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### SITTING DAYS—2017

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FORTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—SECOND PERIOD

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

House of Representatives Office Holders
Speaker—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith MP
Deputy Speaker—Mr Mark Maclean Coulton MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP
Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Hon. Sharon Leah Bird MP, Mr Russell Evan Broadbent MP, Mr Scott Andrew Buchholz MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mr Andrew William Hastie MP, Mr Kevin John Hogan MP, Mr Stephen James Irons MP, Mr Craig Kelly MP, Ms Maria Vanvakinou MP, Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP and Mrs Lucy Elizabeth Wicks MP
Leader of the House—Hon. Christopher Pyne MP
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Darren Chester MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Anthony Stephen Burke MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP

Party Leaders and Whips
Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
Chief Government Whip—Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP
Government Whips—Mr Albertus Johannes van Manen MP and Mr Rowan Eric Ramsey MP

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Barnaby Thomas Gerard Joyce MP
Deputy Leader—Senator the Hon Fiona Nash
Chief Whip—Mr George Robert Christensen MP
Deputy Whip—Ms Michelle Leanne Landry 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 Joanne Catherine Ryan MP and Mr Graham Douglas Perrett MP

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<td>Wilson, Mr Joshua Hamilton</td>
<td>Fremantle, WA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
<td>O'Connor, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Timothy Robert</td>
<td>Goldstein, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyatt, Hon. Kenneth George, AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zimmerman, Mr Trent Moir</td>
<td>North Sydney, NSW</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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PARTY ABBREVIATIONS
AG—Australian Greens; ALP—Australian Labor Party; AUS—Katter's Australia Party; IND—Independent; LNP—Liberal National Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals; NXT—Nick Xenophon Team

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Acting Clerk of the Senate—R Pye
Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic
Parliamentary Budget Officer—P Bowen
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<tr>
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<td>Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Indigenous Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Women</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism</strong></td>
<td>Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cabinet</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Scott Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cyber Security</strong></td>
<td>Hon Dan Tehan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon James McGrath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation</strong></td>
<td>Hon Angus Taylor MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</strong></td>
<td>Hon Barnaby Joyce MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Anne Ruston</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</strong></td>
<td>Hon Luke Hartsuyker MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Foreign Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Hon Julie Bishop MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment</strong></td>
<td>Hon Steve Ciobo MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for International Development and the Pacific</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
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<td>Hon Keith Pitt MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attorney-General</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon George Brandis QC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Leader of the Government in the Senate)</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Justice</strong></td>
<td>Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treasurer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Revenue and Financial Services</strong></td>
<td>Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Small Business</strong></td>
<td>Hon Kelly O'Dwyer MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister to the Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>Hon Michael McCormack MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Finance</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Michael Sukkar MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(Deputy Leader of Government in the Senate)</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Regional Development</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Local Government and Territories</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</strong></td>
<td>Hon Darren Chester MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(Deputy Leader of the House)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Urban Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>Hon Paul Fletcher MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Defence</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Defence Industry</strong></td>
<td>Hon Christopher Pyne MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon Dan Tehan MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon Peter Dutton MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</strong></td>
<td>Hon Alex Hawke MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon Arthur Sinodinos AO</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Resources and Northern Australia</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Minister</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Hon Craig Laundy MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Sport</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Aged Care</td>
<td>Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Indigenous Health</td>
<td>Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Health</td>
<td>Hon Dr David Gillespie MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Communications</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for the Arts</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Manager of Government Business in the Senate)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon Josh Frydenberg MP</td>
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<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders</strong></td>
<td>Hon Bill Shorten MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders</td>
<td>Senator Patrick Dodson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Preventing Family Violence</td>
<td>Terri Butler MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister to the Leader (Tasmania)</td>
<td>Senator Helen Polley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</strong></td>
<td>Hon Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Education</td>
<td>Hon Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Women</strong></td>
<td>Hon Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Schools</td>
<td>Andrew Giles MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Universities</td>
<td>Terri Butler MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Equality</td>
<td>Terri Butler MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Penny Wong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Penny Wong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific</td>
<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Don Farrell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Special Minister of State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Sport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon Chris Bowen MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Treasurer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Competition and Productivity</td>
<td>Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Charities and Not-for-Profits</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for the Digital Economy</td>
<td>Ed Husic MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Treasury</td>
<td>Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Environment and Water</strong></td>
<td>Hon Tony Burke MP</td>
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<td>Hon Tony Burke MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon Tony Burke MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Attorney-General</td>
<td>Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House of Representatives</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Medicare</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health</td>
<td>Hon Warren Snowdon MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education and Development (1)</td>
<td>Hon Kate Ellis MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for TAFE and Vocational Education</td>
<td>Hon Kate Ellis MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Early Childhood</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Australia</td>
<td>Lisa Chesters MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Resources and Northern Australia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Hon Jason Clare MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Trade in Services</td>
<td>Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting for Resources</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon Shayne Neumann MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Small Business and Financial Services (2)</td>
<td>Senator Katy Gallagher</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Small Business</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Ageing and Mental Health (3)</td>
<td>Hon Julie Collins MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Ageing</td>
<td>Senator Helen Polley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health</td>
<td>Senator Deborah O’Neill</td>
</tr>
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Thursday, 9 February 2017

The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 9:30, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

DOCUMENTS

Statements of Thanks and Appreciation

Presentation

The SPEAKER (09:31): For the information of honourable members, I present a copy of statements of thanks and appreciation by former members of the 44th Parliament.

COMMITTEES

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Membership

The SPEAKER (09:31): I have received a message from the Senate informing the House that Senator Singh has been discharged from the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters and that Senator Brown has been appointed a member of the committee, and that Senator Ketter has been discharged from the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade and that Senator Singh has been appointed a member of the committee.

BILLS

Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Bill 2017

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Turnbull.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (09:32): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In January this year, I made a commitment to establish the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Bill 2017, which will ensure that parliamentarians' work expenses are accountable, transparent, and fair.

Politicians must be accountable for their use of taxpayers' dollars. Australians are entitled to expect that we, their representatives, spend their money carefully, ensuring at all times that our work expenditure represents an ethical, prudent and cost-effective use of public resources. It is taxpayers' money.

As I have said previously, the whole concept of entitlements is anathema to me. These are business expenses and we as politicians should spend them as frugally, if not more frugally than we would our own money. They should only be spent for the purpose of doing our job and we must be accountable for them.

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Bill 2017 is the first step in the biggest reforms to the management of parliamentarians' expenses in more than a generation.
The authority will be independent. It will be charged with administering and overseeing the travel and related expenses of parliamentarians. This already happens in a number of jurisdictions including, perhaps most notably, the United Kingdom.

The authority's core functions will be to audit and report on parliamentarians' work expenses. It will also provide advice, monitor and administer claims for travel expenses and allowances by parliamentarians and their staff, ensuring that taxpayers' funds are spent appropriately and in compliance with the relevant rules.

The functions will be provided at arm's length from government—distance in this case being essential to maintaining confidence in the decisions of the body, protecting against partisanship, and shielding against misuse.

The independent authority will have an independent board comprised of individuals with diverse yet highly relevant skills, as well as with substantial experience and significant standing within their professions. The board will be responsible for the statutory functions of IPEA while a chief executive officer (CEO) will manage the day-to-day operations.

The members of the board will include a former judge, a former member of parliament, a person who has significant experience, knowledge, and standing in the field of auditing, and a person with wide experience in remuneration matters. With this depth and breadth of experience, the authority will demonstrate a high standard of independence and accountability.

Together with the chief executive, the board will provide confidence to administrators, parliamentarians and the Australian public that their money, public money, is spent appropriately, in accordance with the rules and in a manner that ensures value for money.

Under the current system, as we know, parliamentarians and administrators navigate a complex work expenses framework that is comprised of legislation, regulations, determinations, procedural rules, guidelines, conventions and decisions of executive government.

The new authority is intended to provide clear and consistent guidance, advice and rulings for parliamentarians. Clear advice and guidance is crucial. Currently it is often necessary to read several instruments in order to understand a single work expense. The Department of Finance, for example, has had to produce a suite of eight separate handbooks on the patchwork of legislation and guidelines that form the work expenses framework.

The change that will have the greatest impact on transparency is the modernisation of the system that manages work expenses. Our current system of six-monthly reporting will be updated as soon as possible to allow for a monthly disclosure of expenses in an accessible and searchable format. This process of modernisation will bring Australia into step with jurisdictions around the world and ensure a greater degree of transparency, accountability and integrity in the use of public funds.

The bill will create the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority, but we need to go further. In order to support this reform, the government will continue to implement the recommendations of the review chaired by John Conde and David Tune into the parliamentary entitlements system.

My government will present a further significant bill to the parliament in the near future which will improve the legislative and administrative framework of the parliamentary work
expenses system—further encouraging transparency, accountability and value for money. The IPEA will perform its functions both in respect of the current framework, and then the new framework once it has been reformed.

The new authority will commence on 1 July 2017, fully supported by these changes to parliamentary work expenses.

In recognition of the immediate need for reform in this area, while we work to establish the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority and reform the work expenses framework, I have directed that an interim advisory body be established by executive order. This body will include a board and will administer travel expenses and allowances, and provide advice and support to parliamentarians on the current parliamentary work expenses system in respect of travel expenses and allowances. This body will commence as soon as possible, and then will be abolished—and the board transitioned—upon commencement of the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority, pursuant to this legislation.

As parliamentarians we have a duty to ensure that our spending of public money meets the expectations of the Australian public. Transparency and accountability are critical to meeting this duty and demonstrating that it has been met. The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority is the first part of a robust response to the obvious shortcomings of the existing systems which will provide greater transparency and accountability as well as greater clarity to parliamentarians in recognition of the unique challenges that we face in representing our constituents across this wide land.

This bill is the first step in the biggest reforms to the management of parliamentarians' expenses in over 25 years. I look forward to working with the opposition and other members and senators to ensure that these important and timely reforms are delivered.

Debate adjourned.

**Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2017**

*First Reading*

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Turnbull.

Bill read a first time.

*Second Reading*

Mr Turnbull (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (09:40): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill supports the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Bill 2017 by addressing consequential matters that would arise from the enactment of the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017.

The bill would provide exemptions to the freedom of information scheme established under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 for the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to documents requesting that the authority give personal advice relating to parliamentary work related travel expenses and allowances to parliamentarians and their staff. The exemption also extends to any other documents connected with the performance of those functions.
These exemptions are intended to ensure that the authority can provide frank advice to parliamentarians and their staff, and to encourage parliamentarians and their staff to engage with the authority at an early stage to seek guidance where they are unsure of their travel expenses or allowances. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

**Farm Household Support Amendment Bill 2017**

*First Reading*

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Joyce.

Bill read a first time.

*Second Reading*

Mr JOYCE (New England—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources) (09:42): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Farm Household Support Amendment Bill 2017 is a bill to amend the Farm Household Support Act 2014.

The bill proposes to assist farmers in financial hardship by removing unnecessary waiting periods once they have been approved for payment of farm household allowance. The bill also resolves a technical anomaly in the definition of farm assets in the Farm Household Support Act whereby some types of assets used wholly or mainly for the purpose of a farm enterprise—such as water rights or shares in marketing cooperatives—are not assessed as farm assets.

The farm household allowance program provides up to three years of income support, paid at the same rate as Newstart allowance, to farmers and their partners in hardship. Since its introduction in July 2014 over 7,000 farmers have been granted access to the program which allows them to access income support payments, case management services and improvement activity supplements. The safety net provided by this program is essential to ensure the government can appropriately support farmers in hardship.

The government's general position is that conditions for receipt of farm household allowance should be aligned with those for mainstream income support payments, unless there are good reasons for departure.

The program settings recognise that farmers are often excluded from mainstream income support payments by the size of the assets they use in operating their farm, yet they cannot realise those assets for self-support without taking away some, or all, of the income producing capacity of the farm enterprise.

Farm household allowance is therefore subject to a two-tiered asset test. The first, applied to non-farm assets, is the same as that applied to Newstart recipients. The second tier permits the farmer and their partner to hold up to $2.55 million in net farm assets.

The mutual obligation provisions for farm household allowance also differ from those for Newstart allowance, recognising that the aim is to provide income support for a limited time while the farm household seeks to move to a more sustainable financial position. To this end,
recipients receive case management support and financial assistance to obtain advice or training to improve their situation.

When the farm household allowance program was introduced in 2014, the same ordinary waiting period and liquid asset waiting period that apply for other Australian government income support programs were retained. These are generally applied to ensure that social welfare applicants use their own readily available resources before drawing on public monies, and have incentives to continue to seek work.

Experience has shown that the normal considerations around waiting periods are no longer appropriate for farm household allowance.

Farmers are an integral part of the farm business enterprise. If a farmer has qualified for farm household allowance, this means they are experiencing hardship. Requiring this farmer, or their partner, as a farm household allowance recipient, to wait additional time, notwithstanding they have been found eligible, could lead to additional hardship which risks a reduction in their capacity to operate the farm enterprise.

The bill therefore proposes the removal of the requirements for recipients of farm household allowance to serve an ordinary waiting period or liquid assets waiting period.

Farm household allowance is also time limited, so removing the standard waiting periods generate no costs to the budget.

The bill also seeks to clarify the legislative treatment of certain assets necessary for the operation of the farm enterprise.

Under the Farm Household Support Act certain assets, which are necessary for the operation of the farm enterprise, are currently excluded from the definition of farm assets. Therefore they must be assessed as non-farm assets, and are subject to the lower tier 1 test that does not account for the illiquid nature of farm assets. Examples include water rights and shares in marketing cooperatives.

This is contrary to the intent of the farm household allowance program in respect of the assessment of assets, and this bill therefore provides for the definition of farm assets to include water rights and shares in marketing cooperatives used or held substantially for the purposes of operating the farm enterprise. This change will apply to new customers of the farm household allowance program. It will not affect existing customers who may have been assessed under the current minister's rules applying to these assets.

The clarification of the treatment of assets will not change the maximum asset holding limits to be eligible for the farm household allowance. It will therefore have minimal impact on the budget.

In seeking to remove unnecessary waiting periods for farmers and their partners approved to receive farm household allowance, and in clarifying the treatment of assets within the Farm Household Support Act, this bill further demonstrates this government's responsiveness to the needs of the farming community and rural and regional Australia as well as our willingness to streamline the assessment of farm household allowance applications where appropriate and possible.

Debate adjourned.
Treasury Laws Amendment (Combating Multinational Tax Avoidance) Bill 2017

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum to this bill, and to the Diverted Profits Tax Bill 2017, presented by Mr Morrison.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (09:48): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill implements the suite of tax integrity measures the Turnbull government announced in the government's 2016-17 budget to combat multinational tax avoidance.

Most taxpayers comply with Australia's tax rules and pay the right amount of tax.

However, there are some who do not; some who try to avoid paying Australian tax by diverting Australian profits to low-tax countries.

When this happens, other taxpayers, including families and small businesses, citizens who comply with our tax laws, are left to carry the taxation burden.

This government will not stand for tax avoidance. We will not stand for the deliberate flaunting of our tax laws by major multinational enterprises.

That is why the Turnbull government has introduced some of the strongest taxation integrity rules in the world—so that those taxpayers who attempt to avoid paying tax are caught and do not undermine our tax system, on which all Australian government services depend.

The government inherited a tax system that had not kept pace with developments in global trade and investment and digital commerce. It was left to this government to reverse the years of inaction on tax integrity, particularly in relation to multinationals, and ensure that the tax loopholes that they left open are now closed and multinational entities operating in Australia pay the right amount of tax.

We are determined to have the strongest rules against tax avoidance for these matters; to level the playing field and deliver a fairer tax system for all, so the important services—hospitals, schools and important targeted welfare benefits; all of these things—Australians can rely on into the future on a sustainable basis.

In 2015 the government introduced a package of three key reforms to combat multinational tax avoidance.

The first was the Multinational Anti-Avoidance Law to stop multinationals with significant Australian activities booking profits overseas to avoid paying tax in Australia. We are already seeing positive results from this measure—the dividends from taking action—with many multinationals now restructuring to book their income in Australia.

The second was to double the penalties for large companies that enter into tax avoidance or profit-shifting schemes—making them think twice before engaging in these behaviours.

Thirdly, we introduced country-by-country reporting which requires large multinationals to report to the Australian Taxation Office their income and tax paid in every country in which they operate. This is obviously consistent with the BEPS process, which we have been a key
partner in with our partner jurisdictions around the world—particularly, driven through both the OECD and the G20.

It would be great if both these measures had received bipartisan support in this parliament but, sadly, they did not. And we were able to ensure passage of these measures through the other place with the support of the crossbenches. But we are aware that more needs to be done.

Increasing digitalisation, globalisation and technological advancements have changed the way in which multinationals do business. While the expansion of the global economy has delivered many benefits to Australian businesses and consumers, it has also created new and innovative ways for multinational companies to avoid Australian tax by shifting their profits from Australia to lower-taxing countries.

We are committed to ensuring that the Australian tax system keeps pace with the modern economy and that everyone doing business in Australia pays the right amount of tax on their Australian profits.

And that is why we are introducing this bill: a bill that delivers on our promise to ensure that Australia is at the forefront of the international fight against tax avoidance.

This is a bill that sends a clear message to multinationals—if you wish to operate in Australia, this government expects you to pay your tax, the right amount of tax, and prepare to be challenged and have this legislation and these measures enforced if you choose to violate them.

This bill implements a new diverted profits tax, ensures our transfer pricing rules remain international best practice and imposes even tougher penalties for large multinationals who fail to comply with tax reporting obligations.

The diverted profits tax and the tougher penalties for failure to comply with tax reporting obligations will apply to large multinationals operating in Australia with annual global income of a billion or more.

The transfer pricing measure will apply to all taxpayers who undertake cross-border transactions with related parties.

**The diverted profits tax**

Schedule 1 of this bill implements a new diverted profits tax from 1 July 2017. The diverted profits tax is targeted at multinationals entering into arrangements with offshore related parties that lack economic substance, in order to divert their Australian profits to lower tax countries and avoid paying Australian tax.

The diverted profits tax is also designed to encourage multinationals to provide relevant information and cooperate with the ATO in administering the tax law.

The diverted profits tax is expected to raise $100 million in revenue each year from the 2018-19 year and will reinforce Australia's position as having some of the toughest laws in the world to combat corporate tax avoidance. This is in addition to some $3.7 billion related to earlier measures combating tax avoidance that the government has already introduced.

The diverted profits tax will not replace the operation of the transfer pricing rules as they apply to ordinary transfer pricing disputes. It is intended that the transfer pricing rules will remain the primary mechanisms for pricing the cross-border transactions of multinationals.
It is expected that the diverted profits tax will apply in limited circumstances. Most companies do the right thing and meet their tax obligations. The diverted profits tax is focused only on tax avoidance arrangements that are artificial or contrived.

Importantly, the diverted profits tax does not expand the coverage of the corporate tax base but seeks to maintain its integrity.

The diverted profits tax does not apply to managed investment trusts or similar foreign entities, sovereign wealth funds and foreign pension funds. These entities have been excluded as they are low risk from an integrity perspective, as they are widely held and undertake passive activities. This exclusion will ensure that such entities do not face unnecessary compliance burdens as a result of the introduction of the diverted profits tax.

Similarly, the diverted profits tax does not capture entities with Australian income of $25 million or less.

The diverted profits tax contains a number of key features that will encourage greater cooperation between uncooperative multinationals and the ATO. As a result this will reduce the length of disputes between the ATO and multinationals.

These key features include:

- allowing the commissioner to impose the diverted profits tax on the basis of a reasonable assessment of the available information—placing the onus on multinationals to demonstrate they have not diverted profits from Australia;
- imposing an up-front diverted profits tax liability payable on the amount of the diverted profits at a penalty rate of 40 per cent; and
- preventing multinationals from introducing new information on appeal to the Federal Court that was not previously made available to the ATO, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

**Increased penalties**

Schedule 2 of this bill increases the administrative penalties that can be applied by the Commissioner of Taxation to significant global entities for breaching their tax reporting obligations.

From 1 July 2017, the government will increase the maximum penalty 100 times for these entities where they fail to lodge tax documents on time or take reasonable care when making statements to the ATO—a one-hundred-fold increase.

The penalty regime that was in place when we came to government was wholly inadequate and was not commensurate with the gravity of reporting offences that could be committed by significant global entities.

As a consequence, this bill which I am introducing today, will raise the maximum administrative penalty for significant global entities who fail to comply with their tax reporting obligations from $5,250 to $525,000 when taking into account the increase in the value of Commonwealth penalty unit announced in the 2016-17 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

The government is also doubling the penalties for these entities when they make false or misleading statements to the ATO.
These changes will make the penalties applicable to significant global entities more commensurate with their turnover, and provide greater incentive for them to lodge tax documents on time and take reasonable care when making statements to the ATO.

This schedule also includes a minor amendment to ensure administrative penalties apply as intended where a significant global entity does not lodge a general purpose financial statement as required under the taxation law.

These changes send a clear message that the government will not tolerate inaccurate or delayed tax reporting and administration by large multinationals—more so than any other government prior to this one.

**Transfer pricing**

Schedule 3 of this bill amends Australia's transfer pricing law to give effect to the 2015 OECD transfer pricing recommendations.

The amendment will apply from 1 July 2016 and directly tackles inflated transfer pricing by multinationals.

Australia's transfer pricing rules currently specify that they are to be interpreted to best achieve consistency with the OECD's *Transfer Pricing Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and Tax Administrations* as last updated in 2010.

As part of the OECD's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting Project, the BEPS, the OECD updated these guidelines in 2015 to better align transfer pricing outcomes with value creation.

The updated guidelines will make it clearer how intellectual property and other intangibles should be priced, and ensure that the transfer pricing analysis reflects the economic substance of the transaction rather than the contractual form.

Adopting these changes will keep our transfer pricing rules in line with international best practice and help ensure that profits made in Australia are taxed in Australia.

This also sends a clear message to multinationals and the international tax community that Australia is absolutely committed to combating multinational tax avoidance.

**Further government action**

Last July I attended the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting and High-Level Tax Symposium where I shared Australia's experience in implementing tax policies which drive innovation and promote growth.

I also spoke about the importance of tackling tax avoidance through the coordinated and comprehensive implementation of the BEPS action plan.

In ensuring innovation and promoting growth in Australia, I cannot stress enough the importance of combating multinational tax avoidance and maintaining momentum on our own domestic implementation of the BEPS process.

The Turnbull government is absolutely committed to tackling tax avoidance, and ensuring that everyone who does business in Australia pays the right amount of tax.

The Turnbull government's extensive plan to target tax avoidance was outlined in the 2016-17 budget. Importantly, this plan builds on key announcements in the 2015-16 budget including the Multinational Anti-Avoidance Law.
This government also announced in the 2016-17 budget that Australia would implement OECD anti-hybrid rules to ensure that multinationals are not able to take advantage of differences in how countries tax hybrid financial instruments or hybrid entities.

We have ensured a level playing field for all domestic suppliers by passing legislation that has ensured GST is charged on digital products and services imported by consumers. But we are now going even further and we will remove the low-value imported goods GST threshold. This means that GST will be charged on all low-value goods imported into Australia regardless of their price.

The government is taking a strong, world-leading, but balanced approach to multinational tax avoidance.

The Turnbull government has said that enough is enough when it comes to multinationals diverting profits offshore and failing to meet their tax disclosure responsibilities.

Adopting the changes in this bill will keep our transfer pricing rules in line with international best practice and help ensure that profits made in Australia are taxed in Australia.

The Turnbull government is ensuring that Australian taxpayers do not get dunned by multinationals, and we have backed that up with serious and consistent measures that we have introduced into this parliament. It is disappointing that, on previous occasions, they have not enjoyed bipartisan support as they should, and I would urge this House to show that bipartisan support now for at least these measures. The details of these measures in this bill are contained in that bill and outlined in the explanatory memorandum.

Debate adjourned.

Diverted Profits Tax Bill 2017

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Morrison.
Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (10:02): I move:
That this bill be now read a second time.

The Diverted Profits Tax Bill 2017 forms part of a package of bills to combat multinational tax avoidance.

The bill imposes a new diverted profits tax that is targeted at multinationals who enter into arrangements with offshore related parties that lack economic substance so as to divert their Australian profits to related parties in lower tax countries, in order to avoid paying Australian tax.

The bill imposes an up-front diverted profits tax liability payable on the amount of the diverted profits at a penalty rate of 40 per cent.

This has the effect of encouraging greater cooperation between uncooperative multinationals and the ATO. As a result this will greatly reduce the length of disputes between the ATO and multinationals, and lead to timelier dispute resolution.
Further details of the bill and the new diverted profits tax are set out in the explanatory memorandum for the Combating Multinational Tax Avoidance Bill 2017.

Debate adjourned.

Parliamentary Entitlements Legislation Amendment Bill 2017

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Frydenberg.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Minister for the Environment and Energy) (10:04): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Parliamentary Entitlements Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, a bill which largely mirrors the provisions of the 2014 bill of the same name, to implement the changes to the Parliamentary Entitlements and Life Gold Pass Acts.

On 9 November 2013, the government announced changes to strengthen the rules governing parliamentarians’ business expenses. On 13 May 2014, the government also announced, as part of the 2014-15 budget, changes to Life Gold Pass travel.

On top of the changes outlined in 2014, this bill significantly accelerates the termination of access to travel under the Life Gold Pass scheme for the vast majority of pass holders, including former ministers, presiding officers and the leaders of the opposition.

The bill ceases Life Gold Pass travel on the day it commences for all current pass holders, other than retired former prime ministers and their spouses and renames the remaining benefit parliamentary retirement travel.

Specifically, the bill:

- removes parliamentary retirement travel from spouses and de facto partners of all former parliamentarians, other than those of retired former prime ministers, with effect from 14 May 2014;
- reduces the amount of parliamentary retirement travel available to former prime ministers, their spouses or de facto partners, effective 14 May 2014;
- requires that parliamentary retirement travel undertaken after 14 May 2014 be for the public benefit, and not for a commercial purpose or a private purpose; and
- ceases parliamentary retirement travel for former parliamentarians, other than former prime ministers, at the latest with effect from commencement of the bill.

Further, the bill:

- Amends the definition of dependent child, for domestic travel purposes, of a minister, presiding officer or opposition office holder from under 25, to under 18 years of age.
- Imposes a 25 per cent penalty loading on any claim for a prescribed travel benefit that a parliamentarian subsequently adjusts (either voluntary or involuntary).
The 25 per cent penalty loading will not apply where an adjustment is made within 28 days of the date the claim was made, or where the adjustment was the result of an administrative error by the administering department.

- Establishes a mechanism to minimise the risk that payments made in the course of administering parliamentary work expenses will breach section 83 of the Constitution. The mechanism is comparable to mechanisms included in other acts, such as the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act 1948. The mechanism will include a statutory right for the recovery of payments that are beyond entitlement, as well as the 25 per cent penalty loading, where applicable.

The bill contains sensible reforms to improve accountability in the spending of taxpayers' money, which strengthen the parliamentary work expenses framework.

I foreshadow that this government will soon bring forward further legislation as it implements the Prime Minister's recently announced reforms to the management of parliamentarians' work expenses, and recommendations of the review committee: An independent parliamentary entitlements system.

Debate adjourned.

Enhancing Online Safety for Children Amendment Bill 2017

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Fletcher.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Urban Infrastructure) (10:08): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Enhancing Online Safety for Children Amendment Bill contains important amendments to implement the government's announcement of 23 November 2016 to broaden the general functions of the Children's eSafety Commissioner to cover online safety for all Australians, not just Australian children.

The bill will also change the name of the Children's eSafety Commissioner (the commissioner) to the eSafety Commissioner, to reflect the expanded general functions.

The expansion of the commissioner's general functions, as proposed by the bill, will allow the commissioner to take on a broader online safety role and carry out important work on the government's election commitments relating to women's safety and to online safety for older Australians.

The bill amendments address feedback received by the government that adult members of the public are not aware that they can go to the Children's eSafety Commissioner for assistance with concerns around illegal or offensive online content, the sharing of intimate images without consent—commonly referred to as 'revenge porn'—or for general advice about how to manage technology risks and online safety.

There are already a broad range of existing functions performed by the commissioner that go beyond online safety for children. The commissioner has a wealth of expertise in
technology use and in developing educational, promotional and community awareness programs on online safety for children for a wide range of audiences.

Expanding the commissioner's role and changing the name of the Children's eSafety Commissioner to the eSafety Commissioner will make it easier for the public to identify where they can seek assistance and advice in relation to a range of online safety issues, irrespective of age.

The bill will make minor consequential amendments to five other acts to reflect the change to the act's short title and the change in name of the statutory office of the commissioner. These acts are:

- the Australian Communications and Media Authority Act 2005;
- the Telecommunications Act 1997;
- the Broadcasting Services Act 1992;
- the Criminal Code Act 1995; and

The commissioner's responsibilities for administering the online content scheme under the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 remain unchanged by the bill. The statutory scheme for complaints about cyberbullying material on social media services will also remain unchanged and will continue to only relate to material that is targeted at, and harmful to, an Australian child.

The statutory office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner has been in place since 1 July 2015. The office was created by the Enhancing Online Safety for Children Act 2015.

The Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner has been a considerable success by any measure and the government is looking to build upon this success and help to improve the online experiences of all Australians.

Achievements of the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner

Since its establishment, the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner has:

- finalised over 320 complaints about serious cyberbullying that targeted Australian children;
- worked with 11 major social media service providers to counter cyberbullying;
- certified 23 online safety program providers with more than 115 presenters delivering programs into Australian schools;
- finalised over 15,000 investigations into online content including over 9,000 investigations into online child sexual abuse content;
- reached over 92,000 students and teachers through its virtual classroom program;
- had over 3.3 million website page views;
- made the iParent portal available to parents, providing advice on a range of online safety and digital content issues; and
- launched the eSafetyWomen site with resources and advice for women, and provided training for more than 1,200 frontline professionals across every state and territory to help women experiencing technology facilitated abuse.
The office's role has already expanded since its establishment, recognising that staff have a wealth of expertise in all areas of online safety which should be put to good use.

For example, in December 2015 the functions of the commissioner were expanded to include online safety for women at risk of domestic violence.

The commissioner also manages the existing eSafetyWomen website, established with a $2.1 million funding commitment from the government's Women's Safety Package announced in September 2015. eSafetyWomen offers a range of resources to help women manage technology risks and abuse by giving them the tools and information they need to encourage confidence and safety online.

The government recognises that there are other groups within the community that can benefit from the expertise of the commissioner's office.

Prior to the 2016 federal election, the government committed to provide additional support for victims of non-consensual sharing of intimate images—commonly referred to as 'revenge porn'—and to improve the digital confidence and online safety of older Australians.

**Improving the digital confidence and skills of older Australians**

The government is committed to ensuring older Australians have the digital skills and knowledge to take advantage of new technology and stay connected with loved ones online.

Around 80 per cent of Australians own a smartphone and thousands more own a tablet and other smart devices.

Despite this strong take-up, only around 20 per cent of older Australians own a smartphone. Older Australians often cite a lack of confidence and knowledge as one of the key reasons for not participating online.

The Turnbull government is committed to bridging this digital divide. The government is investing $50 million to improve the digital literacy of older Australians and improve their safety online.

The Children's eSafety Commissioner is working with the Department of Social Services to develop a digital inclusion and online safety strategy for older Australians.

Like many Australians, face-to-face contact remains an important form of engagement for older Australians. But the convenience of technology provides an additional avenue to keep older Australians connected, especially to family and friends.

The government is ensuring that older Australians who have access to existing devices will be supported to learn how to take full advantage to keep in touch and stay connected.

Smart devices provide unparalleled opportunities for older Australians to continue to participate fully in our society. They provide opportunities for grandparents to stay connected to their families and grandchildren, and for older Australians to retain their independence.

The government will leverage existing community infrastructure such as libraries, retirement villages, community centres, and aged-care facilities to support older Australians to develop the confidence and skills they need to stay connected.

This government's measures will include:

- The development of an overarching digital literacy and online safety strategy for older Australians;
• Delivering free or low-cost, one-on-one, face-to-face digital training and support to older Australians, including a helpline;
• One-off small grant funding to assist community organisations with the delivery of coaching or training and support to older Australians;
• A communications and marketing campaign to raise awareness among older Australians and their families of the benefits of connecting online and how to access support;
• A national digital portal to provide a one-stop shop for information, tools and training materials;
• National digital and smart device training materials and tools, including online safety and outreach train-the-trainer programs, for use by families, friends, peers and community organisations; and
• A seniors and schools intergenerational mentor program to bring school students and seniors (in aged-care facilities) together to promote relevance and usefulness of technology.

The Turnbull government is committed to supporting older Australians and ensuring they have the skills to participate in our modern digital economy.

Additional support for victims of non-consensual sharing of intimate images

The coalition's commitment to keeping women and children safe from domestic and family violence is comprehensive, multifaceted and unwavering.

The government recognises that the sharing of intimate images without consent, commonly referred to as 'revenge porn', is emerging as an issue of great concern in the community.

That is why this government has put the issue on the Council of Australian Governments' agenda to ensure that the Commonwealth and states and territories are working together to ensure there is a coordinated approach.

The government will also conduct a public consultation process on a proposed civil penalties regime targeted at both perpetrators and sites which host intimate images and videos shared without consent.

A discussion paper will be released in the near future and feedback will be sought from the eSafety Commissioner, federal and state police, women's safety organisations, mental health experts, schools and education departments, the Online Safety Consultative Working Group and others.

Impacts on individual's rights and freedoms, including freedom of speech and privacy

It is important to note that these amendments to change the commissioner's statutory functions only relate to the general, or 'soft', functions of the commissioner and do not relate to the statutory scheme for complaints about cyberbullying material, which will continue to only relate to material that is targeted at, and harmful to, an Australian child.

The amendments do not create any new offences or civil penalties, provide any new regulatory powers, impose any taxes, or set any amounts to be appropriated from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Conclusion

The Children's eSafety Commissioner has been a huge success in enhancing online safety for children.
The amendments proposed will assist the good work of the commissioner to continue to have a positive impact on a broader range of vulnerable Australians, including older Australians, victims of domestic and family violence, and for people who have had intimate images shared without their consent.

I commend this bill to the House and look forward to implementing the next stages of the government's agenda to promote the online safety of all Australians, and to work across government, the private sector and in the community to allow all Australians to enjoy safe and positive experiences online.

Debate adjourned.

Health Insurance Amendment (National Rural Health Commissioner) Bill 2017

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Dr Gillespie.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne—Assistant Minister for Health) (10:20): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am proud to introduce the Health Insurance Amendment (National Rural Health Commissioner) Bill, which amends the Health Insurance Act 1973 for the purpose of establishing Australia's first National Rural Health Commissioner.

This is an incredible and historic occasion—an historic occasion for the coalition, the National Party, and the third of our population that call regional, rural and remote Australia home.

This is really a historic occasion for our nation.

Improving access to quality health care for people, no matter where they live, is a priority for this coalition government.

As a medical practitioner who has worked for more than 20 years as a doctor in regional Australia, I am so proud and privileged to be here today to deliver this crucial commitment.

From my professional background, I understand the many pressures facing our hardworking members of the health sector.

Our doctors, our nurses, dentists, allied health workers, our pharmacists, our Indigenous health workers, mental health workers, our midwives—we understand these people, what they are up against and we understand the needs of Australians in regional, rural and remote Australia.

We understand that it takes a toughness and a boldness, coupled with a deep sensitivity, to work in health in rural and remote areas.

Since Australia's pioneering days, before telecommunications, we found ways to overcome isolation between the new colonies. We did that. We are a nation that has overcome geographic challenges, having one of the largest land masses and the largest search and rescue regions in the world.
Around one-third of Australians live outside metropolitan areas, and about two per cent of the population live in remote and very remote locations. Compared to metropolitan areas, rural and remote Australians generally:

- experience higher rates of chronic disease;
- have a shorter life expectancy;
- face higher health risk factors such as higher rates of smoking, drinking and obesity;
- have lower incomes, and fewer educational and employment opportunities;
- are, on average, an older population with a greater proportion living with a disability;
- face some higher living costs, difficulties sourcing fresh food, harsher environmental conditions and relative social isolation;
- have higher rates of preventable cancers, such as melanoma and lung cancer; and
- have lower levels of health literacy.

For those living in rural, regional and remote Australia, finding services can often be difficult, if not impossible.

As our Deputy Prime Minister, the Leader of the National Party, has said, 'We will continue to make sure that for the people out there doing it tough, that you don't make their life tougher.'

And it was the former Minister for Rural Health, Senator Fiona Nash, our Deputy Leader of the Nationals, who made this bold and historic commitment.

I commend to the House these two leaders, who are champions for regional and rural communities in their own right.

As a member of the National Party and the Assistant Minister for Rural Health, I have reiterated that this government is committed to bridging the city-country divide.

For more than 20 years I served in areas many hours' drive away from the nearest city. I was a consultant specialist gastroenterologist through regional hospitals for much of that time, and I have felt the demand that is on regional health services and regional health staff.

The common problems encountered in the bush necessitate the development and application of a dedicated framework which supports a nationally coordinated approach that is adaptable to local conditions.

Our commitment today is to ensure that regional, rural and remote communities will have a champion to advocate on their behalf so they are able to receive the support they need to deliver health services to local people.

This is all guided by a deep-lying principle that every Australian should have the right to access a high-quality standard of health care, no matter where they live.

To this end, this bill will pave the way to establish Australia's first-ever National Rural Health Commissioner. The commissioner is an integral part of our broader agenda to reform rural health in this nation.

Establishing this role will be achieved by amending the Health Insurance Act 1973, which will provide for the commissioner to be a statutory position, enabling them to carry out their duties independently and transparently.
The commissioner will work with regional, rural and remote communities, the health sector, universities, specialist training colleges and across all levels of government health administration to improve rural health policies and champion the cause of rural practice.

The position will be independent and impartial—a fearless champion. The commissioner will be someone who has extensive experience within the rural health sector, who is capable of collaborating and consulting closely with a broad range of stakeholders, and who has a passion for improving health outcomes in regional, rural and remote Australia.

The commissioner will be appointed for a period of two years, with a reappointment up until 30 June 2020.

As a part of the role, the commissioner will be required to submit a report to the responsible minister. This will outline findings and recommendations for consideration by the government.

The commissioner will not be able to delegate his or her powers to anyone else, they will not hold any financial delegation powers, nor will they have any specific employment powers.

The commissioner will be assisted by staff from the Department of Health throughout the duration of their term.

Once appointed, the commissioner's first priority will be to develop National Rural Generalist Pathways. The aim of these pathways will be to address the most serious issue confronting the rural health sector: the lack of access to training for doctors in regional, rural and remote communities. Attracting and retaining more doctors and health professionals into country areas is essential if we are to improve access to health care around the coast and in the bush.

Rural generalists are faced with a unique set of challenges, and the commissioner will examine these while developing the generalist pathways.

It is widely recognised that rural generalists often have advanced training and a broader skill set than is required by doctors practising in metropolitan centres. In many instances, they perform duties in areas such as general surgery, obstetrics, anaesthetics and mental health. They not only work longer hours but also are frequently on call after hours in acute care settings, such as accident and emergency and hospital admitted patient care.

However, despite the rural generalists' multidisciplinary skill set, demanding workload and geographic isolation, there is no national scheme in place which properly recognises this set of circumstances.

In developing the National Rural Generalist Pathways, the commissioner will consult with the health sector and training providers to define what it means to be a rural generalist. The commissioner will also examine appropriate remuneration for rural generalists, to ensure their extra skills and working hours are recognised. By addressing these areas, the pathways will help to encourage more doctors to practise in regional, rural and remote Australia.

While the development of the pathways will be the commissioner's first priority, the needs of nursing, dental health, pharmacy, Indigenous health, mental health, midwifery, occupational therapy, physical therapy and other allied health stakeholders will also be considered.
Health-care planning, programs and service delivery models must be adapted to meet the widely differing health needs of rural communities and overcome the challenges of geographic spread, low population density, limited infrastructure and the significantly higher costs of rural and remote health-care delivery.

In rural and remote areas, partnerships across health-care sectors and between health-care providers and other sectors will help address the economic and social determinants of health that are essential to meeting the needs of these communities. The commissioner will form and strengthen these relationships, across the professions and for all the communities.

It is worth noting that this government's commitment has been shared and welcomed by the sector. These are organisations that have been crucial in its development and I would like to thank:

- Allied Health Professionals Australia
- Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
- Australian Indigenous Doctors Association
- Australian Medical Association Council of Rural Doctors
- Australian Rural Health Education Network
- Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives
- CRANAPlus
- Federal Council of the Australian Dental Association
- Federation of Rural Australian Medical Educators
- Indigenous Allied Health Australia
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Association
- National Rural Health Alliance
- National Rural Health Student Network Executive Committee
- Rural Doctors Association of Australia
- Rural Faculty of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- Rural Health Workforce Australia
- Services for Australian and Rural and Remote Allied Health

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the health workforce division within my department who have assisted in developing this important initiative for our government.

In addition to establishing the role of the commissioner, this bill also contains two other amendments to the Health Insurance Act 1973.

It will repeal section 3GC of the act, to abolish the Medical Training Review Panel. 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 that the panel's role would cease. This measure will simplify legislation in the Health portfolio.

The other amendment will be the repeal of section 19AD of the act. This will not affect any medical practitioner subject to the legislation, and will not affect the operation of any current workforce or training programs. It will remove a burdensome and ineffective process which required a review every five years of the operation of the Medicare provider number legislation, subsections 19AA, 3GA and 3GC of the Health Insurance Act 1973.

Previous reviews have not resulted in operational improvements to the legislation. Furthermore, recent developments in systems supporting Medicare provider number legislation and processes are not captured by section 19AD. Repealing this ineffectual measure in the act is a necessary measure.

To sum up, this bill is an important step forward for regional, rural and remote health in Australia.

This coalition government recognises the value of our rural communities and the special place they hold within the fabric of this country. People living in these communities make an enormous contribution to our national economy, and to the culture and character of Australia. Access to a quality standard of health care is what they deserve and are entitled to expect. The key is to recruit and retain more doctors and health professionals outside of the major cities, and that will be the focus of the National Rural Health Commissioner and our government.

With the appropriate training opportunities, recruitment, remuneration and ongoing support, the government is confident that more people will be encouraged to pursue a rewarding career in rural health.

Regional, rural and remote health is built on the commitment, the expertise and the courage of its workforce. We have some of the most resilient and passionate people working in this sector. The formation of the commissioner will help to provide the rural health workforce with the support it needs to carry out its vitally important work.

Finally, I, together with the commissioner will champion the incredible and rewarding opportunities of a career in rural medicine. We will do our best to hear you, to listen to you, and to make the necessary steps for our health system to work better for you.

Our coalition government looks forward to working closely with the National Rural Health Commissioner to ensure we can improve access to health services for all the men and women who call regional, rural and remote Australia home.

I commend this bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2016-2017
First Reading

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

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Sukkar.

Bill read a first time.
Second Reading

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (10:37): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

- Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2016-2017; and
- Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2016-2017.

These bills underpin the government's expenditure decisions.

Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2016-2017 seeks approval for appropriations from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of just under $2 billion.

I now outline the significant items provided for in this bill.

Firstly, this bill would provide the Department of Defence just over $810 million. This includes approximately $36 million for Operation Highroad and largely reflects the net effect of the reallocation between operating and capital costs, which is partially offset by the impact of foreign exchange movements.

Secondly, just under $200 million is proposed for the Department of Immigration and Border Protection in 2016-17.

This includes approximately $64 million to enhance Australia's border protection measures and support for the resettlement of refugees processed at the Regional Processing Centres on Nauru and Manus Island, and around $100 million to support the accommodation and processing of illegal maritime arrivals at regional processing centres.

Thirdly, the Department of Human Services would receive just under $156 million. This includes approximately $77 million to progress tranche two of the Welfare Payment Infrastructure Transformation program.

Fourthly, the Department of Health would receive just over $143 million. This includes approximately $30 million to commence modernising the information and communication technology systems supporting the health, aged care and related veterans' payments services; around $28 million to strengthen mental health care in Australia; and $10 million to support the establishment of a national research network that will focus on improving childhood cancer survival rates.

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

I commend this bill.

Debate adjourned.

Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2016-2017

First Reading

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

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Sukkar.

Bill read a first time.
Second Reading

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (10:40): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2016-2017, along with Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2016-2017, which I just introduced, are the additional estimates appropriation bills for this financial year. This bill, Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2016-2017, seeks approval for appropriations from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of just over $284 million.

I will now outline the significant items provided for in this bill.

Firstly, the bill would provide the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development just under $119 million in 2016-17 including $81 million in equity funding to the Australian Rail Track Corporation to deliver network upgrades.

Secondly, the Department of Human Services will receive just over $79 million. This includes around $41 million in capital funding to improve some of the IT systems that support its client management.

Thirdly, the Environment and Energy portfolio will receive just under $11 million, which includes supplementation for foreign exchange movements to the Bureau of Meteorology and the Department of the Environment and Energy.

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

I commend this bill.

Debate adjourned.

Treasury Laws Amendment (Bourke Street Fund) Bill 2017

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Ms O'Dwyer.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Minister for Revenue and Financial Services) (10:42): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today, I introduce a bill to enable the tax deductibility of donations to the Bourke Street Fund, following the senseless and vicious attack in Melbourne on 20 January 2017. In doing so the Commonwealth parliament is working with the Victorian government to support the immediate families of the deceased, as well as those injured and their immediate families.

Australians are rightly as one in our condemnation of this evil act. But we are also united in our empathy for those whose lives have been lost and our desire to console those for whom life will never be the same.

In doing so we are resolved to focus on how we might help.

Donations from across Australia are indeed a measure of our community's genuine desire to help and sustain the victims of this terrible crime.
As such to facilitate donations this bill amends the list of deductible gift recipients in the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. The 2017 Bourke Street Fund Trust Account will be added to the act, for a five-year period, from 21 January 2017.

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

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

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

Returned from Senate

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

**COMMITTEES**

**Intelligence and Security Committee**

**Membership**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly) (10:44): Mr Speaker has received advice from the Prime Minister nominating Mr Leeser to be a member of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security.

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Minister for Revenue and Financial Services) (10:44): by leave—I move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Intelligence Services Act 2001, Mr Leeser be appointed a member of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security.

Question agreed to.

Mr Broadbent: A very good appointment, too. I take the opportunity to congratulate the member for Deakin on his elevation, and I wish him every success.

**REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (10:45): As required by resolution of the House, I present a copy of the Register of Members' Interests, Volume 5, for the 45th Parliament.

**COMMITTEES**

**Privileges and Members' Interests Committee**

**Report**

Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (10:45): I present the report concerning the Registration and Declaration of Members' Interests during 2016.

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

**Report**

Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (10:45): I present the report from the Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests concerning an application from Mr Calum Thwaites for the publication of a response to a reference made in the House of Representatives in February 2017.
BILLS

Migration Amendment (Visa Revalidation and Other Measures) Bill 2016
Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (10:46): This Turnbull government bill is reminiscent of President Trump's Muslim ban executive order, and that is why we are so concerned about it. It is a grave shame, because the balance of the bill contains very important changes which we are very supportive of, including the SmartGate technology, which the tourism sector would no doubt like to see passed sooner rather than later. It is a very great shame that the government has seen fit to include such a controversial provision in the visa revalidation schedule to this bill.

By that schedule, the Turnbull government is seeking to give the immigration minister the power to personally decide that a class of persons must have their visa revalidated. This bill does not contain any guidance on how a class might be described, and there is a lack of clarity about that. But, if you look at the bill, it seems that the minister could decide that all persons from a particular country, from a particular ethnicity, from a particular religion, must immediately be in a position to seek to have their visas revalidated. Of course, the effect, if the visa is not revalidated, is that there is a cessation of the visa. In deciding on issuing the instrument determining that a class of persons must have their visa revalidated, the minister has to decide whether the minister thinks it is in the public interest to do so.

There are two issues that arise from that. Firstly, it is not a question of whether it is actually in the public interest to issue this instrument deciding that a class of persons must be submitted to visa revalidation, but it is sufficient if the minister thinks it is in the public interest, which is a much more subjective way of triggering the power to create this instrument. Secondly, the test for the minister in making the decision about this is the public interest, which is a pretty amorphous and ill-defined concept. There is a situation where, if this bill were to be passed in its current form with this power included in it, the minister for immigration could personally decide to require that a specified class of persons complete revalidation checks. There is no power for the parliament to overturn that decision, no power for the parliament to change the terms of it. The only parliamentary scrutiny of this instrument created by the minister is that the minister has to lay it before the parliament, but they do not have to lay it before the parliament immediately. There are two periods at the end of each of the parliamentary half-years where these instruments are laid before the parliament so, if it is done in the first half of the year, you have to lay it before the parliament within 15 sitting days of 1 July; and, if it is done in the second half of the year, then, similarly, you lay it before the parliament subsequent to that.

This is a situation where we are being asked in a bill that should really only be dealing with the non-controversial and broadly supported measures to include a provision that would say to whoever happens to be the immigration minister at the time, 'Here is virtually unfettered power to decide that anyone in Australia on a visa—it does not matter whether it is a permanent visa or a temporary visa—who is from any given country must resubmit to a visa revalidation process.' You only pass the revalidation check on the basis of the minister's
satisfaction—that is the test in the revalidation check provision. It is a question of whether the minister is satisfied that there is no adverse information about the person seeking to have their visa revalidated or, if there is adverse information, that it would be unreasonable for that information to be taken into account. This is another test in this set of provisions that turns on the minister's satisfaction, not on whether there actually is a pass or fail or by some objective standard, but whether the minister is satisfied as to whether the visa should be revalidated. If the visa is not revalidated, the consequence is that the visa ceases to operate and, ultimately, people will have to leave the country and not return until they have revalidated their visa.

This bill is purportedly about the 10-year Chinese visitor visas but, if you look at the revalidation provisions in schedule 1 to the bill, you will see that there is no reference to the 10-year Chinese visitor visas, nor to any specific class of visa. If you look at the words of the bill, rather than what the government has said outside about the bill, you will see that it is obviously intended that Minister Dutton would have broad power in relation to all classes of visa to call people up by class for visa revalidation.

This is a very different power from the types of power that have previously existed under migration law which have been directed to individuals—for example, the character test. The character test is about whether a specific individual meets the character requirements to obtain a visa and come into our country. This is a very, very different kettle of fish, because it says the minister does not have to have any particular individual basis for saying that someone's visa will have to be revalidated or they will lose their right to have a valid visa. It is just a class-based thing. In describing a class, a minister deciding—for example, along the lines of the US executive order from the now President Trump—might decide to choose, say, seven Muslim-majority nations and decide that everybody who was in Australia on any form of visa from any of those nations must submit to this process, where the default position is that your visa will cease, unless you satisfy the minister that it should be revalidated. I think most Australians would not be particularly happy with the idea of any minister for immigration having that much power with such limited scrutiny by parliament and without any power by parliament to alter or overturn the decision that is made.

Of course, we understand that the government are interested in what it can do to ensure that there is scrutiny with respect to the 10-year China visitor visas, but that is not how they have drafted the bill. That is not how this bill has been drafted. Either they have misunderstood their own legislation or it is more likely to be the case that they have deliberately included in this bill a much broader power than has previously been represented to the nation and to members of this parliament. The opposition obviously have had some concerns about this.

Our shadow minister, the member for Blair, who spoke in this debate yesterday, has sought to engage with the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection in relation to the bill and the problems with it. He has reached out to the minister. He has done so following the Senate inquiries, where issues with this bill were highlighted. Unfortunately, the minister has not taken the opportunity to seek to work with Labor to, firstly, ensure that the noncontroversial aspects of this bill can be conveniently passed or, secondly, to respond to the genuine and serious concerns that we have about this wide-ranging and almost unfettered power that he wishes to have conferred upon himself. That, I would suggest, is not just an example of this minister's refusal to negotiate on the terms of this power, it is also quite irresponsible.
suspect that the tourism sector will be very disappointed by the minister's conduct in this regard.

It would have been very easy to split off schedule 1 from this bill and allow the other schedules to be passed. It would have been very easy to have the SmartGate expansion, for example, passed very quickly and very conveniently through this House, if the minister had done the right thing and worked with Labor to ensure that that happened. Instead, he has insisted on pressing ahead with this bill in the form in which it was drafted with this controversial, wide-ranging and potentially very oppressive power to discriminate against people based on a class definition conjured up by the minister on any basis whatsoever. That is a great shame.

It is a great shame that the government did not listen when these issues were raised in the Senate inquiry. It is a great shame that the government has refused to negotiate with the shadow minister. It is a very great shame that we are in a position now where we are genuinely having to have an argument about whether powers reminiscent of those being exercised by the new US President Donald Trump should be conferred on Minister Dutton. Those things are a very great shame. I know that my electorate would not want me to stay silent while such powers were being sought to be conferred on the immigration minister, the member for Dickson. My electorate would not support this idea that we should, as a nation, confer on a member of the executive the power to decide on any class of persons he likes and to then be able to cause significant detriment to people who happen to be members of that class.

I think my constituents expect the Labor Party, of which I am a member, to speak out against this sort of creeping executive power that could be used for oppressive purposes, and that is what I intend to do when I am here in this place. My constituents would not want to see that. We have all seen the press reports from LAX. We have all seen the press reports of the protests that are happening at the United States airports. We have seen the press reports of the courts being in a position to consider whether that particular executive order from the new administration is constitutionally valid. We have all seen the press reports of people who have been unable to get home to their families because of the travel bans that have happened in the United States. My constituents would not support those measures and they certainly would not support this idea that Minister Dutton should be given this virtually unfettered power to do things that are very much reminiscent of what is happening in the US at the moment.

Australia has had a non-discriminatory immigration framework in place for the last four decades. We should not be signing up to Trump-style immigration measures that give the minister this virtually unfettered power. So we are going to do what Minister Dutton should have done. We are going to move an amendment in the Senate to remove schedule 1 of the bill. We are very happy to work with the government to create a visa revalidation framework that is fair. In the meantime, we call on the government—and I repeat the call that the shadow minister has made—to work with Labor to get schedule 1 out, renegotiate it, and to pass the other provisions that are now being held up because of this government's inability to work across the aisle to negotiate and to find a way forward to get non-controversial legislation passed.

It is not just Labor that have concerns with this bill. I have really sought to emphasise why I believe this bill is so concerning in its current form with the virtually unfettered power being
conferred on Minister Dutton. But there are significant stakeholders who have raised concerns about this bill through the Senate inquiry processes. The Migration Institute of Australia made submissions in which it reserved its full support for the bill due to concerns related to this exact power that we have been talking about today. The Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law has made submissions raising concerns about it. They have said that they are concerned about the minister's power to decide that it is in the public interest that certain visa holders must complete a revalidation check and raised issues about the lack of definition of 'public interest', and about the extent to which this would give the minister discretion to impose checks on any number of visa holders.

The Law Council of Australia has also raised a number of concerns with schedule 1 of the bill—the schedule that Labor are very worried about—and those concerns include the fact that it does not seem to be either necessary or proportionate to the bill's intended objective, because the power that is being conferred on the minister has the potential to apply to all classes of visas not just the 10-year Chinese visas. It also raises concerns about the broad powers to be conferred on the minister, the very limited explanation as to the purpose of those broad powers, the fact that the instrument by which this power would be exercised would not be disallowable by the parliament and the fact that there are already existing powers that can be used in the Migration Act to address some of the concerns that have been raised.

The ANU College of Law migration law program has also raised very similar concerns about the power proposed to be conferred upon the minister. They say:

The affect of making such a determination that bypasses parliamentary disallowance increases the potential harm the legislation can do to both individuals and to Australia's reputation.

You have seen what has happened in other countries that have imposed unreasonable migration bans on people from a particular country or ethnicity and what that has done to tourism and international education, which would, of course, be terrible for our nation too. Those are the concerns, and we hope that the government will work with Labor to resolve them.

Mr HART (Bass) (11:01): I rise today to speak on the Migration Amendment (Visa Revalidation and Other Measures) Bill 2016 currently before the House. The purpose of this bill is to amend the Migration Act 1958 in three broad ways. It will enable the use of contactless SmartGate technology during immigration clearance, it will clarify when a visa ceases to be of effect under the Migration Act, and it will also introduce a new revalidation check framework for visas.

Let me start by noting that there are elements of this bill that Labor took to the last election. Measures are included ensuring our competiveness as a nation in the Asia-Pacific region, removing ambiguity in current legislation, improving technology that supports greater flows of people and minimising delay whilst maintaining the ability to identify persons of concern.

This bill also supports the pilot of a proposed 10-year validity visitor visa, created in part with the aim of attracting visitors from the world's fastest growing outbound tourist market—that is, China and India. The 10-year visitor visa will encourage repeat visits to Australia by genuine tourists and business people, hopefully giving this economy an edge over similar markets such as the United States and Europe.
Tourism Australia reports that visitors from China generated $8.3 billion in total expenditure in 2015. China is already our largest source of tourism, worth over $5 billion. It would seem fair to assume, as the government has done with this pilot visa program, that increased visitor numbers to Australia from China will continue to translate into significant benefits for our economy.

However, Australia's visa costs impact upon our competitiveness as a nation in the Asia-Pacific region. There is, of course, an imperative to ensure that every discretionary cost within the government's control is minimised. Labor plans to undertake an audit of Australia's tourist visa offering for each of our main target markets and to undertake an assessment of how that offering compares to our major competitors.

With respect to the Chinese tourism market, Labor will review the cost of the 10-year multiple entry visa so that it is competitive with that for Chinese citizens visiting, for example, the US and the EU. We plan to introduce an online visa application in both English and Mandarin which can be submitted online anytime, as well as reduce the processing time for visas submitted online to within 48 hours.

Labor will also continue the rollout of SmartGate at our borders, as enabled by this bill, whilst exploring and investing in new technologies which can further reduce delays and modernise existing systems. Under this legislation, the contactless technology is to be rolled out for SmartGate in major airports from May 2017. The use of contactless SmartGate technology during immigration clearance will speed processing times, as the technology uses biometric capabilities to facilitate self-processing for up to 90 per cent of international travellers. SmartGate can also confirm a traveller's identity without the need for manually presenting a passport using live facial mapping compared to a verified image from departmental holdings.

I would also note that amendments contained in this bill act to remove an existing ambiguity as to whether a 'ceasing event' under certain sections of the Migration Act can apply to a visa that has been granted but not in effect. By clarifying the circumstances in which a visa can cease to be in effect, this bill operates to provide certainty under the act.

From what I have described so far, this legislation appears to be run-of-the-mill, straightforward legislation. For two of the three amendments so far contained in the bill, that is more or less true. What I would like to draw attention to, however, is that the legislative framework contained in this bill by which visa holders may be required to undergo a 'revalidation check' at one or more points during the visa period has some significant problems.

On the face of it, with respect to the introduction of the 10-year visitor visa, a revalidation check would seem to be a sensible measure. Certainly a person who is granted such a visa at any point in time may experience a change in their personal circumstances over a 10-year period, meaning that, for whatever reason, it may be no longer appropriate that they are granted entry into Australia. In his speech, delivered on 19 October 2016, the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection made much of the fact that it is necessary to manage the risks associated with granting a visa for a period of 10 years. The minister went on to say:

This 'revalidation' will be used to ensure that visa holders continue to meet genuine temporary entrant, identity, health, character, passport, national security and other criteria over the 10-year period.
The minister also said the following:

... schedule 1 of the bill also introduces a 'public interest' revalidation check to manage specific, serious, or time-critical risks in relation to an identified cohort of visa holders. In such circumstances, issuing a personal ministerial revalidation requirement will immediately prevent specified visa holders from being able to travel to and enter Australia until they successfully revalidate their visa. This will ensure that we have up-to-date information on an individual's circumstances and we can effectively mitigate potential risks to the Australian public, while providing a streamlined mechanism to facilitate travel as appropriate.

What is not sensible—what is in fact of great concern, certainly to me and to the Labor Party—is that under this bill the visa revalidation check is not limited to the 10-year visitor visa category. Rather, the visa revalidation check could be applied to the holder of any Australian visa. Let me be clear: this legislation provides the minister for immigration the power to require a revalidation check of any category of visa, including protection visas, spouse or family visas, or permanent resident visas. Let me repeat that last point: permanent residents of this country may be required to undergo revalidation checks upon criteria to be determined by the minister.

The bill further provides the minister the power to determine that a specified class of person holding a visa of a prescribed kind must complete a revalidation check if the minister determines that it is in the public interest to do. To top this all off, this determination is not a disallowable instrument. The minister is only required to provide a statement to the parliament. There is no scope for parliamentary oversight.

On 10 November 2016 the bill was referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for inquiry and report. The committee tabled its report on 28 November 2016, with the majority report recommending that the bill be passed. The committee noted concerns from interest groups regarding the visa revalidation system and the oversight mechanism in place but was satisfied that the proposed measures were 'necessary and justified' and would 'lead to good outcomes for both the integrity of the Australian immigration system and the national economy'. In regard to the specific public interest revalidation checks, the committee encouraged the government to consider that the ministerial exercise of powers in relation to those checks would be subject to disallowance by the Senate.

The question of oversight of the exercise of power by this parliament is not an abstract consideration, in my submission. The power reserved to the minister is broad and discretionary. As the bill is presently drafted, there are effectively no limits upon the exercise of the power, to such an extent that a minister might, in my view, make a decision requiring revalidation which would otherwise offend, for example, the Racial Discrimination Act, in that a class of persons might be selected by a criterion that would normally be prohibited. There is an open question as to whether other legislation, in particular federal antidiscrimination laws, might operate to place limitations on the exercise of the minister's power. It might be the case that a ministerial determination that applied to a particular class of persons on the basis of race or some other objectionable criteria would be subject to legal challenge as breaching provisions under the RDA. It is not a stretch to suggest that recent criticism of executive orders issued by President Trump with respect to immigration controls affecting permanent residents—in that case residents holding so-called 'green cards'—could equally apply here, but in this case to an express power that is proposed to be granted to the minister by virtue of this legislation. In such a case we, as a parliament, would stand
condemned. Put yet another way, the exercise of this broad power may be unconstrained and not subject to review or oversight except through expensive legal challenge.

Selection of a class of individuals by reference to race or any other characteristic, upon public interest grounds, might be permitted. This should not be a power that is given to a minister except in specific, not general, circumstances and certainly not without oversight in this place or administrative review. Public interest grounds such as health, national security, compliance with the law and the like are not criteria that provide effective limitations upon the exercise of this power in a bona fide manner. Rather, a minister might see those public interest grounds as an opportunity to characterise or dress up the circumstances of the case to justify acting against a group of individuals, whether by reference to race, religion or other criteria.

Although the minister's explanatory memorandum states the revalidation check is intended to support the proposed introduction, on trial, of a specific new, longer validity visitor visa—that is, the Chinese 10-year visa—the bill itself does not link to any particular visa or visa type. As indicated earlier, it confers on the minister a broad discretion to prescribe in regulations any kind of visa as being subject to revalidation requirements. Regulations made to prescribe a visa for the purpose of the proposed subsections 96B(1) and 96E(1) will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny via the normal disallowance process; however, the minister's determination that a particular class of persons holding this prescribed visa type must complete a revalidation check would not be subject to the same disallowance process. As 'public interest' is not defined under the Migration Act, the proposed provision gives the minister the very broadest discretion.

A revalidation check is defined as a check as to whether there is any adverse information relating to a person who holds a visa. 'Adverse information' is not defined in the legislation. A visa holder will pass the revalidation check if the minister is satisfied there is no adverse information relating to the person or that it is reasonable to disregard any adverse information relating to the person. The bill does not specify the types of information a visa holder may be required to provide. When a revalidation check is required, a written notice must be given to the visa holder, specifying how that person is to complete the revalidation check. The explanatory memorandum notes:

Adverse information … is to be given its ordinary general meaning when considering whether the information relating to the person is adverse. Whether the information is adverse will also depend on the circumstances of each particular case and depend on the visa held by the person as a revalidation check will generally be directed to determining whether the person continues to meet the criteria for the visa that has been granted.

The Law Council of Australia has raised concerns with respect to the broad definition of adverse information currently used in the migration regulations in the context of employer sponsorship and nomination.

It noted that this covers a wide range of activities committed not only by the relevant person but also by an associated person, and does not relate to either the criteria for the grant of the visa or the matters which may expose a person to visa cancellation under the existing provisions of the Migration Act. Also, the ANU College of Law Migration Law Program pointed to the broad range of matters covered by the definition and queried whether a similar definition will be inserted into the migration regulations to apply in the context of the
revalidation checks. The explanatory memorandum to this bill does not provide clarification on this issue.

In summary, therefore, Labor is not prepared to pass this legislation unamended. We will be moving amendments to the legislation in the other place. It is not appropriate for us to simply pass this legislation. This parliament will stand condemned if we give this minister the power to act with the broadest discretion permitted by this legislation. Thank you.

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (11:16): I also rise to speak on the Migration Amendment (Visa Revalidation and Other Measures) Bill 2016.

There comes a moment in the life of every minister when they have to consider what sort of minister they want to be and what sort of minister they want to be known for being. This legislation, in part, represents such a moment. There is actually only one part of this legislation that is problematic. The remainder—the 10-year Chinese visitor visas and the expansion of SmartGate—are all supported by Labor. The problem is with the revalidation provisions.

Almost as concerning as the provisions through this section has been the minister's approach to how he wishes—or, rather, how he does not wish—to deal with them. The minister is digging in over what is essentially just bad or sloppy drafting. The ability that these provisions provide to require revalidation of course is not in any way limited. It provides the capacity for a minister to provide a notice to a broad class of persons, limited only to a visa class which is prescribed in regulation—again, something that can be set by the minister. This provides the executive with a huge range of powers for a class of persons—not any one individual visa holder—upon any reasonable suspicion or basis.

Critical to all of this, of course, is that a regulation or a provision that will allow a revalidation to occur to a class of persons is for a prescribed class of visa. While those regulations that prescribe the class of visa may be disallowed, the notices themselves issued by the minister cannot be disallowed. This means that there is absolutely no legislative oversight for this delegated responsibility to the executive and to the minister.

Of course, we have raised this issue with the minister. We have said, 'There are minor changes we need here. We need to make sure that if you're going to have this power, that it is something the parliament has some oversight over.' These are simple changes to be made and they would in no way, if made, come as any detriment to the regime that the government is proposing in the concept of revalidation—which is a sensible idea for a visa that will exist for 10 years.

But instead of making these sensible changes, which will not restrict government's capacity to make sure it can revalidate visas, the government is being stubborn. The government is being particularly stubborn, because there are some significant problems here. The problems have been well set out by many people and organisations in their submissions to the Senate committee that considered this legislation—in particular, the Law Council of Australia.

What is interesting is that the committee acknowledged these concerns were raised in the submissions that were made to it. Fundamentally, we have a dragnet power over classes of people which could be applied based on nationality, based on the passport they hold, based on their place of birth or based on their religion, with no capacity for a disallowance by the
parliament. The power is too broad, it is inappropriate and it fundamentally lacks any oversight by the legislature.

In addition, the constraining elements in the legislation, as drafted—the concept of the public interest and the concept of adverse information—are too broad, not defined and will virtually allow any action by the minister in respect of a visa that is being revalidated. Specifically, the Law Council of Australia noted:

- Bill appears to be neither necessary nor proportionate to its intended objective, in that it has the potential to apply to all classes of visas, not just the proposed longer validity visitor visa;
- Bill grants a broad range of powers to the Minister, with limited or no explanation as to their intended purpose;

And they could apply much more broadly than the way in which they are described in the explanatory memorandum and how the government has said that it wishes to use them.

When we legislate in this place for the Commonwealth of Australia we cannot just take for granted what a government says is the limited purpose of how it wishes to use a broad power. The parliament must always consider how the breadth of power that it is providing to the executive may or can be used. It needs to have consideration of the full breadth of the power that it is providing to the executive—especially when it is providing that power in a completely unfettered way, which is what is being proposed here by the government. The Law Council goes on to say:

- Bill provides capacity for the Executive to make legislative instruments that are not subject to disallowance by the Senate—

or the House—

potentially impacting upon all persons residing in Australia as temporary or permanent residents; …

if the minister so decided to apply these to those types of visas. The last point, that I think the Law Council makes well, is that there are already existing powers in the Migration Act that allow it to do many of the things that the government has stated the purpose of these provisions is for. As I said, Labor has said that it will be very happy to work with the government to find a way to ameliorate the larger issues that they have with this legislation, but they refuse to do that.

The question is: given these issues are easy to fix, why not fix them? This is a very important question, and the minister has to ask himself: how are provisions like this in keeping with Australian liberal democracy? Handing unfettered powers like this to the executive, to a minister, undermines the concept of the rule of law. It completely does away with the concept of why we have a parliament in the first place if we hand to a minister very broad powers that are in no way reviewable by the parliament itself.

Really, the question the minister has to ask himself is this: what sort of liberal party would do this? This is not even what real conservatives would do. This really does look more authoritarian than anything else. We have gone through centuries in the establishment and the working out of the concepts of parliamentary democracy and the rule of law, and one of the key aspects of that has always been the separation of the power of those who create the laws and those who put the laws in place.

Understandably, we delegate many capacities to legislate through legislative instruments to executives on a regular basis in a limited and constrained way. But this is not that. This is
handing an unfettered power that will not even be subject to disallowance by the parliament to a minister, to do something to a broad class of persons that is ill-defined—and is not only ill-defined but would in fact be, in most respects, almost completely unlimited, other than the requirement that it be limited to a class of visas to which this power applies. But then we find that the class of visas to which this applies is something that is set by the minister in delegated legislation.

This is not about the proper administration of our borders. This is not about national security. All of those issues can be fixed, and Labor is happy to work with the government to make sure that this legislation can work properly.

So, Minister Dutton, the question for you is: what sort of minister do you want to be known as? Labor always supports good legislation. Ten-year visas? That is agreed. SmartGates? That is agreed. Unfettered class revalidation? No deal. Fix the bill.

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (11:24): I am pleased to stand to speak on the Migration Amendment (Visa Revalidation and Other Measures) Bill 2016. Anybody who listened to the minister's second reading speech or read the explanatory memorandum on this bill would think we were talking about a bill which was actually quite noncontroversial. In fact, the Labor opposition supports the measures which were described in the second reading speech and which are outlined in the explanatory memorandum. Some of them were covered in Labor's policy before the election, and essentially we would support them as quite reasonable measures—if you took the minister's second reading speech at face value. And I am going to cover the things that he did cover at face value first, just to put in context the rest of this bill, which is actually quite good—in fact, quite important.

The bill introduces revalidation checks, according to the minister, because we have introduced ten-year visitor visas for China, with India coming on at the end of 2017. The ten-year visitor visas for China are incredibly important for tourism. It also talks about rapid approval of visas for Chinese tourists. This is all incredibly important and, as outlined in the second reading speech, well worth supporting for our tourism industry.

The bill also covers what we call SmartGates. That is about using technology to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of screening at airports. It involves improving technology, biometric capability, reducing manual processing, facial recognition and various biometric data collection. Again, this is a really important use of technology to improve our efficiency at airports.

If it were just those things, we would be having quite a different discussion now. But, unfortunately, there is a ticking time bomb in this legislation, and it is one that the minister chose not to raise and it is one not covered in the explanatory memorandum. It relates to the revalidation of visas. While the second reading speech talked about the Chinese 10-year tourist visas, the reality of this bill is that it allows the minister, without needing to bring it to this parliament and without any ability for this parliament to disallow it, to essentially require the revalidation of any class of visa. It is incredible overreach.

Whether this is sloppy drafting or intentional we are going to have to speculate. But the change in this bill does not only relate to 10-year Chinese tourist visas. It relates to any class of visa or any class of person. It allows the minister to decide that any group of people or any class of visa—permanent residence; marriage visas; spouse visas; you name it—or a group of
people, based on race, a country they have passed through, an age or anything, actually require revalidation under this bill.

If this were sloppy drafting, you would expect that the minister and the government would have responded to the concerns of third-party stakeholders. There were many criticisms of this bill in the various stages of its process, and the minister has ignored those. The Labor opposition approached the minister in November last year asking for some changes, and he did not respond until Monday. So if this was sloppy drafting, this is not the way you deal with it. Given that it was not mentioned in the second reading speech, that it was not mentioned in the explanatory memorandum, that there has been a public presentation of a bill which is quite narrow in its focus, and that, when the extent and breadth of it is exposed, they simply proceed as if it was their intention all along, one could be excused for believing that this was actually an intentional opening up of a minister's powers to an extraordinary level—a level which we have never seen in Australia.

Australia is a country with a non-discriminatory immigration program. We are proud of it. We have a multicultural community. It is unimaginable that our community would accept unfettered power by a minister—any minister, for that matter—to decide, on a whim, that he would require an entire class of people or visas to be revalidated. It is even worse when you consider that that minister is Minister Dutton.

Regardless of which minister it is, no minister should want this power. This is a power that exceeds the usual powers of a minister and the powers that a minister should require. This is not something that we do in Australia. But you are talking about Minister Dutton, who has stood in this place and in others and lumped whole groups of people together as bad Australians, as a mistake that Australia made in letting this group or that group into the country—as a mistake we made, literally, in letting people into this country. Some of the people who are most offended by those statements live in my electorate. I know them, and I assure you it was not a mistake. They are fine people. Here we have a minister who will make those kinds of statements now seeking for himself the power to act on the basis of those statements—the power to require entire groups of people or classes of visas to be revalidated—without the possibility for those changes to be disallowable in the Senate. As I said, there are no limits to the minister's power under these amendments in this bill.

We should all be concerned with the security of Australians. If the minister wishes to expand his powers, he should do so openly and with real consultation. That has not happened here. We on this side of the House are asking that those measures be removed and that we have a real debate and discussion about them, rather than what appears to have happened, which was to try and slide these extreme changes through under the guise of a different meaning altogether.

I state again—because there may be people out there who are not familiar with the way that parliament works—that second reading speeches and memorandums of understanding are actually part of the legal document. They are part of the interpretation that courts make, for example, when they look at a bill. They are written by the departments, rather than ministerial staff, and they form part of the way that the country understands the interpretation of a bill. For a minister to stand in this House and pretend that this bill is simply about 10-year Chinese visitors visas is quite extraordinary. If it were just sloppy drafting, we would have expected it to be changed by now. If it were sloppy drafting, you would expect the minister, the
government and the department to have been running around for the last few months trying to fix it, and yet we have not. We have seen them stand by their guns and continue to pursue a line of giving the minister powers that no reasonable parliament would give.

I think it is pretty clear, from the speakers that have spoken on our side, how we feel about this and what we expect the government to do on this. We expect them to be up-front with the Australian people. If they do want to dramatically expand the minister's powers, they should say so openly and have the debate and not go about trying to hide it in this way. But they do what they do. This is the kind of behaviour we have come to expect from Minister Dutton. This is an extension of it, and we should, as a nation, resist the giving of extraordinary powers of this kind to any minister at all. I totally reject this increase in powers.

As I said, it is a shame, because the rest of the bill is actually quite good. From my Chinese community and my Indian community that would be open to the 10-year visas at the end of 2017, I know that that part of this bill is actually really good. It is good for my community. I hope this government can find a way to ensure that this parliament is treated in a way that allows us to support that section of the bill without the expansion of the minister's powers in this way.

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (11:34): I am pleased to rise to speak today on the Migration Amendment (Visa Revalidation and Other Measures) Bill 2016. I would like to respond to comments made by the member for Griffith during this debate. The member for Griffith, at the start of her speech, referred to a Trump-style Muslim ban and then, throughout her contribution to this debate, criticised that the minister here in Australia could have similar Trump-style powers. Now, this is a very important point. I would like to completely rebut what the member for Griffith said and show it as completely false.

Firstly, the change that the US have made to their visa policy is not a ban; it is a 90-day suspension. It is not a Muslim ban; it applies to seven countries only. Those country are Iraq, Iran, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan and Libya. By any stretch of the imagination, those countries are anything but democracies. They are countries that have significant issues with security in their nations and significant issues with terrorism being inflicted upon their own people in those countries. It only applies to those seven countries. The Islamic world is estimated at around about 1.6 billion people around the world. If you look at all the countries that are not affected by this ban—countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and Saudi Arabia, and I could go on and on—88 per cent of people of Islamic faith are not affected by the temporary suspension that was made to the US visa policy. Now, this is a very important point. I would like to completely rebut what the member for Griffith said and show it as completely false.

Firstly, the change that the US have made to their visa policy is not a ban; it is a 90-day suspension. It is not a Muslim ban; it applies to seven countries only. Those country are Iraq, Iran, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan and Libya. By any stretch of the imagination, those countries are anything but democracies. They are countries that have significant issues with security in their nations and significant issues with terrorism being inflicted upon their own people in those countries. It only applies to those seven countries. The Islamic world is estimated at around about 1.6 billion people around the world. If you look at all the countries that are not affected by this ban—countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and Saudi Arabia, and I could go on and on—88 per cent of people of Islamic faith are not affected by the temporary suspension that was made to the US visa policy. Now, I am not here to defend that policy or say whether it is right or wrong. What I am here to do is point out that to call it a Muslim ban, as the member for Griffith did at the dispatch box, is misleading and false. It is not fit that an Australian member of parliament come into this chamber and make such misleading statements. Another reason the claim that it is a Muslim ban is false is that people in Iraq, whether they are Christians, Mandaeans or whatever religion they are, may be affected by the temporary suspension but someone of the Islamic faith from Indonesia, Egypt, Pakistan or Nigeria will not be affected. When a person of the Mandaean faith can be affected by the ban while a person of the Islamic faith cannot be affected, how can it possibly be called a Muslim ban?

This is very dangerous. This description, claiming that this is something that could be done here in Australia, causes division and hatred and is based on a falsehood. I say: shame on the
member for Griffith. I invite her to come back into this chamber, correct the record, apologise to this House and apologise to the nation. We have a difficult enough situation in the world at the moment with terrorism. We do not need members of the Australian parliament making false statements in this House that only cause more division and more tension.

The legislation grants someone from China a 10-year visa to come to Australia, and this is something that we should all welcome very much. We have seen the growth of China in our lifetimes. Hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of poverty into the middle class, with the ability to travel. We should never forget how that rise out of poverty occurred. It occurred not through aid or special measures; it occurred simply because the Chinese government, after years of going down the communist track of collectivisation of industry and allowing government to control everything, saw the light and realised it would be best for their economy to open it up to market forces and allow people to own property. We have seen in our lifetimes the greatest uplift of people out of poverty probably in human history. That is a great bonus for our country. There are hundreds of millions of people in China now who represent a market that we can attract to become tourists to Australia, to create more jobs and more wealth in this country. We should never forget how that rise out of poverty occurred.

We have so many wonderful tourist attractions for people to see in this country. As an example of some of the wonderful tourist attractions that we have in this country, over the recent Christmas break I had the opportunity to take my small kayak out onto Port Hacking.

Mr Hunt: Ah!

Mr CRAIG KELLY: Yes, I see the minister at the table. I actually defeated him once in a kayak race, if I remember correctly—but I digress. Port Hacking is in Sydney's southern waterways. The water there was absolutely pristine. You could see the sandy bottom two to three metres down and you could see the fish. This is all within a short distance of Sydney's CBD. This is a tourist attraction that I have in my electorate for people from China. We also have Garie Beach, a most magnificent place within the Royal National Park. Every weekend, so many Chinese tourists come to experience Garie Beach and visit the Figure 8 rock pools further south.

It is also important, in this bill, not only that we have the 10-year visa period but that the minister has the ability to make some of the changes that are needed. If a visa needs to be cancelled or a revalidation required, in this day and age the minister, surely, must have this discretion. For members of the Labor Party to go on about how terrible this is and to falsely link it to what the member for Griffith described as a Muslim ban is a disgrace to this parliament. We need to do everything we can to stop the false division that we see. Unfortunately, the member for Griffith failed in that task today.

The other thing that we hope to see in years to come is for this 10-year visa to be extended to many other countries. I would like to see in years to come this extended to many other countries that we deal with, because tourism is such an important sector of the economy. If we look at where our strengths will be in this economy in years to come, where will we be in 10 or 15 years time if we do not fix our corporate tax rate? Where will we be in 10 or 15 years time if our electricity costs are two and three times those of our major competitors? What
industries will we have that will drive the prosperity of this nation in years to come? If you look at our industries, clearly our tourism industry is one of the most important that we have because it creates more opportunities for hotel construction, which creates jobs for all the tradesmen—the builders, carpenters, electricians, plumbers and landscapers—constructing tourism, not to mention our food suppliers. Every time a Chinese tourist or other overseas tourist comes to this country, they need to be fed. We have some of the best produce and some of the best wines that they can sample when they come here. This all increases the demand for the supply of goods from Australia and, therefore, increases employment opportunities and wealth creation opportunities for this country.

I hope that at the conclusion of this debate, or sometime during the day, the member for Griffith reconsiders her words and that she considers the potential division she created by her false labelling of the changes in the US visa system. I hope she comes back in here and says that she may have misspoken and corrects the record, because we cannot allow this to happen in the Australian parliament. It is one thing for some journalistic rags to make these false statements; it is completely another thing for elected members of the Australian House of Representatives to come into this parliament and say such things. I hope the member for Griffith reconsiders her approach to this and takes the opportunity that this parliament provides to come back into this parliament and correct the record. With that, I will conclude my speech by saying that I commend this bill to the House.

Mr KHALIL (Wills) (11:45): I rise to speak to the Migration Amendment (Visa Revalidation and Other Measures) Bill 2016 in its second reading and to the objectives of the bill. As many speakers have pointed out, the three main objectives contained in the bill are (1) to introduce a new revalidation check framework for visas, including a 10-year visitor visa; (2) to clarify when a visa ceases to be in effect under the Migration Act; and (3) to enable the use of contactless SmartGate technology during an immigration clearance.

In his second reading speech, the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection noted, quite explicitly, that this bill would support the introduction of a proposed 10-year validity visa. Of course, the implementation of this visa was induced by the outcomes of the Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia. The white paper highlighted the need for the Australian government to target the fastest-growing tourism markets, being China and India. It further noted that the electronic lodgement of visitor visa applications, a fast-track visa approval scheme and the trial of a 10-year validity visa would promote and boost tourism from those key regions. Clearly, the importance of tourism from these regions, especially in Asia, is something that is well understood and supported by Labor.

Indeed, it is Labor policy that we will restore tourism to the heart of Australia's economic narrative, recognising its importance as a super-growth sector for local jobs and the economy. That is why Labor announced, prior to the last election, that we would undertake an audit of Australia's tourist visa offerings for each of our main target markets and undertake an assessment of how those offerings compare to our major competitors. The tourist visa audit mandated by our election platform proposed to assess the competitiveness of our visa fees, visa processing arrangements and the ease of interaction with the Australian border.

With a specific view to the growing Chinese market, Labor proposed to (1) review the cost of the 10-year multiple entry visa so that it is competitive with that offered to Chinese citizens
visiting the US and the EU; (2) introduce an online visa application in both English and Mandarin which can be submitted online at any time; and (3) reduce the processing time for visas submitted online to within 48 hours. These policy measures are aimed to help to arrest and reverse the decline in the share of the Chinese tourist market, which has been stagnant since 2004 as a proportion of the total Chinese market.

A report by Tourism Australia notes that, in 2015, visitors from China generated $8.3 billion in total expenditure. In response to the white paper recommendations, the first stage of the 10-year visa pilot for visitors from China commenced on 12 December 2016. I would note, for the record, the fact is that this pilot program has not occurred as part of a reciprocal arrangement with China.

The subsections under the proposed section 96 in this bill introduce a mechanism that would require visa holders to undergo revalidation at various points throughout the term of the visa in order to re-establish their visa. The explanatory memorandum notes that: a continuous updating of biographical, contact and passport information would be necessary in the context of extended grant periods. It also notes that this legislative framework enables the management of risks to the Australian public. However, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights has raised concerns that the powers contained in the bill are not proportionate to this objective. While the powers will purportedly only be used in the course of addressing objective assessments of risk, there is nothing that constrains the powers arrogated to the minister under schedule 1 of this bill.

In a number of submissions that were received by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, which many of the previous speakers have alluded to and quoted from, it has been recognised that these powers can be used at large against any person who holds a visa of a 'prescribed kind' entirely at the discretion of the minister. Of course, the stakeholders who have provided submissions include the Law Council of Australia, the Migration Council of Australia, the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, the University of New South Wales, and the ANU's College of Migration Law.

The real issue we have been discussing with concern is section 96E and its broad scope that would allow the minister discretion to seek revalidation of visas for a whole class of persons. As the member for Blair said earlier in this debate, Labor is concerned with the unintended consequences of schedule 1 of the bill.

The revalidation framework is an uncommon measure for a country to enshrine in legislation. No other nations who have introduced 10-year visas for Chinese nationals have used similar provisions as of the current time except one, and that is the United States. From November 2016, the United States Department of Homeland Security will require all holders of 10-year business or tourism visas to periodically update the information contained in their visa application. However, even under US jurisdiction, the United States policy is qualified within the stated purpose of the regime.

Natural justice comprises a common-law principle dictating that a decision-maker must provide the opportunity for a person whose rights, interests or legitimate expectations are affected by a decision to understand the basis for the decision and to be heard. The restraint that this bill proposes to place on certain basic rights of appeal gives rise to concerns that the amended Migration Act would severely limit natural justice being afforded to those people that it will impact.
Schedule 1 of the bill provides that, where the minister thinks it is in the public interest, the minister may issue a legislative instrument requiring a specified class of person holding a visa of a prescribed kind to complete a revalidation check. However, I note, as other speakers in this debate have noted, 'public interest' is not defined under the act, and the bill does not seek to create any definition that a public interest test would need to abide by. In common terms, the powers provided within this bill go much further than the stated objective requirements. This bill would provide the minister with extremely broad discretion to potentially revalidate any type of visa for any type or class of person. This could, in theory, be used to revalidate visas for people of one nationality or from one geographic region, or to target people of one ethnic or religious group, albeit indirectly. The instrument is non-disallowable, meaning that the minister merely has to make a statement to parliament in order to undergo revalidation of certain classes of visa holders.

Labor has sought to work constructively with the government to amend this bill. As the member for Blair stated earlier, Labor reached out in good faith to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection in November last year to request amendments to the bill. It is somewhat unbelievable that the request was ignored until just this week, when the member for Blair received a flat refusal to support parliamentary oversight of the minister's non-compellable power to determine specified classes of people to revalidate their visa.

In accordance with part 3 of the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011, the government has provided advice that it considers the bill, in its current form, is compatible with Australia's human rights obligations. However, it is important to note that, in its ninth report of 2016, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights raised the matter of the broad ministerial powers. The committee's report stated:

As the power to prescribe the type of visa is unlimited, it appears that it could enable the minister to prescribe any type of visa … This measure therefore has the potential to engage a number of human rights, including Australia's non-refoulement obligations, the right to an effective remedy, the right to liberty and the right to protection of the family.

The Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, who is here in the House, knows that I am on the record with many criticisms of some of the rhetoric that has been espoused by him in his portfolio responsibilities, and I have made the argument—it is part of our democratic debate—that I believe that he has been irresponsible and somewhat divisive in his conflation of immigration policy and national security. I also note and have said publicly that I think that there has been a protracted campaign of dog-whistle type politics undertaken in the media.

So, clearly, I am a critic of the minister and his attitude towards multiculturalism and the way that it influences immigration policy. But this debate is not where I think we should be discussing those types of criticisms, because, regardless of who is Minister for Immigration and Border Protection—whether it is Minister Dutton or another minister on either side of politics—the principle of using the discretionary powers given to the minister in this bill should be proportionate and commensurate with the stated policy objectives. This is a principle worth defending. In this case, we believe, that those powers are not proportionate and not commensurate with the stated policy objectives.

It is important for us as members of parliament to sustain and protect the checks and balances in our democratic system, the separation of powers and, specifically, the checks on executive power, which are critically important. And, in this instance, as I have said, we do
not believe that these broad discretionary powers are proportionate to the more narrow objective of revalidating long-term tourism or business visas. In its current scope, it would permit the closure of a whole class of persons across many different visa classes, and this executive decision could be based on race, religion or country of origin. We believe that this is unnecessary executive overreach.

An important point to make here is that we all know that the minister already has a range of instruments under the Migration Act that allow the minister to cancel visas if there is any bona fide concern for the public interest or national security. In particular, section 501 already allows the minister to cancel a visa on character grounds; section 109 allows the minister to cancel a visa if the holder has provided incorrect information on their application or on their passenger card; section 116 allows the minister broad circumstances to cancel a visa where the minister is satisfied the decision to grant the visa was based on a fact or circumstance which no longer exists; section 134B allows the minister to undertake an emergency cancellation of a visa on security grounds through an ASIO assessment; section 140 provides that, if a visa is cancelled under certain sections, a visa held by that person’s family member or members may also be cancelled.

There is a stark contrast between Labor, we on this side of the House, and the coalition government that could not be more evident. I commend and concur with the comments our leader, Bill Shorten, made only last week, when he said:

Australia has had a non-discriminatory immigration policy for more than four decades. It’s made us stronger.
We don’t just tolerate diversity, we embrace it. We are the home of the fair go for all. All races, all faiths, all cultures.
And I wholeheartedly concur with the member for Blair when he said in this place that Labor will speak out against legislation that seeks to target people from certain regions, because Labor has never and will never agree to discriminate against people on the basis of their race, religion or country of origin—which this bill gives the potential for a current minister or a future minister to do.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned issues with the powers proposed by schedule 1 of the bill, I do emphasise that all of the other measures contained in this bill are consistent with Labor policy. Indeed, they are very much Labor policy, as I have outlined. We support the implementation of contactless automated technology for immigration clearance—referred to as SmartGates. This technology is estimated to achieve substantial savings to the Commonwealth, by reducing manual processing and creating a fast, seamless self-processing experience for up to 90 per cent of people entering Australia. The savings to be found in reducing compliance costs are estimated to be almost $33 million per annum.

As previously referenced, Labor also recognises the significant importance of promoting tourism from certain key global regions. I am proud of Labor’s record in government of investing in the infrastructure and legislative framework to deliver long-term growth in tourism. We have always ensured that tourism receives representation at the highest levels of government, sending a message around the cabinet table and around the world that tourism matters. We of course support returning tourism to the centre of government. Amongst our comprehensive suite of tourism policies, we have clearly pledged support for a 10-year multiple entry visa in order to remain competitive in the global tourism market and we
support SmartGates to facilitate a better, faster and cheaper experience for people arriving at our border. So I do not want our isolated criticisms of part of this bill to reflect on those far more sensible elements of the bill before the House which we support.

But, while the bill does seek to make some sensible changes to the Migration Act, we must ask what has driven this government overreach beyond the basic objectives of the bill and to provide powers which have raised these concerns—concerns that were articulated by the Law Council of Australia in their submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, where they said:

The Law Council queries whether the Bill is necessary, justified and proportionate to achieving a legitimate purpose.

After full consideration of all the current circumstances, I stand with my Labor colleagues on this side of the House to oppose the bill in its current form. And I echo the member for Blair’s call to the government to work with Labor in a sensible, bipartisan fashion to create a visa revalidation framework that is fair.

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (11:59): I want to say thank you to all of those members who have contributed to this debate. I was here for the contribution by the member for Hughes, who made a fine contribution. I thank him very much for his strong stance on these important matters.

The amendments of schedule 1 of the Migration Amendment (Visa Revalidation and Other Measures) Bill 2016 will help Australia’s international tourism sector by establishing a visa revalidation framework within the Migration Act. This framework will underpin the introduction of a long-term visitor visa for Australia, which will have a validity period of 10 years and will allow for entry and stay for up to three months. This new long-term visa will reduce red tape and streamline repeat visits to Australia by genuine tourists and businesspeople.

The framework supports this long-term visa by providing a mechanism which will enable a longer validity visa to be periodically assessed to ensure they continue to meet the requirements for holding their visa. This includes existing health, character, security and other requirements for entry to Australia. Allowing for the periodic review of these requirements is necessary to ensure that both the integrity of the visitor visa framework and public confidence in the visitor visa program are maintained.

I need to correct some misinformation being peddled by those opposite—that the visa revalidation framework will apply to everyone. This is simply incorrect. Visa revalidation will only apply to those visa classes prescribed in the regulations, which are disallowable by this parliament. The government has been very clear that the only visa being prescribed will be the subclass 600 visa, which will enable a 10-year visitor visa trial for Chinese nationals.

Additionally, the bill introduces a ministerial power to manage specific, serious or time-critical risks in relation to an identified cohort of visa holders. This power will enable the conduct of public interest revalidation checks for prescribed visa holders. This provision will ensure potential risks to the Australian public are able to be effectively managed and effectively mitigated.

It is intended that this power be exercised only in exceptional circumstances necessitating an immediate response where it would be in the public interest to do so. For example, the
power would be available in situations where there has been an assessment of increased risk to the Australian community due to a significant health or national security incident overseas. Without this power, the government would have limited scope to manage risks associated with the travel to Australia of large cohorts of travellers who have a valid long-term visa in effect.

Noting that the foreseeable circumstances in which a public interest revalidation would be required are of a time-critical nature, it is appropriate that a legislative instrument related to this power not be disallowable. To make the public interest revalidation a disallowable instrument would introduce uncertainty and weaken the effectiveness of the measure in managing the potential risk to our country. The government has ensured that sufficient parliamentary oversight of public interest revalidation exists through a legislative provision which requires the minister to table a statement in a house of parliament explaining the minister’s reasons for making the determination. It is important to note that the government has drafted these provisions consistently with other public interest provisions already contained within the Migration Act, which are also non-disallowable.

The regrettable part is that this is a complete overreaction and an obvious failed political stunt by Labor. In November last year, Labor senators sat on an inquiry into this bill that recommended that the bill be passed. Labor had only ever raised one small technical issue with the bill—that is, whether or not clause 96E was disallowable, a request which the government opposed as it would weaken the effectiveness of the provision.

All of a sudden, yesterday, the shadow minister raised wide-ranging issues and has claimed on that basis that they are unable to support the entire visa revalidation framework. This is in direct contrast to a conversation that he and I had on Sunday night where he expressed in no uncertain terms that he had no problem at all with this bill— that is, whether or not clause 96E was disallowable, a request which the government opposed as it would weaken the effectiveness of the provision.

In schedule 2, a further amendment in this bill will ensure that if a person holds a visa that is not in effect and a ceasing event applies to the visa, such as the cancellation of the visa, the visa period for that visa will in most circumstances end and the person will no longer hold the visa. This will provide certainty as to when a person is no longer the holder of a visa and supports the amendments establishing the visa revalidation framework.
Additionally, schedule 3 in this bill enables the use of leading edge contactless technology in automated immigration clearance. A traveller will be able to self-process through SmartGates without having to present their passport. The live facial image of the traveller at the SmartGate will be compared with a verified image from departmental holdings to confirm the traveller’s identity. This will reduce the time it will take for a traveller to self-process through a SmartGate. In addition to faster processing, this measure delivers stronger security at our border. Implementing this technology also expands the self-processing option to a greater number of travellers.

In summary, this bill deserves support by all members in this chamber.

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

The House divided. [12:11]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .................... 76
Noes .................... 69
Majority................ 7

AYES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Banks, J
Broad, AJ
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR (teller)
Colesman, DB
Crewther, CJ
Dutton, PC
Evans, TM
Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hartsuyker, L
Henderson, SM
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Katter, RC
Kelly, C
Landry, ML
Lee, J
Littleproud, D
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O’Brien, LS
O’Dowd, KD
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Price, ML
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharkie, RCC
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Turnbull, MB

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bishop, JI
Broadbent, RE
Chester, D
Ciobo, SM
Coulton, M
Drum, DK
Entsch, WG
Falinski, J
Flint, NJ
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hastie, AW
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Joyce, BT
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Laudy, C
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
McVeigh, JJ
Morton, B
O’Brien, T
O’Dwyer, KM
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Pyne, CM
Robert, SR
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Tudge, AE
Van Manen, AJ
AYES
Vasta, RX
Wicks, LE
Wilson, TR
Wyatt, KG

Wallace, AB
Wilson, RJ
Wood, JP
Zimmerman, T

NOES
Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burke, AS
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Chesters, LM
Claydon, SC
Conroy, PM
Dick, MD
Elliot, MJ
Feeney, D
Freelander, MR
Giles, AJ
Hammond, TJ
Hayes, CP
Husar, E
Jones, SP
Kelly, MJ
Khalil, P
King, MMH
Leigh, AK
Marles, RD
McGowan, C
Mitchell, RG
O’Connor, BPJ
Owens, JA
Plibersek, TJ
Ryan, JC (teller)
Snowdon, WE
Swan, WM
Templeman, SR
Vanvakinou, M
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

Aly, A
Bird, SL
Brodmann, G
Burney, LJ
Butler, TM
Champion, ND
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Danby, M
Dreyfus, MA
Ellis, KM
Fitzgibbon, JA
Georganas, S
Gosling, LJ
Hart, RA
Hill, JC
Husie, EN
Keay, JT
Keogh, MJ
King, CF
Lamb, S
Macklin, JL
McBride, EM
Mitchell, BK
Neumann, SK
O’Neil, CE
Perrett, GD (teller)
Rishworth, AL
Shorten, WR
Stanley, AM
Swanson, MJ
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Watts, TG
Wilson, JH

Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (12:16): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Defence Industry

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (12:17): by leave—I rise before the House today as the first Minister for Defence Industry, to provide an overview and to update the House on the Turnbull government's historic investment of $195 billion over the next decade in Australia's defence capability.

Particularly, I would like to outline how this government is ensuring that Australian industry can grow and continue to play a vital role in our defence future.

Defence industry is our national endeavour. Our mission is simple: to guarantee our national security and ensure that Australia can play its part in protecting peace in our own region, in Asia, in the Pacific and in the Indian Ocean; and to use the defence dollar to drive local jobs growth and a high-technology, advanced manufacturing future for Australia. A vibrant, thriving and growing defence industry sector does not just buttress our nation's defence; it also provides and supports jobs for thousands of Australians. As the defence industry grows, new jobs will be created in the economy, from naval architects and electrical engineers to plumbers, construction workers, shop assistants and labourers.

A strong Australian defence industry is key to our economic prosperity, growing and using the skills and innovation that characterise our defence industries to work to form the basis of the smart, high-tech advanced manufacturing of the 21st century that the Prime Minister so often talks about.

As he said last year, 'What we are doing in defence industry is completely transformational.' He said, 'Australia is entering the single biggest period of defence construction in its history.'

We recognise the creative, innovative and agile companies in Australia who engage with our various defence projects either directly or indirectly.

Since re-election in July 2016, this government has hit the ground running.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr PYNE: Thank you. I thank my colleagues for their support.

Land 400 downselect

Within days of taking the portfolio, BAE Systems Australia and Rheinmetall were shortlisted to compete for the Land 400 Phase 2 project. This iconic project will acquire 225 combat reconnaissance vehicles and help us win the land battle. The total acquisition cost is up to $5 billion.

In August the Commonwealth signed contracts with the two short-listed tenderers to take part in the risk mitigation activity. The test and evaluation program is now underway and it will see vehicles offered by the two companies undergo blast and ballistic testing to make sure they are good enough to transport our military personnel.

Hawkei
Thales is building the Hawkei, a next-generation protected vehicle, which represents an entirely new capability for the Army, providing a similar level of protection as the Bushmaster at about half the weight.

Late last year the project reached a major milestone—the handover to Defence of the first of 10 vehicles to roll off Thales’s production line in Bendigo.

These pilot Hawkei vehicles pave the way for full-rate production in 2018 and represent a triumph of both defence capability and the country’s burgeoning defence industry.

Hawkei production will involve around 170 jobs in the Bendigo region alone.

It is expected approximately 60 new jobs will be created in Thales’s supply chain.

The Turnbull government is delivering after the $1.3 billion contract was signed with Thales in October 2015 to produce 1,100 Hawkei vehicles and more than 1,000 companion trailers.

**Land Forces conference**

I have made visiting key defence industry hubs a priority since taking on this role.

I have already visited Henderson, Brisbane, Newcastle, Bendigo and Melbourne, and plan to visit other locations including Burnie and Bankstown. In August, I was hosted in Cairns by my good friend the member for Leichhardt—who is never short of coming forward asking for defence projects in his electorate—who took me to see the shipbuilding facilities at Norship Marine and Tropical Reef Shipyard.

It is a highly optimistic sector at the moment, and this was particularly clear at the Land Forces conference held in Adelaide in early September.

This conference was by far the largest that they have ever held.

It brought together 13,500 military leaders from 22 different armies and innovative defence companies representing 23 countries, and they had over 500 industry exhibitors who showcased their world-class technology.

It was exciting to see so many Australian companies connecting with defence.

It was also good to see the member for Corangamite there, who is interested in advocating for jobs in her electorate, particularly in the Land 400 space.

**Future submarine project**

Acting on the findings of the 2016 Defence white paper the Turnbull government has determined that Australia needs 12 regionally superior submarines with a high degree of interoperability with the United States—craft that will provide our nation with an effective deterrent and an ability to play an active part in antisubmarine warfare operations in our region. In September we signed the first contract ahead of schedule with DCNS to mobilise the resources needed to develop our regionally superior Future Submarine and commence its design. At the same time we announced Lockheed Martin Australia as the combat system integrator—again, ahead of schedule.

On 20 December 2016, the intergovernmental agreement between France and Australia was signed, which defines the principles, the framework and initial means of support and cooperation between the two governments—again, ahead of schedule. As a crucial part of the process we have already commenced work to maximise the opportunity for Australian
industrial involvement in the project and early planning for the construction of the submarines here in Australia.

**Future frigates and offshore patrol vessels**

The government has also announced plans to build nine anti-submarine warfare frigates. It is set to start construction in Adelaide by 2020, which will cost $35 billion. The future frigate and offshore patrol vessel programs will directly create over 2,500 jobs for Australians and will indirectly support the jobs of many thousands more. The $3 billion to $4 billion program to construct 12 offshore patrol vessels will begin in Adelaide in 2018 and then transition to Henderson in Western Australia.

The OPV project remains on track, with the request for tender being released on 30 November 2016. This will see the designers team up with Australian shipbuilders to try and win this iconic project. We are delivering on our commitment—spending more money locally where possible, boosting growth, creating jobs and giving our military the best equipment we can.

**Workshops**

We are committed to giving Australian companies as much opportunity as possible to be part of these future defence projects. Over the past few months and for many more months to come, local companies are being given the chance to find out more about the opportunities available during a series of Land 400, future frigates and offshore patrol vessel workshops being held nationwide, including in the member for Swan's electorate. He in fact opened that on 2 November. Thousands of Australian small and medium-sized enterprises have registered to participate in the Defence facilitated showcase workshops—a chance for Australian suppliers to get their slice of a very big pie. It is critical that we provide Australian companies with opportunities to enter this supply chain.

**Naval shipbuilding plan**

The Turnbull government will release a naval shipbuilding plan imminently that brings together all of the elements of the government's continuous naval shipbuilding strategy—the first in Australia's history. The government's unprecedented commitment to continuous naval shipbuilding will support the strategic and capability needs of Defence; provide a viable, permanent shipbuilding industry; provide certainty for the shipbuilding workforce; deliver value for money; build commercial confidence; and promote the use of global best practice. Defence is conducting a strategic review of the workforce, skills and infrastructure needs at Osborne and at Henderson to inform the naval shipbuilding plan's development.

The government is committed to maximising Australian industry involvement in the naval construction programs for future submarines, future frigates and offshore patrol vessels. I look forward to revisiting Austal's shipyard at Henderson in the near future with the member for Canning to see the rollout of Australian defence capability. I also acknowledge that the member for Canning, as a former serviceman and probably the most recent serviceman in the parliament, has a deep interest in defence industry opportunities for his region and for his constituents. He is not here. Never mind.

**Mr Howarth:** He's working hard.

**Mr PYNE:** He is a very good fellow.
Mr Howarth: I will pass on your comments.

Mr PYNE: Please do.

ASC separation
To that end, in mid-October the government also announced the structural separation of ASC into three entities. These three new companies will support the key capabilities of shipbuilding, submarine sustainment, and infrastructure. The separation of ASC will deliver a more flexible approach to managing the investment required in shipbuilding infrastructure to support the government's historic continuous shipbuilding program. The new submarine sustainment and shipbuilding companies will continue ASC's important role in the sustainment of the Collins class submarines and the finalisation of the air warfare destroyers respectively.

The creation of these three new companies follows a strategic review of the ASC, which was conducted in 2015. Work has already begun on the separation of ASC into the three new companies, with full separation expected to be completed by June 2017.

International visits
In my first international visit as the Minister for Defence Industry, I visited the United States and the United Arab Emirates. I met with key defence officials in Dubai to highlight the capacity and capabilities of our defence companies. In the US I had the pleasure of meeting with the key defence companies operating in Australia as well as Pentagon officials, including the then US Secretary of Defense, Ashton Carter, to sell the merits of Australian defence industry.

The recent US election has seen a President elected who during the campaign committed to a massive expansion of around half a trillion US dollars to their defence budget. This result could bring with it an expansion of opportunities for Australian defence companies.

Joint Strike Fighter maintenance and sustainment hub
Following my visit to the US, I was pleased to announce on 7 November that Australia had been successful in the first round of assignments for work maintaining the componentry of the global fleet of Joint Strike Fighters. Successful companies include HI Fraser, which is located in the member for Mackellar's electorate, and Rockwell Collins Australia, which is located in the member for North Sydney's electorate.

The award of this contract acknowledges that Australia has the skills base and capacity to take on one of the most technically complex and expensive defence projects ever produced, as a maintenance and sustainment hub for the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft operating in the Asia-Pacific. This places Australia as the regional hub for maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade for the Joint Strike Fighter fleet, potentially bringing hundreds of millions of dollars and supporting hundreds of Australian jobs for decades to come.

Just this morning I had a phone call from the newly appointed Secretary of Defense, James Mattis. In the call I congratulated Secretary Mattis on his recent appointment and noted his keen interest and personal history working with Australia. I expressed my enthusiasm and strong desire to work closely on our shared defence interests as a key ally of the United States. Secretary Mattis reiterated his strong support for the Joint Strike Fighter program as a key strategic capability for the United States and allies across the globe.
We talked about the fact that the price for the lot 10 of the Joint Strike Fighter has been recently announced and has dropped below $100 million for the first time. For Australia this is hugely significant and represents a 25 per cent reduction from the price of the fighter in 2014, showing the program is on track in terms of delivery and efficiency.

**Poseidon aircraft**

On 16 November, I, along with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, took delivery of the first of 12 P-8A Poseidon aircraft. The Poseidon is at the cutting edge of military technology. These aircraft will support a full range of tasks, including antisurface and antish submarine warfare; maritime and overland intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; electronic support; as well as providing a search and rescue capability. Operated from RAAF base at Edinburgh, this will create more than 35 highly skilled jobs in South Australia.

**Centre for Defence Industry Capability (CDIC)**

The government is also committed to working with industry to build our innovation potential and ensure Defence maximises its opportunities to develop cutting-edge technologies. In December last year I opened the Centre for Defence Industry Capability, which has been funded at $230 million over the decade, a close collaboration between the private sector, Defence and AusIndustry. It is headquartered in Adelaide. The CDIC is designed to have a national reach to ensure flexible access for industry across Australia.

At the same time I opened the Defence Innovation Hub. The new $640 million innovation hub will bring together Defence, industry, academia and research institutions to collaborate on innovative, creative and cutting-edge technologies that can deliver better Defence outcomes.

We will also invest $730 million over the next decade in the Next Generation Technologies Fund (NGTF). The NGTF will provide opportunities to better position Defence to respond to future strategic challenges and develop the next generation game-changing technologies and capabilities to enhance national security into the future. I will be making more announcements about this new funding in early 2017.

**Closing**

As you can see, we are getting on with the job. This government has put the defence of our nation and the building of our defence capability at the very centre of our national policy agenda. We are determined to use the Defence dollar—$195 billion over the next decade—in building capability, to assist in transforming our economy, driving and growing local jobs.

In spending this it is critical that we get maximum value for money, that we learn from the mistakes of the past. Projects like the Air Warfare Destroyer, which was taken back from the brink by this government, must not be allowed to happen again. In the future we will use world's best-practice manufacturing and shipbuilding techniques to ensure success.

This will mean that we will not just hope that our processes and systems work, but rather that they are tried and tested. This will be through utilising a range of cutting-edge techniques including 3D planning, building a prototype ship of the Future Frigate and ensuring that the workforce are trained to the highest standards.

The government will do this while meeting the time frames that we have committed to and creating the jobs that we promised to deliver. The Offshore Patrol Vessel project will start in
2018 at Osborne in South Australia before it moves to Henderson, WA when the Future Frigate project starts. It will create more than 400 jobs. We will 'cut steel' on the Future Frigate project in 2020, as we promised, which will create 2,000 jobs at Osborne. The Future Submarine project will start in the early 2020s and will create 2,800 jobs—5,000 jobs at Osborne alone.

After years of Labor's neglect, we recognise that Australian industry is crucial to maintaining and developing the future ADF. Good relationships with industry are fundamental to developing a sovereign defence capability and that is why we are seeking to build closer ties between the military and industry—this will provide innovative solutions and capabilities to the ADF, and it really is happening. The reports from the industry and from Defence show there is a completely new buzz in the defence industry in Australia.

Currently 25,000 Australians are employed in the defence industry, and there are over 3,000 small to medium enterprises all around our country—they provide essential capability, services and support to the ADF. So we recognise the importance of this national endeavour. There is no time to waste in implementing it, there is no opportunity that should be ignored and there is no limit to what the Australian defence industry can achieve with the right business framework and appropriate government advice and support.

This government under the leadership of Prime Minister Turnbull will ensure that the growth of the Australian defence industry as a national enterprise in providing defence capability for the protection of our nation also becomes one of the most important industrial sectors in our national economy.

Mr MARLES (Corio) (12:34): I thank the Minister for Defence Industry for giving his ministerial statement. Labor's attitude, when it comes to national security and when it comes to defence, begins with a spirit of bipartisanship. Labor, like the coalition, passionately believes that the first priority of any government is to provide for our nation's security and to provide for our nation's defence. This is an area of public policy that should be above party politics.

There is much in what the minister has said which does indicate good news—for example, the minister spoke about opportunities that may come to the Australian defence industry through increased expenditure under the new American administration. I wholeheartedly agree that there are opportunities in relation to that and the Australian defence industry should pursue them. We would work with the government in seeking to facilitate that. Indeed, what the minister has just reported in terms of his conversations with Secretary Mattis around American support for the future of the Joint Strike Fighter is good news, as is the specific news about Australia's defence industry role within the production of the Joint Strike Fighter.

Having said that, it does not mean by any means that Labor provides the government with a blank cheque when it comes to this area of policy, both in terms of strategy and in terms of defence industry. We do not stand in blind agreement with the coalition on all matters and we would not be expected to. We have an absolute obligation as an alternative government to hold the current government to account, to ask questions and to challenge, where appropriate, the decisions that government makes. Whilst there are obvious differences between Labor and the coalition in other areas of public policy about how Australia should be governed, national security is not one of them, but it is an area where, of course, detailed attention needs to be provided. A critical example of this is that Labor does support the government's target of
increasing Defence spending to two per cent of GDP. That is an important commitment that has been made on a bipartisan basis.

The coalition at times likes to play politics with Labor’s support for that target. They often talk about the spending of the Labor government in 2012-13, but what those comments always miss is that in 2002-03 under the Howard government, when Australia was actively engaged in military actions overseas, defence spending was just 0.02 per cent of GDP higher than the year they like to criticise. Furthermore, they often miss the fact that defence spending under Labor was at 1.93 per cent of GDP in 2009-10—higher than at any time during the Howard government and higher than it has been under the current government. In fact, the 2009-10 figure of 1.93 per cent was the highest spending level since 1994-95, when defence spending by the Keating Labor government was at 1.96 per cent of GDP.

I am sure that the minister has enjoyed taking us through his list of greatest hits over the last 15 minutes or so, and indeed there is obviously good news in much of what he said, but I would like to remind the House that the self-congratulatory trip down memory lane only tells us perhaps one side of the government’s recent history in relation to defence industry. The truth is that the government has also overseen a litany of disasters when it comes to defence procurement. There was a failure, for example, to invest in Australian defence industry jobs, resulting in the loss of over 1,500 jobs at shipyards across Australia. Workers in South Australia and Victoria well understand that fact. A failure to provide Australian companies with the opportunity to compete for the contract to build the Navy supply ships by conducting a limited tender process with two overseas companies is an example of that. There is the failure to deliver the enterprise level naval shipbuilding plan that this government promised would be released with the defence white paper. We saw a former defence minister famously claim that he would not trust ASC to build a canoe, and in just over three years we have already seen in this area of public policy three defence ministers in the portfolio and indeed if you include those who have held the positions of assistant minister with responsibility for defence industry or defence personnel there has been a total of eight ministers in what should be a stable area of government but in fact has been a revolving door. Now we have a bizarre situation where we have two defence ministers at the same time. The government has not, or perhaps cannot, give us the policy reasons for the split in responsibilities—I think everyone understands the political reasons but we have never seen a proper policy articulation of why we now have two defence ministers.

As an aside, Labor's bipartisan approach to policy in respect of defence does go to the critical review that the government undertook, which was the First Principles Review by the first defence minister, Senator Johnston. It was a significant review and the outcomes of that have the potential to represent a sea change within the culture of Defence. The First Principles Review undertook a comprehensive assessment of the way in which the defence establishment operates and made a number of recommendations for significant organisational change. We fully support the work and outcomes of that review and commend the government for undertaking it. One of the key mantras of the review, though, was 'one defence', so it is ironic that with a mantra of one defence the Turnbull government in fact has two defence ministers seeking to ensure that culture of one defence. Labor has a very traditional view in respect of how this portfolio should be handled, and we will, if elected to
government in the future, have one defence minister reflecting the key principle of one defence.

Finally, we saw this country's most significant and expensive procurement decision, in respect of future submarines, being tossed around the government party room in order to save the former Prime Minister's job. Specific to the Minister for Defence Industry's area of responsibility, the Integrated Investment Plan released by this government has less detail in it than the Defence Capability Plan released by the former Labor government, and it gives no indication of how the government seeks to change Australian industry involvement in defence procurement. Over the last three years Labor has been making a case about the strategic importance of having a strong domestic defence industry for Australian innovation, technology and jobs but meanwhile we have seen in the Turnbull government in large measure a government that has been running a policy of domestic neglect.

In large measure, the Turnbull government has spent the past three years focussing on the acquisition of off-the-shelf defence equipment and has shown little regard for Australia's local defence industry. Australia accounts for 10 per cent of US foreign military sales and is the seventh largest defence importer in the world. The Turnbull government has been happy to spend this investment overseas, instead of leveraging it to grow the Australian defence industry. It is ultimately an indictment of the Turnbull government's commitment to Australian defence industry that, at the same time as local shipyards are shedding jobs, the government has contracted Spanish shipyards to build the Navy's replenishment vessels. It is all very well for the minister to talk about the rhetoric of supporting local defence technology and jobs, but at the end of the day the government and the minister will be judged on what is actually delivered.

Labor has a strong history of developing Australia's defence industry and capacity. We have a strong contemporary history when it comes to submarines and the current existing class of submarines, the Collins class. It was the previous Labor government, addressing the concerns regarding the readiness of the Collins class submarines, that initiated the Coles review. The recommendations that came from that review are recommendations that we implemented. The implementation of these recommendations saw the former Labor government double the sustainment budget for the Collins class, which has led to four of those boats being in the water today and five crews being ready. It has led to Kim Beazley, a giant of Australian defence policy, saying last year:

The Collins class submarines are a great Australian engineering accomplishment and to go from no background in submarine production to building one of the best conventional submarines ever produced was a genuine national achievement.

Mr Beazley is absolutely right. It is worth remembering that all of that occurred against a backdrop of pretty serious criticism from the coalition of the time, but we do not hear that criticism from the coalition today in respect of the Collins class submarines.

Labor has always supported the Australian defence industry and recognises that sovereign capability is critical to our national interest and national security. Nowhere is this more apparent than when it comes to Australia's Future Submarine Program. The future submarine project is as defining a piece of materiel acquisition as we have ever had in terms of the future shape of the Australian Defence Force. As such, it is the biggest and the most important strategic challenge the Australian defence industry and the Australian defence establishment
face today. There has been no bigger procurement in terms of both scale and cost, with 12 submarines budgeted at this point at more than $30 billion.

This will be the largest defence project in Australia's history and will procure a capability that will be critical to our future national security, yet it has been the subject of political meddling under the Abbott-Turnbull government. Expert after expert described the competitive evaluation process dreamt up by the former Prime Minister and former Minister Andrews as woefully inadequate and rushed. Warren King, the defence department's former head of procurement, is on the record as saying that another 12 months of analysis was needed for the government to have sufficient information to make the best possible decision. The Abbott-Turnbull government, in truth, has bungled this decision from day one. That this decision ended up being tossed around the government party room as I described earlier in the context of a leadership contest at the beginning of 2015 was ultimately a total disgrace. To see our nation's single biggest military defence procurement being tossed around in order to secure votes in respect of a single individual's career is breathtaking. It was ultimately an affront to the Australian public. It fundamentally disrespected the defence industry and our Defence personnel, but more importantly it undermined good public policy.

Let me be clear: Labor does unreservedly support the government's commitment to build all of these submarines in Australia. This decision is critically important for Australian industry. However, in the context of this commitment, there are number questions now about exactly how this will play out. Recently, for example, questions have been raised about the training capacity and the staffing capacity which exists in Australia to fulfil the Collins upgrade and sustainment program. These issues are intimately connected with the future submarines project, which will not be completed in terms of the building of the submarines until the middle of this century, and in terms of the life of the future submarines it will be well into the latter part of this century. This of course means that the Collins upgrade itself, and indeed the sustainment of those boats to keep them relevant, contemporary and safe, is a critically important issue. From the mid-2020s through until the 2040s, the maintenance of Collins is going to be an expensive undertaking, and we need to ensure there is absolutely no capability gap in the ultimate transition between Collins and the future submarines.

The truth is this: what is being planned now provides a capability which will not come into being until the early 2030s, a long time into the future, and which is a very expensive procurement. It is going to go over the course of a series of Australian governments. That is the reality. We absolutely support the procurement of these submarines, as I have said, but future Labor governments—indeed, future governments of all persuasions—will have an obligation to actively manage this project and the ongoing procurement of these submarines. I want to say now that we will do so on the basis of seriously going about these questions from the point of view of the best public policy for Australia, not just the best politics of the particular moment in time. We will bring to bear some very important principles. One is that it is critical that in the development of the future submarines project that there is no delay. It is already a very long procurement process. It is absolutely critical that there is at the heart of this procurement the development of Australian jobs, Australian industry and a sovereign capability to build submarines in this country.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate the support that Labor has for the growing of our defence budget to two per cent of GDP. I want to reiterate Labor's support for the acquisition of the
capabilities that have been outlined by the minister and indeed in the government's defence white paper and the industry capability plan. I want to reiterate Labor's support for Australian jobs in the procurement of these capabilities and, in doing so, the building of a vibrant Australian defence industry which has the capacity in the future to do more export around the world. Also, importantly, I want to acknowledge that the defence industry is a high-tech industry and that it has a role in boosting technology throughout our country, and that we will seek to make sure that it plays that role as a future Labor government. We absolutely support the important place it has within our national economy.

Labor, in opposition, will continue to support the government in respect of the increase in our defence spending in the build-up of the Australian defence industry, but in the process we will hold the government to account at every step along the way to make sure that the acquisition of appropriate capability, the creation of jobs in this country and the development of a high-tech industry is ultimately achieved.

COMMITTEES

Membership

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent) (12:50): Mr Speaker has received advice from the Chief Government Whip nominating members to be members of certain committees.

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism) (12:51): by leave—I move:

That:

(1) Mr Goodenough and Ms Ley be appointed members of the Joint Select Committee on Government Procurement;

(2) Ms Ley be appointed a member of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network;

(3) Mr Hastie be discharged from the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories and that, Ms Ley and Mr Morton be appointed members of the committee, and

(4) Mr Morton be discharged from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs and that, in his place, Ms Ley be appointed a member of the committee.

Question agreed to.

BILLS

Treasury Laws Amendment (Enterprise Tax Plan) Bill 2016

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (12:52): Here we are at last. Nine months after the last budget was delivered, the centrepiece of that budget, the centrepiece of the government's so-called economic plan, is finally before the parliament for a vote. No rush to get this before the parliament. Nine months later and the Treasurer gets around to bringing it on for debate in this parliament. I do not think they are particularly proud of this centrepiece of their so-called economic plan. Remember the Treasurer telling us that this was not just any old budget, not just another budget? It was different to all the budgets in the past. It was different to Paul Keating's budgets and Peter Costello's budgets and Wayne Swan's budgets. It was different
because it was special, the special Treasurer told us. He had something different to all the other treasurers. He had an economic plan—an economic plan he did not even bother to legislate. He did not even bother to bring it before the House until today.

This is the economic plan in which the Treasurer, Scott Morrison's answer to the deficit is to increase the deficit by $50 billion over the next 10 years. That is his big answer to reduce the budget deficit: make it bigger in the meantime. Of course, we know that because the secretary of the Treasury told us. The Treasurer did not. The Treasurer stood at the dispatch box and said, 'I have a 10-year plan for our economy,' but what he did not tell us is how much it is going to cost. I asked him the next day after the budget. It was not the most complex question I could have thought of: 'What does the 10-year plan cost over 10 years? Of course, he would not say. He knew the answer, but he would not say. We knew that it would be in the vicinity of $50 billion. He did not want to fess up about that fact. I was reminded by the Prime Minister yesterday when he did not want to fess up to the fact that a million people would be affected by his cuts. He did not want to fess up to that. The Minister for Social Services has been out today saying, 'Actually, 1½ million people will be affected.' But they do not like fessing up to the facts about their particular policies.

The fact of the matter is that increasing the deficit by $50 billion over the next decade is not a plan to reduce the deficit. The government like to lecture everybody by saying, 'We must have belt-tightening. We must do more with less. We must ensure long-term budget integrity,' but then they turn around in the next breath and say that they want to increase the deficit by $50 billion with the corporate tax cut. They say that this is necessary for growth, but the fact of the matter is that the budget is in such a difficult position and is facing such serious challenges that the government and this parliament have to make choices about priorities. We have to make difficult decisions. We cannot do it all. In a perfect world, as I have said repeatedly, of course corporate tax would be lower rather than higher—of course it would be—but so could many other things be improved in the budget: personal income tax; more spending on health and education and important social safety nets. All these things are important, and it is the role of this parliament to make choices.

On this side of the House we make a different choice. We choose budget repair which is fair through reforms to negative gearing and capital gains tax and other important initiatives which we have already announced, such as better funding for our schools and fairer funding for our schools, and we choose not to give away $50 billion in a corporate tax cut. We choose not to say, 'It's important for Australia, with the triple-A rating under such threat, to see this brought about.' We know that the budget is in a parlous state. We just yesterday had a reminder from the Parliamentary Budget Office—a very fine institution—confirming a projected $42.8 billion black hole in the budget due to unlegislated measures, which are not so fondly called 'zombie measures' in the public discourse. There are the measures from the 2014 budget—the budget which cost the member for Warringah and then member for North Sydney their jobs, quite rightly—but this Prime Minister and this Treasurer continue with them. In fact, the return to surplus is dependent on those zombie measures. We would not have a return to surplus at the projected date without those zombie measures, and they are fallacious.

The government has introduced another omnibus bill. They will have to negotiate what they can through the crossbench because they will not get support from this side of the House.
for cutting payments and making a million Australians worse off, for making people wait longer for Newstart, for making it harder for pensioners who have worked hard all their lives and saved to have some time overseas. We will not be supporting those measures. But guess what: we are also not supporting giving $50 billion away in large corporate tax cuts. It is not a priority for this nation. It is not the sort of reform that this nation, facing the difficult circumstances and budgetary challenges over the medium term that we have, can afford at this time. It just beggars belief, but the Treasurer goes on about the deficit and debt. In fairness to him, he does not say ‘budget emergency’ or ‘debt and deficit disaster’ anymore. Those days are gone. That was what they used to say when they were sitting on this side of the House. On that side of the House there is no budget emergency or debt and deficit disaster; there is the capacity to give away $50 billion in tax cuts.

They say it is about—wait for it—jobs and growth. This is their big plan for jobs and growth, and they have some figures to back that up. Treasury analysis that was released on budget day does back up that there will be a gross dividend. What is that gross dividend? It is one per cent. The economy will be one per cent bigger. One per cent is worthwhile if it is going to make the economy one per cent bigger this year. I would say that is a worthwhile contribution. One per cent bigger a year—that is great. But, of course, no, it is one per cent bigger 10 years after the tax cut is implemented in 10 years time—that is, in 20 years time. In 20 years time, they will have a one per cent dividend for the economy. We had a negative quarter last year—and indeed, the first negative quarter in a long time which could not be clearly sheeted to clear external factors. It was a substantial negative quarter, without being alarmist. I am sure that this quarter will be positive. What did the government say in response to that negative quarter? 'Yes, but we've got a plan to make the economy one per cent bigger in 20 years time, so don't worry about the negative quarter this time.' Of course, that is not a plan for jobs and growth.

We saw the Prime Minister last week at the National Press Club again. I will give him this: it was a calmer and more prime ministerial performance than we saw yesterday, but that would not be hard. Barnaby Joyce could be more prime ministerial than what we saw yesterday at the National Press Club!

Interestingly, the Prime Minister briefed that he was going to make an announcement that the corporate tax cuts would lead to a $750 increase in wages, but when the speech was released it was not in there. Then it was in the speech he actually delivered, so there was obviously a lot of toing and froing in the Prime Minister's office about the drafting of that speech. Again, $750—a 1.1 per cent increase in wages—was not today, not next year, not the year after, but a $2 a day increase in 20 years time. Well done, Prime Minister! That is the big dividend that the Prime Minister gives us from his big centrepiece economic plan.

We have a situation where, despite his tantrums about text messages and his tantrums about how he was robbed, this Prime Minister presides over a government that is attacking Medicare through freezes on the Medicare Benefits Scheme and wanted to put a $7 tax on going to the doctor. They said that these are the sorts of things that are necessary for budget repair and then they say, 'But, on the other hand, we can afford a $50 billion tax cut for big business.' Well, they cannot—and they will not get support for us for this $50 billion corporate tax cut. We will stand for better priorities than that.
The Prime Minister and the Treasurer like to say, 'But Labor used to support corporate tax cuts.' As I said, we have always said that, in a perfect world, corporate tax would be lower rather than higher, but they have one little problem—well, they have several little problems—with their equation. One that I think is particularly amusing is that they quote the Leader of the Opposition, me and others on parliamentary debates and the debate which was occurring when they were walking in here and voting against the corporate tax cuts. That is what they were doing at that time—the now Prime Minister and the now Treasurer were voting against the corporate tax cut which was smaller than the one that is being proposed by this government. They said it could not be afforded then and, of course, what they have now is a much bigger corporate tax cut, which is completely unfunded.

We will not prescribe to this Laffer curve, Reaganomics-style approach of: 'It's all right; it'll trickle down. We will cut tax and then everything will magically come back and we will whirl back into surplus.' That has been discredited continually. I saw our old friend Bronwyn Bishop—which is always a delight—on the television the other night making that case—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): I interrupt the member for McMahon. The member for Hughes on a point of order, I assume?

Mr Craig Kelly: Under 66(a), I would ask the member if he would take an intervention so I can ask him a question on a passage from one of his best-selling books.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the member for McMahon willing to give way?

Mr Bowen: I am delighted that the member has been reading for a change but, no, I am not taking an intervention.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Hughes will resume his seat.

Mr Bowen: The member for Hughes has a revelation that I have written a book or two, which is welcome. Yes, that book argues for better funding for education, over many pages. That book argues for funding for research and development—will we hear about that? We are not going cop a lecture from this Prime Minister about consistency and standards in public life. This is the Prime Minister who took the Prime Ministership and has sold out everything he ever believed in—this joke of a Prime Minister who stands for nothing but his own ambition; this joke of a Prime Minister who harangued this parliament yesterday not about a million Australian families, not about the need to provide those families with more relief but about his obsession with the Leader of the Opposition. That is what we get from this Prime Minister.

We have a Prime Minister who is devoid of values and a government that is devoid of agenda and devoid of strategy. All they have to fall back on is a $50 billion corporate tax cut. This parliament should debate this. I am glad that, nine months after it was brought in, we are finally getting the chance to debate this legislation. I will tell you what else we should debate: a second reading amendment. I move:

"the House declines to give the bill a second reading as the:

(1) Government has failed on fiscal policy, tripling the deficit and increasing net debt by $100 billion, and putting our hard-earned and coveted triple A credit rating at risk;

(2) Prime Minister and the Treasurer have failed to deliver the economic leadership that this country needs and deserves; and"

CHAMBER
Government's plan to give a $50 billion tax cut to big business is not affordable in the current fiscal and economic circumstances."

The government has supported other second reading amendments in the past; they should support this one, because it is a good one. It calls it as it is and says that budgets are a matter of priorities, budgets are a matter of choices. The government has made its choice. As I said, in a perfect world, if we had the budget in balance, corporate tax cuts are something this parliament could decide on and could embark on. But when we are at grave risk of losing the AAA rating on this Prime Minister's watch, when we have a return to budget surplus which is predicated on zombie measures which shall not pass the parliament then, in our view, this parliament cannot make that choice. We cannot make the choice to engage in that $50 billion unfunded corporate tax cut. We can make different choices. We will stand for schools, we will stand for better funding for hospitals, we will protect Australian families to the best of our ability with our votes in this House and the other House, and we will not lend our support to this particular piece of legislation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the amendment seconded?

Mr Thistlethwaite: I second the amendment, and reserve my right to speak.

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

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (13:05): Recognising the link between corporate tax rates, investments and jobs is not rocket science. Lower tax rates mean more revenue is retained by businesses, which means more for investment in those businesses and therefore more jobs. More vigorous, more profitable businesses with more jobs means a growing national economy, which means more prosperity to be shared by all. It is a simple, well-tested equation in capitalist systems. The Labor Party used to understand that but, listening to the shadow Treasurer's speech just now, I genuinely believe they might be living in la-la land.

The member for Hughes wisely interjected and asked if the shadow Treasurer would be prepared for him to read out some quotes from his book, and he denied that, so let me do so. In 2013, the shadow Treasurer, from whom we just heard, against company tax rates, said:

"It's a Labor thing to have the ambition of reducing company tax, because it promotes investment, creates jobs and drives growth."

On ABC Lateline in 2014, the year after he wrote those words in his book, he said:

I'd like to see it lower over time. I think we've had 14 years of having the corporate tax rate stable. That's too long. Over time, I'd like to see is lowered.

On the 7.30 in 2013, he said:

"I think we should have the ambition of lowering company tax. … it would be the approach that we would take that our ambition would be lower company tax rates … because it does improve our overall international competitiveness."

In 2015, the shadow Treasurer said:

I would like to see the corporate tax rate come down over time. I'd previously said that our nation should be aiming for——

wait for it——
a 25 per cent corporate tax rate.
This is the shadow Treasurer from whom we have just heard the complete opposite. His get out of jail card today is:
Only in a perfect world.

Only in a perfect world would the shadow Treasurer accept a cut in corporate tax rates. What does that actually mean? Does that mean his book can only be read when the wicked witch of Narnia is dead and Aslan the lion takes over? Or is that the la la land once the Greens and Labor get back into power one day, and suddenly it is a perfect world and his book is relevant? Either he defies his own logic or, indeed, he is in la la land. It does not stop with the shadow Treasurer.

Indeed, on 2 May 2010 the then Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced a reduction in the corporate tax rate from 30 per cent to 28 per cent for small businesses from 2012-13 and to all businesses from 2013-14. In June 2010, he told the Business Council of Australia:
The government's target is to bring it to 25.
The May announcement was part of the government’s response to the Henry tax review, which had recommended a cut in the corporate rate to 25 per cent—the same level that is being put to the parliament in this bill.

On 2 July 2010, the Gillard government reduced the cut proposed by former PM Rudd to 29 per cent, citing the state of the economy, but Labor never actually introduced the legislation to implement it. Why? It was because the Greens would not support it. The then de facto government of the country, the Greens, with their nigh on Marxist views of the world, denied the attempt by Labor to cut the corporate tax rate. The posture of bowing to the Greens has been fastidiously maintained under the leadership of the Labor Party by the backflipping Leader of the Opposition.

In his 2015-16 budget reply speech, in contradiction of the views held by his two immediate predecessors, the opposition leader supported a cut in the corporate tax rate for small businesses, and small businesses only, to 25 per cent. Tax cuts for larger businesses disappeared altogether from Labor tax policy, even though Julia Gillard in 2012 told the parliament:
If you are against cutting company tax, you are against economic growth.
This is the former Labor Prime Minister.
If you are against economic growth, you are against jobs.
And Labor, especially the opposition leader, now not only formally supports the Greens policy on corporate tax reform; he supports the Greens anticapitalist rhetoric to boot.

The attacks on big business by the opposition leader would not be out of place coming from Marx or Engels. His language of attacking big business oozes with contempt but, unsurprisingly, given the record of the Leader of the Opposition, this has involved yet again a double backflip. In 2011, addressing former Prime Minister Rudd’s policy for a cut from 30 to 28 per cent, the now opposition leader said in this chamber:
More capital means higher economic activity and higher wages.
In 2011, he also said this:
As Australia is buffeted by the economic affairs overseas, we understand that lowering corporate tax assists the creation of jobs. And what can be more important in this country than the creation of jobs.

And in a speech to the national conference of the Australian Council of Social Services, the opposition leader said:

Friends, corporate tax reform helps Australia's private sector grow, and it creates jobs right up and down the income ladder.

But the Greens said no, and the Leader of the Opposition promptly fell into line via another 180-degree U-turn, involving a whole new take on economics altogether and a whole new take on tax policy. He stays in line with the Greens to this very day.

Now, he argues: 'Tax cuts? That's just trickle-down economics. The benefits all go overseas. Tax cuts don't boost employment, just inequality.' In other words, he is now saying the polar opposite of what he was saying in 2011. The Leader of the Opposition, clearly, will say whatever he can and do whatever he can, no matter how deeply it might contradict his previous positions, to keep faith with a powerful Left—a Left in the Labor Party and outside of it—so that he can keep his own job.

But please do not think it is just big business that the opposition leader does not like; he has a demonstrable track record of falling in line with the Greens when it comes to tax rates for small business too. For example, when the Greens in 2012 signalled under their then new leader Christine Milne that they would not support Labor's proposed corporate tax cut, she even put a cut-off point on the Greens support for tax relief for small businesses. Do you know what that cut-off was, Acting Deputy Speaker Hogan? The Greens cut-off was a maximum turnover of $2 million. To give her some minor credit, there is no doubt that businesses with a turnover under $2 million are vitally important to our economy, but it now reflects the smallest end of small business. In fact, they are often now referred to as microbusinesses. The meat in the small business sector are those with turnovers of between $2 million and $10 million. These small businesses, as the Treasurer pointed out in his second reading speech, employ 3.4 million Australians; 3.4 million Australians are employed by small businesses with a turnover of between $2 million and $10 million. That is a huge contribution. But, of course, the Leader of the Opposition again dutifully fell into line with Greens policy, because Labor, too, now agrees that any business with a turnover above $2 million cannot have a tax cut.

If there is to be a significant tax benefit to small businesses in this country, with the flow-on benefits that the opposition leader himself outlined in 2011, then it will be via the coalition's plan, which is for a cut to 27½ per cent from the current 28½ per cent that was legislated by the Abbott government—down from 30 per cent—and reaching 25 per cent by 2026-27, without that artificial barrier of $2 million turnover favoured by the Greens and their fellow travellers, the Labor Party.

Businesses with turnovers over $10 million will reach the same target of 25 per cent via increases to the threshold for the 27½ per cent rate—to $25 million in 2017-18, $50 million in 2018-19 and $100 million in 2019-20—until all companies are covered by 2023-24. The rate itself will then be progressively cut from 27½ per cent until it reaches that 25 per cent point for all businesses in 2026-27.

These are urgently needed tax reforms. As the Treasurer himself highlighted, we have gone from, in 2001, having one of the lowest corporate tax rates in the world to now having among
the highest. The average rate across the EU is 22½ per cent. Across the OECD, it is 25 per cent.

In our region, our current rate of 30 per cent is way off pace. South Korea has a 24 per cent rate, the same as Laos and Malaysia. In Thailand and Vietnam, it is 20 per cent. In Singapore and Taiwan, it is 17 per cent, and Hong Kong has 16½ per cent.

This chasm between our rates and the rates of our competitors and trading partners is a double-edged sword for our economy and for the Australians who want jobs. Not only are global companies less likely to invest here or expand here because of high tax rates when they could be enjoying higher retention of their earnings elsewhere, but some of our own companies may indeed move offshore to take advantage of more competitive rates.

In light of these realities, those who criticise the plan should also contemplate the timeframes that are involved and the fact that these changes are phased in over a considerable period. The changes mean that a tax rate of 27½ per cent will reach the biggest of our businesses in 2023-24. It will be 2026-27—that is almost a decade from now—before the rate hits 25 per cent, and they still oppose it. That is a fair way down the track, when the New Zealand rate has been at 28 per cent since 2011, and with Asia ranging right now from 24 per cent to around 17 per cent. These are numbers that give context to what this bill seeks to do.

This is not a massive giveaway, as the Labor Party suggests. Having abandoned all reason in relation to its previous positions on corporate tax reform, it now protests. This is a measured, responsible, modest effort to ensure that we retain a sufficient degree of international competitiveness to continue to attract and promote investment in our own country.

While our rates will still continue to be higher than some of our competitors, subject to events we cannot foresee elsewhere, we do have other positives that we can sell that will stand us in good stead to attract investment to this country: we are a stable democracy; we are a secure nation; we live by the rule of law; our financial safeguard institutions are globally well regarded; we have some of the strongest and safest banks in the world; we have a highly skilled workforce and a lifestyle that is the envy of many; we have world-class health and education systems and a reliable and trustworthy business culture.

As long as we maintain these standards, we can continue to attract the level of investment that we have previously enjoyed from both domestic and international businesses and our economy can grow with jobs and have opportunities for all, even if our corporate tax rate, as we do bring it down, becomes simply ballpark competitive. That is the aim here: a competitive rate, not a discount rate.

It would difficult to be as upbeat about the future as we might like to be, if this plan were to be rejected, which is what Labor and the Greens want. Their opposition is just one of many instances where their policy positions have, long ago, lost touch with any semblance of reality. This bill is a gauntlet for the Labor Party, one of many gauntlets that we need to throw down, because only if they break from the Greens and come to common sense will Australia benefit.

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (13:21): In my remarks today, I want to deal with the three arguments that the coalition has made for cutting the company tax rate: the first, that Labor once supported cuts to the company tax rate; the second, that other countries have lower
corporate tax rates; and the third, that it will boost growth. I want to explain to the House in turn why each of these arguments is wrong.

The coalition first of all claims that Labor, in the past, has supported company tax rates. It is certainly true that Paul Keating took the approach of broadening the base so you could lower the rate. Against the opposition of Liberals and Nationals at the time, Paul Keating brought in things like capital gains tax and fringe benefits taxation. He ensured that our tax base was broader and, in so doing, was able to finance a rate cut. This broadening of the corporate tax base was the same philosophy that underpinned the Gillard government's approach, and then we said at the time we would support a modest reduction in corporate tax of one or two percentage points.

What has changed since then? Unfortunately, a lot has changed since then. In 2013, net government debt in Australia was $184 billion; now, net government debt is $317 billion. Net debt has increased by $113 billion since the coalition came to office. How much is that? That is about $4,500 for every man, woman and child in Australia. So everyone listening to this debate today will be listening knowing that the Liberals have increased the government debt each of them owes by $4,500. If you need an answer to the question, 'Why is now a bad time to cut the corporate tax rate?' the simple answer is: '$4,500 of Liberal-National debt'.

What have they done about that? Have they pulled the debt truck out of storage, maybe upgraded it to a debt B-double? No. They no longer talk about debt. They no longer claim that it matters. But, according to modelling—which did not come out at the time of the budget but was dragged out of the Liberals and Nationals—this is a $50 billion corporate tax cut. According to modelling by Independent Economics, it is a tax cut costing $48.2 billion and, when it is complete—when it is ripe—its annual cost will be $8 billion. That is a massive hit to the government coffers at a time when the government have sent debt soaring. The Liberals and Nationals used to talk as though they cared about debt; now they simply increase debt and say, 'It is no longer a problem; we can just cut the tax base.' That is the philosophical approach that Ronald Reagan took in the 1980s: just ramping up debt, cutting taxes and leaving the problem to someone else. Labor cannot support a cut to the company tax rate when the Liberals and Nationals have so badly increased debt in this country, from $184 billion to the $317 billion currently projected in MYEFO, a near doubling of Australia's government debt.

The next argument they make is that other countries have lower corporate tax rates than Australia and Australia's corporate tax rate is uncompetitive. We can easily move through countries which enjoy strong economic performance yet have corporate tax rates higher than 30 per cent: France, 33.3 per cent; Japan, 30.86 per cent; the United States, 40 per cent. Corporate tax rate comparison across countries is invariably problematic, so here I am drawing on 2016 numbers from KPMG's corporate tax rates table. Australia has a rate, as honourable members know, of 28.5 per cent for small businesses and 30 per cent for everyone else. And the government proposes to bring the overall tax rate down to 25 per cent. A number of other countries have tax rates between 25 and 30 per cent, among them New Zealand, at 28 per cent; Canada, at 26.5 per cent; and Germany, at 29.72 per cent. The fact is that having a company tax rate well above 25 per cent has not stopped countries, like the United States and Germany, from growing strongly.
There is one more little secret that those advocating a company tax cut do not let you in on, and that is dividend imputation, an unusual system in Australia shared in the OECD only by New Zealand. What does dividend imputation do? It gives back a share of the company tax revenue to individual taxpayers. According to Geoffrey Kingston's 2015 analysis in *JASSA: The Finsia Journal of Applied Finance*, a rough rule of thumb is that dividend imputation gives back a third of company tax revenue. So, in terms of what the government raises, a 30 per cent rate with imputation raises about as much as a 20 per cent rate without imputation. If you hear anyone do international corporate tax comparisons and not mention imputation, you know they are being deeply disingenuous. So Australia's 30 per cent rate raises what Britain's rate of 20 per cent without imputation raises. Those facts are simply ignored by those opposite.

The Treasurer, extraordinarily, in question time yesterday was arguing that I should be supporting a corporate tax cut because my co-author Richard Holden supports a corporate tax cut. The Treasurer seems to have a very unusual notion of how economists work. He thinks that once you have written an article someone you must be in mind meld with them. Every future position they take, you have to take. Clearly, that is the way things work over on the government benches. They are in mind meld about everything, aren't they? Apart from maybe Cory Bernardi, or George Christensen, or the next break-out. The fact is that you can write papers with people and then disagree with them afterwards.

*The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Coulton):* Order! I remind the member for Fenner to refer to members by their titles.

*Dr LEIGH:* I thank you for that wise comment, Mr Deputy Speaker. The member for Dawson seems to be straying off the reservation. We will see whether or not he is able actually to put his vote where his mouth is next time the vote on a banking royal commission comes to this House. He could not quite manage it on the last sitting day of last year, but let's hope, for the sake of the electors of Dawson, that he is able to do it next time around.

The fact is that powerhouse economies around the world have corporate tax rates comparable with Australia's, ignoring imputation. Take into account imputation, compare us with countries that have rates a third lower, and Australia's corporate tax rate raises approximately what is raised by even the countries with the lowest corporate tax rates in the OECD.

Then we come to the government's argument that a corporate tax cut will boost growth. In order to knock down this argument you have to go no further than the government's own analysis, a paper released on budget night titled *Analysis of the long term effects of a company tax cut*. You have to work through this paper fairly carefully in order to work out exactly what the government's argument is. First of all, let's start with the fact that domestic shareholders barely benefit from corporate tax cuts. As the Grattan Institute's John Daley has pointed out, local shareholders only gain if profits are reinvested rather than paid out. Our firms have pretty high payout ratios, so most of the $8 billion annual gain from a corporate tax cut will, in the first instance, go overseas.

*The DEPUTY SPEAKER:* Order! The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour, and the member for Fenner will be given an opportunity to conclude his speech at that time.
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Lunar New Year

Mr CLARE (Blaxland) (13:30): The first Chinese migrant arrived in Australia 199 years ago this year, only 40 years after the First Fleet and 12 years before my first convict ancestor. His name was Mak Sai Ying. He was a carpenter, and he married a woman named Sarah Jane Thompson. They had a bunch of kids and he became a publican. He ran a pub called the Lion Inn in Parramatta, not far from my electorate.

Since then, stories like this have been repeated thousands and thousands of times; people from places like China and Vietnam, looking for a better life and in the process making Australia a better place to live—including people like my mother- and father-in-law, who were Vietnamese refugees. Today, one in 10 Australians can claim some Asian ancestry, including my little boy—my little three-month-old boy—Jack.

This time of the year is very important for many Chinese and Vietnamese Australians: it is the lunar new year. So can I wish all Chinese Australians happy new year—Kung hei fat choi! Xin nian kuai le! And can I wish all Vietnamese Australians a happy new year—Chuc mung nam moi!

Mackellar Electorate: St Sava Parish

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (13:31): Mr Deputy Speaker: Srećna slava! On 29 January I was invited to partake in this year's Slava, or 'Feast Day', a unique Serbian Orthodox tradition, during which families come together to celebrate their patron saints. I was honoured to be invited to take part in the celebrations with the St Sava Parish, the first of its kind in Australia.

Founded in 1949 by Serbian immigrants and refugees, it is home to a stunningly beautiful Serbian Orthodox Pro-Cathedral in Ingleside, at the heart of the electorate I am so proud to represent. Covered in traditional Byzantine frescoes, I encourage all who come to the northern beaches to visit this most beautiful cathedral.

As I found myself in a school hall filled with laughter and cheer—adults eating and drinking, children playing—I wondered on the unique welcome I had received; a heartfelt welcome allowing me to share in one of Serbia's most sacred traditions. I watched, mesmerised, as young men and women performed traditional Serbian songs and dances, bringing together many families from all over Sydney.

Thank you for allowing me to break the Kolac with you, letting me taste the Koljivo and breaking open a bottle of Sljivovica. I look forward to celebrating many more holy days together, and I hope to be of service to your parish.

Deputy Prime Minister

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (13:33): The Deputy Prime Minister has spent the last two weeks trashing people who live in our cities around this country. It is quite shocking for someone who is the Deputy Prime Minister of the whole of the nation. He said recently that people should stop whingeing about Sydney house prices, that the problem was they all wanted harbour views and they should move to the country. He said on Monday, in one of their internal party meetings, that people should stop talking nonsense that just appeals to Oxford Street.
I know the people who live and work around Oxford Street, in the Prime Minister's electorate and in mine, and they are decent, hardworking people. He also said—the Deputy Prime Minister—in question time just yesterday:

Are you on the side of working men and women, or are you on the side of Annandale?

What can that possibly mean, other than the people of Annandale are not hardworking? It is just not fair.

I would never run down people who live in regional parts of Australia or in the country. I am proud of what our country caucus does for those people—standing up for decent funding for their schools as well as for city schools. We stood up against the backpacker tax, which would have left the fruit rotting on the ground. We did not see the National Party standing up against the backpacker tax.

And when it comes to Shoalwater Bay, it was actually Labor that was arguing against the compulsory acquisition of people's homes and farms. It was not the National Party and it was not the member for Capricornia. So instead of the Deputy Prime Minister trash the people of Sydney he should do a better job of standing up for regional Australia!

**Bonner Electorate: Broadband**

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (13:34): Today I rise to update the House about a call out I put on Facebook recently, asking constituents to submit their burning questions to me.

The post generated quite a bit of interest. Today I am going to answer some of those questions. However, as I can only mention a few I am going to focus on the questions related to the NBN rollout in Bonner asked by Petro from Wishart and Chris in the Bayside. I thank Petro and Chris for their questions.

As Telstra is now project managing the rollout, they have decided to focus on rolling out the fibre-to-the-node technology before the hybrid-fibre-coaxial technology rollout. In my electorate, Bonner is made up of 77 per cent hybrid fibre coaxial, which means we are awaiting the next update. NBN has recently taken down their old three-year rollout plan, which was released on October 2015. In the meantime there has been a move to provide more accurate and timely information about the NBN, with a brand-new website allowing you to check your address.

NBN has released the first phase of the 'check your address' web function that will provide a date range for when the NBN service will be available at an individual address. Keep in mind that some suburbs are stating generic rollout information on the NBN website, saying it will be delivered by 2020. These suburbs will be updated in the coming months.

Just like the questions I was asked by many others when they want to know— *(Time expired)*

**Women in Parliament**

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (13:36): I could not let this first week of the parliament for 2017 go by without a reflection on the apparent determination of this government to make invisible the important contributions of women to the social, economic and political life of this nation.

Just imagine how Australian girls and women feel as cameras pan across the government's frontbench in question time to see just two of the 18 seats occupied by Australian women now
in 2017. But, worse still—and an issue close to your own heart, Mr Deputy Speaker—imagine if the cameras were to pan now up into the newly-made-over Federation Chamber, where we see the figures of four daunting, grey old men hovering across us in great gilded frames as we contemplate the issues before the nation?

I am not disputing the role of Billy Hughes, Isaac Isaacs, Frederick Holder and Egerton Lee Batchelor to the nation, but what I do dispute is the complete exaggeration of the historical importance of men at the complete expense of everybody else. Where is Rose Scott? Where is Bessie? Where is Enid Lyons? Where are the women who have helped shape all of the important economic and social reforms of this nation? That chamber no longer reflects the diversity of our nation and the diversity of our parliament. It is a— (Time expired)

**Murray Darling Medical School**

Mr GEE (Calare) (13:37): The shortage of doctors in rural Australia is of great concern to country communities. One organisation that is seeking to remedy this imbalance and this injustice is Charles Sturt University. It has joined forces with La Trobe University to form the Murray Darling Medical School. It aims to train doctors in the country for future practice in the country.

Less than 10 per cent per cent of Australian medical graduates trained at urban universities choose to work in rural areas. And it is not good enough. There may be an oversupply of doctors in big cities, but there is a chronic shortage of doctors in country Australia.

One of the impediments to establishing the Murray Darling Medical School has been resistance from the established universities and their medical deans. Their resistance resembles a closed shop. And we have had a gutful of it.

There is a place for both the medical training being offered by the older universities and the new approach being taken by Charles Sturt University. I am therefore calling on the medical deans to end their resistance to CSU's proposal and to work with them. All CSU seeks is 180 annual Commonwealth-supported medical student places out of over 3,000. It is not too much to ask.

What the medical deans need to understand is that communities in the country are backing CSU to the hilt on this, and what they want to see is their tertiary institutions working together to benefit country communities. We are not going away. The doors of the closed shop need to be flung open, because country Australia is demanding it.

**Tweed Valley Women's Service**

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (13:39): I was very pleased last week, along with community representatives, to formally hand over a petition with more than 10,000 signatures calling on the New South Wales state government to restore funding to the Tweed Valley Women's Service. The petition was presented to Jenny Aitchison, New South Wales shadow minister for the prevention of domestic violence, and she will now lodge it for debate in the New South Wales state parliament. I launched this petition in January 2016 after the women's service was forced to close when their contract was suddenly cancelled by their lead agency, On Track Community Programs. This parliamentary debate is now triggered because more than 10,000 people have signed the petition to restore this very important state government funding to the Tweed Valley Women's Service. This is a service which has provided counselling, accommodation and support for women and children for more than 30 years.
The complete inaction by the New South Wales government and the North Coast Nationals MPs over the closure of the Tweed Valley Women's Service is both shameful and irresponsible. We have a domestic violence crisis across this nation, and on the New South Wales North Coast the state National Party MPs Geoff Provest and Thomas George have refused to help this service. It is shameful. As both the state members had shown they were unwilling and unable to do the job they were actually elected to do, I launched this petition, with the support of the community, demanding the New South Wales government restore funding to the Tweed Valley Women's Service, and I continue to call on the New South Wales government to properly fund this service. I thank all those thousands and thousands of people who signed this petition for this very important service.

**Moore Electorate: Australia Day Honours**

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (13:40): On behalf of the parliament, I formally congratulate four outstanding constituents within my electorate of Moore who were recognised in the recent Australia Day Honours List within the Order of Australia for their dedicated service to our community over an extended period.

Mr Norman McKenzie was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of a lifetime of work in environmental and wildlife conservation as a scientist and zoologist, his career having spanned 45 years with the Western Australian Department of Parks and Wildlife. Mr Branco Bratich, a resident of Padbury, was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for services to the martial art of karate as a national coach, instructor and administrator. Mrs Robin Bromley, a resident of Hillarys, was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for services to promoting nutrition in schools through her work in establishing the Federation of Canteens in Schools, and the Western Australian canteens association. Mr Ron de Gruchy, a resident of Sorrento, was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for services to retirees and superannuants through his work as President of the Western Australia Self Funded Retirees Association and other organisations.

Congratulations to the abovementioned residents. You can take satisfaction from knowing that our community is a better place as a result of your individual contributions.

**Prime Minister**

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (13:42): Wasn't yesterday just extraordinary! I had a front-row seat to the outrageous rant by the Prime Minister, clearly only caring about his own job. This is a Prime Minister, this is a bloke, who is weaker than Billy McMahon. Let us just call it for what it was yesterday. He gets fired up about protecting his own job, but when is he going to get fired up about Australians' jobs? When is he going to get fired up about the cleaners here in this place who have not had a pay rise since his government came to office? When is he going to get fired up about the coal miners in central Victoria who have been replaced by labour hire workers who are being paid less? When is he going to get fired up about the cuts to education and about all the students who are going to miss out on vital programs because his government has slashed the funding to schools? When is this Prime Minister going to get fired up about Medicare and restore the funding that has been cut, or increase the GP rebate so that the doctors do not have to slug pensioners with more and more fees?

This is a Prime Minister who only cares about his own job, and the only time he stands up and raises his voice is to protect his own job. He is a weak Prime Minister. He is one who...
goes the nasty attack and does not stand up for the Australian working people. All he does is stand up for his own job. And it is a disgrace. He should come in here today and apologise to all the schoolchildren who may have witnessed his appalling display yesterday.

**Canning Electorate: Building Better Regions Fund**

**Mr HASTIE** (Canning) (13:44): In my maiden speech in 2015 I stated that:

Canning is a thriving ecosystem with hardworking Australians who enjoy their freedom and lifestyles unique to each township. The people of Canning generally want to get about their business without undue interference from government.

But recently we have had government, or Canberra, trying to tell us who we are. Under the guidelines of the Building Better Regions Fund, almost all of Canning has been classified as 'significant urban area', rendering large sections of the Peel region unable to apply.

Canning is anything but urban. It is located an hour south-east of the Perth CBD and is home to the Peel region. We have beef farmers, orchardists, national forests and Australia's largest goldmine. We have bauxite mining and some of the most important bauxite refineries in the country. The southern parts are considered a holiday destination, renowned for camping and recreation. And, for what it is worth, we have our very own Peel regional development authority.

My office has been overwhelmed by correspondence from people and community groups concerned about the change to our status. We are regional, and Canning is struggling to cope with the social symptoms of isolation such as high unemployment, homelessness, family violence and drug abuse. For Canning, access to the BBRF is not about money, it is just about who we are: we are regional. I would like to thank the Prime Minister, who, in December, took a phone call from me and made a commitment to review the situation and help restore our status as regional.

**Prime Minister**

**Mr WATTS** (Gellibrand) (13:45): Yesterday in this parliament we witnessed the return of what Annabel Crabb aptly noted as 'bad Malcolm' in her essay 'Stop at nothing' in *Quarterly Essay*. The man with a temper, who is vicious, bullying and with an habitual tone of bitter sarcasm, a man who feels himself superior to all around him.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister, under pressure from his coalition colleagues, launched an extraordinary personal attack on the Leader of the Opposition. Labor had spent question time asking about the issues that matter to the Australian public, issues like the future of family payments for millions of Australians and the Centrelink automated debt notice debacle. And how did the Prime Minister respond? By labelling the Leader of the Opposition a 'social climber'. The member for Reid explained this on Sky News by saying, 'Bill's a private school Melbourne boy, and we think he's professing to be something that he's not'. Well, I am a public school boy, and we know exactly what toffs and snobs mean when they say someone is a social climber. It means 'know your place'. It means 'do not rise above your station'. It is an ugly, demeaning, personal attack.

I say to those opposite: laugh all you like while you can, because we know, from experience, that when bad Malcolm emerges, when the Prime Minister is under pressure, that bad Malcolm has bad judgement. You can ask Godwin Grech how that pans out. As Jarvis
Cocker said about another infamous social pretender: 'Well, I can't see anyone else smiling in here—are you sure...?'

**Menzies Electorate: Australia Day**

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies) (13:47): I rise to acknowledge the 57 recipients of the annual Menzies community Australia Day awards, now in its 23rd year. I was joined by some 600 local residents on Australia Day to acknowledge these volunteers and great contributors to our community. I also had pleasure in presenting the Manningham promoting character award to the Veneto Club in Bulleen and to present one of the flags that fly in this chamber, which was provided by the Speaker, this year to St Mark's Anglican Church in Templestowe.

Amongst the 57 volunteers who were acknowledged, nominations came from the Doncaster All Abilities Basketball competition, Doncare, the North Eastern Jewish Centre, the Rotary Club of Templestowe, Information Warrandyte, the women's friendship group, Manningham City Council, the Peace Society, the Doncaster Rovers soccer club, the Lions Club of Donvale, Doncaster Secondary College, the Warrandyte Neighbourhood House, Greythorn Bowling Club, the Chinese Senior Citizens Club of Manningham, St Mark's Anglican Church, the Australian Air League, the Pied Pipers, the UMMA mosque, the post-polio support group, the BLIA temple, Doncaster Police, the Scouts, St Vincent de Paul and U3A Manningham.

In 23 years, we have honoured more than 1,000 local volunteers: great people who build the local community.

**Prime Minister**

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:48): Who put the red cordial in the PM's Grange? That is the question that is on everyone's lips today after that extraordinary, strange rant that we had yesterday—what will forever be known as Prime Minister Turnbull's 'know your place' speech. That is what we got yesterday, and we got it in response to questions about cuts to families. We got it about questions about cuts to young people. We got it about challenges to the fairness of a $50 billion tax cut for big business and tax cuts for big banking.

I can understand that he is under a bit of pressure—I mean, it was a tough summer. First, he tried Trump-lite: 'I'm not a politician.' Then he took his business credentials out for a run. And then there was the 'Trumble' moment, and there was our PM, his dignity dented. The pressure was on. Worse, this week he had to come back to the people's house, and he had to take impertinent questions from the plebs on this side of the chamber: questions about why he wants to cut $30 billion from schools; questions about the Centrelink debacle. I understand the pressure he is under; those opposite clearly do not. They have put pressure on our Prime Minister, and he has lost his centre. Prime Minister, please, dig deep.

**Page Electorate: Water Safety**

Mr HOGAN (Page) (13:50): Last month at Pippi Beach in Yamba there were some great acts of courage. About 100 swimmers were in the water when two surfers and six teenage swimmers were sucked out to sea in a rip after a series of freak waves. Luckily, lifeguards Mikey Gilliman and Harry Fuhey were on duty and immediately sprang into action. With a surfer already out beyond the break line, the lifeguards told him and the two surfers, Shane Henwood and Shane Sutherland, to form a floating platform for the teenagers to hang onto while they methodically brought each one back to shore one by one. It took both young men
over 20 minutes to complete the rescue. After the last person was rescued, beachgoers spontaneously clapped and cheered the lifesavers. Clarence Valley lifeguard supervisor, Greg Wyllie, described the rescue as professional, methodical and impressive. He also noted that both guards exhibited an extreme amount of fitness and skill. The swimmers were all swimming between the flags, and this highlights the significance and importance of our volunteer lifeguards.

Honourable members interjecting—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Coulton):** There is a lot of background noise. I think it is important that members are heard in silence.

**Mr Hogan:** I would like to thank Harry, Mikey, the two Shanes and the surfer involved in their great effort, and I extend that thanks to our lifeguards on beaches everywhere for the selfless and wonderful work they do for our communities.

**Prime Minister**

**Mr CONROY (Shortland) (13:51):** I rise to talk about the Prime Minister's deep identity crisis. Mostly, it pertains to which US President he is most alike. Last year, we saw 'Abraham Turnbull', where the Prime Minister had this whole narrative of how he grew up in a log cabin and was the worker's friend. But yesterday we saw 'Malcolm Trump'—the Prime Minister as the billionaire saying, 'Know you place.' The truth is that this Prime Minister is deeply out of touch and he leads a government that is deeply out of touch. You do not have to look any further than housing affordability, where Prime Minister Turnbull's one policy suggestion is, 'Have rich parents.' What a joke. We had the former Treasurer saying, 'You should get a good job,' because that has never occurred to anyone. Then we had the Deputy Prime Minister—that joke—say that all five million Sydneysiders should move to Tamworth. It is a bit hard to be a nurse at the RPA or a police officer out at Campbelltown if you are commuting from Tamworth. Then we had the member for Petrie, who I am glad is in the chamber, suggesting we move back to 1995 to buy a house.

The truth is that the government are deeply out of touch. They do not understand the challenges and struggles of all Australians. This Prime Minister is the most out-of-touch public figure we have seen since Marie Antoinette.

**Petrie Electorate: Deception Bay State High School**

**Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (13:53):** Deception Bay is home to many a great Aussie battler—hardworking, salt-of-the-earth folk and plenty of families with challenges but also with great opportunities. Increasingly sought for its beach-side locale, Deception Bay has undergone significant rejuvenation and is earmarked for further development. The local high school nurtures more than 700 students. It has a reputation for outstanding academic, sporting and cultural achievement and is celebrating its 25th year. Core values of belonging, integrity, aspiration and persistence underscore a strong and vibrant learning culture and make Deception Bay State High School a popular choice. It adopts a flexible and inclusive approach to learning, emphasises mutual trust and works closely with families to achieve the best outcomes for each of its students. The school claims many great achievements, but it has a new reason to be proud, having been named one of the 20 best 2015 Top Gains high schools for South-East Queensland. This is a significant achievement. Well done to the staff and
leaders at Deception Bay State High School. I would love to know your secrets and will be out to see you soon. Congratulations on a great 2015 and keep up the great work.

Prime Minister

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (13:54): I, too, watched the Prime Minister incredulously yesterday. 'Bad Malcolm' returned, charging around the building like a wounded bull. Unlike the member for Shortland, I was not thinking about US presidents; I was thinking about Jack Nicholson in The Shining—'Here's Malcolm!' Today he has been telling us all that he does not suck up to billionaires and, yet, I looked at The Monthly and there was a picture of him famously standing up to Kerry Packer—that is, before he betrayed Kerry Packer. The bit I really like about this article in The Monthly is where it says:

Packet's friend and legal adviser Malcolm Turnbull brought along some US junk-bond holders who were hoping to get at least some of their money back after a catastrophic attempt at privatising the Fairfax group by 'Young' Warwick …

Here is a man who has spent a lifetime standing up to billionaires—that is what he actually said in a press conference today. Did he stand up to the billionaires that host 19,000 registered businesses at Ugland House, a place that President Obama called 'the largest building in the world or the largest tax scam in the world'? Malcolm Turnbull had five investments with a minimum investment of $1 million per investment. (Time expired)

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield will refer to members by their correct titles.

Lunar New Year

Mr IRONS (Swan) (13:56): I rise today to speak about the Chinese New Year. Based on the lunar calendar, the Chinese New Year fell on 28 January this year, but, in keeping with tradition, celebrations across my electorate of Swan and across Australia have continued. The Chinese New Year is one of the most important occasions on the Chinese calendar. It is a time of strong traditions and rich culture and is a celebration of the year that was and, of course, the year that will be. It is a very special occasion not only for the Chinese community but for all Australians as we celebrate our nation's diversity. It is a time to enjoy a spectacular array of Chinese cuisine, music, dancing and more, and has become a major festival of celebration in Perth.

On Saturday evening, my wife, Cheryle, and I attended the Chinese New Year ball held in my electorate of Swan, where I represented the Prime Minister, who has just entered the chamber. We were immersed in an evening of diversity and culture. We thoroughly enjoyed the celebrations and were pleased to be able to share in such an important occasion with the community. I would like to thank the Western Australian Chinese Chamber of Commerce and President Khoon Tan for hosting us on the evening and congratulate them on their 30th anniversary. I would also like to thank the chamber for their continued efforts in championing Chinese businesses but also in promoting and supporting the broader Chinese community in WA.

It is now the Year of the Rooster, which is associated with the traits of confidence, hard work and loyalty. On behalf of Cheryle and myself, I would like to wish all our members and constituents a very happy Chinese New Year and a successful Year of the Rooster.
Prime Minister

Mr ROB MITCHELL (McEwen) (13:57): Yesterday we saw one of the nastiest speeches by the Prime Minister since the election night dummy spit. The second he was questioned about his attacks on families, he spat the silver spoon across the dispatch box. The Leader of the Opposition had the figures; the PM had the tantrum. He tells us that the solution to not being able to afford housing, not being able to afford health care and not being able to afford education is simply to get more money. Get rich parents—because that is what he did. It is all about the money for the member for Wentworth. Even billionaire Kerry Packer said he would hate to come between Turnbull and a sack of gold. And yesterday we were told no-one else can associate with millionaires but other millionaires. The Prime Minister tells us: if you are not a millionaire, you are not of any value to him.

I ask the Prime Minister: what about those Australians who are actually doing the hard work? What about the ones farming our produce, the ones teaching our children and the ones fixing the sinkhole near your joint? The government's $50 billion corporate tax cuts to big businesses are benefiting the same millionaires I mentioned before: 'the Cayman Islands club'. But tell me, 'Mr Harbourside Mansion', what about the families you are hurting? What about the services you are cutting? Eating truffles with your turned up polo shirt collar and your sockless boat shoes might be a thing of the rich, but as you showed yesterday— (Time expired)

Energy Affordability

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (13:59): It has certainly been a hot summer, possibly as hot as the summer 120 years ago in 1896. Tomorrow, in my electorate, down in Sutherland, they are expecting 38 degrees, and, to the west of the electorate, they are expecting 41 degrees. Many of the residents of Sydney will come home tomorrow and want to turn their air conditioning on, but unfortunately, with electricity prices already double that of the USA, there will be many hardworking Australians who will be unable to afford their electricity bills. But at least they do not live in South Australia, where they will be lucky if their electricity even works.

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

CONDOLENCES

Bosman, Mr Leonard Lewis

The SPEAKER (14:00): I inform the House of the death on Monday, 6 February 2017, of Leonard Lewis Bosman, a member of this House for the division of St George from 1963 to 1969. As a mark of respect to the memory of Leonard Bosman, I invite honourable members to rise in their places.

Honourable members having stood in their places—

The SPEAKER: I thank the House.
QUESTIONs WITHOUT NOTICE

Pensions and Benefits

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is to the Prime Minister. After repeatedly refusing to say exactly how many Australian families will be worse off because of the Prime Minister’s cuts to family payments, the government today was forced to admit that 1½ million Australian families who receive family payments will be worse off. Why is the Prime Minister cutting the living standards of 1½ million Australian families?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:01): The question for the Leader of the Opposition is: why is he threatening the jobs of every Australian? Do you want to know how many Australian families will be worse off under a government led by this man? Every single one. How many South Australians are worse off because of the Labor left ideological approach to power? I will tell you: every single one—every single one that wants to turn the lights on, that wants to put the air conditioner on, that wants to have a job and wants to have some investment.

The Labor Party threatens every job and every business. They have a set of policies, and every single one is designed to discourage investment and discourage employment. And on energy, we do not have to theorise about what their policies will do; we do not need an economic model; we have got the state of South Australia that proves their folly.

Ms Burney interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Barton is warned!

Ms Plibersek: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The point of order is on relevance. If the Prime Minister could stop shouting and tell us about the 1½ million families—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will resume her seat. The Prime Minister is in order, and I caution the member for Sydney on points of order. I have cautioned her before.

Mr TURNBULL: I do not think it is the volume the honourable member objects to; it is the content—they cannot take it. They cannot take the fact that they have failed to deliver the security of energy that Australians need, and they have done it in South Australia in spades. We can see it. Yesterday, it was 41 degrees—no power. That was great! What a great achievement! Really, this is the triumph of the Labor Party. They have a set of policies, a platform, every plank of which is designed, determined, to undermine employment.

Mr Thistlethwaite interjecting—

Mr TURNBULL: I saw the member for Kingsford Smith complaining a moment ago about how you model these things. Well, you don’t need a model; you know exactly what is going to go on because you have the model there in South Australia. It is a real-life experiment. That is exactly what they are doing. They have been experimenting with the lives of South Australians, and that is what they will do right around Australia.

This Labor Party is led by a man who preached the virtue of cutting business taxes—

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will resume his seat. There has already been a point of order on relevance, but I—

Mr Morrison interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will cease interjecting. The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order.

Mr Burke: I appreciate that we are not allowed to get up to raise a point of order again, but there has to be some limit. It is insane what is going on now. It has nothing to do with the question at all—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my right will cease interjecting.

Mr Pyne interjecting—

Mr Robert interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House is warned! The member for Fadden is warned! Members on both sides may wish to raise their voices, but I am not going to shout over the top of them. The Manager of Opposition Business I heard out of deference to his position. He well knows the standing orders. I am listening carefully to the question. I have a summary here with me. There was a preamble to the question, and I am not going to have the Manager of Opposition Business reflect on me with what he just said. I am really not. I have said before, many times, that if the opposition does not want to have preambles within their questions that is a matter for them, but I have decided to have free-flowing debate in this regard. I have said this many times before, and it was uncharacteristic of the Manager of Opposition Business that he was going to describe the Prime Minister's answer in that way and how I am ruling on them—I am not happy about that; I am really not. The Prime Minister is well within order given the question that has been asked. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr TURNBULL: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The only insanity that we are seeing at the moment is the Labor Party's assault on the living standards of Australians. The only insanity we are seeing right now is the way this opposition persists with policies that are turning out the lights and the air conditioners in South Australia—

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs is warned!

Mr TURNBULL: so that families cannot keep their children cool on a 41-degree day. That is insanity for you.

Economy

Mr RAMSEY (Grey—Government Whip) (14:07): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House on how the government's energy and childcare policies are backing hardworking Australians and supporting family budgets, including in my electorate of Grey?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:07): I thank the honourable member for his question. I recall just a few weeks ago our visit to Port Lincoln, a city which has got to the point where, because of the unreliability of electricity in South Australia, businesses are investing millions of dollars in back-up generators. That is the great achievement of the Labor Party's energy policy in South Australia—back-up generators. As one of the honourable member's constituents said, 'We may as well be operating in a Third World country, the electricity is so unreliable.' We stand for secure, affordable electricity. We stand for policies that deliver on our emission reduction targets. And we believe that every party and every
leader, or would-be leader, must have a commitment to delivering energy security, because it is the foundation of all of the opportunities for households, for businesses, for families and for employment.

The truth is that the Labor Party stands today for higher power bills and less available and less affordable childcare. That is their position. That is where they have staked their ground. They are opposing our childcare reforms; reforms which will make childcare more affordable, more available and, above all, more affordable for the families on the lowest incomes. So more mums will be able to make that balance, get out into the workplace and stay in the workplace. As one of the mothers said to me yesterday, 'These reforms will enable me to work an extra day. These will enable me to keep more of my after-tax income.' This is a huge opportunity. It builds on our commitment to provide security.

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL: But we see none of that from the Labor Party; we just see ideology. It was 41 degrees in South Australia yesterday—41 degrees—and all of the wind turbines were providing 2½ per cent of the state’s electricity. And you know what, Mr Speaker? That is what they do during a heatwave. The heatwave comes, the wind drops and there is no wind power. So what was South Australia doing? It was sucking brown-coal energy from Victoria. The most emissions-intensive energy in Australia was being hauled across the interconnector, stretching it to capacity. What a triumph of ideology over common sense!

Mr Champion interjecting—

Ms Butler interjecting—

Mr TURNBULL: The Labor Party stand for higher electricity prices, less reliable electricity, less affordable child care and less available child care. They have abandoned Australian families, just as the Leader of the Opposition, again and again, abandoned the members of his union.

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield and the member for Griffith were interjecting continuously. They are warned. I wanted to make sure they heard the warning. The member for Sydney has been, as well, and I am cautioning her as well.

Energy Security

Mr BUTLER (Port Adelaide) (14:10): My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Energy. Why did the Australian Energy Market Operator, the federal regulator that reports to this minister, force blackouts on South Australians last night when there was sufficient spare gas generation capacity at Pelican Point—

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Port Adelaide will resume his seat. Members on my right will cease interjecting. The Minister for Trade and the Minister for Health—

Mr Frydenberg: Why don't you do that again?

The SPEAKER: I would like to hear it in silence. The member for Port Adelaide has the call.
Mr BUTLER: Thank you again, Speaker. My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Energy. Why did the Australian Energy Market Operator, the federal regulator that reports to this minister, force blackouts on South Australians last night when there was sufficient spare gas generation capacity at Pelican Point, which the federal regulator refused to turn on?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Minister for the Environment and Energy) (14:11): Christmas was seven weeks ago and I am getting my present now! I mean, seriously! As the Prime Minister just said, the problem in South Australia was a lack of supply. The fact is—

Mr Dreyfus: You are delusional.

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

The member for Isaacs then left the chamber.

The SPEAKER: I say to all members that I cannot allow continued disruptions of question time. They decide whether they leave under 94(a) by their actions. The minister has the call.

Mr FRYDENBERG: Wind power fell to 2½ per cent of supply yesterday in South Australia. At times, it can provide up to 80 per cent. So the whole problem was the failure to provide sufficient wind. The only wind blowing in South Australia is the hot air of the Labor Party. I suppose the member for Port Adelaide thinks that the market operator could have fixed the blackout last September, where 1.7 million people lost their power. I suppose he thinks the operator could have fixed the blackout last December. I suppose he thinks the operator could have fixed the blackout in January. And now we have got one in February.

The member for Port Adelaide asked a serious question about what the market operator thinks about the system in South Australia. The reality is—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr FRYDENBERG: This what the market operator said last year before the blackout:

Initial challenges are more acute in South Australia, due to the combination of its generation mix …

The fact is that they have the world's highest proportion—

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order?

Mr Burke: On direct relevance. The question goes to a decision taken by the market regulator yesterday. The comments made last year cannot be relevant to the refusal to turn on additional power yesterday.

The SPEAKER: I have listened carefully to the minister and to the point of order. He is a fair way through the answer now. He is well within his rights to refer to comments by the regulator, but the Manager Of Opposition Business is correct in saying that whilst he is able to do that the question also asked about actions yesterday. The minister will need to address himself to those or wind up his answer.

Mr FRYDENBERG: The reality is that the market operator and the market condition actually appointed to the failure in South Australia because there is this increase in the generation of intermittent power. But I spoke yesterday and this morning to the market operator. You have not. The market operator has made it very clear he disputes Jay Weatherill
and the federal Labor Party trying to blame the umpire for the bad game that they have played when it comes to South Australia’s energy needs.

We all know, in Jay Weatherill’s words, this was a big experiment. This big experiment has failed the people of South Australia. They pay on average more than 40 per cent more than the national average for electricity. We have seen big energy users be pushed out of business as a result of this experiment. We have seen these blackouts across the state, which have occurred multiple times. The fault lies with the Labor Party, their ideological approach and their refusal to support blue-collar jobs because they want to win green votes in the city.

**Distinguished Visitors**

The SPEAKER (14:16): I inform the House that we have present on the floor this afternoon the Hon. Murray McCully, New Zealand’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, and His Excellency Mr Chris Seed, New Zealand’s High Commissioner. On behalf of the House, I extend a very warm welcome to you to question time.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

**Questions Without Notice**

**Agriculture Industry**

Mr PASIN (Barker) (14:16): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. Will the Deputy Prime Minister outline how the government is securing the future of agricultural production in Australia and in my electorate of Barker? Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware of any threats to the ongoing viability of hardworking Australian business and families?

Mr JOYCE (New England—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources) (14:17): I thank the honourable member for his question. Might I also give thanks, through him, for the support from the citrus growers in South Australia who commended us on the work we are doing in turning around the citrus industry and bringing real prosperity back to the area. It is so important when areas such as the South Australian Murraylands and Riverland region produce $2.1 billion worth of produce. Within South Australia the wool market that has also turned around and the wine market has turned around. We have record cattle prices and record meat sheep prices. We are bringing real prosperity back to the area via good policy.

Of course, that is in stark contrast to some of the other things that are happening. One of the biggest problems the irrigators have is high electricity costs. We have a running example of what would happen to our nation, the nation of Australia, if it adopts the same policy that South Australia has on renewable energy of 50 per cent. We do not need to model what is going to Australia if this crowd gets in. We can see it; it is live. They had a real-life experience of 41 degrees last night because all the air conditioners went out. Why did they go out? Because of their pathetic policy. Because of the pathetic way that they are tied to the Greens. They are more interested in Balmain than they are in the people of the Riverland. They are more interested in Annandale than they are in Adelaide. They are more interested in Green preferences than looking after the Australian working men and women.

We have seen this in such live examples. The Loxton pumping station in South Australia has had bills increase from 2010 when they had an $880,000 power bill to a $1.8 million...
power bill in 2017. We have seen the Central Irrigation Trust's bill has gone up by $1.4 million in 18 months. This is driving people out of jobs. It is driving industry out of South Australia.

What does the Australian Labor Party want to do? Of course, when they see a complete and utter stuff-up they replicate it as federal policy. That is what they are going to do. They want to do to Australia what they have done to South Australia. They want to give us a real-life experience of the Middle Ages. They want to take us back to the caves. That is how it works as these jobs drop off.

When is the member for Maribyrnong going to go to the dispatch box and defend his party's position on power? When is he going to stand up and say something about what they are going to do to our nation's power? When are they going to stand behind this absolute stroke of genius, which is to take Australia to the same position they have taken South Australia?

Now there is the Western Australian Labor Party. It must be a contagion! They want to replicate the South Australian experience. But it is not much of an experience; it is a bit of a nightmare. In the last five months they have had four months in which they have had blackouts. In the last five months they have had four very good reasons why businesses should be leaving South Australia.

It is really a question for you, isn't it, member for Maribyrnong? Are they actually going to switch you off? (Time expired)

**Pensions and Benefits**

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:20): My question is to the Prime Minister. Kelly is a mum from Ballarat with three children in school aged seven, eight and 11. Kelly says that she relies on family payments to keep her car on the road, which she says is her only means of getting her children to and from school. The Prime Minister's cuts to family payments mean that Kelly will lose around $1,000 a year. Why is the Prime Minister taking money from families like Kelly's but still persisting with a $50 billion tax giveaway to large businesses, big banks and multinationals?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:21): I assume the business tax cuts that the honourable member referred to are the ones that in 2012 he said delivered productivity, investment, jobs and economic growth. This Leader of the Opposition says one thing in one place and another in another place, depending on what the audience is and whether it suits him.

The simple fact of the matter is this: What we are doing is ensuring that hardworking families get more support with more affordable and available child care. We met some of them just this morning. I met Annette this morning. She has a two-year-old son, Hugo, who uses three days of child care. She will be able to use more now, and she will be able to work more and stay more engaged in the workforce. And Kate, who has a two-year-old daughter, Anna, and a five-year-old son, Ben. They will benefit from our child-care package.

Under our package, a family earning $50,000 a year—

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will resume his seat. The Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.
Mr Shorten: My point of order goes to relevance. My question was about people receiving family payments and school-age children. The Prime Minister keeps talking about child care, but he does not talk about families with kids at school.

The SPEAKER: I have heard the Leader of the Opposition's point of order. There are a number of aspects to the question. The question asked a number of things. There were. I am not going to be told there were not. I am sitting here with a summary of the question. It referred to company tax cuts; it had a preamble at the start; it talked about big business, banks, family payments and why the government is making cuts. Having considered all that, the Prime Minister is in order.

Mr TURNBULL: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Our Families Package and the child-care package are absolutely fair and ensure that funding goes where it can produce the best outcomes for all Australian families. On the phasing out of the end-of-year supplements, we have been very honest about that. We took that policy to the election. These are end-of-year supplements that are no longer fit for purpose. They were introduced at a time when mistakes or miscalculations were much more common. That is not the case now. We are replacing them with a much more generous and more affordable and available child-care system and $20 a fortnight extra per child for those receiving that family tax benefit. That means families get the money when they need it the most during the year, not simply at the end of the year. We are putting money into the pockets of Australian families with children to ensure that they can meet their household expenses and, above all, that more children get the benefit of that early learning and child care and that more mothers and fathers are better able to balance work and family and stay engaged in the workforce. That is of critical importance to every Australian family and every Australian parent.

National Security

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (14:24): My question is to the Prime Minister. The new United States President, Donald Trump, appears to be dangerously unhinged, has a sycophantic relationship with Russian dictator, Vladimir Putin, and is surrounded by Far Right ideologues who seem hell-bent on war, including in our region. So far Australia has followed the United States into every war every time they have asked. Prime Minister, can you understand why Australians are now worried that they may wake up one morning to find that, in a private phone call, you have committed Australia to another American-led war? Given how dangerous Donald Trump is, will you commit to supporting the Greens' bill to require a full and public parliamentary debate and decision before Australia follows the US into their next war?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:25): I can imagine no step that would put Australia's national security more at risk than adopting the policies of the Greens. As Theresa May said in the House of Commons, the honourable member is part of a protest movement. I am the leader of a nation. I am standing up for Australia's security. You, the Greens party, would undermine it at every turn. The American alliance is the foundation of our national security. It has been built by millions of Australians and Americans of sacrifice and of standing shoulder to shoulder in every major conflict since the First World War. In the last week, we have seen more recognition and support for the Australian alliance in the United States than we have seen for many years. There were motions proposed in the Congress. We have seen endorsements from cabinet secretaries. We have seen endorsements from leading
senators, like John McCain. We have seen front-page headlines and editorials. Americans understand they have no truer ally, no more resolute friend than Australia. We have stood together again and again in freedom's name, in our national interest. And, when we commit our troops to war, when we put our men and women of the ADF in harm's way, we do so when they are well led, well supplied and with every effort to ensure they can return safely home, their duty done, their mission accomplished. But I say to the honourable member: the policies of his party would put this nation at grave risk, and we will not have a bar of them. We are standing for Australia, defending our security, defending our national interests, and whenever we commit our troops we do so in the national interest of Australia. That is our duty. That is the nation we serve.

Economy

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (14:28): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer outline to the House what the government is doing to ensure that Australia has a strong economy that creates jobs and reduces cost-of-living pressures? How does a competitive economy help hardworking Australians get ahead, especially in regional parts of Australia like Canning?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:28): This is coal. Do not be afraid. Do not be scared. It will not hurt you.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer knows the rule on props.

Mr MORRISON: It is coal. It was dug up by men and women who work and live in the electorates of those who sit opposite—from the Hunter Valley, as the member for Hunter would know. It is coal that has ensured for over 100 years that Australia has enjoyed an energy-competitive advantage that has delivered prosperity to Australian businesses and has ensured that Australian industry has been able to remain competitive in a global market. Those opposite have an ideological, pathological fear of coal. There is no word for 'coalophobia' officially, but that is the malady that afflicts those opposite. It is that malady that is affecting the jobs in the towns and the industries and, indeed, in this country because of the pathological, ideological opposition to coal being an important part of our sustainable and more certain energy future.

Affordable energy is what Australian businesses need to remain competitive. They cannot fizzle out in the dark as those opposite would have them do, as businesses in South Australia are now confronting. On this side of the House, you will not find a fear of coal anymore than you will find a fear of wind—except for that which comes from the Leader of the Opposition; you will not find a fear of sun; you will not find a fear of wave energy; you will not find a fear of any of these sources of energy. What you will find is a passion for the jobs of Australians who work for businesses that depend on energy security that those opposite want to switch off, just like the South Australian Labor government is switching off jobs, switching off lights and switching off air conditioners and forcing Australian families to boil in the dark as a result of their Dark Ages policies.

That is not the only thing we are doing to stand up for Australian businesses; our company tax cuts that those hypocrites opposite used to support and now oppose—here he is; the whinger from Watson!
The SPEAKER: The minister will return to the despatch box. He will withdraw two unparliamentary remarks.

Mr MORRISON: I withdraw, Mr Speaker, unreservedly. When it comes to our company tax cuts, when it comes to energy prices, what I do know is that there is someone else who knows a lot about digging things out of the ground for the great prosperity of Australians, and that is Twiggy Forrest—do not worry, Leader of the Opposition, he will give you a dinner invitation later! You can tuck your knees under his table, too, as the Prime Minister said yesterday. This is what Twiggy Forrest said today:

We've kept our power prices high, which lowers the standard of living, and if we keep our tax rates high we will jack up unemployment and keep people out of work.

That is the policy prescription from those who sit opposite, and they should be ashamed.

Pensions and Benefits

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:31): My question is to the Prime Minister. Is the Prime Minister aware that almost three million children are in families that receive family tax benefit part A? Prime Minister, how many of these three million children are in families that will have their payments cut?

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Minister for Social Services) (14:32): I thank the member opposite for his question. As mentioned earlier, there are about 1.5 million families that we could describe as family tax benefit families in the system. The question has been asked about some numbers, so I will give you some numbers: of those 1.5 million families, 720,000 have children of childcare age—between zero and five years. Of those 1.5 million families, 480,000 have children of after-school care age—aged six to 12 years. All of those families with children of those ages stand to benefit from generation-changing childcare reform—that is 720,000 out of 1.5 million; and 420,000 out of 1.5 million. We will get on to the Leader of the Opposition's number, so let me tell you this: there are one million children of long day care age, between zero to five years, inside the family tax benefit system. There are 1.2 million children of after-school care age, between six to 12 years, and the families of those children all stand to benefit from reform to child care.

Let me give you a few examples of how that reform might work: earlier on we heard about Kelly, whose youngest child was aged seven. If, for instance, you had two children aged six and over and were earning a low income of about $50,000, you would stand to benefit $239 a year, because you could access the reforms to child care that we have put on the table. What is fascinating is that we have devised a system where we can find appropriate savings inside the family tax benefit system and reinvest almost all of those into generational reform to child care. Members opposite also made some savings inside the family assistance system, you might realise. In fact, they made $23 billion worth of savings, and so—

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume his seat. The Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

Mr Shorten: My point of order is on relevance. There was no preamble. I asked one simple question: how many of these three million children are in families that will have their payments cut? The minister is talking about children who are not affected by their cuts. We just want him to the answer to one question: how many children are in families that are going to get a cut in family payments?
Mr PORTER: As I was noting, we have invested all of the money that we are saving from the family tax benefit system. The fact is that members opposite also made some savings. They made $23 billion—

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume his seat for a second. It was a very specific question and the minister, in the early part of his answer, was very specific with some figures. I have to say to the Leader of the Opposition that at that point I deemed him relevant. Whilst members asking questions would like them answered in a particular way, he was answering them with figures that might have required you to do some calculations. The minister is now moving to a more general area, and I would ask him to either come back to the specifics or seek to wind his answer up.

Mr PORTER: There are 720,000 families out of 1.5 million who will benefit—net benefit. There are 480,000 families with children who are of long day care age who can also benefit. All of those families stand to benefit from childcare reforms that we have on the table, and what reforms have been offered by those opposite? Nothing. How much of that $23 billion worth of savings did they reinvest into child care? Zero.

Energy Security

Ms FLINT (Boothby) (14:36): My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Energy. Will the minister update the House on the importance of energy security and affordability to Australia, and particularly to the people of my home state of South Australia in the light of yesterday's blackout? Is the minister aware of what obstacles stand in the way of delivering reliable and affordable energy to hardworking Australian businesses and families?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Minister for the Environment and Energy) (14:37): I thank the member for Boothby for her question and acknowledge her deep commitment to energy security and affordability for her constituents and her state. As I said, yesterday at 6.33 pm 40,000 customers—households and businesses—lost power. They lost it for a total of 27 minutes and the spot price went from around $100 a megawatt hour to $14,000 a megawatt hour. This followed a state-wide blackout last September and other outages in December, in January and now in February. It reminds us that Jay Weatherill's big experiment has failed—the take-up of intermittent sources of power of more than 40 per cent. We on this side of the House know that we need to keep more baseload power in the system—cleaner coal, gas and—as the Prime Minister has talked about—storage, including pumped hydro. I wish I could say that was a view shared by those opposite, but it is not. Jay Weatherill held a press conference this morning, the Premier of South Australia, and this is what he said as to why the blackout occurred last night: 'If they had a carbon price, they could have avoided the blackout last night.'

The Premier of South Australia thinks more tax means more wind. The Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Tom Koutsantonis, said wind had nothing to do with it, even though wind only got down to providing 2½ per cent of supply. Now we have the member for Port Adelaide trying to blame the operator. Next, he will be telling us that the operator killed Kennedy! Next, he will be telling us that the operator sunk the Titanic! Next, he will be telling us that the operator powered the submarine that took Harold Holt! It was not the operator's fault; it was Jay Weatherill's fault. Now, the Leader of the Opposition wants to take this horror show national with a 50 per cent renewable energy target. You want to sell out the
jobs of the 3,000 people working at Olympic Dam, the 1,600 people working at Whyalla with Arrium and the 750 people working with Nyrstar at Port Pirie. That is what you want to do.

I would say to the Leader of the Opposition: do not ever sacrifice the jobs of blue-collar, hardworking Australians on the altar of your ideology, your green ideology. You say you are not a rampant greenie, but you are, Mr Speaker. You are selling out the blue-collar workers.

The SPEAKER: I just say to the minister: I am not any of those things.

Mr FRYDENBERG: After these recent events, what will it take for the Leader of the Opposition to see sense? Please tell me, Leader of the Opposition, that the lights will not have to go out at Raheen!

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:40): I inform the House we have present in the gallery this afternoon a delegation from the Asia-Pacific who are attending the Pacific Research Dialogue at the Australian National University. On behalf of the House, I extend a very warm welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Electricity Infrastructure

Mr BUTLER (Port Adelaide) (14:40): My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Energy. I refer to the statement released today by the operator of the Pelican Point power station, which reads:

The second unit … at Pelican Point is not able to provide a market response under the current rules of the … NEM unless directed by the market operator.

Why did the federal regulator which reports to this minister force blackouts on South Australian households and business instead of directing Pelican Point to switch on the second unit?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Minister for the Environment and Energy) (14:40): This is literally unbelievable. You have had successive blackouts in South Australia. You have had written reports from the Australian Energy Market Operator and the Australian Energy Market Commission saying that the system's strength is a weakened as you increase a reliance on intermittent sources of power. The Australian Energy Market Operator—

Mr Keogh interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Burt is warned!

Mr FRYDENBERG: disputes the version of events that the Labor Party are starting to peddle. When you play a bad game, you do not blame the operator. This is absolutely pathetic. There are hundreds of thousands of workers in South Australia in the manufacturing sector. Their jobs have now been put at risk as a result of higher electricity prices—

Mr Keogh interjecting—

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

The member for Burt then left the chamber.

Mr FRYDENBERG: Just last week, Senator Ruston and I visited a seafood business in South Australia that has seen its electricity prices go up by 50 per cent. Do you know whose
electorate that is in? It is the member for Port Adelaide's electorate. You have no message of support for them because you have a 50 per cent renewable energy target federally.

**The SPEAKER:** I always allow preambles, but we are now into the second minute. The question, whilst it was long, was very specific in a number of regards. As the minister knows, he will need to address those remarks or discontinue with his preamble and wind up his answer.

**Mr FRYDENBERG:** The Energy Market Operator disputes this version of events that the Labor Party are putting forward. Pelican Point could have come on with the high demand and the high prices. The issue in South Australia was not Pelican Point. The issue in South Australia was the low supply from wind power. This is all about creating a little distraction here, so we do not see what is going on here. To use the words of the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Penny Wong, 'your policy is a smokescreen'. This is a smokescreen. The reality is wind power only provided to 2½ per cent of supply in South Australia yesterday. The interconnector, ironically providing brown coal fired power from Victoria into South Australia, was at maximum capacity. The issue here is that wind was so low in South Australia and demand was high because of the temperatures that the system could not cope. If South Australia was like other states, you would not have had this problem and you are only compounding this problem with your 50 per cent renewable energy target, which is putting ideology ahead of jobs.

**Mr Butler:** I seek leave to table the media statement from ENGIE that confirms that this minister and the operator sat on their hands last night.

**The SPEAKER:** Is leave granted? Leave is not granted.

**Energy Security**

**Mr GEE** (Calare) (14:44): My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport representing the Minister for Regional Development. Will the minister update the House on the importance of affordable and reliable energy in regional Australia and what impact would higher electricity prices have on jobs and hardworking families in regional Australia?

**Mr CHESTER** (Gippsland—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) (14:44): I thank the member for Calare for his important question on what is a very serious issue for regional Australia. The member's electorate in regional New South Wales is home to the Mt Piper power station, which employs in the order of 300 people. It is these power stations which are vital for providing the affordable and reliable energy that regional Australia needs. It is the power stations in regional Australia that keep the lights on in our homes, in our schools, in our hospitals and in our businesses; but it is the people who work there who are being vilified by Labor and the Greens as dirty, big polluters. Many of those people live in my community. I can tell you that they know they have been sold out by the Australian Labor Party.

The member asks why it is important for regional Australians to have affordable and reliable energy. One-third of Australians live outside of our capital cities, and we want more people to enjoy the great quality of life we can offer in places like Wagga Wagga, Rockhampton, Mildura, Mackay, Dubbo and Gippsland. We want to build a safer, stronger and better regional Australia where everyone can get ahead. But people living in regional areas have, on average, lower household incomes than people living in our metropolitan areas,
and when the power bills go up it is the people in regional Australia—those who live in homes in regional Australia—who are hit the hardest.

Reliable baseload energy is also critical for jobs in regional Australia. There were more than 670,000 regional businesses registered in regional Australia in 2015. But they are getting squeezed by higher energy costs. Our dairy farmers, our retailers, our hairdressers and our workshops are all suffering under high energy costs, and they will only increase under Labor's ideological obsessions. If we are serious about keeping manufacturing in regional Australia—and we especially want jobs right throughout our regions—we need to keep providing reliable baseload energy across the nation.

Now, this side of the House understands that. Those opposite have given up on manufacturing. They have given up on coal-fired power stations—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr CHESTER: They have surrendered to the Greens, and by the sound of their protests, they know it in their hearts. To save their own jobs, to keep getting those Greens preferences, they have sold out the workers in places like Latrobe Valley, and they know it.

Mr Broadbent interjecting—

Mr CHESTER: As the member for McMillan knows, in our electorates, it is not just baseload energy that comes from these power stations, it is baseload jobs.

Mr Rob Mitchell: You sold them off!

The SPEAKER: The member for McEwen!

Mr CHESTER: They know that this impending closure of Hazelwood is exactly what Labor wanted five years ago when they voted for the Contract for Closure scheme. Those opposite wanted to get rid of coal-fired power stations under the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments, and they know it. This Prime Minister has a plan for jobs. He has a plan for reliable and affordable energy into the future. Labor in this place and at state levels right around Australia has given up on the workers that it used to represent. Labor has sold out to the Greens. You know you have sold out to the Greens, member for Maribyrnong, and it is families around Australia who will pay the price if 'Electricity Bill' ever becomes Prime Minister.

The SPEAKER: The minister will return to the dispatch box and withdraw that last unparliamentary phrase. He knows he needs to refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr CHESTER: I withdraw.

Pensions and Benefits

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga) (14:47): My question is to the Minister for Social Services. I refer to the minister's previous answer, and I quote:

… we have invested all of the money that we are saving from the family tax benefit system. But, under its policy, the government is cutting $2.7 billion in family payments and only spending $1.6 billion on its childcare policy. Is the minister aware he was misleading the Australian people, or is he just plain incompetent?

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Minister for Social Services) (14:48): I should have said 'almost all', that is true.
Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left! I am trying to hear the answer.

Mr PORTER: But it does give me the opportunity—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Jagajaga will resume her seat. Members on my left will cease interjecting. The member for Jagajaga cannot have a point order within 17 seconds; that is a record. The minister has the call.

Mr PORTER: In the omnibus bill that we brought before the parliament, there are significant reductions in the savings that we have achieved. The reduced savings from the family tax benefits system are about $1.72 billion. The reduced savings from the paid parental leave changes are about $700 million. The childcare costs, in the end, are about $1.6 billion.

All of the money that is being reinvested, of course, is very important to making sure that childcare goes ahead. If I might return to a point that I tried to come to in an earlier answer but was unfortunately prevented from doing but that you have now given me an opportunity to raise, there was a situation that developed with respect to the previous government—

Mr Burke: What’s going on?

Mr PORTER: where they did go into the family assistance process—

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume his seat. The member for Jagajaga will resume her seat. The minister is halfway through a sentence. I heard the Manager of Opposition Business ask, ‘What’s going on?’ I think we are about to find out, but I caution the minister to remain relevant to the question that is being asked, not a previous question. But I do say to the member for Jagajaga that the preamble to her question did refer to his previous answer. The minister has the call.

Mr PORTER: I have been asked about the reinvestment of our savings from the family tax benefits system into childcare. The lion’s share of the savings from the family tax benefit savings are being reinvested into childcare. It is generational reform.

But what is very interesting about the structural changes that allow you to save money in the family assistance system and move it into proper investment in childcare is that over six years members opposite took $23 billion out of the family assistance system. In fact, the list is so long it is on a spreadsheet: changes to rules for receiving family and parental payments overseas; indexation pauses on upper limits of family payments—

Mr Bowen interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon!

Mr PORTER: prevent payment of family tax benefit Part A installments for customers who provide inaccurate estimates; pause indexation of family tax benefit supplements; extend pause FTB B; remove expansion of link to FTB A; cease fortnightly payments for recipients who do not lodge tax returns. What they moved out of the family assistance system was $23 billion worth of savings that they took out of the family tax benefit system. And how much of that did they reinvest into childcare over six years? Absolutely none.

What we are presenting the parliament and the Australian people with is a system that invests a massive amount of money found in savings in the family tax benefit system. That
allows 230,000 Australians who have said that the reason they cannot engage, or engage more, with the childcare system is because of a failure to reform that system to be helped by this major reinvestment. It is a reinvestment that we are making and that you were never able to make. *(Time expired)*

**National Security**

*Mr COULTON* (Parkes—Deputy Speaker) (14:52): My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. Will the minister inform the House of the importance of strong and consistent immigration and border protection policies? What are the benefits of having a strong and consistent border protection agenda?

*Mr DUTTON* (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (14:52): I thank the honourable member for his question and his interest in making sure, like all of us on this side of the parliament, that we can keep the people smugglers out of business. I am pleased to say that today marks the 928th day since we had a successful people smuggling venture to this country. That is something that those opposite could never preside over, because they dismantled the Howard government policies. They saw 50,000 people arriving and 1,200 people drowned at sea; they opened 17 detention centres; and they completely lost control of our borders.

Australians watch their television sets of a night-time and see the dramas unfolding across the world in terms of people moving across borders and the difficulties where that manifests itself in terrorist attacks, and people are unnerved in this country and around the world. They want to know that their government—the Prime Minister and the responsible leadership team in the country—have the wherewithal to deal with that threat. They know that in this government we have the runs on the board. You cannot look at what people say without looking at what they do. The Labor Party had the rhetoric in opposition that they would not change policies, that they would not dismantle policies, that they would implement policies that would secure the borders of this nation—and they failed. They failed dismally.

This government have got every child out of detention. We have closed those 17 detention centres, we have stopped those boats, and we are dealing with the threats, as they are posed, at our borders. And we will not be deterred by people like the member for Melbourne and the others within the Greens coalition when they were in government with the Labor Party, because we know that theirs is a failed plan.

We know, when we look at this Leader of the Opposition, not to look at what he says but to look at what he did when he was a minister. He promised the Australian public he was going to take care of Australian workers. He ripped off Australian workers in the Clean Event episode when he was a union leader and money was diverted into the union. That is a fact! That is exactly what happened when he was a union leader. What happened when he was part of a government that looked the Australian people in the eye and said that they would stop the drownings at sea and stop the people smuggling business? He failed. And this Labor Party failed the Australian people.

At every turn—it does not matter what aspect of the Leader of the Opposition's character you go to—he fails the test. The Australian public instinctively know, when they look at this Leader of the Opposition, there is something that is not right. They have a hesitation about the Leader of the Opposition because they know that he says one thing to one part of the country.
and something very different to another part of the country: one thing when he is in inner-city
seats talking to Greens voters and something different when he is talking to those people who
are living out in the suburbs around the country. We have only just started on this Leader of
the Opposition. (Time expired)

Pensions and Benefits

Ms KATE ELLIS (Adelaide) (14:55): My question is to the Prime Minister. In September
of last year the government announced more than $3 billion for its child-care policy—

Mr Fletcher: Weren't you going to end the double drop-off? That was a great policy,
wasn't it, Kate?

Ms KATE ELLIS: but legislation introduced by the government just yesterday—

The SPEAKER: The member for Adelaide will resume her seat. The Minister for Urban
Infrastructure will cease interjecting. He was warned yesterday; he is warned again today. The
member for Adelaide will begin her question again.

Ms KATE ELLIS: My question is to the Prime Minister. In September last year the
government announced more than $3 billion for its child-care policy, but legislation
introduced by the government yesterday showed that this policy has now shrunk to a $1.6
billion policy, half of the original amount that was promised by the Prime Minister. Why is
the Prime Minister still making pensioners, new mums and over 1½ million Australian
families pay for his shrinking child-care package at the same time as giving a $50 billion
corporate tax cut to big business?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:57): I thank the honourable member
for her question. She comes from the great state of South Australia, struggling all too often in
the dark: struggling with 41-degree temperatures; struggling with businesses that cannot get
reliable or affordable power. I would commend the ABC's online news site to the honourable
member today. One small-business owner after another, many in her electorate, is saying how
they are being put out of business by the ridiculous Labor energy policies in South Australia.
That is the reality: a state that is struggling to get more investment, more industry, is being put
out of business by Labor's policy.

In terms of child care, what we are delivering is exactly what we promised. We are
delivering precisely the benefits that we promised to Australian families, and it will mean, for
example, that a family earning $65,000 a year will have 85 per cent child-care costs paid. It
will cost $15 per child. That is a huge saving for those families, making child care more
affordable and available.

In terms of the budgetary matters she mentioned, I will ask the Treasurer to add to that.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:58): Only the Labor Party could complain about
the fact that things do not cost as much as they were first estimated. They want it to actually
cost more. What we inherited from those opposite was the exact same model for child care
that was used by those opposite when the original estimates were put together for this
package, when it was first introduced in the 2015-16 budget. What is a tragedy here, with our
child-care reforms, is that if those opposite had supported the savings that we put forward for
two budgets—if they had supported them then—those child-care reforms would be available
right now. What we see from those opposite is not a Leader of the Opposition who has a stop-
go sign; it is a stop-stop sign on every single thing that we bring into this parliament.
Only the Labor Party could complain about the fact that we are delivering exactly the same reform at a lesser cost, which not only ensures that we can deliver the important childcare reforms but we can maintain our trajectory to return the budget back to balance, which is currently projected to be reached in 2021. They are the party of higher prices for child care, bigger deficits, higher taxes and larger debt.

**Pensions and Benefits**

**Mr BUCHHOLZ** (Wright) (14:59): My question is to the Minister for Revenue and Financial Services. Will the minister advise the House on how making the childcare system more affordable, flexible and accessible for hardworking Australian families will create jobs and relieve cost pressures? And what are the alternative approaches to this?

**Ms O’Dwyer** (Higgins—Minister for Revenue and Financial Services) (15:00): I thank the member for Wright for his question. I know of his very strong interest in this area.

He understands that a lack of access to affordable child care can be a real barrier for mothers and fathers returning to the workforce, for them increasing their work hours and for them, in fact, reskilling by going back to university or undergoing further training. By providing access to more affordable child care, the Turnbull government is giving Australian families real choices about their future.

Under the previous Labor government, they actually commissioned a taxation review by former Treasury secretary Ken Henry. In it in 2009 he said:

Access to high-quality and affordable child care can be an important factor in a parent’s decision to remain in or return to the workforce. … Assistance with child care costs recognises that child care is a cost of employment and thereby reduces the disincentives to participate that are created by the tax and transfer system.

He went on to say:

Access to quality child care also plays a role in early childhood development, particularly of children from families experiencing, or at risk of, social exclusion.

We could not agree more.

That is why this government is making childcare reforms that are in fact a very important economic reform. These reforms are going to deliver relief to around a million Australian families in their out-of-pocket childcare cost pressures. They are going to help relieve their household budgets and they are going to give those children an opportunity to benefit from early education. This is critical, because of those children aged under five around 40 per cent use childcare facilities.

So under our changes, a working family that is earning around $60,000 a year will end up paying $15 per child per day for child care. These reforms are going to see us abolish a multiplicity of payments and replace them instead with one single new childcare subsidy that is targeted to provide the greatest assistance to those who are in the most need.

Now, I am asked by the member whether there are any alternatives. I suppose that does depend on your definition of what an alternative is. Those opposite went to the election promising that they would keep the status quo. Then after the election, they went to the National Press Club and they said that they were going to embark upon a big national conversation. And more recently they have said that they are just going to scrap it all and start again.
What they cannot walk away from, though, is their perfect record when they were in government of increasing the cost of child care to Australian families. (Time expired)

**Pensions and Benefits**

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (15:03): My question is to the Prime Minister. Is it still his government's policy to make Australians work until they are 70 to get the age pension? And can the Prime Minister confirm that he is giving Australia the oldest age pension in the developed world?

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Minister for Social Services) (15:03): We have been asked about the age pension age, and so let me start with a very apt description that was given by the member for Jagajaga. She said:

Increasing the age pension age is a responsible reform to meet the challenge of an ageing population and the economic impact it will have for all Australians.

... ...

Australia must move towards a higher pension age over the next decade.


But an even better description—a more academic, a cleverer and more well-rounded description—comes from the member for Fenner. He says:

A better approach would be to index upper age limits in all laws, ...

... ...

How might age indexation operate in practice? One approach would be to mandate that all elderly age limits should increase by 3 months every year (approximately the rate at which life expectancy is presently rising).

Source: 'You're only as old as they feel', op-ed by Andrew Leigh in *The Australian Financial Review*.

I do feel a little bit sorry for the member for Fenner! He was put into the shadow ministry in a factional deal where he got in but he did not get any weight!

**The SPEAKER:** The minister will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order?

**Government members interjecting—**

**The SPEAKER:** Members on my right! The Minister for Immigration and the Treasurer! The Leader of the House!

**Mr Burke:** The question, once again, is one without a preamble and is one which goes directly to the question of the age pension age going up to 70. At no point in the answer so far has the minister referred to that.

**Government members interjecting—**

**Mr Frydenberg:** Give the economist a fair weight!

**The SPEAKER:** On my right. Both the Treasurer and the Minister for the Environment and Energy do not need to interject when I am trying to address the House. I have made that very clear. The minister was completely in order in his preamble. But as he well knows, the preamble cannot last for the entire three minutes.
Mr PORTER: As I was saying, with respect to the issue raised again by the member for Fenner, I do feel sorry for the member for Fenner. In a factional deal that suited his leader he got more work and less pay! He is going to join the Clean Event support group! (Time expired)

Mr Dutton: Use your union credit card! Give them your AWU credit card!

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Immigration is warned! The member for Sydney.

Pensions and Benefits

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:06): My question is to the Prime Minister. Yesterday the government introduced into the parliament a $2.7 billion cut to family tax benefits—

The SPEAKER: Sorry, member for Sydney. The call was on this side—

Ms PLIBERSEK: I know—they were too slow.

The SPEAKER: No, we are not going to play those games, okay? It is not going to be an athletic contest. It will not suit everybody! The member for Durack has the call.

Energy Security

Ms PRICE (Durack) (15:07): My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Will the minister advise the House what Australia's key international partners are doing to ensure their energy security? Is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (15:07): I thank the member for Durack for her question and I note her interest in energy security and the important role of the resources play in her electorate.

Australia is an energy superpower. Our resources are powering the rise in living standards of developed countries. Our resources are driving the economic strength of developed countries. And Australia is the largest exporter of coal. Australia will soon be the largest exporter of LNG. On this side of the House we know that fossil fuels will continue to play a vital role in securing the world's energy needs as well as, of course, playing a vital role in securing the jobs of thousands of Australians, including in the electorate of Durack.

I am asked about what our international partners and competitors are doing. Let me take South Korea. Coal consumption in South Korea has increased by 50 per cent over the 10-year period 2005 to 2015, driven by the electricity sector. In Japan, it is estimated that 45 additional coal-fired power stations will come online in the next decade with the introduction of ultra-supercritical units combined cycle technology, and this will not only secure Japan's electricity needs but meet their environmental standards. Indeed, it is estimated that in our region alone 162 ultra-supercritical units, coal-fired power stations, will be built over the next decade.

I am asked to contrast what our international partners and competitors are doing with others. Well, take the Labor Party's quixotic renewable energy target policies. In South Australia, under a Labor government, we have seen blackout after blackout, destroying business confidence, undermining jobs and threatening investment. In Queensland and Victoria we have seen the renewable energy targets of Labor governments challenging electricity prices to all-time highs, threatening jobs. And it seems that Labor's recklessness is contagious—this madness has now crossed the Nullarbor—because the Western Australian
Labor Party has been shown to be planning a 50 per cent renewable energy target for Western Australia. So they are equal opportunity when it comes to power blackouts. Their idea of equality is for Western Australia to have blackouts as well. Just wait for Mark McGowan’s Julia Gillard moment, when he looks down the camera and says, ‘there will be no 50 per cent renewable energy target under a government I lead’! He is introducing a 50 per cent renewable energy target. Western Australia— *(Time expired)*

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

*Ms Plibersek interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Sydney knows the Prime Minister is completely within his power to end question time, which he has done. She has got the matter of public importance so far.

**AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS**

**Report No. 37 of 2016-17**

**The SPEAKER** *(15:11):* I present the Auditor-General's Performance Audit report No. 37 of 2016-17 entitled *Australian Taxation Office's implementation of recommendations: Australian Taxation Office.*

Ordered that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

**BUSINESS**

**Leave of Absence**

**Mr BURKE** *(Watson—Manager of Opposition Business)* *(15:11):* I move:

That leave of absence from 9 February 2017 until 2 March 2017 be given to Mr Chalmers for parental leave purposes.

Question agreed to.

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Education**

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

The Government's $30 billion of cuts to schools hurting Australian children.

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

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

**Ms PLIBERSEK** *(Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition)* *(15:12):* You really do not have to look further than the line-up on the government's frontbench to know why it is so very important that this country invests in literacy and numeracy. Those geniuses opposite are very happy to give themselves an A+ for managing the economy, but they have added $100 million to net debt; they have tripled the deficit. ‘Tripling the deficit’, incidentally, for those opposite, means it is one times, two times, three times bigger than it was under Labor. They have tripled the deficit. They have blown out net debt. And, at the very same time, they are cutting funding for our schools in favour of a big-business tax cut.
Properly investing in our schools is vital for every Australian child. At every school I visit, the principals, the teachers, the teachers aides, the parents are telling me the huge difference that the early years of extra funding have made in their schools. My colleagues the members for Lalor, for Moreton, for Bendigo, for Solomon do not need convincing. They are going to tell you about the benefits for their schools. So I am going to focus on a few benefits for the schools of those opposite. Let us take member for Gilmore, for example. Ulladulla high school: $450,000 extra funding; more tutoring for senior students, meaning much better literacy numeracy results meaning—guess what?—much better HSC results. Or let us take the member for Capricornia—Berserker Street State School: $600,000 extra funding in the early years alone, meaning a speech pathologist is employed. We know that kids who start school from a disadvantaged background often need extra help to catch up to their peers. In fact, there is research that shows that by the age of three children who have professional parents have heard 30 million more words than children from disadvantaged backgrounds. So this extra help makes all the difference for a lifetime of learning.

You know, it is not just individual children who benefit. It is our whole Australian economy. We cannot be a high-wealth, high-productivity nation without investing in our schools. In fact, any economist will tell you, the OECD will tell you, the Australia Institute will tell you that when we invest in education we lift living standards for all Australians.

What is the Liberal’s plan for school funding? Well, it is a mystery. Early in 2013, the then shadow education minister said that Labor’s plan to properly fund schools was a ‘conski’. Then, in August 2013, just before the election, he realised, didn’t he, that parents, teachers, principals and kids loved the idea that their schools would get extra funding. So then the Liberals said that you could vote Labor, you could vote liberal and there would be not a dollar difference to your school because they were on a unity ticket with Labor on school funding. They had the posters. They had the bunting. When you went out to those election booths on polling day, there it was on a unity ticket with Labor. What did they do at the first opportunity, the 2014 budget? They slashed $30 billion from school funding. And then, again, before the most recent election, we had the Prime Minister, with this extraordinary thought bubble, saying, ‘Perhaps the federal government should give up funding public schools altogether.’ Do you remember that one?

At the moment, we do not know what their plan is, but we know one thing for certain because it is in black and white: the Liberals still want to cut $30 billion from schools. If you look at page 7 of the budget overview for 2014-15, there is the gap. For those opposite who find it difficult to read graphs, I will tell you: there is a line that goes higher, which is Labor funding, and there is a line that goes lower, which is Liberal funding, and the difference between the high line and the low line is the $30 billion cut—and it is there in black and white.

What worry me most are the cuts to the most disadvantaged schools, because we know those children are struggling, and they do not deserve a lifetime of educational disadvantage because of the $30 billion of cuts from those opposite. Parents are working hard. They are fundraising in their school communities. They are out there on weekends doing the sausage sizzle. They are there on election day selling the homemade cakes. I will tell you, you cannot fundraise $30 billion through sausage sizzles. This is a cut of, on average, $3 million for every school community across Australia. Do people know how many sausage sizzles that is?
That is thousands of sausages sizzled to try to make up for the cuts from those opposite. The Liberal's cuts hurt every child in every school right across Australia, because it means fewer teachers, less one-on-one attention, less help with the basics, less of a focus on literacy and numeracy, and less support catching up. They hurt every child.

But while the Liberals are making this $30 billion raid on the future of Australian children, they are prepared to give $50 billion to their big-business mates. That is despite economists telling us that investing in schools gives a better economic return than this tax cut, which ends up, in 20 years, still being a rounding error when it comes to national growth. When I travel around the country, I have not met one parent, one teacher, one principal who has said to me, 'You know what this country really needs? It's a big-business tax giveaway.' This tax giveaway is the equivalent of every man, woman and child in this country giving $2,000 to big business—most of which goes to overseas shareholders and the big banks. If you walked down any street in any electorate in this country and you stopped a random stranger and said, 'Here's $2,000. You can invest it here, giving the banks a tax cut, or you can invested here in your local school,' what would parents say? This is not a mystery.

Of course this $50 billion tax giveaway is welcomed by the CEOs. There is no surprise in that. But I will tell you what the parents of this country want. They want extra teachers in their schools. They want more one-on-one attention for their children. They want more focus on the basics. They want extra support with literacy, numeracy. They want science and coding in their schools. They want more help for children who are struggling. They want more extension activities for kids who are gifted and talented. They want better schools for their children. I ask the mums and dads of Australia: if you had that $2,000, what would you do with it? I know what their answer would be. Our children should not miss out on a decently funded school system—a decently funded school system that those opposite promised. 'Not a dollar difference' is what they said. They said they were on a unity ticket with Labor. Children should not be punished for the mendacity of those opposite and for their desire to help their big-business mates with a tax giveaway.

I was very disappointed to see the New South Wales education minister move along, because there was one conservative voice in this country that was standing up for kids in disadvantaged schools, particularly in regional and rural communities—the communities that the then NSW education minister represented. He was the one who said that the Deputy Prime Minister was out of touch with rural communities because the big problem in rural and regional communities is the educational gap between country and city kids and not whether you could buy another gun. That is what the previous New South Wales education minister said.

Labor will continue to stand up for proper investment in our schools. We will continue to stand up for schools being able to offer coding in the classroom. I cannot tell you how many of the schools I visited have actually had kids from primary school onwards sitting on the floor with their iPads coding a program to make a robot move around the room. Who can tell me that that skill will not be valuable in this century?

Mr Hammond: Crucial.

Ms PLIBERSEK: And it will be not just valuable but crucial, as my colleague says. In the classrooms I have seen groups of four or five children who were missing out before and who would have drifted through their schooling without ever properly learning to read or
write being taken out of class and intensively taught so that they could catch up and go back into the classroom at the same level as their peers and have the confidence of achieving with all of their peers. I can tell you, too, about schools that I have visited where the principal has said to me, 'This extra money has allowed me to help the kids who were not turning up, to go out and make sure that they come to school in the first place, so that they get the birthright of every Australian child, which is a decent education.'

Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson—Assistant Minister for Vocational Education and Skills) (15:22): I have a message for the mums and dads of Australia, and that very simple message is that your kids will get a better quality education under a coalition government than you will ever get for your kids under a Labor government.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mrs ANDREWS: The reason for that is that the coalition government is the government of quality education. We know on this side of the House that funding is important, but what you do with that funding is just as, if not more, important than the quantum of the funding. There are numerous examples. Those opposite, if they had read the reports that are available about the standards of our education here in Australia and the comparison with education standards overseas, would know that here in Australia we have a lot of work to do to ensure that our kids can compete internationally and globally—because, despite the record funding that is being injected into education, our standards are, unfortunately, slipping. The time has come when we need to face up to the fact that significant work has to be done focusing on the quality of education here in Australia.

On this side we all know that funding of schools is a responsibility of the state and territory governments and the Commonwealth government. The Commonwealth provides about one-third of government funding to schools, with the state and territory governments providing the remainder. I have already said that school funding under this government is at record levels over the forward estimates. We can also demonstrate very clearly that the Commonwealth contribution is outpacing the contributions of the states and the territories. But I am not necessarily here today to have a debate about the quantum of the funding; I am actually here because I am interested in a good-quality outcome in education for our students. As I have indicated before, we know that there is not necessarily a direct link between the quantum of funding and the outcome. That has been demonstrated in a number of studies, particularly when we compare ourselves with many of the overseas countries that have a much lower per capita gross domestic product than Australia and yet are outperforming us.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mrs ANDREWS: So we know that there are other things that you need—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Coulton): Order! I was waiting for the interjections to settle down. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was heard in silence. I would expect the same respect to be given to the member for McPherson, if we could have a bit of silence, thank you.

Mrs ANDREWS: I maintain that we are the government of quality education and we are going to proceed down that path. We have a plan, which we have already started implementing, to make sure that we regain the rightful position that we should have in international education standards and that we provide the students of Australia with the
quality education that they so desperately need but was unable to be delivered under the previous government. We have released the Quality schools, quality outcomes paper, which has five key areas that we are focused on into the future. The first one is boosting literacy, numeracy and STEM performance. We are not just talking about it; we are actually out there doing it because we recognise that we have a lot of work to do to make sure that we are graduating students with high-level STEM skills. At the moment, unfortunately, that is not happening, but, when we released the National Innovation and Science Agenda last year, we made a $64 million contribution to initiatives that will improve the teaching and learning of STEM in the early learning and schools programs. That is going to be of enormous benefit because we know that, whilst we cannot actually define what the jobs of the future will be, 75 per cent of those jobs will require skills in mathematics, engineering, technology and science, and we need to make sure that we are equipping our kids for those jobs of the future.

The second pillar of the Quality schools, quality outcomes paper is improving the quality of teaching and school leadership—doing the things that make a difference. The third one is preparing our students for a globalised world, where they can get a job and compete with other students who are at this stage ahead of them globally. The fourth one is focusing on what matters most and those who need it the most. This means genuine attention to needs. The fifth one is increasing public accountability through improved transparency. So we have a plan, we are well on the way to implementing that plan and it is focused on quality. But we on this side of the House have a holistic approach to education. We do not necessarily compartmentalise education. We look at education as a highway which starts with early childhood education and goes through school, vocational education and higher education.

Let me tell you, if we want to talk about cuts, the biggest cuts that caused the most damage—the ones that brought vocational education to its knees—were those that were made by those on the other side of the House. When Bill Shorten was in the education portfolio, there were nine successive cuts to employer incentives in vocational education of $1.2 billion. Labor has brought vocational education in this country to its knees. What those on the other side did to apprentices we have been unable to recover. I understand that you had the great initiative of holding a summit, and that was going to resolve all of the issues. Well, you are too late, Ethel, because we have already been out there consulting.

We have spent months out there, on the ground, talking to the people that understand and know about vocational education, so that we are informed about the policies of the future that are going to go a long way to fix the problems that Labor created in vocational education when they ripped $1.2 billion out of vocational education and brought it to its knees.

We have been undertaking a program of talking to school students, students who are looking to move into vocational education and mature-age workers. We have been talking to businesses. We have been talking to training providers. We have been talking to the private providers. We have been talking to the TAFE colleges. We have been making sure that we are fully informed about what the issues are in vocational education, because it is important that we understand that vocational education is very much based on the successes the students have as they go through school and go into vocational education—which is, in fact, a destination on its own but is a pathway into higher education. We know that we need to improve and increase the number of commencements in apprenticeships, and we know we need to improve the completion.
Ms Collins: They dropped dramatically under you!

Mrs Andrews: They dropped dramatically when Labor cut $1.2 billion and brought it to its knees. I do not know why the people on the opposite side fail to recognise the damage they have done to vocational education in this country. They hold themselves up as the gurus, the ones who understand vocational education. Well, start taking a little bit of responsibility for what you actually did, because you have come so close to destroying what could have been a world-class system. You brought it to its knees, and there is so much work that needs to be done now to try to bring the level up, to restore some confidence in the community and to restore some confidence to the employers that we are not going to cut the rug out from underneath them yet again. That is the damage Labor has done, and they did it consistently with nine successive cuts—$1.2 billion from 2011 to 2013. Time and time again—you did not know when to stop. Unfortunately, by the time you had finished with vocational education, it was damaged almost beyond repair. So, those on the other side, face up to a little bit of responsibility, understand what you have done and, if you cannot be productive and if you cannot be part of the solution, then get out of the way and let those that can fix it actually do it—and that is us.

Ms Ryan (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (15:32): I would like to thank the member for MacPherson for that wonderful tirade. It is nice to see, first, that somebody is now in a portfolio who can say the word 'education' without blushing—that would be a start—and, second, that after four years in government, they are actually looking at the issue and talking to people in the TAFE sector—that would be terrific. What a good idea.

There is no more important a topic than school education, and I would just like to bring the House back to the fact that this is an MPI about a $30 billion cut to school education. The distraction from the last speaker might have made the speaker feel better—the speaker, who was speaking, not the Deputy Speaker of course—but I do not think that it quite hit the mark. It is not a surprise that they want to distract away from the $30 billion cuts to school because, when you look at it electorate by electorate, the member for MacPherson's electorate will lose $22 million across the next two years, because of the policies of the government that she represents.

I notice that the member for Deakin has made himself scarce when he saw that I had a list, because the member for Deakin's electorate will lose $21 million across the next two years. I am not surprised they want to dash out of this chamber. In my electorate of Lalor, there are 58 schools, and these cuts will mean $35 million will be cut from our schools across the next two years.

We talk a lot about numbers in this place, and I am going to talk specifically about the schools in my electorate that currently are getting equity funding and are doing fabulous work in improving student outcomes. The state schools in my electorate all have a target that every child will make more than one year's progress in that one year. These are aspirational schools working hard and being supported through needs-based funding by our state government. At Iramoo Primary School, there are 775 kids with $1.1 million extra this year in equity funding to support the great work of that school. At Laverton prep to 12, there are 653 kids with $1.6 million.

If you listen to these numbers, you also get some understanding about the level of disadvantage and why this funding is needed. If I look at a school like Manor Lakes prep to
12—1,800 children on its books with $1.3 million this year to support every child in that school from prep to 12. This is what equity funding looks like, and these schools are getting the outcomes that we want them to get. They are making aspirational targets and they are trying to reach them. They are working together collaboratively. The teachers are working together, experts in their field, building their craft together as they teach and learn, as they work together on the ground with those students, becoming better and better teachers, because they are feeling supported because they have the resources they need.

Then you look across the chamber and think about the things we know they want to do. We have Minister Birmingham—what a joke! He has been running around and has found a cheap option—went to the UK; someone did—a three-minute test for six-year-olds; a reject-shop option. Don't worry about professional teachers doing their work and learning together, just take a cheap three-minute test, wheel out some cheap program and that will fix it. Do you know where he figured this out? In the UK. Why would you go to a country that is below us on the PISA, in every measure, to figure out how to improve education? Why would you go somewhere where we are performing better than they are?

I do not want to trivialise the importance of education in this country—economically and socially. I do not want to suggest that I would support not taking action when our schools are slipping down in those measures. Our schools need support and our families need support. To back up the member for Sydney, I will finish on this: when I was a principal in a primary school in the inner city we could raise $30,000 at a fete—$30,000, not $35 million. (Time expired)

Mr BROAD (Mallee) (15:37): This is a matter of public importance debate. This is the time when we throw mud at them and they throw mud at us. I like how it does not take long for the reflex action to kick in, with the shake of the head to say 'Shame, shame'. But there is not shame in this, because we are all concerned about the education of our children, which is a matter of public importance. I noticed when I was handing out how-to-vote cards last year that the Labor Party were saying, 'Health and education; health and education,' and it was interesting to see the look on their faces when we said, 'Health, education, border integrity and lower taxes.' It just pointed out that there is actually a holistic purpose to government.

I have learnt a word today—and I guess we are always learning. Education is about lifelong learning. I learnt the word 'mendacity'. That is a word that I had never heard before.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr BROAD: I stand corrected. I must say that, when it comes to literacy, the Labor Party are better. They are good with their words. So I learnt a word today. But, when it comes to numeracy, I think the coalition probably has one up on you. I have been running a business for a long time, and I know what is a cut and what is a balloon payment that was never funded. I guess what we are talking about today is a balloon payment that was put forward in the forward estimates that was never accounted for and never had allocated funds put against it. What we have done is we have been responsible with our numeracy: in 2016, $16 billion; in 2017, $17 billion; and then $18 billion and $19 billion; and, by 2020, we will be funding $20.2 billion to our state governments for education. We are better at numeracy.

But just because you say something long enough does not make it true. I just want to make the point that money does not always equal outcomes. This is the challenge that a responsible
government has to tackle. It has to be: how do we deliver the outcome we want to achieve? The thing that differentiates people on this side of the parliament as opposed to those on the other side is that we realise that throwing money at something does not always fix it. I just want to make that clear. We have focused on how we can deliver that service. We are strengthening the teaching and school leadership. We are developing the essential knowledge and the skills. We are focusing on phonics—the sounding of words.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr BROAD: You think it is revolutionary, but this is about delivering an outcome instead of just shovelling money at it. I also might point out that the federal contribution towards education funding is growing faster than the state contribution. And I might also point out that, when you look at the schools that I have, in a third of the state of Victoria, you see that they are largely forgotten by the administration of the state Labor government. They do not even know they are there. Some of the schools are white-ant eaten. This is because the state administration are very poorly administered.

We talked about sausage sizzles. Some of my very, very poor but private funded schools that can get direct funds from the federal government—

Ms Husar interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Lindsay is warned.

Mr BROAD: What they can do with their money is just phenomenal. They manage to stretch it. They manage to get local tradesmen to expand their works. I have to say that there is a lot to be said for better administration of our funds.

There are three things that make a good, educated student. One of those is their home life. If they are not getting fed breakfast and they do not have a good home life, they are not going to be a good student.

The second is the culture of the schools. When I go to the schools across my patch I see very dedicated teachers who are doing their best but are largely passed over by the administration of the state Labor government. The third is the quality of the facilities. We must produce citizens, not just graduates. I am impressed with our young Australians. We are committed to them. We are the party that understands numeracy and can deliver the best education system for the future.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Moreton, I remind the member for Deakin and the member for Franklin that there should be only one person speaking at a time—and please show respect.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton—Opposition Whip) (15:42): Thank you for that protection, Deputy Speaker. Education is the great enabler in our society. In fact, it is the antithesis of those snobs who peddle the 'know your place' sort of line, because education lets you move through society by being given greater opportunity. I do not say that as poor white trash from the bush raised by a single mum; I am actually going to back it up with a quote from some author called Andrew Leigh. In his book Battlers & billionaires—a great book—he quotes some Harvard academics who say:

… we should think of inequality as a race between technology and education. In eras when technological advances outpace schooling attainment, the gap between rich and poor widens. But in times when the quantity and quality of education increases, so too does equality.

This very skilled author called Andrew Leigh gives us some examples and says:
Someone who completes 12 years of high school is nearly 20 per cent more likely to have a job than someone who drops out in year 9 … a diploma boosts earnings by nearly 20 per cent, while a bachelor’s degree boosts earnings by around 50 per cent.

Education gives people opportunities in life. We saw through that whole Gonski process and all the research that that is the case. In electorates like mine, there are schools that are using this Gonski money incredibly wisely, with school boards, principals and parents coming together to say, ‘What will be the greatest good from this money?’

I know that in my electorate of Moreton in the next few years alone the Turnbull government will cut $12 million. I am from country Queensland. I grew up in the electorate of Maranoa. Somewhere like Maranoa would actually lose $33 million. Hinkler, whose member was at the dispatch box before, would lose $23 million. Mallee would lose $33 million.

Why is this of relevance for the National Party? Because the National Party seats benefited the most from Gonski. It was an investment in the bush and in the opportunities that flow from that. ‘Why would the Labor Party invest in the bush?’ you might hear. Because the Labor Party believes in doing something for the national interest. That is what the Labor Party believes in doing, irrespective of political expediency of rewarding the wealthier schools. That is how the Labor Party invests in education.

Look at the way that that money is being used in Moreton. We see at Sunnybank State High School they have created a dynamic learning environment that is future-focused on students. Corinda State School employs a maths coach to partner with teachers. Kuraby State School is doing Mother’s Day and Father’s Day stalls, trying to raise money so that they can invest in education. But we can never do enough fundraising. As the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party said, we cannot cook enough sausages or make enough lamingtons.

We must make a wise investment in education. Why? Not just because it makes teachers feel good but because it will boost productivity. It will make the economy hum. It will make us competitive with our Asian neighbours who are not sitting idly by and saying, ‘Gee, education is not worth investing in.’ We know that our neighbours—those that we compete with—are investing strongly in education.

Schools in Moreton benefited from Gonski. Children in Moreton benefited from that boost in productivity. It is a solid investment in egalitarianism. That is what it is. That is the sort of Australia the Labor Party believes in. By investing in education we let our best and brightest come forward. We cannot afford to let down that poor kid in the bush, that Indigenous kid, that kid whose second language is English or that bright kid who, but for a little bit of help and support, could be our next leader or our next CEO of Apple or whatever.

We must be investing in our brightest people, and we can only do that by investing in our schools appropriately—not by going back on election promises, flip-flopping on election promises and breaking election promises to the Australian people. It was supposed to be a unity ticket. Why was it a unity ticket? Because it made sense. Remember, Gonski was a banker that looked at economic advantage; not at what the teachers’ unions wanted. (Time expired)

Mr LEESAER (Berowra) (15:47): I thought that the big issue in education was education quality. When we are being beaten as a nation by Kazakhstan and Slovenia, I would have thought that we need to focus on what we can do to improve performance. If we were being beaten at the cricket by Swaziland and Lesotho, we would not be asking how much funding
we were giving to the AIS or to Cricket Australia, we would be asking what we were doing to improve batting performance. Yet what we have heard from my friends opposite is the usual: throw money at the problem, like Jackson Pollock throwing paint at a canvas, just messing things up left, right and centre. We heard so little from members opposite about improving performance. We heard so little from members opposite about improving teaching and school leadership. We heard nothing about developing knowledge and skills. We heard nothing about better evidence and transparency. We heard nothing about parental engagement.

My friend the member for Moreton made a very good point when he said that education is the great enabler. But the truth of what Labor did with the Gonski funding is that they did not actually make it the great enabler funding. Do not trust me on this; trust Labor's own expert that they appointed to the Gonski panel, Ken Boston. He said of Labor's deal, which was implemented by the Leader of the Opposition when he was education minister:

Now, this was not what the Gonski review recommended. It was not sector-blind, needs-based funding. It continued to discriminate between government and non-government schools.

Indeed, under Labor's implemented Gonski funding program some of the arrangements for schools will not attract their theoretical needs-based funding entitlement for more than 100 years. That is hardly needs-based funding and that is hardly an improvement in the quality of our education system at all. That is what we have heard from the Labor Party.

In fact, what we have heard from those opposite today have been a series of scares and class envy. The first great scare we heard from them was that there were these massive cuts to education. The truth is that there are no cuts. School funding under the coalition over the 2014-17 period has been at record levels. Recurrent funding is going from $16 billion in 2016 to $20 billion in 2020. Between 2016 and 2020, total government funding for government schools is growing at 33½ per cent faster than non-government schools. This is one of Labor's great lies.

We also heard from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition the usual class war and class envy stuff about tax cuts for businesses. Can I say that this demonstrates how little Labor knows about dealing with business. Labor would like to say that any business that has a turnover—not a profit—of more than $2 million is a big business. I have to say that we on this side of the House who know something about business—

An opposition member interjecting—

Mr LEESER: I am addressing a question and a point made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in this debate—a debate that she raised and an issue that she chose to bring up. Let me say that there is a big difference between turnover and profit. That is what we know. We do not understand why Labor wants to put the small business families who sends their kids to schools in more difficulty, not being able to invest more money in their own school choices, by not giving them a tax cut. People who run small businesses want their kids to go to schools and they want them to have good schools, but they want the performance of those schools to be better quality.

That is where the focus of this government's education policy has been. That is why in our focus we have looked at developing a diagnostic test for year 1 students to ensure that if there are literacy and numeracy problems early on we can address them and do something about them. That is the time to actually engage kids who are having really great difficulties in
literacy and numeracy. We have put together initiatives to get and ensure that we maintain the best teachers in the classroom. We are reforming literacy and numeracy through improvements in STEM teaching. We know that the best jobs in the future will be jobs that require students to have stronger STEM knowledge.

Increased funding, as we know, does not mean increased performance. We have had increased funding in the education space for decades and yet the performance is slipping. That is why we need to ensure that the focus is on quality. A quality focused education policy will get us the outcomes we need to improve our performance against other countries. The Leader of the Opposition's corruption of the Gonski process demonstrates he is not fit to run the country. This notion is typical of Labor's approach to public policy. Labor is to public policy what Bernie Madoff is to financial management.

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (15:52): Perhaps a bit of a history lesson is required for the new members of the House who were not here in the last parliament when a former education minister, Christopher Pyne, the member for Sturt, said, 'No strings attached,' signed a deal with the Liberal government in WA and the Liberal government in the Northern Territory. No strings attached. He took away any accountability for those states to deliver dollar-for-dollar to the schools. We know what the Northern Territorians did to their government which did not invest in schools, and perhaps it is about to happen in WA as well. But it is your side of politics that took away the conditions that the previous government set to ensure that the funding went into the schools and into the programs that would deliver better outcomes.

It is such a coalition-Liberal thing to say that, after you have cut funding, increased funding does not improve standards and increased funding does not improve outcomes. Go to any primary school in Mallee or any primary school in Bendigo and ask those teachers what the needs based equity funding is doing to help those schools and what it is doing to improve numeracy and literacy outcomes in those states. I am not surprised that this government is denying what is going on when you look at the level of cuts. Perhaps some of those opposite need to return to school to understand how to read their own budget. In the member for Mallee's electorate, which he did not address, $33 million was cut from schools in 2017, 2018 and 2019. That kicks in next year. The member for Goldstein is in the chamber. Fifteen million dollars has been cut from his schools next year and the year after. In the member for Higgins' electorate, $12 million was cut from the schools.

The other reason I raise those issues is that there is also something going on in our country between the inner-city wealthy seats and the outer-metropolitan seats and the regional seats. The reason why we need a needs based funding model is to ensure that schools in the most disadvantaged areas, where there is very low household income, get the extra resources that they need. We all know that the seats of Higgins and Goldstein are some of the most wealthy seats we have. Those families have done well. Their capacity and ability to fundraise is higher. But it is a lot harder for a school in my electorate of Bendigo to make up the money that this government has cut.

I have a few examples. Just last week the principal of Bendigo Senior Secondary College spoke out about how the funding cuts this government has made will affect his school. This is not just any secondary school. This is Bendigo Senior Secondary College which has the largest VCE program in the state of Victoria. They also have the largest VET in Schools and apprenticeship and VCAL program in the state of Victoria. Next year, because of this
government's cuts, they will lose $1.6 million and the year after $1.9 million. The principal, Dale Pearce, said:

It puts a lot of our programs and a lot of our students at risk ...

For us, we have introduced a study schools program, we run a netschool program to re-engage young people, we would like to be doing more in terms of literacy programs and some enrichment opportunities for our really gifted students.

It creates uncertainty for parents as well, they need to know what we are able to deliver ...

They are not able to deliver the programs they were hoping to. They need to develop their programs in advance and are looking at May. So the government has an opportunity to do the right thing by these students. The NETschool program that I mentioned helps young mums get an education. The badge that I am wearing was made by their arts students as part of their art competition.

It is not just our public schools in Bendigo that will miss out. There are our Catholic schools. We have a large Catholic network within Sandhurst, and those schools will be hit just as hard as our public schools. Our Catholic school system also runs an engagement program, the Doxa program, which helps young people back into education. Four million dollars was cut from our secondary schools and $1.6 million was cut from our senior secondary schools, not to mention hundreds of thousands of dollars from regional schools—schools with fewer than 100 students. The government has a chance to admit their mistake and restore this funding. Give the students a chance.

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (15:57): The member for Sydney had the audacity to mention the word 'mendacity' in this MPI. This MPI, which the opposition titled, 'The government's failure to properly fund schools,' and their repeated statement that the government is cutting funding from schools—and I am sorry to say this word in the chamber—is a lie. The whole basis of Labor's argument on education is fundamentally based on a mistruth. They think that if they can tell a lie over and over and over again it will hopefully somehow resonate with the public. I say: shame on every one of you. At least come into this chamber and tell the truth about what is happening to school funding. The truth is that, under this government, we are at record levels. We are now spending $20 billion more than the previous, Labor government. Funding for education under this coalition government is 25 per cent higher. So do not come into this chamber or run around your electorates and spread the lie that the coalition is cutting funding to education. It is completely and utterly untruthful. It is a lie. I am sorry to say that word in this chamber. What we need to concentrate on is that funding is important, and that is why this coalition government has education funding at record levels. But it is not just about the funding. We have to make sure that we are teaching our kids skills and talents that will do them well once they leave school.

I would like to highlight one thing that is being taught in our schools at the moment, called 'Building Respectful Relationships'. I would like to let the House know that this is being taught in our schools and, if we wonder why we are behind countries like Kazakhstan, could I put to you that this is one of the reasons. This is a role-playing game that girls in year 9 are doing—

Mr Hill interjecting—
Mr CRAIG KELLY: They've dropped it. They are given the character parts. For example, they could play the character of Megan. This is a description of what they are told to learn about Megan, the character they play:

Megan is 17, lives in the city and works in a local cafe. She has had 15 sexual partners and describes herself as bisexual. She has casual sex and some short-term partners, including two women. She rarely practises safe sex. She forgets to protect herself because she is often drunk when she has sex.

That is what our children are being taught to role play. Another character they could play is a girl called Grace:

Grace is 16 and in year 10—

And remember, this is a year 9 girl playing this—

She has been sexually active since she was 13.

Mr Hill interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Bruce is warned!

Mr CRAIG KELLY: Or there is another one called Kelly—this is what a year 9 girl is asked to role play in our schools today, and you wonder why our education is going backwards.

Kelly is 14, in year 9 and is very interested in girls. She is not sure but thinks she might be a lesbian.

Kelly quotes:

I think I'm a lesbian, but I'm not sure because I've also been attracted to a boy. I guess this gives me more options than most.

Members of the opposition laugh at this, and this may very well be funny for blokes drinking down at the pub. But this is what is being taught to year 9 girls in our schools today, and we wonder why we are going backwards. We would like to have as much funding for education as we can.

In this debate the deputy opposition leader talked about the so-called cuts or the changes that we are making to the company tax rate, so I would like to quote a passage from a book written by the shadow Treasurer: *Hearts & minds*. He actually has a separate chapter here under the heading 'Promoting growth through cutting the company tax', and I will quote exactly from his book. I am sure the other members would like to know what the shadow Treasurer thinks about cutting company tax. He says:

One of the more controversial reforms by Paul Keating as Treasurer was slashing the corporate tax rate from 49 per cent to 39 per cent in 1989 … I was a fresh-faced—

this is the shadow Treasurer—

Labor Party branch member at the time, and I recall the party as a whole being incredulous that a Labor government would cut the tax rate for 'fat-cat companies'. I remember a motion by the Young Labor conference calling for the corporate tax rate to be lifted to 60 per cent to pay for a program for social reform.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

What actually happened when Keating cut the company tax rate? We know that when he cut the company tax rate from 49 per cent down to 39 per cent, we did not lose one cent of corporate tax. We actually, within four years, were getting 60 per cent more revenue at 39 per
cent than we had been at 49 per cent, and that has happened every time throughout our history. *(Time expired)*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I might remind the members on my left that several of them are out of place; they are disorderly. We nearly got through this MPI without anyone leaving. I hope we can keep it that way. The member for Lindsay has already been warned, and I am showing her a lot of leniency.

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (16:03): While the member for Hughes is still here, I just want to let you know, mate, that your electorate is going to miss out on $29 million of funding for your schools.

Mr Craig Kelly interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Hughes!

Mr GOSLING: The member for Boothby, $25 million for your electorate over 2018-19—the schools in your electorate; you could have had for the kids in your school. I do not know why you mob don't just go, 'We don't really care much about education.' I do not know why you do not just tell the truth and just say: 'We don't really prioritise it. We don't really think it's that important.' That would be honest. The fact that you have felt the need during this debate to talk about all other unrelated aspects of policy just shows that you are not serious about it, and you know you are not. It is a disgrace, because you are failing the children of this country and the families of this country. If it is not cuts to family benefits, it is cuts to our schools, which are cuts to our kids' futures, but you guys are probably all right. Your kids—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Solomon to address through the chair.

Mr GOSLING: Through the chair—the member for Hughes, just remember when you go back to your school that your children might be okay, but there might be other kids from families that are not doing too well, and maybe they could do with a little bit more assistance in the classroom. But you are not particularly worried about that; you are more worried about these other little niche side issues.

Mr Craig Kelly interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Hughes is warned!

Mr GOSLING: Through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Hughes: you have stood up here and just talked crap, because you obviously do not care about the funding of the kids in your schools.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Hughes on a point of order.

Mr Craig Kelly: I would ask the member for Solomon to withdraw his unparliamentary language and I would like to ask him to reflect on his conduct during this debate.

Mr GOSLING: It is absolutely shameful that you can come into this House—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Solomon did use an unparliamentary term, and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr GOSLING: Sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. I missed that one.

Mr Craig Kelly: You know what it is!
The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You know what it is. I am not going to repeat it. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr GOSLING: I withdraw. The education of our kids is important to us. That is why we prioritise it. That is why we do not lie to people about education funding. That is why, in the 2013 election, your leadership said: 'No cuts to education' and 'We're on a unity ticket'. But was that true?—through you, Mr Deputy Speaker. That was not true. It was not true at all.

In my electorate, when I dropped my daughter to start preschool the other day, there were so many kids there and so many parents who just want to make sure that their children get the best education they possibly can, but that takes prioritising. It takes a government to prioritise it, and the leader of the government is showing his lack of leadership on the issue of the education of our kids. He is failing to help families in this country to lift up the horizons of the children of our families. Not only is he cutting their family benefits; he is cutting funding from their schools, and it is nothing other than an absolute disgrace. I am sorry, it is. If you do not like it, change your policy. If you do not like it, put funding back into schools because there are kids who are struggling at school and they need a hand and that extra funding that you are denying them, because you will not prioritise the education of our kids.

You could be helping them with more individual attention, more time with the teacher, so they do not go the wrong way, so they can get a good education, so they can go on to VET, TAFE and university—those opportunities that you have had that some of these kids will not have, particularly kids from lower socioeconomic areas. That is what needs based funding is about. It is simple: you help the kids in the schools who need a hand. You are letting down the children of Australia. I am sorry, there is no other way to say it. You are not prioritising the education of our kids. They are our future. Please, think about it. Think about the education of the children of Australia. It is really important. Our future depends on it. A high-technology future depends on it. It should not just be the GS schools or whatever that get those opportunities; every Australian child should have them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Solomon on how to address members in a debate. Every time he says 'you', he is reflecting on my opinion of things as the person occupying the chair. He might want to understand that.

Mr GOSLING: That was not my intention.

Ms FLINT (Boothby) (16:08): Before I address this ridiculous allegation that the government has failed to properly fund public schools, as a proud South Australian I want to start by talking about the most serious failures of government in this nation at the moment in time, which of course are the serious and costly failures of the incompetent South Australian Weatherill Labor government. It is really hard to know where to start on this topic when I am talking about the Weatherill Labor government in South Australia, but let us start with the obvious: Labor cannot keep the lights on in South Australia. They cannot keep our air conditioners on in South Australia. People in South Australia cannot trust Labor to keep the lights on. If you want to talk about failure, let us start right there. It is a huge failure of government.

The South Australian Labor government has also failed to open one of the world's most expensive buildings. We have a $2-plus billion hospital sitting there that has not opened its doors. If you want to talk about failure of government, let us talk about that. We have a $2-
plus billion desalination plant that does not produce water for South Australia. It is sitting there virtually mothballed. If you want to talk about failures of government, let us talk about that as well. Locally, in my electorate an issue that is very dear to my heart and to my residents is the failure of the state Labor government to put one dollar of new funding into the Oaklands crossing. That is yet another Labor government failure.

It is Labor governments not the Turnbull government that have failed schools in South Australia. I am very interested that none of those opposite seem to have read The Advertiser from last Friday. I want to read a few quotes from The Advertiser. On page 3, Friday, 3 February:

The state spending—

The South Australian state Labor government spending—
on public schools fell from $2.450 billion to $2.394 billion in 2014-15 when adjusted for inflation, while federal money increased—

Oh my goodness—

$12 million to $385.5 million.

State funding per public school student dropped from $14,682 to $14,312, while federal funding rose from $2237 to $2307.

So do not talk to us, especially me as a South Australian, about failures in education funding for public schools. It is Labor that have failed in this area. The kicker in this issue in South Australia is this, again from The Advertiser:

The figures come just days after it was revealed the state government gave a $757,500 grant to the group of community organisations to run a campaign against the federal education funding policies. They should have been running it against themselves. It is absolutely ridiculous. This matter of public importance is a sham, particularly in relation to the state of South Australia but also in relation to overall education funding by the Turnbull coalition government. I would like to congratulate my South Australian colleague the Minister for Education and Training, Simon Birmingham, on the work he is doing. We know that funding for Australian schools matters, that is why we are making a record overall investment of $73.9 billion in recurrent funding for schools over the next four years. I notice all of the Labor members opposite have disappeared. They have left the chamber. They cannot handle the truth. Those sitting in the backbench cannot handle the truth.

I want to recap: we are making a record overall investment of $73.9 billion in recurrent funding for schools over the next four years from 2016-17 to 2019-20. Indeed, our funding will grow each and every year from $16.1 billion—that is $16.1 billion, for the Labor members left in the chamber; there are only two of them, the rest have gone—to $20.2 billion by 2020. That is an increase of more than 25 per cent in just four years.

This is a ridiculous allegation that the Labor Party have made. We have not failed to properly fund schools. We have invested record funding in schools. I reiterate: if you want to look at a government that have failed to invest in public schools, you need look no further than your state colleagues in the South Australian Labor Party and ask them what they are planning to do to increase funding for public schools.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Coulton):** The time for the debate has expired.
BILLS

Corporations Amendment (Life Insurance Remuneration Arrangements) Bill 2016
Tax and Superannuation Laws Amendment (2016 Measures No. 2) Bill 2016
Hazardous Waste (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Amendment Bill 2016
Hazardous Waste (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Levy Bill 2016

Returned from Senate

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

Regulatory Powers (Standardisation Reform) Bill 2016

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.

Treasury Laws Amendment (Enterprise Tax Plan) Bill 2016

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill now be read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:

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

"the House declines to give the bill a second reading as the:

(1) Government has failed on fiscal policy, tripling the deficit and increasing net debt by $100 billion, and putting our hard-earned and coveted triple A credit rating at risk;

(2) Prime Minister and the Treasurer have failed to deliver the economic leadership that this country needs and deserves; and

(3) Government's plan to give a $50 billion tax cut to big business is not affordable in the current fiscal and economic circumstances."

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Coulton) (16:15): The question now is that the amendment be agreed to.

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (16:15): Not only do most of the first-round benefits go overseas, but there will even be some cases in which US-based multinationals repatriate their profits, paying the difference between their higher rate and our lower one. In such cases, an Australian company tax cut simply flows into the coffers of the US Treasury, meaning some of the reduced revenue from the Australian company tax cut would be available to be spent by the successors to President Trump—I say 'successors' because we are talking a very long time into the future, and I will come back to that issue.
Having enjoyed the first-round benefits of a company tax cut, the Treasury report then argues that foreign shareholders will respond to higher after-tax profits on their Australian investments. The theory goes that overseas shareholders then invest less in other countries and more in Australia. More investment, allegedly, means greater demand for land and labour. So, in the long run, land prices and wages are supposed to rise.

Of course, as Keynes famously put it, we are all dead in the long run, so it is worth thinking about how long we are talking about. The answer, typically, is seven to 10 years. Since the coalition's tax cut only reduces the tax rate on big business to 25 per cent on 1 July 2026, this means that the coalition is promising benefits that would accrue somewhere between 2033 and 2035. At that point, Prime Minister Turnbull would be in his late 70s and well on the way to becoming the longest-serving Prime Minister since Robert Menzies. As things currently stand, I think most commentators would say he would be lucky to last out this year!

But how big will the gains be? It depends on how you pay for the company tax cut. The Treasury report suggests that tax cuts could be funded by a nationwide land tax, higher personal income taxes or lower government spending. Given that the federal government has not levied a nationwide land tax since 1952, let us set that one aside. So that means you fund it either through less spending or higher income taxes.

According to Treasury, if you do it through less spending, the boost to households is 0.7 per cent. But there is a bit of a wrinkle in that. The Treasury report notes that it is important to recall that the modelling of 'government spending is assumed not to affect directly the welfare of households'. It also notes:

While this is a common modelling assumption, it ignores the fact that: government spending provides goods and services that would otherwise not be provided by the market sector; households derive direct utility from government spending; and infrastructure spending can improve market sector productivity.

So, in other words, if you believe that everything the Commonwealth spends on schools, hospitals and roads has no impact on the welfare of households, then you can believe that the benefit of a company tax cut funded by less government spending is as big as 0.7 per cent. If you do not, then it is smaller than 0.7 per cent.

We should also be wary of a government that claims that it is going to fund a company tax cut out of lower government spending, given that government spending, as a share of the economy, has gone up, not down, under the Abbott-Turnbull government. So, most likely, a company tax cut for big business would be funded by higher personal income taxes—in other words, taxes down on big business; taxes up on individual taxpayers. If you do it that way, the government's own modelling suggests that the benefit to households is 0.1 per cent—not annualised; total.

So how big is a gain in household incomes of 0.1 per cent? If you look at data going back to the early 1970s, you can roughly work out how rapidly household income has grown over that period. It turns out that it has risen by about 0.1 per cent per month. So in exchange for copping higher personal income taxes and a lower corporate tax rate, the government reckons that the most likely scenario is that households would get an extra month of household income growth. That is what the government's own modelling claims the benefit is.

This is at a time when wage growth is at a 30-year low, living standards are below where they were in 2013, inequality is at a 75-year high, the homeownership rate is at a 60-year low
and the top one per cent have doubled their share of national income over the past generation. Yet the only economic plan that the government has is a plan which, according to the most likely estimate from their preferred modelling, delivers 0.1 per cent extra income to households in the mid-2030s. No wonder, when you look to independent commentators, they panned it. Ross Gittins says:
"If you wanted to create jobs, cutting the tax on foreign investors isn’t the way to do it."

Bernard Keane says:
"It could be the greatest tax avoidance scam ever perpetrated …"

If you want to do something to help business grow, then it makes more sense to invest in trained workers. Make sure that you have proper investment in infrastructure based on cost-benefit analysis and not on National Party pork-barrelling, that you have predictable politics, not the chopping and changing that we have seen from this government, a government led by a man who said he would never lead a party not as committed to climate change as he is but who now backs off from an emissions intensity scheme, even though his own Chief Scientist says it would decrease power prices and tackle emissions.

Labor supports a strong business sector, but we do not believe in quick sugar hits. The government has put in place a $20,000 instant asset write-off—not one like Labor’s, which was ongoing, but one which cuts off at midnight on 30 June this year. That is no way to build long-term business growth in this country.

**Mr SUKKAR** (Deakin—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (16:21): We do not support this pathetic and shabby amendment. It is a quite a long amendment, but I do not think that at the bottom here it should read:

Government's plan to give a $50 billion tax cut to big business is not affordable in the current fiscal and economic circumstances.

I think the amendment should include some of the quotes from a book called *Hearts and Minds: a Blueprint for Modern Labor*. It is not exactly a bestseller, I might say—I looked on Amazon when searching for this book and it was 7,079,869th on the Amazon list—but we should, in this amendment, include some quotes from the shadow Treasurer.

The Leader of the Opposition asks why there is a distrust of politics and politicians. I will tell him why. It is because those opposite say one thing before they get here and then, when they arrive, say a completely different thing. In his book, the shadow Treasurer said:

Today capital is even more mobile than it was then and it is important that our corporate tax rate is competitive.

He also said:

At 30 per cent, our company tax rate is now above the OECD average … it is how the rate compares to that of our competitors that counts.

He went on to say:

… it’s a Labor thing to have the ambition of reducing company tax, because it promotes investment, creates jobs and drives growth.

Now we have had the shadow Treasurer move this pathetic and shabby amendment. Clearly, the shadow Assistant Treasurer, whom I might say had some pretty good publications in his past, had to accept an economic lobotomy in order to get preselection with the Labor Party,
because in a paper titled *Do rising incomes lift all boats?* Dr Andrew Leigh argued quite forcefully, quite persuasively, why reducing corporate taxes benefits all Australians; indeed, it increases investment, increases the number of jobs and increases incomes for those who have those jobs. Why do we have a deficit of trust in Australian politics? Because we have shabby stunts like this and shabby positions taken by the shadow Treasurer and the shadow Assistant Treasurer. They obviously have no scruples, because arguments they have made for many years—arguments I agree with—are now not politically expedient. They have been hijacked by the extreme left wing of their party—the same extreme left wing that Paul Keating referred to when he instituted a cut in company tax from 49 to 39 per cent. The shadow Treasurer and the shadow Assistant Treasurer now stand with those extreme left-wing Labor members who are arguing that we should have a 60 per cent corporate tax rate.

It should not be a great surprise to people that the shadow Treasurer has done this, because the shadow Treasurer has abjectly failed in every single portfolio he has ever undertaken. When he was the immigration minister he made even the member for Watson look good as an immigration minister. There were record boat arrivals. This man is not capable. This man with the shadow Treasury portfolio today is indicating that he is not up for the job—but we know that, because he has done the job. We know that, lamentably, he was the Treasurer of this country for a very short period of time—I am still reminded of Bowen's $18 billion black hole! But he has the audacity to come to this dispatch box and criticise this government's efforts to turbocharge our economy and improve the budget bottom line.

We have got a team here: the shadow Treasurer, who is an abject failure in everything he has ever done in this place and continues to be; and the shadow Assistant Treasurer, who I think in his heart of hearts agrees with us. In his heart of hearts he knows that the company tax cuts for all businesses, which we are proposing, are so important for this country, but he has sold his soul for a seat in parliament. He is colloquially known as 'the lobotomised member for Fenner' because they have taken every good idea that he ever had and reprogrammed him. Now he sounds like someone on the Socialist Left of that party.

This amendment is shabby and very short-sighted. In the OECD even the socialist French government is implementing cuts in corporate tax from 30 to 28 per cent. We will have a higher corporate tax rate than socialist France. Ponder that thought.

It is extraordinary that the Labor Party has dragged this motley duo of the shadow Treasurer and shadow Assistant Treasurer to this extreme left position, which I really would have expected to see from the Greens political party, not the Labor Party. When I had a look at *Hearts and Minds: a Blueprint for Modern Labor*—I borrowed it from the library, Mr Speaker—I saw there was a foreword from Paul Keating. Paul Keating would repudiate this motley duo of the shadow Treasurer and the shadow Assistant Treasurer, because they have repudiated every single legacy of that period of Labor government.

We will continue to do what is right for this country and make these arguments. These are tax cuts for all businesses. These are tax cuts that will start with your local hairdresser. These are tax cuts that will start with the local cafe. These are tax cuts that will start with people like my sister, who has started a small business, working from home so she can be with her children. These are tax cuts that will benefit her. These are tax cuts for the smallest companies, the smallest businesses—the businesses that we know drive the growth, the entrepreneurial spirit and, ultimately, the prosperity of this country. So I am very disappointed
to see that the motley duo of the shadow Treasurer and assistant Shadow Treasurer have been dragged to the extreme left of their party, but we will do what is right. We will continue to argue for these tax cuts. They will ultimately provide the economic growth that we need in order to give Australians the prosperity that we know they deserve. We are not going to let these shabby little political stunts get in the way.

Debate interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER (16:29): It being almost 4.30 pm I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Centrelink

Ms O'NEIL (Hotham) (16:29): Mr Speaker, by now your constituents have no doubt informed you about the Centrelink debt recovery shambolic process that is being undertaken right now right around Australia. This is a program that has been going for some time, but from the very first moment it started it was absolutely clear that this was a fundamentally flawed process, creating a situation where millions of Australians who depend on Centrelink benefits were made to feel like fraudsters and were made to feel that they were cheating the system. Many were made to feel that they owed thousands of dollars to Centrelink, which it now turns out is actually Centrelink’s fault.

What we have seen is that 4,000 honest Australians every single week have received letters from Centrelink, telling them that they owed thousands and thousands of dollars to Centrelink—the government. When these claims have been investigated, for very large numbers of Australians we have found they have not been true.

One of the biggest issues with this program is that the Centrelink debt recovery program reverses the onus of proof. It basically tells the good people of Australia that they are the ones who owe money and that they are the ones which must prove to Centrelink that Centrelink is wrong. This is simply unfair.

Labor has written to the relevant minister, Alan Tudge, to ask him to suspend the Centrelink debt recovery program until the problems are resolved. But this has fallen on deaf ears and Labor is very disappointed on behalf of the Australian people. My office has received hundreds of phone calls and complaints from people who have been caught up in this mess. My constituents tend to be at the lower end of the income spectrum, and about 42 per cent of the people who live in my electorate were born overseas. I have had elderly citizens contacting my office, telling me that they have received a letter from Centrelink saying they owed debts ranging from $1,700 to $14,000. These are elderly people who have served their country for many years. They are entitled to a pension and they are getting that pension, and now they are getting these, frankly, terrifying letters from Centrelink.

We know that what Centrelink does if they do not respond to those letters—at the request of the government—is hand that letter over to a debt collector, and then debt collectors are going to these pensioners and hounding them for money, which in the most part we are finding is actually not owed to Centrelink. Unfortunately, because of the incompetence of this government these hardworking pensioners have been made to feel like they have been accused of fraud and like they have been rorting the system.
I have to say that Labor absolutely disagrees with what is the central thrust of this program—and that is, that somehow, people who are on social security benefits in this country are freeloading, that they are defrauding the system—I reject that. That is absolutely wrong. It is one of the hallmarks of good government and the good society that we live in here in Australia that if you fall on tough times, that if you are in a period of your life where you need income support, then you will be able to get that income support. As a fellow Australian, I am very happy to pay it.

One of the things that those who sit on the opposite benches forget is that the vast majority of Australians, at some point in their lives, will access that social security system. They will access it because they are sick, or because they have a period of disability, or because they go on the age pension when they reach that age or because they have children who are in child care. This is not a system which is for a narrow bunch of Australians who are trying to defraud us; it is for our fellow neighbours, who we are supporting as part of the community.

I want to talk about some of the instances in my electorate. A 92-year-old lady in my community received a letter from Centrelink and completely broke down. Thankfully, she had just received my newsletter; she had no-one else to turn to. She phoned my office, we worked with Centrelink and—surprise, surprise!—the woman owed nothing to Centrelink.

Another Hotham resident, Mr Matthews, received a letter just before Christmas stating that he and his wife, Carole, owed almost $11,000 each to Centrelink. This is from records going back to 2011. Mr Matthews wanted me to tell the parliament that he has been deeply hurt and distressed, and that his wife is suffering from poor health. He thought the government's behaviour was disgraceful and he feels that this is a smack in the face to older Australian citizens, many of whom have fought tooth and nail to provide for their families and to make a contribution.

Another Hotham constituent, John Wilson, called for help on behalf of his daughter, who suffers from mental health issues. She was shocked to receive a letter stating that she owed almost $10,000. She was receiving financial support; we checked the matter out and we have found that there is absolutely no money owing to Centrelink. Remember, these people were called fraudsters, money was demanded of them, payments were threatened and it was Centrelink that was wrong. Centrelink was the organisation that made the mistake.

Now, the damage has been done for these families, but I want to call on the minister and call on the Prime Minister to end this ridiculous program. It is victimising people who are legitimately deserving of community support and we ask that it be stopped now.

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (16:34): Welcome back to the 45th Parliament in 2017, Mr Speaker. This is the first time I have addressed you this year.

As we return to parliament we do so in the context of a nation that is uncertain and anxious about the future. There are questions, fears and dissatisfaction looming in the minds of many. Some of these are big, existential questions: the strength of our alliances, the stability of our region and the prosperity and future of our country. Others are more immediate, more personal: where can I get a decent job? How am I going to pay my power bill? What sort of school should I send my kids to?
It has become almost something of a cliche to say in recent times, but people are disillusioned with politics as usual. They either believe that politicians do not have the answers, or they do not expect us to work together for the common good. Instead, they expect us to be self-interested and largely ineffective. I know there are many good people in this place, on both sides of the House, and that most of us come here with the best of intentions. But the fact is that the public’s low expectations are often built on reality, and so I think that we all need to lift our game this year.

It would be naive, of course, to expect that we could put aside our differences and come together in agreement on a single agenda. We have sharp, fundamental differences in many policy areas, which is a reflection of deeper, philosophical convictions, and consensus is often not possible. However, I think we should strive to lift the tone of our debate and restore the dignity that people have invested in this House.

Iron sharpens iron and, likewise, the robust Westminster system, with government and opposition seeking the public good, is good for Australia. So we need to do that with dignity and respect. With that in mind, I offer a snapshot of some of the priorities I believe we must pursue in 2017.

One of the fundamental questions that must be asked is, ‘What sort of a place do we want Australia to be?’ I firmly believe that the first thing we should see when looking at our nation is society, rather than government. Local institutions should define the character and activity of our nation from the ground up. Charitable groups, religious organisations, sporting clubs, social societies, free enterprises and community assemblies: this is where Australia begins—not in Parliament House.

To that end, we must ensure that the regulation oversight exercised by government is minimised as much as possible. Governments are rarely effective in building a good community by using fiat or direct orders. Government must not be allowed to stunt the natural growth and exercise of society. Of course, government does have a very important part to play. It keeps people safe, maintains the rule of law, ensures an open and competitive marketplace, promotes economic growth and provides a safety net for those who are most vulnerable in our society. Government is vital, but must always have only a supporting role; it is not the main actor.

Therefore, our legislative goals must reflect this ideal. That is why it is important for the government to pursue action during this session of parliament. I will start with company tax reform. The member for Deakin just spoke on the importance of passing that legislation. He comes from a family of small-business owners, so he knows better than anyone the importance of company tax reform. What is it, in essence? We want to reduce our current corporate tax rate of 30 per cent to 25 per cent, starting with businesses with a turnover of $10 million or less and extending that to all corporate entities by 2026-27—in 10 years from now.

We need to make Australia globally competitive. We are falling behind. Canada has a rate of 15 per cent, Singapore is at 17.5 per cent, Britain is at 20 per cent—under their Prime Minister, they are heading towards 17 per cent by 2020—and America is at 35 per cent, with an aspirational goal of 15 per cent. If we want to continue to be competitive, we need to attract labour and capital, and we will do that with a lower corporate tax rate. This goes to the heart of our prosperity, it goes to the heart of our standard of living and it goes to the security of our nation because no country can fund and resource their defence force without a healthy
economy. This, I believe, is absolutely central to the government's vision, and it is essential to a flourishing Australia. It is also essential to a flourishing Western Australia. Given our relative geographic isolation, we need to attract as much investment as possible.

Al Salam Festival

Mr GEORGANAS (Hindmarsh) (16:39): Mr Speaker, like the member for Canning, I welcome you back to the chair for the 45th parliament in 2017. I would also like to say what an honour it is to serve with you on the Speaker's panel.

I rise today to speak about a wonderful event that took place in Adelaide on 28 January. This particular event took place for the third time in South Australia. It was the Al Salam Festival, or Festival of Peace—a festival organised by the Islamic Society of South Australia. One of their mosques is in my electorate—the Park Holme mosque. This is a wonderful event that promotes peace. It is about dialogue and opening up to the community to have people come along and not only enjoy the festivities in the Al Salama Festival but see how the Islamic Society of South Australia operates and how open they are. They set up kiosks around the parkland where the festival was held for people to ask questions—anything they wished to know about the community. All questions are welcomed and answered, and nothing is out of bounds. I was lucky to attend both the inaugural festival in 2015 and the 2016 festival. I must say it gives me great joy to see members of different communities attending this particular event—an event which promotes wonderful harmony, peace and dialogue, and involves different communities getting together.

I have been honoured to attend many of their previous festivals, and I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the organisers and the army of volunteers who make this event fantastic. There are far too many to name, but I can name the main people. Ahmed Zreika, the president, is a fantastic community person involved in all walks of life in my electorate of Hindmarsh and across South Australia. He does a wonderful job as the President of the Islamic Society of South Australia. I would also like to acknowledge the vice-president, Nur-Muhamad Siddique, who does a wonderful job. Another person who is very well known in South Australia is Dr Waleed Al-khazrajy, who is the treasurer and is involved in medicine in South Australia. I also acknowledge the secretary, Saleh Baltagie, and the executive members who work tirelessly, including Adnan Abu Ajamieh, Ahmed El-Sayed, Ali El-Sayed and Mustapha El-Sayed. The imam of the Park Holme mosque, Riad El-Rifai, does some tremendous work. He is always there, welcoming anyone of any faith to attend and talk to him. He is such a wonderful character and a wonderful person. He works tirelessly. I would also like to mention Professor Abdalla. Professor Abdalla is a professor at the University of South Australia. He came over from the Griffith University, where he was a professor of Islamic studies at the School of Humanities, Languages and Social Science, where he established the Griffith University's first Islamic Research Unit. He does a lot of work in reconciliation and works with different communities.

The Park Holme mosque in my electorate is a wonderful organisation. A couple of times a year, they open up the mosque to the entire community, their neighbours. It is wonderful to attend, as I did earlier this year, to see different community groups visit and have a tour of the mosque. For example, we had different Probus clubs, different senior citizens' clubs and the neighbours. It is a really festive day with lots of food and lots of different activities. It is a wonderful event that promotes peace and inter-community dialogue and that endeavours to
answer all the questions that people may have about the particular mosque in Park Holme. They are people who work tirelessly to ensure that they are integrated and part of the community. They do great volunteer work, not just for their own community but also in the broader community. I congratulate them on their wonderful work. I congratulate them on this year’s Al Salaam Festival and for their open days, and I wish them all the very best for the future. I am sure that the foundations they are building will last them a very long time and will be an integral part of multicultural South Australia.

Racial Discrimination Act 1975

Mr CREWTHER (Dunkley) (16:44): Mr Speaker, I would also like to join the last two members in welcoming you back in 2017 and thanking you for the wonderful job you are doing.

One of the most regular and persistent subjects of communications that I receive from people both in my electorate and right around Australia is section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975. It has been the subject of concern for many people that I have spoken to since prior to my election to this place and up until now. Just last week, I met with a constituent of mine who stressed his concern, and that of his network, that 18C persists in gagging people and limits genuine exchanges of ideas for the sake of not wanting to risk offending people, even if something may not be offensive. As such, I was very pleased when I was able to inform them that the Attorney-General had requested the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights to hold a parliamentary inquiry into freedom of speech.

Freedom of speech is a fundamental value of our society. It is one that can never be taken for granted, as it can so easily be eroded by a complacent society. By all means, protection for minorities is crucial, as is protection against speech which, for example, encourages violence. In 1919, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr famously stated:

The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theatre and causing a panic.

But we have other legislation to defend against that. Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act, as currently drafted, serves only to cripple society and shut down the responsible exchange of ideas should someone who disagrees decide to be offended or insulted. How can we, as a society of diverse origins and values, permit a varying standard of what is and is not offensive, of what is and is not hateful? Subjectivity has no place in the law.

As I stated in my maiden speech:

I am a Liberal because I support freedom and liberty, including freedom of thought, religion, worship, speech and association.

I said that I fear:

… that we are gradually becoming an illiberal society, with people increasingly afraid to express their views or to critique other faiths for fear of public ostracism, being silenced through ad hominem attacks or being caught by such laws.

In the case of the students from Queensland University of Technology we have seen how detrimental to individuals' reputations an accusation of 18C violation can be—to the point where one of the students felt they needed to change their future career path as a result of having had their name dragged through the proverbial mud. There was also the case of cartoonist Bill Leak and how easy it is to submit a complaint to the Human Rights
Commission. The very fact that Senator Leyonhjelm's 18C complaint was accepted last year by the Human Rights Commission proves the point that its submission was designed to demonstrate.

Section 18C is a clumsy attempt to protect a society from its own ability to discuss, debate and reason with a fair and open playing field. Section 18D is designed to prevent 18C rendering unlawful 'anything said or done reasonably and in good faith' in the context of art, discourse for academic purposes or in the public interest. Clearly, this part of the legislation is not working as it was originally intended for Australia's best interests and needs to be further expanded. These sections of the Racial Discrimination Act are a hindrance to public conversation, are ineffective and unnecessarily bureaucratic and ought to be altered as soon as possible. The president of the Human Rights Commission herself has recognised that changes should be made. As Evelyn Beatrice Hall so famously stated:

I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.

I look forward to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' findings when they report on 28 February 2017. I look forward to a society and politics that can continue to uphold free speech and the values that we hold dear and that our forefathers and people and service men and women fought for over many years.

Welfare Reform

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (16:49): It has been a big week in politics, and it has been a big couple of months as well. We know that people, particularly in regional electorates, are really starting to struggle not only because of the cost-of-living pressures that they face day-to-day but also because of the cuts that this government continues to bring about—whether it is by getting agreement in this place or whether it does it by regulations or other means.

Yesterday, when the government tabled the latest round of cuts in their omnibus bill, I had a number of people contact me quite distressed. Having seen cuts off once in 2014, then in 2015 and in 2016, we now have them back on the table: cuts to Newstart, cuts to pensions and cuts to family tax benefit. From the government's own admission, we know that at least 1.5 million families will be worse off because of the cuts tabled in their omnibus bill yesterday.

One person in my electorate who is affected by the cuts that the government has proposed contacted me to say: 'Can you ask the government how I can survive with these cuts? I'm on Newstart. My rent is $300 a week, and, after bills and rent, I'm left with $34 a week for food. $34. I don't have any savings. There's no emergency account if my car blows up or if there's a medical crisis. $34 is all I've got, and I rely on friends and family and our welfare agencies to get by.' This is the kind of poverty and these are the kind of circumstances that the government wants to condemn millions of Australians to. It is the role of this place and government policy to ensure that those people get support. It is the role of a social welfare state to help those when they are in need. This person, Natalie, said: 'I mean, I don't plan to be on Newstart forever. Right now I need some help, and it's just so heartbreaking and disappointing the government is not there for me.'

There are just over 5,000 people in the Bendigo electorate on Newstart, about 19,000 age pensioners, 11,000 or just over on family tax benefit part A and just under 9,000 on family tax benefit part B. All of these people, particularly those people on family tax benefit, have had a tough Christmas. I want to acknowledge the work of our welfare agencies—and, in particular,
St Vincent de Paul in Bendigo, UnitingCare on Forest Street and UnitingCare at Kangaroo Flat—who made sure that these families, the ones who were really struggling over Christmas, did not go hungry and that they also had toys for their children. My office assisted UnitingCare at Kangaroo Flat. Generous locals donated toys, which then went to UnitingCare Kangaroo Flat to go to those families. As the Leader of the Opposition said and as was agreed by Max at UnitingCare, the indignity of a parent not having the means to give their child a Christmas present should not be endured by anybody in this country. The government have no compassion, or, if they had compassion, they lost it. This week, the introduction of their omnibus bill reinforces that statement.

People do not always get the dream run. From time to time they hit the wall. Not everybody has had the same opportunities as those in this place. A compassionate society takes care and helps them out. It puts its hand out and helps them back up. That is why we need a social welfare state that helps those people. Trying to survive on Newstart is hard, particularly for people with families. The loss of the schoolkids bonus has also hit a number of families in my area. The government has backed away from needs based funding will make it even harder for the kids in these families to get ahead. The fact that the government will not back away from lifting the aged pension age demonstrates how out of touch they are with working people and people of regional Australia. It is hard to be a nurse at the age of 70. It is hard to be a construction worker at the age of 70. Most workers in those professions choose to retire before that age. We also should not force them to continue to work if it is not safe to do so.

Over the weekend, before the parliament comes back next week, let us hope that the government discover compassion. Let us hope that they discover some heart and help those who are the most vulnerable in our community. Ranting about electricity prices is not enough. Ensuring people have enough to live on is what matters. (Time expired)

Page Electorate: Nimbin

Australia Day Awards

Mr HOGAN (Page) (16:54): Mr Speaker, I almost feel obligated to welcome you back to the chair and to the speakership in 2017. As someone who is on the Speaker's panel, I thank you for your mentorship.

I have the pleasure and, indeed, the privilege to represent the physically beautiful town of Nimbin. It is not only physically beautiful; it has a great community spirit as well. Nimbin is overseen by the majestic Nimbin Rocks, a significant cultural site to the local Indigenous people. The rocks were home to the Nimbingee, or Clever Men. They were also initiation grounds for young men. The name 'Nimbin' comes from the local Widjabal people, whose Dreamtime speaks of the Nimbingee spirit people protecting the area. It was a logging area and then became a flourishing dairy region as well.

Nimbin famously hosted the Aquarius Festival in 1973 and from then became the home of alternative culture. It has led the way in a number of areas. Its largest employer for a long time has been the Rainbow Power Company, which was one of the first to embrace solar power and living off the grid when it was founded 30 years ago. At the time, many people gave little or no thought to solar energy, and it is now mainstream. The town also embraced permaculture long before the rest of the country had heard of it. Today, Nimbin's
permaculture garden, the Djanbung Gardens, attracts thousands of visitors every year, including from overseas, to learn about agriculture and food production. They have led the charge to legalise the medicinal use of cannabis. As you would know, Mr Speaker, the parliament passed legislation last year to legalise the medicinal use of cannabis.

More tourists visit Nimbin than nearly anywhere in New South Wales. In fact, the only two places in New South Wales that attract more tourists are Sydney and Byron Bay. This is an amazing statistic given that the town's population is around 1,000 and fewer than 10,000 people live within a 15-kilometre radius. Also, Nimbin has a sense of humour. My son, Sean, used to play soccer against Nimbin, and the Nimbin soccer team are known as the Nimbin Headers. Their motto is 'We score'. Of course, the Nimbin annual MardiGrass festival is now in its 25th year, with events like the Hemp Olympics, which includes a tug of war with local police. All of this and more is covered by the town's very own and very popular newspaper, *The Nimbin Good Times*, which is the community voice of Nimbin and, indeed, the wider region.

Above all, Nimbin is a community that accepts all people. It is a community that proudly bands together. I remember, when I was working with my local primary school some 20 years ago, we were trying to buy back the old school site. It took us quite a while to raise the money to do that. Nimbin did it as a community very, very quickly. Nimbin does, however, like a lot of communities, have challenges. A current challenge is methamphetamine, or ice, use, but it is an issue that the community knows it has and is tackling head-on. I encourage everyone who has not already visited this beautiful and vibrant part of Australia to do so. We know from the statistics that many people already do visit beautiful Nimbin.

I would like to acknowledge some people from my electorate who won awards at the recent Australia Day awards. Firstly, from the Ballina shire within the Page electorate, Shirley Oag, from Alstonville, who is 93, received an OAM for service to the community through disability support organisations. Sportsperson of the Year was Russell Priddle, Local Hero of the Year was Kirk Trease and Senior Citizen of the Year was Beatrice Gray. I thank you all for the contribution you make to our local community. I would also like to acknowledge those in the Coffs Harbour City Council area who live within the Page electorate and also received Australia Day awards. To the Young Citizen of the Year, Patrick Mullan; the Sportsperson of the Year, Alisha Phoonie; the Volunteer of the Year, Scott Rodham; and the Sue Hunter Memorial Award recipient, Peta Fairbairn, I thank you all for the wonderful contribution you make to our community.

House adjourned at 16:59
CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Holt Electorate: Community Spirit and Leadership Awards

Mr BYRNE (Holt) (10:01): I want to talk today about an exceptional group of young people whose achievements we celebrated on 12 December last year as part of the 15th annual Holt Community Spirit and Leadership Awards. The awards ceremony, which was held at the Cranbourne Community Theatre, was attended by over 200 people on a fairly warm summer night. It recognised 45 students from 41 local schools. The purpose of the awards is to recognise outstanding achievement at school, not necessarily just academic or sporting but something like a young student making a difference to other students’ lives through community service. We honoured 45 students: Justin Coleman, Bradley Harris, Maleisha Fernando, Aaron Konwalow, Bianca Buckley, Brooke Galley, Prabh Annawai Prabhakar, Bailey Smith, Haylee Phillips, Maali Albert, Neil Reilly, Remi Minto, Rai Miranda, Karissa Peters, Kimberly Dou, Ed Moreno, Jasmine Gonzalez, Anthony Clarke, Arnela Haisila, Sohaila Ahmad, Victoria Kumari, Kai Maas, Daniel Selimi, Yasara Abeysekara, Spencer Tarnok, Charlotte Gruneklee-Smallman, Matthew Cooper, Kayla Damon, Sienna Volkoff, Sheza Malik, Garry Ford, Emily Lai, Tayissah O'Donnell, Cooper Robertson, Isabella Duiker, Charlie Nelson, Agana Santhosh Kumar, Nandira Xavier, Avantiika Singh, Alessia Biondi, Chloe Harbour, Adele Carthew, Lily-Rose Campbell, Leticia Riyanto and Garrett Munyard.

It is a long list of names, but one example of the award recipients is Sienna Volkoff, from Mossgiel Park Primary School. Her passion for orangutans and other endangered species saw her hold numerous fundraisers and participate in fun runs and walks during her time at primary school. As a result, she raised funds to purchase 40 hectares of protected forest habitat for endangered species in Borneo and Sumatra and she adopted two orangutans. That is just one example of these 45 very inspirational stories. I wish I could go into each of these stories because each of these students made a profound contribution to the lives of the broader community as well as the school community.

I would also like to thank Village Cinemas. To commemorate these awards outside of the awards ceremony, Village Cinemas have donated a cinema on Monday, 20 February. All the student recipients and their families are coming to the cinema, free of charge, to watch Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them—which I have not seen yet and am looking forward to.

To the parents of the students, to the students and to the teachers: you should be very proud of the young people that were there that night. They are making a significant contribution to the community. It was an honour to be able to recognise that in December.

Farrer Electorate: Murray-Darling Basin Plan

Ms LEY (Farrer) (10:05): Water is the lifeblood of my electorate and the reason so many of us live, work and raise our families in western New South Wales along the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers. In fact, irrigated agriculture forms the regional economy of much of the electorate of Farrer. The Murray-Darling Basin Authority visited last month. About 200
people attended four drop-in sessions to discuss the proposed amendments to the Basin Plan. I attended the session in Leeton.

The MDBA is currently conducting an evaluation of the social, economic and environmental outcomes of the Basin Plan to assess its effectiveness across the southern basin. The evaluation will also identify if anything else needs to be done to achieve the Basin Plan aims. Southern irrigators have called for a full review of the Basin Plan in the south. This follows the northern basin review, which led to a 70-gigalitre reduction of recovery. But, the MDBA has no provision to review water recovery targets in the south. Socioeconomic impacts are being addressed in a report card due to be released later this year. To quote Murrumbidgee Irrigation CEO Brett Jones:

We support … A plan that focuses on achieving social, economic and environmental outcomes. Not a plan that focuses on numbers and water recovery at all costs.

The regions I represent have lost a lot. Hay and Hillston stand out as having lost the most during Labor's savage 2009 water buyback. Eighty per cent of water recovery for the Lachlan River came from Hillston.

Socioeconomic indices are declining. Deniliquin's population of under-45s has dropped by 20 per cent, indicating significant pressure on this community. Yes, there is a big tranche of investment coming into the Murrumbidgee irrigation area—we have seen it over the past 18 to 24 months—and Griffith is seeing a great deal of activity as a result. But ongoing long-term access to water at a price that is affordable and sustainable has to underpin this development, and the can-do attitude of the Griffith region will do the rest. When I meet my farmers, they remind me: what would our regional economy look like if we had not lost so much of this permanent water?

As I said, unlike the recent review of the northern basin, there is no scope to reduce the water recovery targets in the south, only an SDL adjustment. If the Basin Plan's environmental outcomes can be met using less environmental water then there must be an opportunity to adjust this SDL by more than five per cent. I stand ready to advocate for legislative change to either alter this figure, if indeed we can achieve the outcomes with less water being removed, or express the amount as a single new target of, say, 2,100 gigalitres. My communities, large and small, depend on us getting this right.

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (10:08): I rise on behalf of the many constituents I represent who have been hit hard by this government's robo-debt clawback debacle. My office has been inundated with calls from anxious people, some of them in tears, because they have had money forcibly taken out of their payments for debts that they swear they do not owe. One woman called me earlier this year when she was sent a letter saying that data-matching revealed that she owed $11,000 to Centrelink. She was told that, even if that debt was wrong and she disputed it, she would have to start repaying $200 a fortnight anyway. She was anxious that she would be forced to default on her monthly car payments and angry because she was sure that she did not owe anything, and it turned out she was right.

My office contacted Centrelink on my constituent's behalf, and her case was fast-tracked for internal review. To her great relief, when she logged on to her myGov account about a week later she found that her debt was now showing zero. No explanation was given, and

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certainly no apology was forthcoming. But the truth of the matter was clear: she never owed the money in the first place. Yet, because of the government's completely flawed robo-debt system, she was being treated as a cheat and having her payments garnisheed to recover a bogus debt.

This case turned out well, but there are many thousands of Australians who have been left in financial limbo while they wait weeks, or even months, for Centrelink and the tribunal to review their cases. The onus of proof is placed entirely on the recipient, who is asked to provide documentation that can stretch back as far as seven years or more, making it impossible for most people to comply.

Labor has no problem with the use of technology to ensure that people do not abuse government systems to get more than they deserve. But removing the human oversight—as those opposite have done—only dooms the process to failure. Instead of creating a fair process with the integrity that human oversight can bring, the Turnbull government has gutted the public service and put the robots in charge instead. They are using crude algorithms to come to ridiculous and erroneous conclusions about jobseekers' income and working circumstances, and then using those false conclusions to raise bogus debt notices. Tellingly, Malcolm Turnbull's own hand-picked former digital government chief, Paul Shetler, said that if it were operating as a private company, Centrelink would be shut down for fraud—what an absolute indictment. The amount of distress and upset this debt callback debacle is causing vulnerable people in our community is absolutely disgraceful. The government needs to suspend the system immediately. (Time expired)

United States of America

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (10:11): No American presidential election has ever attracted the attention of Australians like that of Donald Trump. None have come even close—not the election of JFK or Jimmy Carter, of Ronald Reagan or the Bushes, Bill Clinton or even that of Barack Obama, as historic an election as that was. None of them captured the attention of the Australian people like Donald John Trump and his campaign to 'Make America Great Again'. As a medium-sized, free-market liberal democracy, operating in an increasingly integrated and highly volatile global political economy, it matters to Australia who runs the United States of America—especially since the United States has been our most important ally since World War II, the country with which we have our most important symbiotic international relationship, a crucial trading partner, and by far our biggest source of foreign funds and investment. Culturally, we are deeply and intrinsically linked countries, and these connections—their depths and breadths—have made Australians keen observers of the election of President Trump. I have never seen everyday Australians as engaged in international affairs as they are today, and it is all about Donald Trump. And everyone has an opinion—some love him, some do not; some see his victory as a symbol of a new political paradigm, smashing the status quo and turning longstanding assumptions about the world order upside down, while others think everyone should just take a cold shower, relax, and have a cup of tea. Opinions may differ, but most people are asking the same question—that is, what happens from here?

It is for that reason that I extended an invitation to Mr James Carouso, the charge d'affaires of the United States Embassy—the acting ambassador, if you like—to visit my electorate of Fairfax on the Sunshine Coast to have an open discussion on the topic: 'Trump: where to from
here? The charge d'affaires kindly accepted the invitation and so, on the morning of Saturday, 18 February, at the Novotel Twin Waters Resort, the Sunshine Coast will host the No. 1 diplomat from the United States to discuss that question: 'Trump: where to from here?'

I am delighted that my electorate will hear from the charge d'affaires in person and, on their behalf, to Mr Caruso and to the United States Embassy—and to all of our friends in the United States on behalf of the Sunshine Coast—may I say in advance: thank you.

**Housing Affordability**

**Mr HILL (Bruce) (10:14):** When we say that shelter is a basic human need, we do not just mean a place to get out of the rain. It is clearly more than that. We need the security and stability that comes from having a place to call home. Home ownership and the long-term security it brings is out of reach for more and more Australians, on every measure. If you look at the averages, in 1990 the average price people paid for their home was 2.6 times the average household income.

Last year, it was 4.4 times the average household income, which is a 60 per cent increase in the gap between average incomes and average house prices. The median figures also show that house prices keep on growing faster than median incomes can keep up. In the last decade, Australia's median household income—that is the fat bit in the middle of the bell curve—increased by 43 per cent. In that same 10 years, and these figures are important, median house prices across Australia increased by almost 60 per cent—in Melbourne by more than 90 per cent and in my electorate of Bruce by more than 150 per cent. That has lifted house prices in my electorate to more than 10 times Australia's median income.

If that gap between house prices and incomes keeps growing, by 2026 it will take a person in my electorate every cent of their household income for 20 years to buy an ordinary house. Or, to put it another way, if they are even lucky enough to get a loan that does not shove them into housing stress—which most people say is about a third of your income paid on a mortgage—and if they are lucky enough to get that loan when they are 20 years old, they will be paying that loan for 60 years. They will finish paying their house off when they are 80. So it is no wonder that people like my daughter and her friends look at the housing market and despair. What has the government got to say? Nothing—no policy, no minister for housing, not even an assistant minister. We had a report last year into home ownership with no recommendations—that is how seriously this government takes the plight of young Australians who are living lease to lease, never knowing if they will be evicted for no reason or priced out of their neighbourhood by rising rents.

I do not have time now to talk about the rental crisis, which is just as bad or worse, but make no mistake—this is not just a series of numbers. The crisis in housing affordability is a human crisis. There are no simple answers. Supply and demand both play a part. Institutional investment plays a part. Of course, the tax system—negative gearing and capital gains tax—plays a part. Limited tenants' rights also play a part. Everything has to be on the table. I call on those opposite, who have the privilege and responsibility of government, to work with all of us to solve the problem—because the people who sent us here expect us to put aside games of tit for tat and gotcha politics, and to work to find real solutions.
Mr PASIN (Barker) (10:17): I rise today to speak about the establishment of a new Lions Club in the community of Lameroo in my electorate of Barker. Lameroo is a small community in the Murray Mallee. It has a population of just under 1,000 people. It has a strong community spirit. It has seen churches endure, sporting clubs endure, youth groups endure, and service clubs endure. It is in this spirit that last Sunday I attended the charter day for the Lions Club of Lameroo, and I wish to pay tribute to the 41 foundation members of the club; in particular, the president Andy Cornish, who has been an integral part of the charter committee that includes secretary Andrea Maynard, treasurer Mick Stout, membership officer Kieran Caulfield and vice-presidents Tracy Mills and Gary McMurtrie. The fact that the club has 41 charter members exemplifies the strength of commitment to community that you see in Lameroo.

Lions clubs across the globe are an ornament to civil society. The concept of having a club whose purpose is to encourage and promote good citizenship, to assist the less fortunate, to foster civic-mindedness and, in essence, to bring our community together and to foster the best of our intentions is one that we as Australians are fortunate to have so firmly embedded in our society. As we look across the world at the moment, we see a deeply troubling picture. It is the easy to forget how difficult it is to create and maintain a society where people treat each other with respect and work together to improve our quality of life. Lions Clubs International started in Chicago on 7 June 1917 and came to Lismore in Australia in 1947. Regardless of whether or not governments have been willing or able to provide the level of services that communities expect, Lions Clubs International have always been there—across the globe—to make sure that the less fortunate of us are not forgotten and have somewhere to turn. Importantly, Lions Clubs International have also been major contributors to medical research around the world and here in Australia—the bionic ear, cervical cancer vaccines, vision aids, motor neurone disease; the list goes on and on.

The Lions Club of Australia has a long and distinguished history in helping the sight impaired, ever since Helen Keller challenged Lions to become 'knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness', in 1925. Adelaide GP Dr Bob Coulthard initiated the SightFirst campaign, and Lions Clubs have raised since then over $200 million to support this program, which has restored sight to over one million people. I was lucky enough last Sunday to sit next to Dr Coulthard at the charter day, and I am truly in awe of his dedication and service to the Lions community and the Australian sight-impaired community.

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (10:20): Last week we said goodbye to another Labor stalwart from Blair. Clive Claus joined the Labor Party in January 1957. There are just three longer-serving members of the Labor Party in Blair ahead of him. Clive was born in Marburg in 1927 and raised in Haigslea, some six kilometres away. These townships are located in the rural and mining regions in the western part of greater Ipswich. Clive married the love of his life, Dorothy, in 1956 and settled with his wife in Rosewood, moving a little over 10 kilometres from Haigslea. It was in Rosewood that Clive and Dorothy, or 'Dos', as he called her, remained. They were the unofficial mayor and mayoress of the township of Rosewood. Clive and Dos were married 61 years and had three children—Russell; John, also known as Ben; and Sharon—and 11 grandchildren, one of who is now deceased, and one great-grandchild.
Dos was not only the love of Clive's life but became his full-time carer after a car accident in 2014.

Clive loved poultry-fancying. He became recognised nationally and internationally for his knowledge and breeding skills. His involvement led to life membership of the Rosewood Show Society. He even has a road named in his honour in Haigslea: Claus Road. He could be found in the big poultry shed at Rosewood Show or sitting on the veranda holding court outside the Clive Claus official bar at the Rosewood Show. He was an intelligent man but was unable attain higher education due to the need to work. As the eldest child, he left school and worked in the local store. He also worked in the local mines around Ipswich and Rosewood, a dangerous profession, and he was fortunate to avoid the Box Flat disaster in 1972.

Clive was a working-class man, a Labor man, a union man. He believed passionately in the union movement. He was a great friend of former federal Oxley MP Bill Hayden and former state member for Ipswich West Don Livingstone. Clive held executive positions in the party locally at all levels. He was a source of wise advice to me. I always listened attentively to Clive's words. He was the truest of true believers and he will be greatly missed. He was respected and admired. He loved a yarn and to reminisce. He would regularly hold court. He will be truly missed. He was deeply loved and appreciated for his life, his work and who he was. He will be tending the chooks in heaven—that is what I think he will be doing now! Vale Clive Claus, a great man.

Queensland University of Technology Bluebox

Mr EVANS (Brisbane) (10:23): Recently I visited the Queensland University of Technology bluebox program to meet with the people behind one of its most exciting and promising projects. QUT researchers there have developed a sustainable and renewably sourced formulation—lignin barrier coating—for applying water resistant coating to material such as paper and cardboard. Despite the somewhat wordy description, if successful this material could be quite revolutionary. It could replace billions of tonnes of plastic-coated materials currently used to package and transport food right across Australia and around the world. This government, through its innovation agenda, is supporting this project and a whole lot of great projects just like it. This project is receiving an accelerating commercialisation grant of $125,000, matched funding, to see this technology reach the commercial phase and the international stage.

At QUT I was able to meet the brains behind this operation, Albert Tietz, CEO Tim McLennan, QUT bluebox Director Denise Hodge, and Director and Commercial Manager Michael Evans. In his laboratories, Albert showed me just how limitless the applications could be for this technology for agriculture, construction, logistics—you name it. The potential for commercialising a product like this could be really significant. These are the successes that are being achieved and prospered under this government's innovation agenda.

This House's Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, of which I am a member, has been looking at ways to ensure that the teaching of STEM subjects and innovation has a more lasting impact on our economy. Currently Australian schools are producing just a third as many top quintile maths students as the five best school systems globally. At school and university females are in short supply in maths, engineering and computing, and that is a massive disadvantage for our higher education system.
By intrinsically linking innovation to education we can guarantee that more exciting inventions like lignin barrier coating technology can occur here in Australia. Our school and higher education systems must be prepared to develop students' interests and proficiency in science, technology, engineering and maths.

Australia has enjoyed a sustained period of economic growth, and to sustain Australia's high standard of living into the future it is vital that education providers deliver the right skills mix at the right times to support an economy transitioning to the information age. International education is now my city Brisbane's largest export, and there is a big opportunity for us here into the future.

The investment in innovation and creativity needs to start at home and continue with teachers, career advisers, VET providers, universities, employers—you name it. I want to thank QUT bluebox for welcoming me and showing me their work, and I look forward to any opportunities to host the education and training committee members in the laboratories in Brisbane into the future.

Kazzi, Mr Antoine (Tony), OAM
Ghossayn, Professor Fadia, OAM
Barnes, Mr Jimmy, AO

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (10:26): In the recent honours list, Antoine Kazzi was awarded the Order of Australia medal. Antoine Kazzi's Australian journey began in Australia in 1988. After leaving behind memories of his Lebanese village, Jieh, which was destroyed by war, Tony embarked on a new journey—a journey to reach out to the Arabic community through writing, journalism and poetry. At Lebanese, Maronite and Arabic functions Tony will regularly recite his poetry with an energy, rhythm and passion that is enthralling. He has been the editor-in-chief for El-Telegraph, the largest Arabic newspaper in Australia, for almost 20 years, a role that has seen him oversee the publication of over 3,000 articles on Middle-Eastern and Australian matters. His service and commitment to the Arabic community in Australia deserves recognition. Tony is rightfully honoured as a quality journalist, community leader and great Australian.

In the recent honours list Professor Fadia Ghossayn was awarded the Order of Australia medal. This is a proud moment for Professor Ghossayn, who has made Australia her home since 1999, when she left Lebanon at a time when the country was embroiled in conflict. What makes this recognition particularly special is that Professor Ghossayn is the first woman born in Lebanon to receive the Order of Australia medal. Professor Ghossayn is a founding member and president of the Australian Maronite Professional Council and founding president of the Australian Lebanese Foundation at the University of Sydney. She has worked tirelessly over the years with the White Stone Project, supporting the homeless, assisting people with drug, alcohol and gambling addictions, as well as organising funds to support Australian Lebanese students with university scholarships. These achievements represent the values and principles that are an integral part of the Australian story—the story of a nation of diverse backgrounds, many faiths and a myriad of celebrations all united under one sun. I am honoured to recognise and congratulate Professor Ghossayn.

I was very young when I emerged from the Opera House with my parents one hot January day and saw that a band was about to perform on the Opera House forecourt. There was
almost no crowd when they started, but a huge crowd soon gathered. When we returned home Mum looked up in the paper to find out what the band was called. That was the first time I heard the words 'Cold Chisel'.

Some weeks ago Jimmy Barnes returned to the Opera House as part of his Working Class Boy tour. This time he was allowed to perform inside the building. I have been seeing performances at the Sydney Opera House all my life, and it never occurred to me that the most moving night I would experience at the Opera House would be a night with Jimmy Barnes joined onstage by members of his extraordinary family. He told a story of immigration, a story of family violence, a story of survival, a story of finding refuge in music.

In telling his story, just like Rosie Batty has told hers, Jimmy Barnes is helping let others know that it is okay to tell their story too. We need to match their courage with action so that home can be a place of safety for every family member. As you have heard me say before, we need to make sure that we make the right policy decisions so that Australian music is always part of how we tell the stories of this land.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Vamvakinou): Before I call the member for Petrie, if no member objects, statements will continue for a further 30 minutes.

Mature Age Workers

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (10:29): Mature Australians often make great workers. Older Australians are the brains trust of our nation, and I often thank them for the country that they have left me and the younger generation. Without them, Australia would not be the country that it is today. Many older Australians are looking for work, and savvy employers know that the advantages of hiring older Australians go beyond the skill set that they list on their resumes. I welcome changes that came into effect on 1 January this year simplifying Restart, which provides wage subsidies for employers who hire mature age job seekers. I say to the businesses in my electorate of Petrie: take advantage of that opportunity if you are looking to hire.

I also applaud the numerous community organisations who are dedicated to addressing the challenges that older workers face. In my electorate, I think of the Aspley Classes for Seniors and the Redcliffe Seniors Computer Club, just two of many such groups that work to upskill mature age workers. Technology moves quickly; a few short years off the tools can make a significant difference for any of us. Investing in mature age workers is well worthwhile. They have a strong work ethic, take few sick days, are loyal and are unlikely to job-hop from one job to another. Most importantly, they are brimming with experience—something that has been lost in some pockets of different industries, particularly since the end of the Howard government, with the GFC.

Post-GFC, it has been necessary to tighten belts. Employers needed to trim some of the fat, and jobs, unfortunately, needed to be shed when incomes dried up. Employers used a range of techniques to streamline their workforces. Cutting staff is never easy, and most employers went to great lengths to do the right thing, to minimise job losses, to provide choice and to offer fair compensation where losses were unavoidable. Many businesses gave voluntary redundancies, but these were often taken by long-serving staff near retirement age. This had the unintended effect of clearing some companies of experience.
I have been very heartened to hear of companies now actively recruiting mature age workers for the mentorship that they can offer to junior staff. If you look at the agriculture industry, which has seen a boost in the last 12 months, going from $46 billion to $60 billion in sales, and manufacturing, which has seen some 100,000 new jobs, this is an opportunity to employ some of those older people, to keep them on, to help young people coming through. I congratulate those employers committed to opportunities for mature age workers. It is in our best interest nationally.

Centrelink

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (10:32): One of the biggest issues that my electorate office has been dealing with over the summer period has been the Centrelink robo-debts. I have been concerned, since we came back to this place in the last few days, that the two ministers responsible—the Minister for Social Services and the Minister for Human Services—are not aware of the concern that this is causing in the community or they seem not to care about it. So I thought I would tell some stories that I have been receiving in my electorate office and from a public meeting that I held last week, to give people an understanding of how this is impacting on people in our community.

I want to start with Bill. Bill is now an age pensioner but he was working part time, driving a bus for four hours a day and getting a part-Newstart allowance. Bill got a robo-debt letter saying that he owed $3½ thousand or thereabouts. Bill tried to tell Centrelink that the name of his employer and the name that the ATO and Centrelink were using for data matching was different and why it was different. It took him quite a bit of time and energy to try and get through this. But they said to him, 'You've got to start paying this debt anyway while we work it out.' He said, 'I'm happy to pay $10 a week while you resolve it and sort it out.' They said to him, 'You can't do that because we know you've got money in the bank; you need to pay it up-front.' So he paid the whole debt in full, $3½ thousand. He knows he does not owe that money, and he is now stressed that he is never going to get back that money that he has already paid. So that is one example; that is Bill.

Maree is a 70-year-old pensioner who received a debt notice. She went through all of her bank statements and totalled up what Centrelink had paid her over the period that they were talking about. She found that Centrelink had actually paid her less than what they were claiming to have paid her. So Centrelink's debt letter actually shows that they owe her money, if what they are saying is true. She has had this debate with Centrelink and she has gone through it all with them and they said, 'Well, you have to prove it to us.' She has spent hours on the phone. She now has to employ an accountant to do her numbers for her so that she can clear up this debt with Centrelink.

There is a another woman—a professional woman—who was on Youth Allowance who got a debt notice for $5,400 that goes back to 2012. She phones Centrelink and she was told that she needed to pay the debt and then she got an email saying, 'Oh no, you don't owe the debt.' And then, in the meantime, she got a notice saying that her debt was going to a debt collector. She has found it really difficult to get through to Centrelink, and her frustration was palpable. She works full time. She has two degrees, she is trying to sort out this issue with Centrelink and she does not have the time in her working day to talk to Centrelink. She is
getting extremely stressed. She still does not know whether or not she owes this debt. It is a
debacle and the government needs to fix it.

**Tennis**

*Mrs PRENTICE* (Ryan—Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services)
(10:35): I rise to speak about the spectacular summer of tennis that we have just experienced.
It has been a season like no other with international stars of the court bringing breathtaking
matches to the screens of millions of Australians and around the world.

The Federer-Nadal grand slam final at the Australian Open last week demonstrated the
sheer talent, dedication and persistence of our tennis sporting super stars. Congratulations to
Steve Healy, Craig Tiley and all the Tennis Australia team who make Australia's tennis events
the most popular with players on the tennis circuit.

Close to 100,000 spectators enjoyed the sights and sounds of the Brisbane International for
eight days at the beginning of January at the Queensland Tennis Centre at Tennyson. With
334 aces served during the tournament and 12 kilometres of string used for newly-strung
racquets, the Brisbane International was a resounding success. Once again, we were honoured
to have two Australian tennis greats, Roy Emerson and Evonne Goolagong Cawley,
present the eponymous trophies to the men's and women's singles champions.

On 18 January, I was privileged to join Ken and Barbara Laffey for the unveiling of the
Roy Emerson statue in Blackbutt. This life-sized bronze of the tennis legend pays homage to
his 12 grand slam wins from this small regional Queensland town. As a right-hander, Roy was
known for his exceptional level of fitness that saw him ready for even the most strenuous
match on the hottest of days. The statue is a result of a wonderful community
effort over several years, and deserved congratulations to Hazel and everyone involved for a great
community event and lasting reminder.

Tennis is no longer the sport of yesteryear when white attire and gut-string racquets could
be seen on private courts across Australia. Today, tennis is engaging with those from all
walks of life. On that note, I must mention the ever-successful Hot Shots program. Launched
in 2008, it is designed to help every child, no matter their age or ability, to start playing
tennis. Children learn to play on the right-sized court, using racquets that are perfect for small
hands and balls that do not bounce too high. Hot Shots encourages fitness, socialising, all-
round entertainment, and what better sport to do this with than tennis. More than 500,000
children have experienced the program in the past 12 months alone.

Which brings me to the perfect time to congratulate two of my schools who showed
amazing talent in the Brisbane International Schools Challenge. Brookfield State School
coached by Roanne and John Lemmon-Warde won the orange and red ball events; and Jason
Carriage and the team from Fig Tree Pocket State School had a fantastic run, finishing in fifth
place in the green ball competition.

It is wonderful to see the growing profile of tennis throughout the whole of Queensland,
including my electorate of Ryan. No matter where you are in the world or what language you
speak, pick up a tennis racket and you are bound to meet friends who share your common
bond. Congratulations to Lleyton Hewitt and the Davis Cup team on their recent win. As they
say in tennis: game, set and match.
Welfare Reform

Ms SWANSON (Paterson) (10:38): There are stories circulating today that the Prime Minister may put on the backburner his plan to raise the pension age to 70. Well, the backburner is not good enough. It should be clearly shelved altogether, scrapped. It is an attack on pensioners. It was always a bad idea, an offensive idea and Labor has opposed it from the get-go. A country like Australia should not have to keep its older Australians working to the age of 70, whilst giving a $50 billion tax cut to big business. Just think about it: working till 70. I know it might be okay if you are sitting around parliament, but, let me tell you, if you are working as a labourer, as a nurse, as a farmer, these jobs require substantial physical exertion.

Hardworking people in my electorate of Paterson keep saying to me: 'They must be joking. How are my knees going to keep going?' It is a slap in the face for Australians who have worked physically hard all their lives. They deserve respect; Labor think so. But an attack on older Australians is what we have come to expect, quite sadly, from the government. Every budget they try it on. It is very predictable.

Before the 2013 election, they promised no cuts to pensions. What a joke that was! Every single budget since, the Liberals have tried to cut the pension. They never miss a chance. To the Liberals, pensioners are second-class citizens. Pensioners in my electorate are still reeling from the changes to the assets test this year. They are furious at these farcical deeming rates. Tell me: who is getting the percentages that the government claim they are? No-one. They are still furious that the government will not do something about this, even though we keep hammering the point home.

I held a forum for seniors in Nelson Bay. I would have been happy if I got perhaps 100 people. Five-hundred people turned up that morning, and they covered a range of issues. They were busting to talk to me about what was on their mind. What would happen to their pension? What could they expect next? Did anyone in Canberra have the faintest idea of what it was like to try to make ends meet on the pension? Why was there no-one in Centrelink who could help them? Why could they never get through on the phone? Why does it take 10 weeks to get a Medicare refund? Why does it cost so much to go to the doctor? Now the government are preparing to throw pensioners under the bus to get their dubious childcare reforms passed. Only a Liberal government would try to sell cuts to family payments as a positive. Enough is enough. The government must start respecting our pensioners and stop treating them as they have.

Mr HOGAN (Page) (10:41): I would like to acknowledge recent Australia Day award winners. I acknowledge the Clarence Valley Council Citizen of the Year, Diane Lee, and the joint winners of the Young Citizen of the Year award: Bennett Mitchelhill and Hannah Smith, both delightful young people. The Local Hero award winner is Roger Green, a wonderful fundraiser. The Community Achievement award winner is Grafton Midnight Basketball; they also do great work. I thank all the nominees and winners, who are inspirational people in our community.

I also acknowledge the winners in the Richmond Valley Council Australia Day awards. The Citizen of the Year award winner is Brian O'Farrell, whose father also won this award.
previously. The Young Citizen of the Year is Aiden Yourell. The Sportsperson of the Year is Robert Johnston. The Young Sportsperson of the Year is Jacob Jolley. The Volunteer of the Year is Bill Bartier. The Young Volunteer of the Year is Nicholas Colbrelli-Adams. Congratulations to all of you. It was a hot day at Woodburn that day, but you are all inspirational people in our community. I thank you for what you do.

I also acknowledge the winners of the Lismore City Council Australia Day awards. John Turnbull from Modanville received an OAM for his services to secondary education. Alan Hoskins from South Gundurimba got his OAM for service to the Uniting Church in Australia and to the community more generally. The Citizen of the Year is Jane Boorman. The Young Citizen of the Year is Caitlin Bargwanna. The Senior Sportsperson of the Year is Belinda Smith. The Organisation of the Year is the Lismore Kart Club, and I acknowledge Barry Fisher for his work with the Lismore Kart Club and PCYC. The Sustainable Environment award winner is John and Margaret Hildebrand. The Art and Culture award winner is Julian Louis. The Individual Services in the Community award winner is Julie De Nardi. The Group Services in the Community award winner is the Lismore Park Run—Anthony and Belinda Smith. Congratulations. I thank you all for what you do in our community.

I also acknowledge all the winners in the latest Australia Day awards for Kyogle Council. Frederick Finch from Kyogle got an OAM for his services to maritime history preservation. The Citizen of the Year award winner is Roslyn Knights. The Senior Citizen of the Year is Vic Walters. The Junior Citizen of the Year is Ebony Lavell. The Sportsperson of the Year is Amber Bryant. The Minor Student award winner is Ella Day. The Minor Sportsperson award went to Oliver Rixon. The Junior Student award was jointly awarded to Thomas Masters and Tegan Pederson. The Senior Student award winner was Eloise Crawter.

In Bonalbo, the Citizen of the Year is Duncan Robertson and the Young Citizen of the Year is Mason Newton. The Sportsperson of the Year is Kaitlyn Summers. The Business of the Year is the Dog’N Bull Hotel—Kerry and Paul Horne. The Community Organisation of the Year is the Bonalbo Community Hall.

In Woodenbong, the Citizen of the Year is Nan Krarup and the Young Citizen of the Year is Madeleine Barrett. The Junior Sportsperson of the Year is Katelyn Grimmett. The Community Organisation of the Year is the Woodenbong Rural Fire Brigade. I thank you for all that you do in our community.

**Borg, Mr Fred, OAM**

Dr FREELANDER (Macarthur) (10:44): Today I would like to pay tribute to a very significant community figure in Campbelltown, Councillor Fred Borg, who passed away on 20 December last year at the age of 73. Fred was born in Malta in 1943, and like many of Maltese origin he came with his family to Australia after World War II to build a new life, arriving in 1951. Fred gave so much to the people of Campbelltown and he worked hard to ensure our community thrived. He established the 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer, Macarthur’s biggest charity event, which raises funds for the Macarthur Cancer Therapy Centre, the oncology ward and the paediatric ambulatory care unit at Campbelltown Hospital as well as the palliative care unit at Camden Hospital.
Over the years, I had a lot to do with Fred, who was a very kind and caring man who made sure that Macarthur received the health funding it deserved. He was a life member and one of the pioneer board members of the Campbelltown Catholic Club. He loved the Wests Tigers rugby league team and did all he could to support them. Through owning and running his own printing business he became president of the Campbelltown Chamber of Commerce at a very important time, when Campbelltown was transitioning from a region to a city.

Fred was a long-term campaigner for something to be done about the dangers on Appin Road, an issue that everyone in Macarthur is very concerned about and very passionate about, even now. I am doing my best to make sure that Fred's dream of having a safe Appin Road will come true.

Fred was an independent councillor on Campbelltown council for 17 years. He is one of the only council members whose name was a household word in our community. Early last year Fred received a special acknowledgement for 50 years of service to the community of Campbelltown, and this year he received a very well deserved posthumous Order of Australia award.

Fred knew he lived in a great place with wonderful people, and he supported those people throughout his entire time in the Macarthur community. He loved his community but he loved nothing more than his family. He was the father of four and a grandfather of 11. He is survived by his beautiful wife Maria. Ironically, Fred was very passionate about fighting cancer, and cancer is what finally drew his life to a close. He died, I believe, with great dignity.

When I announced that I was standing for election in the last federal election, Fred rang me to tell me that he was a friend of the incumbent, Russell Matheson, my opponent, but he would still do whatever he could to support me. He made sure that at every community event he was at I was acknowledged, and he was very positive about me. I am very grateful to him.

**Corangamite Electorate: Corangamite Medal**

Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite) (10:47): The Corangamite Medal is an annual award I have initiated which recognises one exceptional student in each participating primary and secondary school in my wonderful electorate. The metal celebrates the achievements of young people and encourages the leaders of tomorrow—and we all know how important that is. I have been delighted with how well the Corangamite medal has been received across a diverse range of schools. This year some 41 schools participated in the program. It was fantastic to visit so many schools to present the metal and to pay tribute to young people across my electorate who have made such an extraordinary contribution to their school community, and to the broader community in so many cases.

I will go through the winners, because I think it is very important that I acknowledge each of them in the national parliament and celebrate their achievements. They are from Trinity College in Colac, Laura De Lorenzo; St Ignatius College, Sophie Crothers; Aireys Inlet primary school, Mina Barley; Ceres Primary School, Cooper Field; Sacred Heart College, my old school, very proudly, Sophie Dowling; Colac West Primary School, Tianna Beckett; Lethbridge Primary School, Brooke Devlin. From Woady Yaloak, which has four campuses, the winners were, at Ross Creek, Larissa Brownbill; at Snake Valley, Jazz Humphrey-Brown; at Scarsdale, Ella Ross; and at Smythesdale, Lilly Hall; from Linton primary, Graice Ronan;
Meredith primary, Trent Miller; St Aloysius Catholic Primary School, Claire Martin; Deans Marsh primary, Chloe Hull; Lorne P-12 college, Carl Pulido; Belmont High School, Abbey Lanyon; Surfside Primary School, Brendan Mohr; Mount Duneed Regional Primary School, Tyler Pekin; Oberon primary, Indy Dunn; Colac Primary School, Charlotte Hardy; Oberon High School, Teagan Madden; Colac Secondary College, Nicholas Lenehan-Anderson; Forrest Primary School, Maddy Seebeck; Inverleigh primary, Angus McDonald; Mandama Primary School, Ngara McEwen; Matthew Flinders Girls Secondary College, Laura Bath; Bellarine Secondary College, Amy Thomas; Clairvaux Catholic School, Harry O'Neill; Highton primary, Will Jones; Surf Coast Secondary College, Emma Vescio; Grovedale College, Jessica Loone; Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, Tia Fitzgerald; Ocean Grove primary, Zoe Evans; Torquay P-6 College, Mackenzie Colledge; Barwon Heads primary, Nellie Naulty; Shelford primary, Henry Bennett; Rokewood primary, Lily Terry—almost there, Madam Deputy Speaker Vamvakinou; it is a wonderful, long list—Teesdale Primary, Vincent Weatherly; Grovedale West, Caitlin Dawber; Alvie, Charlotte Little; Beeac, Zac Barwise; Birregurra, Paul Doak; and Point Lonsdale Primary School, Angelica Daniels. Thank you very much.

Turnbull Government

Mr FEENEY (Batman) (10:50): I think it is fair to say that while this might be the first week of parliament for 2017, the political year is already old. We saw, of course, that over the summer break this government managed to lose a minister, so it is a very unsteady beginning for this government for 2017. Not only did they put us through the torture of losing a minister, but we were then treated to the vaudeville of Senator Sinodinos filling in as health minister for a period.

Now, with our first week in parliament, we saw the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull resolved to reset the year and reset the debate as best he could. He did that with a speech to the Press Club.

A government member: It was a sensational speech.

Mr FEENEY: As you know, with that speech to the Press Club—and a member interjects saying it was a sensational speech—but the wonderful irony of it is that no-one would know. No-one would know because he successfully bombed his own speech by having the wit to time it on an occasion where the AEC election records were coming out so that his speech theme around transparency was immediately overrun by questions concerning his donation to the Liberal Party. As a consequence, we had the rather remarkable vision of a Prime Minister needing to go on the 7.30 ABC news program that evening so as to clean up the aftermath of his own attempt to reset the year. And his reset for the year, as a consequence, was entirely about his $1.75 million donation to the Liberal Party.

A government member: All his own money.

Government members interjecting—

Mr FEENEY: By all means, absolutely right. Again, the member makes a final interjection and says it was the Prime Minister's own money. I might, of course, make the observation that given that fact, why it is that he held onto it as a secret rather than being clear about it in the aftermath of the election is an enduring political mystery, because the Prime Minister set himself up so that there would be a full 18 months of speculation and interest in a
matter that you insist is mundane. He worked hard to make it the story that it became and, not satisfied with building a year of suspense, then used that fact to bomb his own reset of the year. Once again, we have seen this government’s tactical ineptitude make sure that it has lost control of the debate again and again.

But on marriage inequality—this remains a key and burning issue for my electorate—I would like to offer the coalition some free political advice: you have set yourselves up to ensure that marriage equality remains a burning issue in the electorate between now and the next election. Clearly, this is not in your interest. We can get marriage equality done. It can go through this parliament and it can become a fact. I have often made the observation that, the day after we achieve marriage equality, people will wonder what on earth the fuss was about. You have set yourselves up to be pinged by this debate for more years than you need. *(Time expired)*

**Fisher Electorate: Australia Day Honours**

**Mr WALLACE** (Fisher) (10:54): I am delighted to rise today to pay tribute to some great Australians who are also constituents in my local community. The federal seat of Fisher is proud to boast not only the Australian of the year, Emeritus Professor Alan Mackay-Sim, but also many of the wonderful recipients of this year’s Sunshine Coast Australia Day awards. Professor Mackay-Sim is famous, as I hope every Australian now knows, for achieving a feat that was previously the preserve only of miracles, that of restoring mobility to a person whose spinal nerves have been completely cut.

Following his work, a firefighter, whose life had been almost destroyed by a savage knife attack, can walk and even ride a bicycle again. But Professor Mackay-Sim's work has gone much further: like all great Australians, he has created a great team to continue and build on what he has achieved. His research using olfactory stem cells is now being developed by colleagues in Queensland to advance our understanding of Parkinson's disease, schizophrenia and motor neurone disease. As Australia transitions into the economy of the 21st century, we have a greater than ever need for innovative and creative thinking. Professor Mackay-Sim, the man who recognised how his work on the nose could help people with a traumatic spinal injury to walk again, is an inspirational leader in that area. I congratulate him on being made Australian of the Year.

In Fisher, though, we have a great many outstanding people. We cannot, of course, make all of them Australian of the Year, but in our community we give our own Australia Day awards to recognise their contributions. I am proud to be able to tell the chamber about just some of them. Our Citizen of the Year was Julie Penlington, who is the founder of Four Paws Animal Rescue, a local organisation that provides loving homes to rescued animals. Jak Hardy, a personal friend of mine, won our Young Citizen of the Year award for his extensive volunteer work in the community. While achieving great academic success, Jak has featured heavily on local volunteer boards and committees. He has even represented Australia at the Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassadors Network.

In Fisher we are very concerned about the preservation of our beautiful natural environment, and I would like to acknowledge our environmental award winner. Rhondda Alexander has been a tireless servant of the community over the past 40 years. I would also like to acknowledge my very good friend Don Moffatt, who received his Order of Australia for his dedication to community rescue helicopter services and the horseracing community.
These are just a few of our local award winners, a selection of the wonderful people we have volunteering in our community of Fisher every day.

**Energy Security**

Mr BUTLER (Port Adelaide) (10:57): Today I rise to talk about this Prime Minister's chaotic and dangerous foray into energy policy over the last six weeks. We in Australia face a very difficult series of challenges in electricity, largely driven by the fact that, according to AGL, three-quarters of our existing coal- and gas-fired generators are already operating beyond their design life and need to be replaced. The industry, big energy users, expert agencies have all said this country needs a comprehensive plan about the replacement of those generators that, first of all, and most importantly, delivers affordable, reliable electricity to households and businesses as well as aligns with our Paris commitments on carbon pollution.

In December Malcolm Turnbull, the Prime Minister, inexplicably overruled his own energy minister to rule out any consideration of an emissions intensity scheme in electricity, in spite of it being recommended by all of the industry, by state governments—Liberal and Labor alike—by the CSIRO, by the Chief Scientist, by the Energy Market Commission, the Climate Change Authority and many, many others. The Prime Minister's former energy adviser, Danny Price, said this makes the Liberal Party:

... the party of increasing electricity prices and reduced energy security.

Instead, what we saw at the National Press Club a couple of weeks ago was the Prime Minister place the idea of new coal-fired generators at the centre of his energy plan. To be clear, no-one in Australia was talking about new coal-fired generators being built in this country. No-one had been talking about that for years, until the former Prime Minister, the member for Warringah, penned an op-ed urging the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, to do just that. And, low and behold, it was the centrepiece of his National Press Club speech. This is the most expensive option, according to the Australian Industry Group. According to the Energy Council, which represents all of the coal- and gas-fired generators:

Put simply, you cannot finance coal.

According to the Climate Institute, it would require somewhere between $27 billion and $44 billion of taxpayer subsidies, because banks simply will not lend to build a new coal-fired generator.

It is good to have the member for Sturt and the member for Boothby here, as I was particularly shocked to read on the front page of *The Australian* last week that senior government sources are already drawing up plans to build a new coal-fired generator at Pelican Point, on the Lefèvre Peninsula. Australia has not built a coal-fired generator in a major city since before World War II. I can tell the member for Sturt and the member for Boothby: there will not be a coal-fired generator built in the community of Port Adelaide while I am the member. The community will reject it. The Prime Minister needs to stop listening to the hard right of the Liberal Party about the important issue of electricity.

**Chisholm Electorate: Cultural Diversity**

Ms BANKS (Chisholm) (11:00): Over the summer, like many Australians, the people of Chisholm spent time relaxing with their families and friends, enjoying summer traditions which are not limited to barbecues, the beach and the cricket. There are many other events and traditions across different cultures that are embraced as part of Australian society.
In Melbourne, the pre-Christmas period was marred by the knowledge that a terrorist plot was planned in the vicinity of Federation Square. The plot was foiled and, in true Australian spirit, Australians did not stay away from churches, Christmas carols or big events such as the Boxing Day test. We continued to celebrate and enjoy our traditions, our diverse way of life, in defiance and as a united sign that no degree of fear will stop us from celebrating our traditions in harmony.

Post Christmas, in the last couple of months I have had the pleasure of representing our Prime Minister at the Theofania Blessing of the Waters in Port Melbourne, organised by the Greek community, and the opening of Chinese New Year in Chinatown. I have also welcomed many new citizens from all corners of the world to our great country, the most successful multicultural nation on this earth. On Australia Day, we celebrated this wonderful occasion and the honour of those people becoming Australians. It was a proud day for those people, as it is for the many Australians who celebrate the day every year in their own unique way, with freedom and harmony.

However, only days before Australia Day, an unthinkable tragedy happened in Bourke Street, in Melbourne's CBD. It broke our hearts. On Australia Day I reflected that, particularly in times of need and crisis, the essence and good spirit of our country and its people come to the fore. No matter our differences in politics, opinions, faith, gender, heritage or ethnicity, we express our love, deep pride and solidarity in being Australian in a humble and understated way in a time of crisis, by our intuitive actions and gestures and by our sincere and genuine praise for those who have done us proud by their deeds, be their small or grand. This is the core of what I love about Australia and Australians.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird): In accordance with standing order 193 the time for members' constituency statements has concluded.

CONDOLENCES

Trood, Professor Russell Brunell

Consideration resumed.

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (11:03): I would not say I have great pleasure in rising on the occasion of a parliamentary discussion about the role of former senator Russell Trood, but it is my privilege to stand and talk about Russell Trood, who was a very good friend of mine, a very distinguished member of the Senate and the parliament, and a very distinguished and accomplished person outside the parliament.

It is worth placing on the record a number of Russell's achievements. As colleagues would know, he passed away this year, taken all too young by a particularly unpleasant cancer—and that could happen to any one of us. It is a great sadness to me and, I know, to George Brandis and many other people in this place who knew Russell very well. Of course, it is a much greater sadness to his wife, Dale, and his children, James and Phoebe. I know that they are appreciating all the support and condolences that they have been receiving about their remarkable husband and father.

I would like to talk a little bit about Russell today on the occasion of this parliamentary debate. There are lots of ways you could describe Russell Trood. He was certainly very charming. He was an engaging personality. He was good-humoured. He was good company.
He was a proud small 'l' liberal in our party. I was quite surprised when Russell was preselected by the Queensland Liberal National Party. They have not always sent a lot of small 'l' liberals to Canberra, although they seem to increasingly be doing so. Russell came to Canberra and never changed his principles about what he believed in. He was a proud liberal in the Deakinite tradition, and he was a good friend.

He was also very passionate about what he believed in. He was very accomplished. I have a list of some of the things that Russell did in his life, and it is worth putting them on the record, because it is quite remarkable. Not everybody who comes into this place has the expertise and the erudition in a particular area that Russell did in foreign affairs. He was director of the Centre for the Study of Australia-Asia Relations. He was director of the Griffith Asia Institute. He was an adjunct professor at the University of Sydney. He was an adjunct fellow of the ANU's Department of International Relations. He was a visiting fellow at the Lowy Institute for International Policy. He was an adjunct professor at the US Studies Centre at the University of Sydney. He was on the board of the National Library, the Australia-Indonesia Institute and the Australian-American Fulbright Commission. He was active on the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific. He was a driving force in the Queensland branch of the Australian Institute of International Affairs. He was president of the United Nations Association of Australia. He was on the council of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. He was the Prime Minister's special envoy for Eastern Europe.

Of course, he was a Liberal senator for Queensland for six years and had the distinction of winning the last spot in that particular election in 2004—the credit for which went to Barnaby Joyce, in fact, but it was not Barnaby Joyce who won the last spot. Ron Boswell rushed out and said that Barnaby Joyce had won the last spot, and that became the fact. It was actually a myth. Russell Trood was the last person to win in that particular election, and that gave us an unprecedented and never repeated four senators out of six from Queensland in that election and, of course, gave John Howard a majority in the Senate, the first time that any government had had a majority in the Senate since the Fraser period. So it was quite a remarkable achievement. Of course, quite a few people wish we had not had a majority in the Senate! 'Be careful what you wish for,' I think, is the expression. When he was in the Senate, of course, he was the deputy chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade and he was the chair of the Select Committee on Reform of the Australian Federation.

So Russell brought amazing experience and knowledge about foreign relations to this place, and he never tired of talking about it if you wanted to know anything about foreign policy, particularly if you wanted a different view from the government line, for example—although Russell was never ill disciplined in public about his views. But he was a questioning member of the parliament and the party room who did not just always accept whatever he had been told by DFAT, the Minister for Foreign Affairs or whoever it might be, particularly a bureaucrat. He would be asking questions and testing your thesis like a true academic. But he was not just an academic; he was also a very passionate politician. He was a longstanding Liberal in Queensland; we did not pluck him out of academia and bring him into the parliament. He had been a member of the Liberal Party in Queensland for decades, working tirelessly—as so many people in this place do themselves and know that others do—for the election of other people. I was very glad when he got the chance to be a senator. He shared a
house briefly with me in Kingston, but he found my digs not suitable for his very high standards, and he very politely told me that he, at his age and station, expected something better. That never seemed to worry Robert Hill, I must say; he was happy to live there for many decades.

So Russell lived with me briefly, but I will tell one story about Russell before I finish—which is at my own expense, actually, and his as well. In 2007, his parliamentary colleague from Queensland Senator Santoro, if you remember, stood down from the ministry, and I was the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, Tony Abbott, and Russell was a Queensland senator but a very new one, obviously. I had been in parliament, at that stage, for about 14 years, but I had never been promoted to the ministry under Prime Minister Howard, so I was, I think, the longest serving parliamentary secretary since Federation. I always used to say, 'I do that job so well that John Howard thinks I should stay in it.' I happily did it. I did things like mental health. I really enjoyed the role, but I was in it for a very long time. So I did not do what we all do when there is a vacancy, which is wait by the phone expecting a call. I had given up on that many years before. I was actually painting a bathroom door at home at my house, which I had taken off the hinges, and somebody told me—I think George told me—that Russell had been made the Minister for Ageing, which I thought was a remarkable achievement having been only in the parliament for a few years, when I was the Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing. But, I rang him and congratulated him—as you would do—and Russell said, 'But I haven't been called by the Prime Minister.' I said, 'Really?' He said, 'No.' I said, 'But everyone says that you are the new minister for ageing. I think it's been in the media.' He said, 'Well, I haven't been rung,' and then my phone rang and I was made the Minister for Ageing. Russell took it very well, I must say, because I thought people would think that I was being arch, you see—but not Russell because Russell knew that I liked him very much and I was genuinely happy about his promotion. Then I ended up in the job that I thought he had got. We stayed very good friends and we were friends right up until his death, and it has been a great sadness to me. I pass on my condolences to his wife, Dale, and his children, Phoebe and James. We have lost a very good soul in Russell Trood, the likes of which we do not often see in this place.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton—Opposition Whip) (11:11): I want to add to the fine words from the member for Sturt about the late Senator Russell Trood, who was my constituent. I did not rely on his vote particularly to get over the line, but I found him good company, as the member for Sturt said. As a board member of the Griffith Asia Institute, where he was the director, I had a lot more to do with him after he had left parliament. We were in parliament together for a few years. But, he was a classic small 'l' liberal with the great intellectual insights that come with being an academic and obviously a go-to person when it came to looking at Asia and the challenges that have been there for many years, but also the greater opportunities that are there. In his role at the Griffith Asia Institute, he was certainly looking to make sure that Griffith University took advantage and made sure that its expertise when it came to Asia, while recognising other universities, was developed and broadcast. Russell did a great job in that role. Obviously, he was way too young an age to die from cancer. It seems like only five minutes ago that I saw him at a Griffith Asia Institute board meeting. When I heard that he was sick and then, sadly, to hear of his death, it was quite a shock.
Russell served his nation loyally and served his university, and in all those many roles as mentioned by the member for Sturt. To be a strong, progressive liberal voice is an important role in Australian politics in this contest of ideas. I think it is crucial that in the Westminster system the conservative parties have a liberal voice, a small 'l' liberal voice, because, I would suggest, they are becoming swamped by with conservatives and even worse; whereas, Russell was, I am proud to say, a Queenslander who brought a progressive voice down to Canberra. Obviously there were many things that we did not agree on, but when it came to looking at the opportunities in Asia he had a great insight and was a great guide. He was a 'gentleman', and I use that term deliberately—always a gentleman—irrespective of our differences, he was always good company. To have been a senator who served his nation loyally is a pretty good epitaph. My thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Dale, and his children, James and Phoebe, and I wish them all the best in this time of grieving.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird): As a mark of respect, I ask all members present to rise in their places.

Honourable members having stood in their places—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the chamber.

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE
Tasmania: 50th Anniversary of Black Tuesday Bushfires

Consideration resumed.

Mr GEE (Calare) (11:14): The 1967 Tasmanian bushfires, also referred to as Black Tuesday, were some of the worst bushfire events in that state's history. They were also some of Australia's worst bushfire events on record. On 7 February dozens of blazes across south-east Tasmania developed into a firestorm and within hours a total of 64 people lost their lives. A further 900 were injured. More than 1,400 homes were destroyed, along with 1,700 other structures. A total of 7,000 were left homeless. The destruction included 80 bridges, 5,400 kilometres of fencing, 80,000 head of stock and over 652,000 acres of land scorched. This year we mark 50 years since that disastrous fire. Our thoughts are with the people of Tasmania, particularly those who lost loved ones in that terrible and catastrophic event. It is important that this House pauses to remember them.

Unfortunately, the events of Black Tuesday in Tasmania 50 years ago were not and will not be the last catastrophic fire events in Australia's history. There were the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires in Victoria and South Australia, which claimed 75 lives and over 2,000 homes, and the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires north of Melbourne in which 173 people lost their lives.

Of course in all of these catastrophic fire events volunteers played a vital and enormous role. Today I would also like to pay tribute to the bravery of our rural firefighters, both paid and volunteer, who in the wake of these events give up their time and put themselves in harm's way to keep our communities safe. It is an issue that is particularly important to our country communities. Some of the service of our country firefighting volunteers stretches over generations. It is that dedication that makes the Rural Fire Service in New South Wales so successful. It is not just the volunteers; it is also their family members because for every person fighting a blaze on the front line you can be sure that there is someone else working behind the scenes supporting those firefighters at headquarters, resupplying them or simply keeping a household functioning while their loved one is out fighting a blaze. If you want to
know what the spirit of Australia is all about then look no further than these brave individuals and community volunteers just like them.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all RFS staff and volunteers who worked so hard this January to contain blazes all over central western New South Wales. A grass and scrub fire in the Wuuluman area between Wellington and Mudgee burnt through almost 2,730 hectares of land. Crews worked around the clock to bring that blaze under control, battling temperatures of up to 43 degrees on some days. The RFS deployed aircraft in the Wuuluman fire, providing assistance to firefighters from the air, throughout the day and the night. This was a first for New South Wales.

The Canobolas Rural Fire Service fire control centre based in Orange played an important role in managing the crews in the Wuuluman fire. Today I would like to make particular mention of David Hoadley, the zone manager—he has certainly had a very busy January with one fire or another—Superintendent Brett Bowden; Inspector Steve Smith; Liz Lewis; Nils White; Geoff Selwood; Arthur Sharp; and Roy Ferguson, who is well known in firefighting circles in the central west. Superintendent Lyndon Wieland and Inspector Bob Conran from the Orana zone RFS also did a wonderful job in coordinating the efforts.

Additionally, a large contingent of crews from the Orana, Chifley and Cudgegong RFS districts helped combat the fire. There were crews from all over the central west, including Wuuluman, Spicers Creek, Dripstone, Mount Arthur, Bournewood near Yeovil, Stuart Town, Neurea, Geurie, Euchareena, Bodangora, Comobella,elong, Maryvale, Curra Creek, Ponto, Cooks Gap, Cooyal, Goolma, Grattai, Gulgong, Harargaves, Lawson, Lue, Moolarben, Mudgee HQ, Mullamuddy, Pambong, Rylstone, Windeyer, Yarrabin, Perstville, O’Connell, Bathurst, Raglan, North West Orange, Newbridge, Blaney, Clifton Grove, Ophir—a brigade close to my own heart; indeed, close to my own house—Springside, Spring Hill and others as well. We are certainly indebted to them all.

Additionally, a bushfire north-west of Bathurst off the Freemantle Road at Gowan almost got away in mid-January. The initial blaze started at 78 hectares, before hot and windy weather tripled the blaze to 217 hectares in a little over an hour. More than 90 firefighters battled the blaze on the ground, supported by water-bombing aircraft and earth moving equipment. The Eglinton RFS were just one of many crews fighting this fire, and I had the opportunity to catch up with some of them during the recent Australia Day celebrations. I would also like to thank them today for their efforts. They included: Mark Bennett, the captain, who runs an engineering company and gave up days of working in that business to help the community put out the blaze, Brett Taylor, Steve Plummer, Tania Willey, Alex Picker, Brian Forde, Peter Patten, Ian England, Greg Inglisie, Nathan Inwood, Kingsley Picker and Morris McMillan.

The Eglinton crew worked around the clock for five days on a split shift roster, and in the days after the fire was contained they continued to clean up spot fires. Only this Monday another fire broke out very close to Bathurst and the Eglinton crew were out there again fighting the fire before it had the chance to impact on nearby homes. These were not the only blazes around the Central West—there was also a fire out near Mandagery that broke out in mid to late January. I dropped in at the Canobolas fire control centre to see how the RFS crews were going. The effort they put into containing that and all of the places around the Central West was extraordinary. They move in fast with earthmoving equipment, they move
in quickly from the air, but you cannot do it without crews being there on the ground—brave men and women who put their lives on the line to make sure that our country communities are safe. When I asked them what they were most hoping for, they said they were looking forward to some rain—the rain came the next day and put out what was left of the Mandagery fire, and the Gowan blaze as well.

On this 50th anniversary of the Black Tuesday bushfires in Tasmania, we remember all those who suffered loss in that catastrophic event and we also pay tribute to all the brave men and women who put themselves in harm's way to keep our communities safe.

**Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II: Sapphire Jubilee**

Consideration resumed.

**Ms MADELEINE KING** (Brand) (11:23): I rise to speak today on the occasion of the sapphire jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, the Queen of Australia and the Queen of Canada, New Zealand, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tuvalu, Barbados, Grenada, the Solomon Islands, Saint Lucia, The Bahamas, and the United Kingdom. I acknowledge the meaning and significance the monarch of the Commonwealth of Nations; her royal family and the monarchy as an institution has had for Britons and for many citizens of the Commonwealth over many years, but particularly in the very dark days of World War II.

Many of the immigrants to this country who live in my electorate of Brand in Western Australia have originated from Great Britain and other Commonwealth nations, and many of those immigrants remain supporters and firm fans of the monarchy and of the Queen and her family. Queen Elizabeth II is a significant figure in the lives of many, and many people around the globe—many people beyond the 17 countries in her realm—find inspiration in her steadfast loyalty and dedication, and in the dignified manner in which she has carried out her duty during the 65 years of her reign over the Commonwealth of Nations.

I rise to speak today principally on behalf of many of my constituents who themselves would like to thank Queen Elizabeth for her long and dedicated service to their home nations and also to this nation.

In my own experience I know that my father, while he lived, adored the Queen and all that she stands for. My father, John Harvie Morris, was one of the thousands of her subjects who stood outside Buckingham Palace on 2 June 1953 hoping to see her on the Buckingham Palace balcony after her coronation earlier in the day at Westminster Abbey. As a sailor in the war, the royal family and his is first home, England, meant a great deal to him. Although his chose Australia for his home and his future, and lived many more years in Shoalwater, Western Australia, than in Devon, England, his loyalty to the Queen and the country of England remained. At our family home—or it might be at my brother's place; I am not quite sure—there is a dress sword of the Royal Marines that Queen Elizabeth's father, King George VI, presented to my grandfather in 1944 as he was awarded a military Order of the British Empire.

My brother John recently had the sword restored, and I can tell you it is quite a beautiful piece of craftsmanship. It is the tradition of the regal that entrances. The extravagant yet elegant royal cipher of the King is engraved on the basket hilt and the crest of the Royal Marines floats halfway down the blade of the sword, halfway to its sharp tip. The sword has
never hurt anyone, but it signifies that the original owner, my grandfather, would have died and killed for the King whose name sits upon its handle, for the Royal Marines whose crest runs along its blade and for the country both institutions stood for.

Of course, that is what the people of the Commonwealth were called upon to do, and they did. Service women and men from around the world died, killed, survived, served and sacrificed for King, for country and for the Commonwealth, and they would continue to do so for his daughter, Queen Elizabeth II, in many theatres of war. It is no wonder the ties to the monarchy are so strong and so many. Queen Elizabeth II is the current and longstanding embodiment of these ties and a tradition that seems so strange when one writes about it and talks about it out loud.

I support many traditions this nation has inherited from the Queen's home of the United Kingdom: the rule of law, our magnificent common law and the judicial system, and aspects of the Westminster system of government that we see in play every day in our workplace here. Like many, I do not like cricket—no, I love it!

Today, I gladly pay my respects and offer my congratulations to Queen Elizabeth II on the occasion of her Sapphire Jubilee, and I pay tribute to her many years of service and dedication, which she had to give by virtue of being the firstborn child of King George VI. The life of the Queen and the royal family has, no doubt, been a life of privilege but equally a life of service and dedication.

For my own part, I hope the day comes sooner rather than later when an Australian can be the head of state of Australia, and will be the head of state only of Australia and not of 16 other nations. Australia will be a republic. That day is inevitable, and I look forward to that day very much indeed.

The Queen herself, when she visited Australia in 2011 for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Perth, said:

Ever since I first came here in 1954, I have watched Australia grow and develop at an extraordinary rate. This country has made dramatic progress economically, in social, scientific and industrial endeavours and, above all, in self-confidence.

Inevitably, that self-confidence should lead us to being a republic, to having faith in ourselves and to allowing an Australian to be our head of state. Becoming a republic is a critical step for Australia and its self-identification in this region, in Asia. The monarchy has played its part in the development of this nation, and I thank the institution and all of those who have served it for helping Australia in its development. But now I think we have got this.

Personally, and to conclude, on behalf of my constituents and on behalf of myself, I would like to say thank you to Queen Elizabeth II for her many years of dedicated service to our nation, to the nations of the Commonwealth and to her own nation of the United Kingdom. I wish the Queen and her family a very happy and peaceful future.

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (11:29): I rise to congratulate Her Majesty the Queen on the occasion of her Sapphire Jubilee, and to acknowledge the gracious remarks of my friend the member for Brand on the Queen's service as well. Unlike my friend the member for Brand, I have been a constitutional monarchist from the time I knew Australia had a Constitution. At the invitation of my early mentor, the late Sir Asher Joel, I joined Australians for Constitutional Monarchy when it was founded in 1992 and I was still a schoolboy. I had the
privilege of being elected as the youngest delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1998 as a member of the No Republic—Australians for Constitutional Monarchy team, and was later appointed by then Prime Minister Howard to serve on the 10 member no case committee for the 1999 republic referendum.

My support for our current constitutional arrangements comes from the fact that I think the constitutional monarchy has helped provide Australia with stable government since its inception. It is the best of all the available alternative systems of government. I like the fact that, despite the inexhaustible ambitions of people in this place, at the apex of our government is one office which we cannot get our hands on. It provides, in the words of the original charter of the ACM, drafted by that great liberal, former High Court Justice Michael Kirby, leadership beyond politics. I always thought it was of great comfort to me that that great generation of lawyers like Michael Kirby, Sir Harry Gibbs, Lloyd Waddy, Ken Handley and Barry O'Keefe banded together because they saw great strength in the legality and the constitutionality of the constitutional monarchy.

Compare our system of government to that of the American system. The American President can never bring the country together as a unifying figure because, at the end of the day, they are an elected politician with ideas, which we all have as politicians, that divide the community along partisan lines. A President as, say, in the German system, chosen by the legislature, can never bring people together because they are usually dull figures chosen as part of a political compromise. The strength of the monarchy as a symbol is that in these highly partisan days there is a figure at the apex of our system who is above politics and provides continuity. While none of us can say who the Prime Minister will be after the next election, we know who our monarch will be for the next century, and that stability is a great strength. The strength of the monarchy, it is said—I think it was Churchill who first said it—is the power that it denies others. The Queen and her governors-general have no mandate. The Queen provides an example to her viceregal representatives. They know that they have to exercise their limited powers in keeping with the traditions of the Crown in a way which brings lustre to the institution, and that has had an effect on the officeholders, turning even doughty Republicans like Bill Hayden into misty eyed monarchists.

The monarchy is a dynamic institution with a great capacity for reinvention. In the 1990s, the monarchy was somewhat unfashionable, but in recent years it has become more popular. No republican system can give us what the monarchy has given us in the last few years: the love of two people, the beauty of a wedding and the rejoicing at the birth of children. In an age of increasing international tension and nationalism, I like the fact that our sovereign is also the sovereign of Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Papua New Guinea, and a range of other realms scattered across the globe. Since European settlement, Australia has had good, bad and even mad monarchs, but it is the system which is fundamental.

Today we acknowledge the exceptional service of the most exceptional monarch we have had, Elizabeth II, whose service is without peer. Queen Elizabeth has been Queen of Australia for 65 years. That is more than half of the entire period since Federation, and that is a matter worth reflecting on. In that time she has seen 14 prime ministers, she has made 16 visits to Australia, is patron of numerous organisations in this country and takes a deep interest in our country and its progress, including, and importantly, the welfare of our First Peoples, for whom she has always had a deep interest. She brings to us the wisdom and unparalleled
experience of governance and history, not only of our own country but also of other nations around the world.

Queen Elizabeth has epitomised through her reign some important values. They are values shared by people throughout the Commonwealth and are effectively the values of our inheritance from Britain: stoicism, service, honour, moderation, openness and tolerance. Broadcasting to the Commonwealth as a 21-year-old, she declared that her whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to our service. She reminded us that our mission is to stand for liberty in the face of tyranny, as she reminded her people in that same broadcast:

We must not be daunted by the anxieties and hardships that the war has left behind for every nation of our commonwealth. We know that these things are the price we cheerfully undertook to pay for the high honour of standing alone, seven years ago, in defence of the liberty of the world.

In an increasingly disposable world, she reminds us of our history. Australia's conception of ourselves is that we are a young country, but in democratic terms we are actually a very old country. We are one of six of the oldest continuous democracies in the world. As the Queen said at the time of her golden jubilee:

We ... have ... a long and proud history. This not only gives us a trusted framework of stability and continuity to ease the process of change, but it also tells us what is of lasting value. Only the passage of time can filter out the ephemeral from the enduring.

I am obliged to my friend and collaborator in matters constitutional, Dr Damien Freeman, for alerting me to a special prayer offered by the Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth at the occasion of the Queen's 90th birthday last year. The prayer asks the following:

May the supreme King of kings, who in His mercy, has seen fit to preserve the Queen in life and good health beyond her ninetieth year, continue to guard her and deliver her from all trouble and sorrow. May He bless and protect Her Majesty's Armed Forces. May He put a spirit of wisdom and understanding into her heart and into the hearts of all her counsellors—

And those counsellors include, of course, Her Majesty's ministers of state for the Commonwealth Australia. The Chief Rabbi's prayer continued—

We offer our gratitude for the blessings You have bestowed upon our gracious and noble Sovereign throughout the ninety years of her life. In Your infinite wisdom, You have guided the hand of Her Majesty the Queen and made her a worthy Monarch who loves peace, inspires loving-kindness and champions the finest values of our society. May she continue to reign in good health for many years to come. …

That is a sentiment that I hope we can all share.

**Mr CHAMPION** (Wakefield) (11:35): I rise to congratulate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth on her Sapphire Jubilee. I was very fortunate to have been born in a town named after the Queen and to still represent that town. From time to time there is a debate in Adelaide about whether the city of Elizabeth should be renamed, but I think it is a fitting tribute to our monarch that Elizabeth is named after her.

We were very fortunate that the Queen visited northern Adelaide on 21 February 1963. She went to a city that was born of the optimism of that postwar generation. It was an industrial satellite city. It had previously been farmland and had expanded out for housing and, of course, for factories and development. I have a picture of Her Majesty, as a younger lady, at
the Holden factory. It was so lovely that she came out on 21 February, on a day that was as hot as South Australia is today. Three thousand or so people went to greet her, including a choir. Some of the members fainted while waiting for her in the heat. But she was very welcome in that town that bears her name.

I think it is important that we acknowledge many of the attributes of the monarchy that the previous speaker spoke about. But he should realise that that period of stability has, I think, been linked to the character and the conduct of Queen Elizabeth. Much of the stability that we have enjoyed and many of the attributes that he assigns to the system of the monarchy have been due to such a good monarch. We should all acknowledge that, whether we are republicans or constitutional monarchists.

I think it is tremendously important that we realise that the conduct of the people within our government, the constraints on power, the denial of power, the observance of convention and the unwritten rules in our Constitution are the glue that binds us. The fact that we are, I think, the fourth oldest continuous democracy in the world is not just a tribute to our monarch; it is a tribute to our people and to the way every citizen in Australia conducts themselves, particularly around the peaceful transfer of power. I am a republican, but I feel no urgency to exert that idea. It will come naturally, as our independence has since federation—and we have been very fortunate that our monarch has been of like mind and has let us exert that independence.

One thing I related to the House on the previous occasion I spoke here, and which I think is fitting to repeat, was that, for a long time, a fountain with a gold tap had sat in the town square in a park where people enjoyed their lunch. Very sadly, that park was bulldozed. It has now become a car park for Target. The fountain with the gold tap went missing. They tried desperately to find it, and they eventually located it; they wanted to have it ready for the next royal visit. Unfortunately, they did not quite meet the previous deadline, but that fountain with the gold tap will be restored to its place, not in the car park but adjacent to it. We hope that our monarch, Queen Elizabeth, can come once again and reopen that very historic fountain in the city of Elizabeth. In this time of transition for that city, with General Motors Holden now leaving, perhaps the monarch can come and signal a new journey for the town that bears her name.

Ms BANKS (Chisholm) (11:40): On the occasion of the Queen's sapphire jubilee, it gives me enormous pleasure—and I regard it as a great honour—to speak today about a person whom I and many people regard as one of the greatest women in modern history.

However, before I do this, I feel compelled to describe my views and feelings as follows. During the election campaign and in the context of my leaving the business world to join this new world of politics, a journalist asked me what the surprises had been, regarding the good things and the bad things. In reply, I said that the worst and most disappointing and surprising thing was the 'Mediscare' campaign of the Labor Party. Why? Because, in my view, that was more than advertising puffery. Rather, it showed a complete disregard—and, importantly, a lack of respect—for my constituents and for the Australian people. Respect underpins Liberal values and everything the Turnbull government stands for. Respect underpins the Turnbull government's policies and everything we do. In fact, respect is the reason why we are the most successful multicultural nation on this earth. Yesterday, the Labor Party showed a complete lack of respect in the House—and this was the greatest surprise for me; the most
disappointing thing for me, to date. But this time, the Labor Party's disrespect was not only for our Prime Minister and the privileged position of being a member of the House of Representatives. They also showed a complete lack of respect for the Queen. As Prime Minister Turnbull made his speech expressing admiration, respect and gratitude to the Queen for her service, a number of those on the other side squealed with laughter and giggles, heckling the Prime Minister. It was disgraceful, abominable behaviour. It demonstrated nothing more than a clear lack of respect—and ignorance. Sitting across from them and observing their behaviour made me feel outraged. They reminded me of an out-of-control classroom of students, as is often depicted in the movies. The Leader of the Opposition was not a leader at all; in fact, his behaviour and body language was like watching a teacher who was standing in front of the out-of-control classroom waiting for them to quieten down. Perhaps he should have schooled the Labor-Party class before his speech in parliament, because even he recognised that the Queen should be admired for her dedication to public service. However, this point was completely lost on certain members on the other side of the chamber, particularly the Labor member for Griffith and the Labor member for Bendigo, who were squealing and laughing like the two naughty kids sitting in the out-of-control classroom.

The Queen's reign for over 65 years is an extraordinary milestone. The Queen is the longest-serving British monarch. Only five other kings and queens in British history have reigned for more than 50 years. Over those 65 years, the Queen has visited Australia 16 times and has become a patron of numerous Australian charities and organisations. She has brought nothing but joy, grace and goodwill to thousands and thousands of Australians. No matter which side of the republican debate you are on, no matter what your age, you cannot help but admire and feel gratitude for the Queen.

I have the pleasure and privilege of knowing many young adults in my electorate, particularly thanks to the two universities and many fine senior schools. They, like the vast majority of Australians, have known no other head of state and consistently show deep admiration and respect for the Queen.

The Queen is revered and respected in this country, but members of the Labor Party in this House yesterday failed to demonstrate this. On behalf of the people of Chisholm and, indeed, every nation-state, I acknowledge with gratitude Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's years of duty and service and I thank her from the bottom of my heart for her extraordinary reign and extraordinary service to Britain, the Commonwealth and Australia.

**Dr McVEIGH** (Groom) (11:45): I certainly join with others in rising to speak on the amazing achievement of Queen Elizabeth II, who has celebrated 65 years with her Sapphire Jubilee, the longest of any British monarch, as Queen of England and Head of the Commonwealth of Nations, of which Australia is a member. I acknowledge many of the gracious and important comments of all colleagues in the chamber, but I wish to add to that from a more personal perspective from my electorate.

It may come as no surprise to many of my colleagues—as they have become used to me and my view that Toowoomba is indeed a city worth talking about within the parliament and visiting in person, as the Prime Minister did just recently—that I want to point out in particular that the Queen herself has been to my electorate of Groom. The Queen's official coronation, as we know, took place on 2 June 1953 in Westminster Abbey, and less than a year later she visited Toowoomba and Oakey in my electorate. When you consider that the
Queen has visited 117 countries on official royal tours since she ascended to the throne, it is plainly obvious to me that Toowoomba was very high on her list of priorities to see. I admit that on that trip she also happened to open the third session of the 20th national parliament here in Canberra but, most importantly, she was greeted by 70,000 ex-service men and women at the Melbourne Cricket Ground during that tour as well.

It was 11 March 1954 when she landed at Oakey airport, and accounts in the local paper recount that she was quickly on her way to Toowoomba. In the city she and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, attended a reception in our magnificent Queens Park and looked over the arena at the Toowoomba Royal Show. The local paper also reported that schoolchildren rode in milk carts and adults travelled in trucks and buses to see the royal couple, even if only for a fleeting moment. The federal government's royal visit commemorative book, published just after that tour, described one of the highlights of the Toowoomba visit as the royal couple witnessing 'the age-old ceremonial of the corroboree,' performed by Aborigines who had travelled from as far as the Northern Territory for the occasion. The Queen was quoted as saying, 'What has impressed me the most was the long distances people travelled to see me.'

The Queen has not been the only royal to visit the electorate. Her father, as Albert, Duke of York, who later became George VI, also visited the Garden City in 1927. As an aside, coincidentally, members would remember the hit movie about him called The King's Speech starring Academy Award winners Colin Firth and Geoffrey Rush. Geoffrey Rush also hails from Toowoomba, but that is another story. Most significantly for our community, the Queen's grandson Prince William visited our city in 2011 following the devastating flood that caused loss of life and significant damage earlier that year. The prayers, best wishes and respect that he conveyed to our community on behalf of the Queen were heartfelt and moving.

Queen Elizabeth II has had a long and mainly peaceful reign, as we know, which has been marked by vast changes and transition in terms of how Britain is viewed abroad and through the lives of people throughout the entire Commonwealth. Throughout, Queen Elizabeth II has been recognised as a progressive leader. She has modernised the monarchy by dropping some of the formalities, made certain sites and treasures more accessible for the public, and reined in public funding for the monarchy in line with expectations of her people—and they clearly love her for it. You can certainly see that in every public appearance that she makes. As a constitutional monarch, Elizabeth II, as we know, does not weigh in on political matters, nor does she reveal her political views are—again, I note the comments of colleagues in relation to that. However, she certainly confers regularly with her prime ministers and has proven that the Crown still has a symbolic and diplomatic power. I believe, for example, her visit to the Republic of Ireland, the first by a British monarch in 100 years, spoke volumes about her as a leader and as a person. From a young age she has been acknowledged as the people's Queen. Her coronation was the first major international event to be broadcast on television. Few of us, if any, in this chamber would have had the chance to witness that, but I would be pretty safe in saying that many of us have witnessed significant royal events over the years—and interestingly, most of them have been ratings-winners.

The Queen today, I am advised, still handles roughly 430 engagements each year and supports hundreds of charitable organisations and programs. She is still the leader of the Commonwealth, which has nations across all six continents with roughly 2.2 billion of the...
world's citizens. I am also advised that in her 23,745 days—or thereabouts—on the throne, she has also sent roughly 170,000 telegrams to centenarians in the Commonwealth. She is a remarkable woman and a born leader. I wanted to note in particular that, as a mark of her true character, she is clearly loved and revered by monarchists and republicans alike. On behalf of the residents of Groom, I congratulate Her Majesty and her family most sincerely on her sapphire jubilee.

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan—Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services) (11:52): I rise today to pay tribute to the reign of Her Majesty Elizabeth II, and to congratulate Her Majesty on yet another remarkable milestone, her sapphire jubilee. It seems like only yesterday when, in 2015, I spoke to congratulate our monarch on her achievement in becoming the longest-reigning British and, therefore, Australian head of state. The Queen, as many in the Commonwealth affectionately know her, has reigned for 65 years, and has for many Australians been the only head of state they have ever known. For an individual who took on this role as a young 25-year-old, Her Majesty has seen generations of political leadership, including the famed Winston Churchill, wars, and the evolution of the role of Great Britain in the Commonwealth and in world affairs.

Today, as the longest-reigning living monarch in the world, the Queen still manages a relentless schedule of public engagements and, whilst reducing her activity in late 2016, Her Majesty continues to demonstrate a dignified, level-headed approach to diplomacy. Succeeding her father, George VI, following his death in 1952, the Queen's reign began just three years into Sir Robert Menzies' own record-breaking leadership. Her Majesty has been noted to have said, following the overtake of her great-great-grandmother Queen Victoria's record of 63 years on the throne, that she never expected nor aspired to such a feat. 1952 was a period of rebuild in the world's postwar history. Seven years after the Second World War, many global leaders were still defined by that significant conflict. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom was the great Sir Winston Churchill, Harry Truman stood at the helm as President of the United States, Joseph Stalin was Premier of the Soviet Union, and the Long March leader himself, Mao Zedong, was Chairman of the Communist Party of China. It is incredible to believe that a 25-year-old grieving at the loss of her father stood amongst these giants of world history. But Queen Elizabeth II's claim to the Crown was only made possible due to the abdication of her uncle, Edward VIII, a mere 16 years earlier.

For the past seven decades, and for countless British prime ministers and many Australian prime ministers, the Queen has remained a constant platform in global politics. Throughout the years, the Queen has grown wiser and more resilient and become, as one could so eloquently put it, the epitome of omnipotence. Attending to a mix of ceremony, politics and diplomacy, the Queen has certainly demonstrated her unwavering commitment to the role. The pace of public life and engagements is taxing for even the fittest, yet at 90 years old, the Queen continues to excel, having given her life to serving the people of Great Britain and the Commonwealth. It gives me immense pride to acknowledge that Australia is united under the Crown.

The monarch's role in the modern era is to be impartial in politics. However, during her reign Her Majesty as the head of state has been called upon to participate in political decision-making. On two occasions, she was required to appoint a new British prime minister on the advice of cabinet.
Irrespective of the separation of Australia from the remainder of the Commonwealth, the Queen will always remain a part of our large family. Her role in leading and representing the Commonwealth's interests abroad is an activity in which she has truly excelled. Overseeing and managing Britain's evolving role in the Commonwealth, the Queen has seen a move from colonial master to partner as Britain's remaining colonies in Africa, South Asia, Oceania and the Caribbean transition to independence. As an ever-calm and pensive woman, the Queen has remained a beloved figure throughout the Commonwealth despite the tumultuous nature of the world.

The Queen has visited Australia 16 times during her reign. There is a genuine affinity and respect for her when she visits, no matter a person's creed or political stance. Noting the republican movement in Australia, the admiration and respect that a majority of us have for Her Majesty bodes well for our continued recognition of the monarchy. With a life of reduced privacy and being accessed the world over, it is continually grounding that she has a realistic understanding of both the privileges and the limitations of the role.

I imagine—this is purely speculative of course—that the Queen would have enjoyed a life less intruded upon. However, it is a testament to her character and sense of duty that she has embraced her role with open arms to unite the corners of the Commonwealth. The Queen's well-documented life—often at the behest of media—has seen tragedy and joy, throughout which she has overcome issues and maintained her composure.

To know that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has achieved her Sapphire Jubilee is a celebration for all, whether you are a monarchist or a republican, for she may indeed be the only monarch we will know to reach such a milestone. Congratulations to Her Majesty. I speak on behalf of my electorate of Ryan in wishing her good health and fortune to continue her reign for years to come.

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (11:58): I take this opportunity to join with the Prime Minister and my parliamentary colleagues in congratulating Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on reaching a significant milestone in her glorious reign—the Sapphire Jubilee. The Queen is Head of the Commonwealth and Supreme Governor of the Church of England. During her long and distinguished reign, the world has changed remarkably. Through momentous economic, political and social events, through conflicts and international events, she has reigned with dignity, integrity and grace. During the Queen's reign, 13 British prime ministers have held office—from Winston Churchill to the current Prime Minister, Theresa May. Her devotion to duty and public service is unparalleled. There are 2.2 billion people living in 52 Commonwealth nations across six continents. Citizens of Commonwealth nations have enjoyed decades of stability, security, good governance and comparably high standards of living. Commonwealth countries are united by diplomacy and international cooperation and through sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games. Currently, the Queen is head of 16 Commonwealth nations.

On the occasion of the Sapphire Jubilee, we celebrate the British heritage of our multicultural nation and all that is good about Australia: our culture, customs, traditions; our system of government and the rule of law; our industrialised economy; and our Defence Force. We should be proud of this heritage and never seek to diminish our British heritage from history. We owe our high standard of living, our peaceful and secure society, to a stable constitutional monarchy built on British heritage. This fact must never be lost in the national
debate on multiculturalism and reconciliation. I believe that there should be mutual respect and recognition of all cultures on which our nation is founded without selective omission. The constitutional monarchy is part of our culture that defines us. We must never downplay the significance of the British culture in today's multicultural Australian society. We should celebrate it as an integral part of the pluralistic nature that defines us as modern Australians.

Throughout my lifetime, I have witnessed the Queen's Silver, Ruby, Golden and Diamond Jubilees. My grandparents instilled in me a healthy respect for our sovereign. I have fond memories of queueing up for hours to see the Queen in public on two occasions—at Perth airport and Government House—when Her Majesty visited Perth. I am proud to say that members of my extended family have been loyal servants of the Crown over the centuries in the military, clergy and banking. Their distinguished service has been recognised with knighthoods and ennoblements and the Baronetage of the United Kingdom of South Hill Park and of Broadwell and Filkins. On this occasion, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Her Majesty on behalf of the Australian people. Long may she reign.

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Minister for Revenue and Financial Services) (12:01): I congratulate Her Majesty the Queen on becoming the first British monarch to reach her Sapphire Jubilee. The Queen was just 26 years of age when she came to the throne. Along with her title, she inherited a huge weight of expectation: that she would be a leader worthy of her nation, that she would be a leader worthy of the Commonwealth, that she would be the bedrock of the Church of England as its supreme governor, and that she would be a source of strength and guidance for her nation in difficult times.

Her service and dedication were never in question. Even at the tender age of 14 years, the then princess delivered a serious message of comfort and reassurance to other children in Britain during World War II on the BBC's Children's Hour, saying:

We are trying to do all we can to help our gallant sailors, soldiers and airmen, and we are trying, too, to bear our own share of the danger and sadness of war.

We know, everyone of us, that in the end all will be well …

Throughout her reign, the Queen has fulfilled her duties with humility, grace and dignity, and despite my republican roots I stand with the staunchest of monarchists to honour the Queen in her Sapphire Jubilee year as she celebrates 65 years on the throne. Queen Elizabeth has been our head of state and a steady presence during turbulent times in our history—times of crisis as well as times of national celebration. Her reign has outlasted 13 Australian Prime Ministers and 20 opposition leaders. The Queen's example of service and duty to her nation and subjects has inspired millions.

In an ongoing legacy motivated by British traditions, every Australia Day we honour those in our society who have contributed to our nation beyond expectations. Under the British system, these awards were originally presented by the monarch. In my electorate of Higgins, we are fortunate to have many inspirations. From business, the arts, sport, philanthropy and community service, Higgins is home to some of the most respected community leaders in Australia who each, in their own way, have made our great country even stronger. This year's Australia Day recipients were Mark Cooper AO, Noel Alpins AM, Sandford Clarke AM, Leon Serry AM, Jennifer Williams AM, Peter Zablud AM, Philomena Docherty OAM, Jennifer Happell OAM, Isobel Morgan OAM, John Shalit OAM, Allan Zavod OAM and John Retchford.
Today I honour these people, but I also, most especially, honour the Queen for her example of unrelenting service, dedication and duty. It cannot have been easy for the Queen, during the last 65 years, to balance her public duties with her life as a private citizen: as the wife of Prince Phillip, the Duke Edinburgh; as mother to four children, Charles, Anne, Andrew and Edward; as grandmother to eight grandchildren, William, Harry, Peter, Zara, Beatrice, Eugenie, Louise, and James; and as a great-grandmother to two great-grandchildren, George and Charlotte. Living a life in public is a sacrifice that she has made for all of us. We honour her for it and we congratulate her again on her sapphire jubilee.

Ms FLINT (Boothby) (12:05): I rise today, as my colleagues have risen, to congratulate our head of state, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, on reaching yet another great milestone, that of her sapphire jubilee—her 65th year on the throne—on Monday 6 February. While five British monarchs have reigned for over 50 years, Her Majesty is the only monarch to reach this sapphire jubilee milestone.

She assumed the throne on 6 February 1952—after the passing of her father, King George IV—at the age of the age of 25. I cannot imagine how difficult that must have been for her in a family context but also at such a young age to assume such responsibility. I think in this respect, to my mind, Her Majesty is one of the best examples for women around the world in terms of a leadership role, in terms of her community service, in terms of raising a large family and doing so whilst being one of the most important and powerful women in the world with some of the greatest responsibilities.

I mention that she was and has been a working mother, because her work output is widely known to be unrivaled, I suppose, in terms of what she does. It is often said that far younger people would not be able to do what she does each and every day. Over the past 65 years, for example, she has made nearly 300 official visits to Commonwealth countries, she has answered over 3.5 million pieces of correspondence. As members here know, that is quite a task and we certainly do not deal with, I am sure, 3.5 million pieces of correspondence in our working lives. She received over 120,000 cards, letters and gifts—

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 12:07 to 12:19

Ms FLINT: As I was saying before we had to attend the other chamber, I believe Her Majesty the Queen is an excellent role model for women everywhere—young women and older women. She has had an incredibly long career and she has raised a family whilst working harder than most of us could possibly imagine. As I mentioned, she has answered over 3.5 million pieces of correspondence in her career, passed more than 3½ thousand acts of British parliament and, in an average year, she hosts more than 50,000 visitors at lunches, dinners, receptions and garden parties at Buckingham Palace—

A government member: How many tweets?

Ms FLINT: I am not sure about how many tweets she does, but she is also the patron of more than 600 charities and organisations. That is a remarkable work output, and I am sure there is so much more that she does behind the scenes. In her 65-year reign, she has conducted more than 300 official visits, including 22 to Canada, 10 to New Zealand and 16 to Australia.
Her Majesty has taken a special interest in Australia. She was the first monarch to ever officially visit us and her first visit was in 1954. Whilst Australia is a very different country to what it was 65 years ago, Her Majesty has provided much-needed stability and continuity, which is one of the reasons I am a staunch supporter of our constitutional monarchy. It is more than just about Her Majesty the Queen; it is about our institutions and our traditions and the wonderful stability this has provided to our nation. I do strongly believe that our constitutional monarchy is responsible for our great freedoms, our democracy and the stability that we enjoy. Our constitutional monarchy is a vital part of our system of government.

Of course, our Governor-General is primarily responsible for conducting day-to-day responsibilities on behalf the Queen. When you look at the Constitution, you realise how entwined the monarchy is with the government and governance of our nation. The Queen is mentioned as 'part of the parliament' in section 1, she 'is empowered to appoint the Governor-General as her representative' in section 2 and 'The executive power of the Commonwealth is vested in the Queen and exercisable by the Governor-General as her representative', as per section 61.

The Governor-General performs a large number of functions that are outlined in the Constitution, but what I think is particularly important—and is one of the reasons why I am vehemently opposed to us becoming a republic—is that the Governor-General has a number of responsibilities known as 'reserve powers' that are governed by convention. They are not written down. They are part of the tradition, practice and protocol that has developed over many decades since we became a Federation in 1901. What really concerns me is how those conventions would be codified. I do not think we need more regulation and legislation in this country. I do not think we need to encourage a position, such as our head of state, to become subject to laws that may well be challenged in the High Court. I think that the role of tradition and convention in our nation is very important. I will be fighting very hard to see that continue, because I do believe that our constitutional monarchy has provided great stability to our nation.

I want to touch on an article that I came across in The Spectator. The Spectator is the first publication that ever published me as a columnist and it was responsible for starting my career as a writer of opinion pieces. They made a number of important observations on 9 September 2015, when they wrote about Her Majesty becoming the longest reigning monarch by overtaking Queen Victoria. They observed that, really, we are living in a golden age of prosperity—the second Elizabethan Age—and they give some very good reasons for claiming that this is the case. Over the now 65 years that Her Majesty has reigned, life expectancy for women has increased by a dozen years. We live very comfortable lives with the best of technology available to us. The Spectator gave the example that the Queen now has a team of 12 people needed to send out royal telegrams congratulating her subjects celebrating their 100th birthday. There are so many people who are living to see a century that the Queen has to have a very large team of people to help her congratulate their 100th birthday. This, to my mind, was a particularly lovely quote that indicates the type of leadership that we have seen from Her Majesty—I quote from The Spectator:

In a speech to the UN five years ago, she observed a truth that few politicians acknowledge: the greatest achievements are not guided by leaders, but by people being left alone to achieve what they can.
'Remarkably, many of these sweeping advances have come about not because of governments, committee resolutions, or central directives — although all these have played a part — but instead because millions of people around the world have wanted them.'

_The Spectator_ reflects on the Queen's patriotism, her love of Britain and the Commonwealth and its countries—of which Australia is one—and her long career being marked by service and, in the context of her being such an incredible role model for women, says, 'Her daily schedule would alarm and exhaust someone half her age.'

Her Majesty 'has succeeded in persuading so many former colonies to maintain an alliance with Britain because she is one of the world's most accomplished diplomats.' _The Spectator_ continues:

Stability is one of the greatest arguments for monarchy, and one to which republicans tend to blind themselves. … Even the US, which can claim to be one of the world's finest democracies, might benefit from having a non-political head of state—

which is something interesting to reflect upon. This is another lovely anecdote:

The hopelessness of the republican cause in Britain was underlined when, two decades ago, an opinion poll asked the public whom they would like to be their first—

(Time expired)

**Mr CRAIG KELLY** (Hughes) (12:27): In the time remaining I would like to associate myself with the comments of all the members on our side on congratulating the Queen. I think that one of the reasons the Queen has been so successful in our country is not because of the power she has but the power she denies others. It has been said: 'While the Queen occupies the highest office of state, no-one can take over the government. While she is head of the law, no politician can take over the courts. While she is ultimately in command of the armed forces, no would-be dictator can take over the army.' In fact, the Queen's only power, that which she holds and safeguards on behalf of every Australian, is the power she denies others. It is perhaps for that very reason that those many socialist central-planners would like to replace our Queen. Long may she continue to reign over us.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr CRAIG KELLY** (Hughes) (12:28): I move:

That the Federation Chamber do now adjourn.

**Tibet**

**Mr DANBY** (Melbourne Ports) (12:29): At the beginning of the new year, around two million followers of Tibetan Buddhism gathered in the Indian town of Bodh Gaya, where Buddha is believe to have attained enlightenment. The devotees came from around the world to receive a major teaching from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Ironically, Tibetans from Tibet, perhaps the most loyal followers of the Dalai Lama, were banned from attending this religious congregation. For these people seeing their exiled spiritual leader was the dream of their lifetime. The Chinese government crushed their dreams.

In the months leading up to Kalachakra, as it is called—teachings in India—the Chinese authorities confiscated the passports of many Tibetans. Just days before the event, authorities demanded that all Tibetans who had already reached India return home or face severe consequences such as losing one's job, pension or ration cards. Seven thousand Tibetans had to go back from India. During the 12-day event, the Chinese authorities threatened Tibetans...
that sharing videos or news articles about religious teachings would lead to arrest and imprisonment.

When it comes to handling the Tibet issue, China is often its own worst enemy. The Chinese government does not want Tibet to get involved in political activities. Those who travelled to India were religious pilgrims—the purpose was religious—but they returned to Tibet politicised. A global leader of peace and compassion, the Dalai Lama is loved and revered by millions around the world. This simple Buddhist monk, as the Dalai Lama likes to call himself, is feared by a nation with the world's largest population, the second-largest standing army and the second-biggest economy.

The recent crackdown on Tibetan pilgrims is part of China's intensifying attempt to undermine the Dalai Lama's influence in Tibet and globally. It is a serious violation of the Tibetan people's right to freedom of religion. It is also a violation of their right to move freely. They are not only restricted from travelling overseas, they also face difficulty in moving freely within their own country. To go to Tibet's capital, Lhasa, Tibetans from other towns need to carry a full range of identification documents. In contrast, more and more Chinese tourists and migrants from mainland China travel to Tibet. The Chinese government also restricts international tourists, journalists and diplomats from travelling to Tibet. The Autonomous Region will officially be shut down for over a month around the time of the Tibetan National Uprising Day. China does not want the world to witness any protests during the politically sensitive month when Tibetans commemorate the uprising of 1959.

The international community must condemn the lockdown of Tibet and ask for unfettered access. Just as Chinese people, journalists and government representatives have access to Australia, Australians should have access to Tibet and China. For over two years, the Chinese government has failed to respond to requests by Australian parliamentarians to visit Tibet even though its delegations representing the so-called Tibetan Autonomous Region regularly receive approval to visit Australia. Reciprocity is a fundamental principle of diplomatic practice. Australia's government officials, parliamentarians and journalists should obtain reciprocal access to Tibet. These visits must be unrestricted to allow open interaction with local Tibetan people and promote genuine understanding of the situation there.

The Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet, of which I am also the co-chair, believes that visits by independent international observers are an important measure to make China accountable for its policies in Tibet and to evaluate the effect of these policies on the Tibetan environment, culture and way of life.

I appeal directly to China's all-powerful leader, Mr Xi Jinping. Mr Xi Jinping, your mother is Buddhist. You must understand that people's devotion to the Buddhist religion has little to make the Chinese state fear. I ask you to allow His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit the Tibetan Autonomous Region—and I volunteer, along with Nancy Pelosi and other leading international supporters of the Tibetan cause, to come with him—to see our Tibetan friends continue to work with China for an autonomous area within the Chinese federation.

The Tibetan Middle Way is not an attempt for independence. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Lobsang Sangay, the elected representative of Tibetans in exile, appeal for the Middle Way—where Tibetan religion, culture and language be respected as undertaken by the Chinese Constitution. Mr Xi Jinping, I ask you to reverse your policies and I call on the
Australian government to renew its support for our endeavour to visit Tibet over the term of this parliament.

**Education**

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (12:34): Last month my Facebook post about teachers evoked enormous shock with the uncomfortable question being explored of precisely why teachers are doing so much work from home and why it is unpaid. As a profession, my great concern is that teaching has been under union control and this has made it harder and harder for teachers of excellence to be recognised, to advance their career and to be rewarded for it.

Everyone in this chamber, everyone nationwide, agrees that frontline service professionals work incredibly hard—and no-one would deny that—but obviously we need to start asking questions as soon as Australia's educational results flatline. Over the last decade results in TIMSS, PIRLS, PISA and NAPLAN assessments have arguably declined in many areas against improving nations, particularly the Asian economies and the northern European teaching systems, so it is appropriate that we ask questions. Simply because teachers are underremunerated and not recognised satisfactorily for their work is no reason not to ask the obvious question about whether we have a genuine way of recognising excellence. With that question, in that social media bomb, I sought to tear that open—not simply because I might offend some teachers, but because there are 50 parents for every teacher asking this very question about the quality of teaching. I want to know that when a child is going to a school their degree of gain over time is going to be at least the state average, if not more. It is a very sensitive topic. But, if some schools are not achieving the same results as other schools, we need to be able to explore the reasons why.

It is my deep conviction that there are elements of principal and senior leadership effect in schools, unrelated to wealth, unrelated to the social and human capital of those families attending the school, that are leading to fantastic results. That drove me to work with none other than John Hattie from the University of Melbourne, Judy Smeed, formerly of QUT, and David Gillespie, an author and examiner of evidence around school performance, to work out what is going on in my own state. The results were astounding. I looked at 164 high schools in my electorate and the region around it. Of those high schools in South-East Queensland, around one-third of GPS schools are performing in excess of what you would expect, but when you go to the independent and the Catholic sectors those numbers fall significantly. Most surprisingly of all, when we looked at our state schools, I found that, no matter how poor the suburb, there is an incredible disparity in performance. The highest performing schools in our state are state high schools, publicly funded non-selective schools. They are in some of the poorest parts of our neighbourhoods, but straight down the road is another high school achieving less than one-third of what that other school is doing. It is never ever reported nor acknowledged. Staff are never thanked for their incredible work. Principals are never recognised with more pay for their incredible and outstanding leadership.

These 2015 results are basically an analysis of gain—how they took their students from year 9 NAPLAN, adjusted for attendance at NAPLAN, through to year 12 exit scores—and, if they did better than the state average, I think everyone of us in this building would want to congratulate those schools. It is not about embarrassing those schools that do not achieve those results, because, by emulating and disseminating those strategies, those schools themselves could be improved—but not if it is a no-go zone, not if the subject is anathema,
not if you encounter rage from unions because I dare to imply that not all teachers are equal. No two students are the same, yet you expect me to believe that every teacher is the same. You expect me to reward a teacher purely on their years of service and to reward the teacher that stays up until midnight cutting out name badges for their students the next day exactly the same as the clock watcher.

Every profession has a variation in energy, ambition, commitment, and those people need to be identified, rewarded and thanked. It is as simple as that. You cannot do that if you fear reporting the underperforming schools. It is quite simple. As long as it is a no-go zone, that is the way we stay. My findings show that in the poorest communities the quality of our schools varies by a factor of three. What do I mean by that? I mean that they have so many kids getting the same NAPLAN scores in year 9, but the number who get an equivalently good exit score can triple in some schools and be reduced in others. That is killing people’s futures because we are not monitoring school quality. It is as simple as that.

To every teacher out there: I know how hard you work. To every frontline professional: of course I know how hard you work. But ultimately, unlike nursing, we have a flat career structure in teaching. Two decades ago nursing took it by the horns and developed a professional advancement structure for the ambitious, for the intelligent, for those that worked at home on CPD. Teachers work at home for free, and it should not happen any more. The moment we can get that element disseminated from our best schools to the other schools we have a future of improving our performance.

Kelly, Mr Leo, OAM

Bonello, Mr Nicholas, OAM

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (12:39): I rise today to pay tribute to a great local hero. On 23 January our community lost long-serving Blacktown city councillor Leo Kelly OAM. Like so many in our community, I respected Leo because he was honest, direct, up-front and always willing to stand up for the locals—or, in the words of his son, John, 'He stood up for anyone and stood up to anyone who stood in the way of what he believed in.'

Leo served on Blacktown City Council for 10 consecutive terms, including as mayor three times. For his work and dedication during this time, and for his tireless service to the community, Leo was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2003—an event he was so humble about that he did not even tell his family. He was involved in many community organisations and played an instrumental role in establishing the Blacktown Arts Centre and the Western Sydney university back in the 1980s.

After a private battle with throat cancer, at age 74, we sadly said our goodbyes to Leo at a special funeral service held at Bowman Hall in Blacktown the other week. Hundreds—hundreds!—gathered to pay tribute to a true local champion. Former councillor Michael Corbin, I have to say, gave one of the best eulogies I have ever had the honour of hearing. In his inimitable way, he stated, 'Leo was nobody's man; Blacktown was his only master.'

I just want to extend, as many people in our area do, our deepest and sincerest condolences to Leo's wife, Janet, to his children, John and Melissa, and to his grandchildren, Owen and James. It is a very difficult time for them, as it is for our city. Leo's service will never be forgotten, the standard that he set will never be forgotten, his approach to his job will not be forgotten and he will be truly missed by our community.
I also want to reflect on the passing of another Australian hero, in his own way, Mr Nicholas Bonello OAM. Nicholas was the father of Monica McGrade, who is part of the hardworking team at Rooty Hill High School in the electorate of Chifley. I am happy to record in the Australian parliament the achievements of Monica's father, Nicholas. Besides being a wonderful example of the generosity and hard work that so many migrants deliver after making Australia their new home, he was an energetic member of the Australian Maltese community, a community that has also made a terrific contribution to the growth and development of Western Sydney.

Nicholas Bonello was born in Balzan, Malta, on 7 February 1926. In January 1941, he became an apprentice boilermaker and then migrated to our country in 1954 to follow the Australian dream with his wife, Desdemona, and children, Carmen, Anthony and Monica. He quickly got to work making his mark on Australia and our relationship with his former home. Mr Bonello served as a court interpreter for a number of years and, through his love of football, was a referee from 1955 to 1964. He was also the co-founder of a very important publication in the Maltese community, The Maltese Herald. The Maltese Herald printed its first edition in 1961, and for over 50 years the newspaper has highlighted community issues specific to the Maltese community and strengthened relations between Australia and Malta.

Nicholas Bonello was chairman of the ANZAC Memorial Committee Malta, and he initiated the memorial at the Argotti botanical gardens in Floriana, Malta, to honour World War I Anzacs buried in Malta. He also served on the first Maltese Community Council of New South Wales, and he returned to Malta in 1973 and 1974 and founded the Maltese-Australian Association. He served in many positions, including president, until ill health forced him to step down in 2014. He was high commissioner for Malta to Australia in 1986-87, and in 2009 he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for his service to Australia-Malta bilateral relations, particularly as the president of the Maltese-Australian Association.

As I reflected in my remarks earlier, I greatly admire the Australian Maltese community's contribution to our country, especially within the great region of Western Sydney. I have seen this personally, having grown up with many friends from a Maltese background. So to them and people like Nicholas Bonello I just want to say thank you and salute you for your tremendous efforts. Monica McGrade, I know that you and your family are experiencing profound loss, but your father's legacy will not go unnoticed, and we are forever grateful for his dedication and hard work.

Australia-Singapore Defence Relationship

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia—Deputy Nationals Whip) (12:44): I rise today to provide an update on plans by Australian Defence to expand facilities at the Shoalwater Bay military training ground. Shoalwater Bay is north of Rockhampton and is located in the Shire of Livingstone. Singapore is one of the many countries that train at Shoalwater Bay with our Australian troops. In the middle of last year, under a joint Australia-Singapore Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, Singapore pledged to invest $2.25 billion in Queensland based military training sites at Shoalwater Bay and Townsville. Late last year, as Australian Defence leaders began further outlining their plan to expand the Shoalwater Bay facility, it emerged that the military might require additional surrounding
grazing land. Some graziers struck a deal and willingly sold their properties at a large profit. However, during the course of this process, fears were raised about the prospect of Defence enforcing legislation to compulsorily acquire farmland as a large resort. For the past two months, this has caused great anxiety, uncertainty and anger amongst the landholders, seafood sector workers and small businesses in that district. Families like the Geddes at Couti-Outi station feared their historic family property would be consumed by Defence.

Last year I met with stakeholders and promised that I would sensibly and firmly push behind the scenes to ensure that their concerns over the possibility of forced land sales were heard at the highest level of the federal government. I was in constant contact with the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and defence minister. I got the defence minister to Rockhampton to meet with the stakeholders, and last Friday I took the Deputy Prime Minister out to Couti-Outi station to talk with a group of farmers, small business owners and workers representing the entire district. On Monday back in Canberra, the member for Flynn and I met with the Prime Minister and the defence minister for further robust discussions. We met again with the Prime Minister, defence minister and Deputy Prime Minister.

On Tuesday this week, I welcomed a pledge from the Prime Minister that no landholder in the Shoalwater Bay district would be forced to sell their property to Defence. This has come as a big relief to local landholders. Farmers that do want to sell voluntarily, however, will still be able to approach Defence themselves. A press release from the Minister for Defence stated:

... Defence will only purchase land from willing sellers around Shoalwater Bay Training Area ...

The minister said:

... it is clear that the community have significant concerns and it is important forced sales are ruled out to alleviate these concerns.

The $2.25 billion capital injection under the joint Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Singapore is good for the Queensland economy. Under the Shoalwater Bay upgrade, nearly $1 billion will be spent north of Rockhampton. This revamp will create important business spin-offs for the city of Rockhampton in construction, logistics, transport, tourism, retail, hospitality and accommodation. Visiting Singapore troops already inject $35 million locally. The upgrades of ADF zones are also part of Australia's own national security needs, training our soldiers to protect us from the growing threats of terrorism in our own backyard. I have previously stated that I support this investment, and I still do, but I also support our farmers. As a result, I support this week's decision that will see no forced sale of their homes and farms. I sincerely thank the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the defence minister for listening to concerns from local landholders, and we look forward to welcoming more Singapore and Aussie troops to our region for increased training in the future.

**Australian Labor Party**

*Mr PERRETT* (Moreton—Opposition Whip) (12:48): This afternoon I am going to talk to two of my constituents particularly. I know they have never voted for me and perhaps will never vote for me, but I want to address my remarks particularly to them. They are my son Stanley Perrett and my other son, Leo Perrett. As I said, they might never vote for me down the track, but I want to talk to them about why I do my job and why I love doing my job.

I know it is very hard for them that I was not around for the start of their school year. I was doing my job as a politician, like many other politicians. Obviously we make sacrifices. It is a
wonderful job and a great calling, but our families particularly suffer. So, Stanley and Leo, I want to talk about my job as a politician. Obviously I did other things before being a politician. Before you came along I was a schoolteacher and a lawyer, but I saw this opportunity to help more people. Being a schoolteacher and a lawyer are about helping people, but being a politician you particularly get to help many people across the nation.

Why join the Labor Party? I want to address that question in this speech. Over the summer, before Christmas, I took you to the Tree of Knowledge at Barcaldine to talk a little about the history of the Labor Party, to help explain that. You can break political parties up in all sorts of ways—on the political spectrum, left and right, and according to what they are focused on. You might say there are clusters of selfishness—people that focus on the individual, trumpeting the belief that the individual is supreme—and then other parties that have more of a focus on caring for all, and that is what the Labor Party is. There are also political parties that are parties of protest and will never, ever form government. But the Labor Party has always been a progressive party of government, and that involves making compromises and actually delivering things, rather than promising ‘pie the sky’-type things.

I can explain politics to you, Stanley and Leo, pretty simply. If you believe tomorrow can be better and want to feel good while actually doing nothing, that is when you join the Greens political party. If you believe that yesterday was better and want to feel good while doing nothing, that is when you join the Liberal political party. If you believe in a yesterday that never was and never will be, then you join the National Party. Once upon a time you used to have to be a farmer to be in the National Party, but I have heard from people that nowadays that is a disadvantage—and that is a disgrace, coming from a farming community like St George, I would say. But, if you believe in a better tomorrow and want to feel good by actually achieving something, then there is only one party to join, and that is why I joined the Australian Labor Party. It has been around for over 125 years, and that is why I took you to the Tree of Knowledge in Barcaldine.

The Labor Party, when it started, was a racist party. It was a party that had particularly tough rules for the Chinese community, but since then it has become a much more inclusive and multicultural party. In my time in the federal parliament, it has done some great things, some incredible things. Stanley and Leo, on my first day at work in this building we saw the first ever welcome to country by the Indigenous owners of this land and then an apology by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to the stolen generations. Later we saw the incredible work of Kevin Rudd, Wayne Swan and Julia Gillard to get us through the global financial crisis. Then we had the National Disability Insurance Scheme, paid parental leave and a price on carbon so that your children will have a planet that they can live on, rather than one affected by climate change.

They are some of the reasons why I have asked you to put up with the fact that I am away for 30 weeks or so of the year. I know it is tough on you, Stanley, and tough on you, Leo, and particularly tough on your mum, but they are some of the reasons why I am proud to be a member of the Australian Labor Party and why I hope that you can understand why your dad is away.

Education

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (12:53): Almost in continuation, I want to give a little bit more detail about how we have started the very, very long process of recognising excellence in
schools. I want to start by saying that a huge amount of this data is actually available on NAPLAN if families care to look. NAPLAN has gone to extraordinary efforts, through the work of ACARA, to make sure that you can compare your school's NAPLAN performance against that of similar schools, schools with similar scores and the state mean. You might be interested in where your school sits compared to the national average.

Of course, NAPLAN is a very different measure to what we often see as an exit score in senior school. When you are leaving school, it is predominantly about finding a job, continuing your training and your education, and so we do not necessarily have highly detailed aptitude tests at the end of senior school, because universities use other means to determine who they will take, as do those that deliver trade and vocational education. I will never stop recognising quality where it exists, but too often it is not immediately available when you go to a website.

In 2015, which is the year of the latest public data, in numeracy in grade 5, for instance, Dunwich on North Stradbroke Island, with a predominantly Indigenous group, achieved the greatest numeracy results in my entire electorate when compared to the human capital of the families at the school. We also saw Russell Island, Vienna Woods, Redland Bay, Cleveland and Thornlands state schools performing above what one would expect for a school in their neighbourhood, as well as one Catholic school, St Anthony's, and one independent school, Ormiston College, overperforming.

You can go and look in NAPLAN and see that, but I take this opportunity to recognise the schools in my electorate of Bowman that are performing above and beyond. You can do that for every odd-numbered year of school across five different domains, if you are interested, and then you can have a look at those performances in bands, numbers and relative gain between years, which is obviously vitally important.

The research that I referred to before though was a little different and probably a little bit more advanced. It was following gain through the last three years of senior schooling, which has really never been performed before. The methodology in some more detail was that in NAPLAN we have an issue that children are often withdrawn intentionally or are simply absent and not turning up. The first phenomenon is predominantly wealthier families; the second is predominately poorer families. Whatever the case, I do not want to see schools with inordinately low NAPLANs hiding their lower performing students and then claiming a higher average, so we adjusted for that.

It is the same with an academic pathway, an ATAR or an OP leading to university. We do not want schools hollowing out the bottom half of their senior group and then claiming 100 per cent success rate with those that remain. Logically, that would mean that we need to be looking at the proportion going on an OP stream relative to the wealth of the community and identifying outliers, which is what we did. Obviously what we found was that NAPLAN sitting was extremely good for schools over the average wealth, but as schools fell slightly we saw a falling off of NAPLAN attendance. It is only proper that we allow poorer schools a slightly lower NAPLAN attendance, for those obvious reasons, without punishing them.

We then simply measured the cohort change: the number of kids achieving a certain NAPLAN level and the proportion of grade 12 achieving a certain OP score. Those who live and breathe statistics will know that one is effectively an aptitude measure, where potentially everyone can get the same score, and the other one is a ranking where, in theory, you are
simply moving down the rungs of a ladder. You cannot directly compare these two cohorts: with additional methodological adjustments that is possible, but probably beyond my resources at the moment.

It is important also to notice that we do not have individually linked data, so I cannot tell you the individual scores of a student—and nor should I know them. But I can talk about percentages of that year that went on to get a score given their starting point. And there were some extraordinary findings. The first one is that there is increasingly a barbell distribution of independent schools achieving something over here and the great bulk of secondary schools that are not in wealthy suburbs are over there and achieving a completely different proportion of people heading into the university stream. The problem I have identified is that if you are not heading towards a university and needing an OP, in many cases universities will take you directly on your diploma. That is not, in and of itself, a single measure of achievement, but hidden behind the diploma are numerous subjects of different levels of ranking or weighting. If we have a diploma where you have done no high-level subjects and another where you have done many, we need to recognise quality—someone doing a higher level of maths. That is the next great step: recognising quality within the vocational stream. I am confident that is where all governments should be heading and, with the encouragement and support of this parliament, I am sure that can be achieved.

United States of America

Mr DANBY (Melbourne Ports) (12:58): As vice-chair of the US-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group, I recently received an email from five Australian expats living in the United States concerned about the actions and potential actions of the Trump administration and its consequences for Australia and America. The chair of the US-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group, the member for Canning, received the same email and I understand he will also be speaking on this.

The five genuine expats who wrote to us are part of a much larger group of Australians living in the United States who expressed their concerns in a letter to the PM and the foreign minister. There were 181 named and 44 anonymous signatories in that letter. These Australians do not expressly specify the actions and statements of the particular administration that triggered their concerns, but, from the context of their correspondence, I presume that those triggers include the executive order on immigration, the telephone call between the President and our Prime Minister and the subsequent fallout from that, various statements the President made in the run-up to his election, and the more isolationist and protectionist position that it seems is being adopted by the United States.

In the email to me the Australian group said:

We are asking the Australian government to publicly commit to a set of bi-partisan, fundamental values that should underpin the Australia-US relationship: tolerance, respect, international cooperation, non-discrimination, democracy and the rule of law. We endeavour to do this in a non-partisan way conscious of the need for diplomacy and the importance of Australia's relationships with the U.S.

They expressed these values in more detail by saying:

We believe shared Australia-U.S. values should include support for:

- Liberal democracy, the rule of law and an independent press;
- Tolerance and celebration of differences;
• International law and multilateral institutions as a means to achieve peace, stability, cooperation and the preservation of human rights;
• International trade, investment and movement of people across borders;
• Science and evidence-based policy and decision making; and
• Freedom from discrimination and persecution on the basis of race, nationality, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability, socio-economic status—
et cetera. They conclude with:

These shared values must be the starting point as our two nations seek to respond to global challenges, including economic recovery, international trade, terrorism, climate change, global health and food insecurity.

I commend these statements. At the same time, I should say that I am not speaking here to criticise the United States or President Trump, but rather to stress how important our common values are and how we wish to see the United States and our relationship prosper and flourish. Not only do we share common values but we also share common interests. The ANZUS Treaty is a central pillar of our relationship. It underpins our defence and security cooperation and has been a force for stability and peace in the Asia-Pacific region and globally. The United States is our largest two-way investment partner and our second largest two-way trading partner in goods and services.

Given the state of flux the world seems to be in at the moment, it is vitally important that we reaffirm our strong and enduring relationship with the United States and at the same time emphasise the liberal democratic values that we all in this parliament share in common and that have underpinned our vibrant and prosperous societies.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 13:01
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Tasmania: Mobile Phone Base Stations
(Question No. 50)

Ms Keay asked the Minister representing the Minister for Regional Communications, in writing, on 7 November 2016:

(1) In respect of the Government's announcement on 25 June 2015 that it would construct mobile phone base stations at (a) Elliot, (b) Gawler, (c) Loyetea, (d) Melrose, (e) Sisters Beach, (f) South Riana, and (g) Takone, in Tasmania, when will these become operational.

(2) In respect of the Government's election commitment to construct mobile phone base stations at (a) Gunns Plains, (b) Sulphur Creek, (c) Devonport, and (d) Yolla, in Tasmania, will this be honoured; if not, why not; if so, (i) when will these become operational, and (ii) where in Devonport will the mobile phone base station be located.

Mr Fletcher: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) Information regarding the expected rollout timing for all 499 round 1 base stations is available on Telstra's and Vodafone's websites (www.telstra.com/blackspots and www.vodafone.com.au).

(2) The Government has announced that Gunns Plains, Sulphur Creek, Devonport, and Yolla are priority locations for funding under round 3 of the Mobile Black Spot Program. A competitive process to allocate round 3 funding, including identifying suitable base station locations, is expected to commence in 2017.

On 1 December 2016, Yolla was announced as one of the 266 locations across Australia to receive a mobile base station under round 2 of the program. The first round 2 base stations are expected to commence rolling out in 2017. The successful applicants (Telstra, Optus and Vodafone) will release indicative rollout schedules on their websites shortly which will be regularly updated as the rollout progresses.

Smithton: Eastern Foreshore Rockwall
(Question No. 56)

Ms Keay asked the Minister for the Environment and Energy, in writing, on 7 November 2016 (Transferred from the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development on 5 December 2016):

In respect of the Australian Government's election commitment to provide $250,000 to construct an Eastern Foreshore Rockwall in Smithton, Tasmania, to help develop the area as a community recreation spot, will this be honoured; if not, why not; if so, (a) what will be the process for either the Circular Head Council or Tasmanian Government to receive this funding, and (b) when will the funding be delivered.

Mr Frydenberg: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

During the 2016 election, the Government made a series of election commitments as part of the Improving Your Local Parks and Environment program. Under this program, Circular Head Council has been invited to apply for $250,000 to construct the Eastern Foreshore Rockwall. Applications close on 14 March 2017. Funding agreements for all grants are expected be finalised and the first round of payments made by mid-June 2017.
Attorney-General's Department: Instances of fraud or theft
(Question No. 197)

Mr Keogh: asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, in writing, on 7 November 2016:

Were there any instances of fraud or theft detected by departments or agencies within the Minister's portfolio from (a) internal sources, or (b) external sources, that resulted in cost to the department or agency in 2015-16; if so (i) what fraud or theft took place, (ii) when did the fraud or theft take place, (iii) what was the cost to the department or agency of this fraud or theft, and (iv) what action has been taken to prevent such theft or fraud occurring again.

Mr Keenan: The Attorney-General has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

- **Attorney-General's Department:**
  - Nil

- **Administrative Appeals Tribunal, (b) (i) – (iv):**
  - One incident of theft occurred from an external source in 2015-16. On 23 February 2016, at approximately 7pm, an individual gained access to an office located at the AAT Registry at City Road Melbourne and removed a mobile phone from a desk. There was no cost to the agency as the phone was of negligible value. A police report was filed. A faulty access control locking mechanism was repaired to prevent any future unauthorised entries and security awareness procedures were reviewed with all employees.

- **Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity:**
  - Nil

- **Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission & Australian Institute of Criminology:**
  - Australian Institute of Criminology: Nil
  - Australian Crime Commission: Nil
  - CrimTrac, (a) (i) – (v):
    - CrimTrac had one documented instance of suspected fraud that was documented in *CrimTrac's 2014-2015 Annual Report to the Minister on Fraud and Corruption Control* involving a contractor falsifying timesheets. While the cost to the CrimTrac Agency was not considered significant, the matter was referred to the Australian Federal Police for consideration. The contractor was terminated on 23 July 2015.
    - The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission is currently in the process of reviewing and updating its planning documentation related to fraud control, and continues to provide ongoing fraud awareness training to staff and contractors.

- **Australian Federal Police**
  - Nil

- **Australian Financial Security Authority**
  - Nil

- **Australian Human Rights Commission**
  - Nil

- **Australian Law Reform Commission**
  - Nil
Mr Keogh asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, in writing, on 7 November 2016:

1. In respect of staff in departments and agencies within the Minister's portfolio:
   a. How many redundancies were made in 2015-16
   b. From what department or agency were these redundancies
   c. What was the cost of payments associated with these redundancies

Mr Keenan: The Attorney-General has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

**Attorney-General's Department: Staff redundancies**

(Question No. 215)

- Mr Keogh asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, in writing, on 7 November 2016:
  1. In respect of staff in departments and agencies within the Minister's portfolio:
     a. How many redundancies were made in 2015-16
     b. From what department or agency were these redundancies
     c. What was the cost of payments associated with these redundancies
  
  Mr Keenan: The Attorney-General has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

  **Attorney-General's Department**

  1. a. 79
     b. Attorney-General's Department
     c. $5,181,846

  **Administrative Appeals Tribunal**

  1. a. 18
     b. Administrative Appeals Tribunal
     c. $997,354.44

  **Austrac**
1. a. 5
   b. Austrac
   c. $454,128

**Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity**
1. a. Less than 5 – for privacy reasons, the department can provide a private briefing if the Member requires further information on this item.
   b. Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity
   c. $78,905.60

**Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (Australian Crime Commission & Crimtrac in 15/16)**
1. a. 9
   b. Australian Crime Commission (6) and Crimtrac (3)
   c. $546,632

**Australian Financial Security Authority**
1. a. Less than 5 – for privacy reasons, the department can provide a private briefing if the Member requires further information on this item.
   b. Australian Financial Security Authority
   c. $126,738

**Australian Federal Police**
1. a. 89
   b. Australian Federal Police
   c. $17,932,340.93

**Australian Human Rights Commission**
1. a. Less than 5 – for privacy reasons, the department can provide a private briefing if the Member requires further information on this item.
   b. Australian Human Rights Commission
   c. $40,949.26

**Australian Law Reform Commission**
1. a. Nil
   b. Not applicable
   c. Not applicable

**Australian Security Intelligence Organisation**
ASIO's separation rate at 30 June 2016 was 4.44 percent.
ASIO does not provide detailed information on staff separations to avoid prejudice to ASIO's activities.

**Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions**
1. a. 31
   b. Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions
   c. $2,247,265.35

**Family Court of Australia and Federal Circuit Court of Australia**
Mr Keogh: asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, in writing, on 7 November 2016:

1. In respect of recruitment, training and service contracts undertaken by the departments and agencies within the Minister's portfolio in 2015-16:
   a. How many new staff contracts were entered into, and of those, what are the relevant staffing levels, and;
   b. What total sum was spent on recruitment, and of this, what is the breakdown for:
      i. Recruitment agency fees
      ii. Advertising
      iii. Assessment processes
      iv. Other associated costs

Mr Keenan: The Attorney-General has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:
Attorney-General's Department

1. a. Please see Table 1. These figures include the engagement of ongoing and non-ongoing employees, permanent transfers from other APS agencies and temporary transfers from other APS agencies.

b. To provide this level of detail would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.

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<tr>
<th>APS Classification Level</th>
<th>Quantity New Staff Contracts 2015-16</th>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate APS</td>
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<tr>
<td>APS 2</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Broadband APS1-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>APS 6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadband APS5-6</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Officer Broadband APS3-6</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1 including Senior Legal Officer</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2 including Principal Legal Officer</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>450</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Administrative Appeals Tribunal**

1. a. Please see Table 1

b. Please see Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APS Classification Level</th>
<th>Quantity New Staff Contracts 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS 1</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAT Broadband 3/4</td>
<td>56 (APS3 – 30; APS4 – 26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>APS 6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES1</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES2</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>109</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2 – Breakdown of cost of recruitment 2015-16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment agency fees</td>
<td>$12,440.33 (includes fees for scribes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$12,305.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment processes</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other associated costs</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$24,745.91</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Austrac**

1. a. Please see Table 1

b. Please see Table 2
Table 1 – Breakdown of new staff contracts 2015-16 by relevant APS classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APS Classification Level</th>
<th>Quantity New Staff Contracts 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS 1</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 2</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 5</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 6</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – Breakdown of cost of recruitment 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment agency fees</td>
<td>$80,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$39,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment processes</td>
<td>$1,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other associated costs</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$120,324</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity
1. a. Please see Table 1
   b. Please see Table 2

Table 1 – Breakdown of new employees commenced 2015-16 by relevant classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification Level</th>
<th>Number of employees commenced 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – Breakdown of cost of recruitment 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment agency fees</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$605.50 (APS Jobs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment processes</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other associated costs</td>
<td>$14,959.29 (APS Jobs, Scribes, Travel Costs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$15,564.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (Australian Crime Commission & Crimtrac in 15/16)
1. a. Please see Table 1
   b. To provide this level of detail would require an unreasonable diversion of resources

Table 1 – Breakdown of new staff contracts 2015-16 by relevant APS classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APS Classification Level</th>
<th>Quantity New Staff Contracts 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS 1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Australian Financial Security Authority**

1. a. Please see Table 1

b. Please see Table 2

Table 1 – Breakdown of new staff contracts 2015-16 by relevant APS classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APS Classification Level</th>
<th>Quantity New Staff Contracts 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS 1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 3</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 6</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>163</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – Breakdown of cost of recruitment 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment agency fees</td>
<td>$297,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$59,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment processes</td>
<td>$28,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other associated costs</td>
<td>$37,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$422,499</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Australian Federal Police**

1. a. Table 1 below identifies the number of new staff contracts entered into by the AFP during the financial year 2015-2016 and the Band levels they commenced in

b. Please see Table 2

Table 1 – Breakdown of new staff contracts 2015-16 by relevant AFP classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFP Band Level</th>
<th>Quantity New Staff Contracts 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Level</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES Level</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 – Breakdown of cost of recruitment 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment agency fees</td>
<td>$170,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$320,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment processes</td>
<td>$650,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other associated costs</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,200,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian Human Rights Commission

1. a. Please see Table 1
   
b. Please see Table 2

Table 1 – Breakdown of new staff contracts 2015-16 by relevant APS classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APS Classification Level</th>
<th>Quantity New Staff Contracts 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS 3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory Office Holder</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – Breakdown of cost of recruitment 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment agency fees</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$1,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment processes</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other associated costs</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,509</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian Law Reform Commission

1. a. Nil
   
b. Please see Table 1

Table 1 – Breakdown of cost of recruitment 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment agency fees</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$259.00 (APS Gazette)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment processes</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other associated costs</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$259.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation

1. a. ASIO does not provide detailed information on staffing contracts to avoid prejudice to ASIO's activities.
   
b. ASIO spent $791,016 on recruitment advertising in 2015-16. In addition, ASIO spent $4,056 on promotional materials for recruitment activities. ASIO does not fall within the definition of agencies covered by the reporting requirements of s311A of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions

1. a. Please see Table 1
b. Please see Table 2

**Table 1 – Breakdown of new staff contracts 2015-16 by relevant APS classification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APS Classification Level</th>
<th>Quantity New Staff Contracts 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS 1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 4</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2 – Breakdown of cost of recruitment 2015-16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment agency fees</td>
<td>$145,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$9,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment processes</td>
<td>$274,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other associated costs</td>
<td>$164,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$594,288</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Family Court of Australia and Federal Circuit Court of Australia**

1. a. Please see Table 1
b. Please see Table 2

**Table 1 – Breakdown of new staff contracts 2015-16 by relevant APS classification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APS Classification Level</th>
<th>Quantity New Staff Contracts 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS 1</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 3</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 6</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>140</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2 – Breakdown of cost of recruitment 2015-16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment agency fees</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$37,118.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment processes</td>
<td>$9,915.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other associated costs</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$54,034.12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Federal Court of Australia**

1. a. Please see Table 1
b. Please see Table 2

**Table 1 – Breakdown of new staff contracts 2015-16 by relevant APS classification**
### Table 2 – Breakdown of cost of recruitment 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment agency fees</td>
<td>$47,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$5,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment processes</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other associated costs</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$52,420.43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### High Court of Australia

2. a. Please see Table 1
b. Nil

### Table 1 – Breakdown of new staff contracts 2015-16 by relevant classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification Level</th>
<th>Quantity New Staff Contracts 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HCE 2t</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCE 3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCE 5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCE 6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### National Archives of Australia

1. a. Please see Table 1
b. Please see Table 2

### Table 1 – Breakdown of new staff contracts 2015-16 by relevant APS classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APS Classification Level</th>
<th>Quantity New Staff Contracts 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS 1</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>108</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2 – Breakdown of cost of recruitment 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment agency fees</td>
<td>$52,361.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$12,544.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

1. a. Please see Table 1
   
   b. Please see Table 2

#### Table 1 – Breakdown of new staff contracts 2015-16 by relevant APS classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APS Classification Level</th>
<th>Quantity New Staff Contracts 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 2 – Breakdown of cost of recruitment 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment agency fees</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$7,658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment processes</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other associated costs</td>
<td>$6,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$14,217</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Office of Parliamentary Counsel

1. a. Please see Table 1
   
   b. Please see Table 2

#### Table 1 – Breakdown of new staff contracts 2015-16 by relevant APS classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APS Classification Level</th>
<th>Quantity New Staff Contracts 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS 3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS 6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 2 – Breakdown of cost of recruitment 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment agency fees</td>
<td>$41,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment processes</td>
<td>$10,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other associated costs</td>
<td>$6,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$58,632</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Venue Hire

**(Question No. 400)**

**Mr Keogh** asked the Minister for Justice, in writing, on 7 November 2016:

In respect of venue hire by the Minister in 2015-16, (a) what total sum was spent, (b) what functions were these hires for, and (c) on what dates were these functions held.
**Mr Keenan:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The answer to this question has been incorporated as part of my answer to question 456.

**Department: Conferences hosted by the Minister**

(Question No. 456)

Mr Keogh asked the Minister for Justice, in writing, on 7 November 2016:

Did the Minister host any conferences in 2015-16; 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, (ii) travel, and (iii) social events.

Mr Keenan: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>(a)</th>
<th>(b)</th>
<th>(i)</th>
<th>(ii)</th>
<th>(iii)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry Consultation on National Security (ICONS)</td>
<td>10 March 2016 Melbourne</td>
<td>$8,214</td>
<td>$5,714</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(jointly hosted with the Attorney-General)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roundtable between the visiting</td>
<td>11 April 2016 Perth</td>
<td>$7,310</td>
<td>$968</td>
<td>$4,573</td>
<td>$1,768</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese delegation from the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Minister for Justice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia – Indonesia Ministerial Council on Law and Security (jointly hosted with the Attorney-General)</td>
<td>8 June 2016 Sydney</td>
<td>$66,266</td>
<td>Included in venue hire</td>
<td>Not provided</td>
<td>$9,745</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note this figure represents the total expenditure for the attendance of 71 officials -38 attendees of the Indonesian delegation, and 33 on the Australian delegation).

(Note - an official dinner was held for Indonesian and Australian delegations. This figure represents the cost of that dinner, and transport to and from the dinner)

Mobile Black Spot Program

(Question No. 536)

Mr Katter asked the Minister representing the Minister for Regional Communications, in writing, on 8 November 2016:

1) Can the Minister provide assurance that there will be funding for a round 3 of the Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP).
2) Will his department address criticisms raised by the Australian National Audit Office about the MBSP, including inadequate (a) coverage, and (b) infrastructure (ie, base stations, towers, backhaul operations and optic cable infrastructure), in rural and remote regions, especially in Far North Queensland.
3) What is the Minister doing to encourage service providers for rural and remote areas to better utilise Government funding so that locations such as the Adels Grove Camping Ground (within the Boodjamulla/Lawn Hill National Park in the electoral division of Kennedy), attracting 30,000 to 40,000 tourists, campers and grey nomads each dry season, in addition to the 5,000 to 10,000 that visit the Boodjamulla/Lawn Hill National Park, Riversleigh district and the Gregory area, have adequate mobile phone coverage.
4) Given Telstra could re-utilise the nearby closed Century Mine's existing tower, Repeater Towers and
backhaul/optic cable infrastructure, can the Minister indicate whether the Adels Grove Tourist Park will be included in round 2 of the MBSP that is being announced by the end of 2016.

**Mr Fletcher:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

1. The Government has announced that it will commit $60 million (GST exclusive) towards a third round of the Mobile Black Spot Program.


3. The Government worked closely with Telstra, Optus and Vodafone to develop guidelines for both rounds 1 and 2 of the Mobile Black Spot Program. The key objective of the program is to improve mobile coverage and competition in regional and remote parts of Australia.

   The program has been highly successful in maximising co-contributions from third parties, including state and local governments and local communities. Together rounds 1 and 2 are delivering almost $600 million in new investment towards improving mobile coverage in regional and remote Australia.

   Gregory in Queensland is one of the 499 locations across Australia receiving a mobile base station under round 1 of the program. Telstra is expected to commence delivering services at Gregory in 2018.

   Optus has received funding under round 2 of the program to deploy a mobile satellite small cell at Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park under round 2 of the program.

4. Adels Grove is not receiving a mobile base station under round 2 of the program.

**Non-Consensual Sharing of Images**

(Question No. 541)

**Ms Butler,** asked the Minister for Justice, in writing, on 8 November 2016:

Why has the Government so far refused to commit to deliver criminal sanctions and penalties for the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, as recommended by the recent Senate inquiry into 'revenge porn' and by other bodies such as the COAG Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children, chaired by former police commissioner Ken Lay.

**Mr Keenan:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Government is pursuing a comprehensive range of measures to combat the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, including education, victim support, civil penalties and criminal sanctions.

The non-consensual sharing of intimate images can be prosecuted under s 474.17 of the Commonwealth Criminal Code. Section 474.17 makes it an offence to use a carriage service in a way that reasonable persons would regard as being menacing, harassing or offensive. If the matter involved a victim that was a minor, the child pornography offences in the Criminal Code may also be relevant. There are also state and territory laws criminalising this conduct.

Several states and territories have introduced or announced an intention to introduce offences that specifically criminalise the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The Government is engaging with states and territories to ensure national consistency in addressing the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. On 9 December 2016, the Council of Australian Governments agreed to the development of principles for nationally consistent criminal offences relating to non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The Government is leading the development of these principles through the National Cybercrime Working Group for consideration by the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council this year.
Non-Consensual Sharing of Images  
(Question No. 582)

Ms Butler, asked the Minister for Justice, in writing, on 10 November 2016:

Why has the Government so far refused to commit to deliver criminal sanctions and penalties for the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, as recommended by the recent Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee's report on the inquiry into 'revenge porn' and by other bodies such as the COAG Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children, chaired by former police commissioner Mr Ken Lay.

Mr Keenan: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
The Government is pursuing a comprehensive range of measures to combat the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, including education, victim support, civil penalties and criminal sanctions.

The non-consensual sharing of intimate images can be prosecuted under s 474.17 of the Commonwealth Criminal Code. Section 474.17 makes it an offence to use a carriage service in a way that reasonable persons would regard as being menacing, harassing or offensive. If the matter involved a victim that was a minor, the child pornography offences in the Criminal Code may also be relevant. There are also state and territory laws criminalising this conduct.

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Wodonga: Australia Post  
(Question No. 623)

Ms Cathy McGowan asked the Minister representing the Minister for Communications, in writing, on 21 November 2016:

(1) Why does it take eight days for a letter posted at the Wodonga Post Office to be delivered to a Post Office Box in the same building.

(2) Where and how is mail, which is posted in Wodonga for a Wodonga address, sorted.

(3) Is it a fact that mail posted in Wodonga to go to Sydney, is sent via Melbourne.

(4) What modelling has Australia Post done on the costs of centralising mail sorting.

Mr Fletcher: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) Australia Post's customers have a choice of Priority and Regular letter services for sending their letters within Australia. This allows them to pay for the delivery speed and service that best suits their needs. All items are delivered according to the delivery timetables for Priority and Regular mail, which Australia Post publicly advertises.

Australia Post advise that for a letter posted in Wodonga that is addressed to a Wodonga Post Office Box, the Priority service offers a usual delivery time of one business day after the day of posting, while the Regular service is up to two business days longer than Priority. While Australia Post recognises there may be isolated incidents of delayed mail, it delivers more than three billion items every year and the vast majority arrive safely and on time.
Australia Post closely monitors its delivery service to ensure it meets its service performance targets. In 2015-16, 96.2 per cent of reserved services letters were delivered early or on time, which is above Australia Post's required Community Service Obligation of 94 per cent.

(2) Letters that are carried by the Priority service are retained and processed in the local area and delivered next business day.

Letters carried by the Regular service are separated from the Priority letters and are sent to Australia Post's facility in Melbourne for machine processing and delivery in line with its Regular timetable. Transferring Regular letters to relevant regional and state mail processing centres allows Australia Post to make better use of advanced automation technology at major mail centres and more efficiently and accurately process mail. Australia Post's machines process on average 400,000 items each per day, which is far more efficient than manual processing.

(3) Yes. Transporting mail to key processing facilities for faster and more thorough sorting is done using existing transport routes and items are delivered in line with Australia Post's Regular and Priority timetables.

(4) The centralised processing of mail enables Australia Post to make better use of best-practice automated mail processing technology at its larger facilities. Diverting the processing component to Australia Post's major facilities enables it to sort large volumes of mail more efficiently and accurately. These changes enable Australia Post to realise significant cost benefits through the use of available capacity on both existing transport routes and processing machines. Australia Post has introduced these changes while maintaining its Community Service Obligations and meeting its customer service promise.