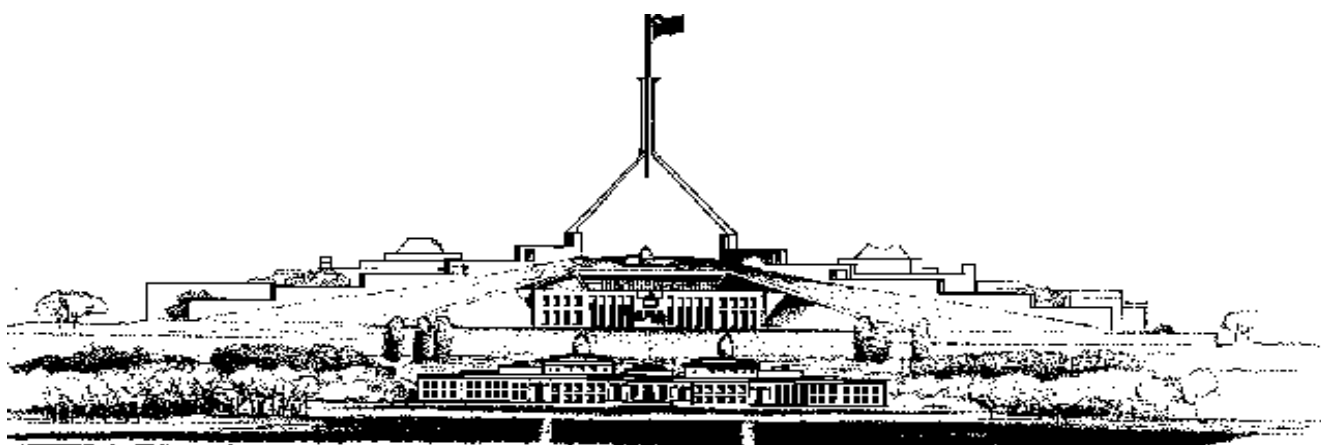




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**



# **House of Representatives**

# **Official Hansard**

**Wednesday, 26 February 2020**

FORTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT  
FIRST SESSION—SECOND PERIOD

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

### INTERNET

The *Votes and Proceedings* for the House of Representatives are available at  
<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/info/votes>

Proof and Official Hansards for the House of Representatives,  
the Senate and committee hearings are available at  
<http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard>

For searching purposes use  
<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au>

### SITTING DAYS—2020

Month	Date
February	4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 24, 25, 26, 27
March	2, 3, 4, 5, 23, 24, 25, 26
May	12, 13, 14, 25, 26, 27, 28
June	2, 3, 4, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25
August	11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20
September	7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17
October	12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22
November	9, 10, 11, 12, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30
December	1, 2, 3

### RADIO BROADCASTS

Broadcasts of proceedings of the Parliament can be heard on ABC NewsRadio in the capital cities on:

ADELAIDE	972AM
BRISBANE	936AM
CANBERRA	103.9FM
DARWIN	102.5FM
HOBART	747AM
MELBOURNE	1026AM
PERTH	585AM
SYDNEY	630AM

For information regarding frequencies in other locations please visit  
<http://reception.abc.net.au/>

**FORTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT  
FIRST SESSION—SECOND PERIOD**

**Governor-General**

His Excellency General the Hon. David John Hurley, AC, DSC, FTSE (Retd)

**House of Representatives Office Holders**

*Speaker*—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith MP

*Deputy Speaker*—Mr Llewellyn Stephen O'Brien MP

*Second Deputy Speaker*—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP

*Members of the Speaker's Panel*—Hon. Kevin James Andrews MP, Hon. Sharon Leah Bird MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Hon. Dr David Arthur Gillespie MP, Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Hon. Dr John Joseph McVeigh MP, Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP, Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP, Mr Andrew Bruce Wallace MP, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth Wicks MP, Mr Richard James Wilson MP, Mr Trent Moir Zimmerman MP

*Leader of the House*—Hon. Christian Porter 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 Butler MP

**Party Leaders and Whips**

Liberal Party of Australia

*Leader*—Hon. Scott John Morrison MP

*Deputy Leader*—Hon. Joshua Anthony Frydenberg MP

*Chief Government Whip*—Mr Albertus Johannes van Manen MP

*Government Whips*—Mr Rowan Eric Ramsey MP and Ms Nicolle Flint MP

The Nationals

*Leader*—Hon. Michael Francis McCormack MP

*Deputy Leader*—Hon. David Littleproud MP

*Chief Whip*—Hon. Damian Kevin Drum MP

*Deputy Whip*—Mr Kenneth Desmond O'Dowd MP

Australian Labor Party

*Leader*—Hon. Anthony Albanese MP

*Deputy Leader*—Hon. Richard Marles MP

*Chief Opposition Whip*—Mr Christopher Patrick Hayes MP

*Opposition Whips*—Ms Joanne Catherine Ryan MP and Ms Anne Maree Stanley MP

Printed by authority of the House of Representatives

### Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
Albanese, Hon. Anthony Norman	Grayndler, NSW	ALP
Alexander, Mr John Gilbert, OAM	Bennelong, NSW	LP
Allen, Dr Katrina Jane	Higgins, VIC	LP
Aly, Dr Anne	Cowan, WA	ALP
Andrews, Hon. Karen Lesley	McPherson, QLD	LP
Andrews, Hon. Kevin James	Menzies, VIC	LP
Archer, Ms Bridget Kathleen	Bass, TAS	LP
Bandt, Mr Adam Paul	Melbourne, VIC	AG
Bell, Ms Angie Marion	Moncrieff, QLD	LNP
Bird, Hon. Sharon Leah	Cunningham, NSW	ALP
Bowen, Hon. Christopher Eyles	McMahon, NSW	ALP
Broadbent, Mr Russell Evan	Monash, VIC	LP
Buchholz, Hon. Scott Andrew	Wright, QLD	LP
Burke, Hon. Anthony Stephen	Watson, NSW	ALP
Burney, Ms Linda Jean	Barton, NSW	ALP
Burns, Mr Joshua Solomon	Macnamara, VIC	ALP
Butler, Hon. Mark Christopher	Hindmarsh, SA	ALP
Butler, Ms Terri Megan	Griffith, QLD	ALP
Byrne, Hon. Anthony Michael	Holt, VIC	ALP
Chalmers, Dr James Edward	Rankin, QLD	ALP
Champion, Mr Nicholas David	Spence, SA	ALP
Chester, Hon. Darren Jeffrey	Gippsland, VIC	NATS
Chesters, Ms Lisa Marie	Bendigo, VIC	ALP
Christensen, Mr George Robert	Dawson, QLD	NATS
Clare, Hon. Jason Dean	Blaxland, NSW	ALP
Claydon, Ms Sharon Catherine	Newcastle, NSW	ALP
Coker, Ms Elizabeth Ann	Corangamite, VIC	ALP
Coleman, Mr David Bernard	Banks, NSW	LP
Collins, Hon. Julie Maree	Franklin, TAS	ALP
Conaghan, Mr Patrick John	Cowper, NSW	NATS
Connelly, Mr Vincent Gerard	Stirling, WA	LP
Conroy, Mr Patrick Martin	Shortland, NSW	ALP
Coulton, Hon. Mark Maclean	Parkes, NSW	NATS
Dick, Mr Dugald Milton	Oxley, QLD	ALP
Dreyfus, Hon. Mark Alfred, QC	Isaacs, VIC	ALP
Drum, Hon. Damian Kevin	Nicholls, VIC	NATS
Dutton, Hon. Peter Craig	Dickson, QLD	LP
Elliot, Hon. Maria Justine	Richmond, NSW	ALP
Entsch, Hon. Warren George	Leichhardt, QLD	LP
Evans, Mr Trevor Mark	Brisbane, QLD	LNP
Falinski, Mr Jason George	Mackellar, NSW	LP
Fitzgibbon, Hon. Joel Andrew	Hunter, NSW	ALP
Fletcher, Hon. Paul William	Bradfield, NSW	LP
Flint, Ms Nicolle Jane	Boothby, SA	LP
Freeland, Dr Michael Randolph	Macarthur, NSW	ALP
Frydenberg, Hon. Joshua Anthony	Kooyong, VIC	LP
Gee, Mr Andrew Robert	Calare, NSW	NATS
Georganas, Mr Steven	Adelaide, SA	ALP
Giles, Mr Andrew James	Scullin, VIC	ALP

### Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
Gillespie, Hon. Dr David Arthur	Lyne, NSW	NATS
Goodenough, Mr Ian Reginald	Moore, WA	LP
Gorman, Mr Patrick	Perth, WA	ALP
Gosling, Mr Luke John	Solomon, NT	ALP
Haines, Dr Helen Mary	Indi, VIC	IND
Hammond, Ms Celia Monica	Curtin, WA	LP
Hastie, Mr Andrew William	Canning, WA	LP
Hawke, Hon. Alexander George	Mitchell, NSW	LP
Hayes, Mr Christopher Patrick	Fowler, NSW	ALP
Hill, Mr Julian Christopher	Bruce, VIC	ALP
Hogan, Hon. Kevin John	Page, NSW	NATS
Howarth, Mr Luke Ronald	Petrie, QLD	LP
Hunt, Hon. Gregory Andrew	Flinders, VIC	LP
Husic, Hon. Edham Nurredin	Chifley, NSW	ALP
Irons, Hon. Stephen James	Swan, WA	LP
Jones, Mr Stephen Patrick	Whitlam, NSW	ALP
Joyce, Hon. Barnaby Thomas Gerard	New England, NSW	NATS
Katter, Hon. Robert Carl	Kennedy, QLD	KAP
Kearney, Ms Gerardine Mary	Cooper, VIC	ALP
Kelly, Mr Craig	Hughes, NSW	LP
Kelly, Hon. Dr Michael Joseph	Eden-Monaro, NSW	ALP
Keogh, Mr Matthew James	Burt, WA	ALP
Khalil, Mr Peter	Wills, VIC	ALP
King, Hon. Catherine Fiona	Ballarat, VIC	ALP
King, Ms Madeleine Mary Harvie	Brand, WA	ALP
Laming, Mr Andrew Charles	Bowman, QLD	LP
Landry, Hon. Michelle Leanne	Capricornia, QLD	NATS
Leeser, Mr Julian Martin	Berowra, NSW	LP
Leigh, Hon. Dr Andrew Keith	Fenner, ACT	ALP
Ley, Hon. Sussan Penelope	Farrer, NSW	LP
Littleproud, Hon. David Kelly	Maranoa, QLD	LNP
Liu, Ms Gladys	Chisholm, VIC	LP
Marino, Ms Nola Bethwyn	Forrest, WA	LP
Marles, Hon. Richard Donald	Corio, VIC	ALP
Martin, Mrs Fiona Barbouttis	Reid, NSW	LP
McBride, Ms Emma Margaret	Dobell, NSW	ALP
McCormack, Hon. Michael Francis	Riverina, NSW	NATS
McIntosh, Ms Melissa Iris	Lindsay, NSW	LP
McVeigh, Hon. Dr John Joseph	Groom, QLD	LNP
Mitchell, Mr Brian Keith	Lyons, TAS	ALP
Mitchell, Mr Robert George	McEwen, VIC	ALP
Morrison, Hon. Scott John	Cook, NSW	LP
Morton, Mr Ben	Tangney, WA	LP
Mulino, Dr Daniel	Fraser, VIC	ALP
Murphy, Ms Peta Jan	Dunkley, VIC	ALP
Neumann, Hon. Shayne Kenneth	Blair, QLD	ALP
O'Brien, Mr Llewellyn Stephen	Wide Bay, QLD	LNP
O'Brien, Mr Ted Lynam	Fairfax, QLD	LNP
O'Connor, Hon. Brendan Patrick John	Gorton, VIC	ALP

### Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
O'Dowd, Mr Kenneth Desmond	Flynn, QLD	NATS
O'Neil, Ms Clare Ellen	Hotham, VIC	ALP
Owens, Ms Julie Ann	Parramatta, NSW	ALP
Pasin, Mr Antony	Barker, SA	LP
Payne, Ms Alicia Emma	Canberra, ACT	ALP
Pearce, Mr Gavin Bruce	Braddon, TAS	LP
Perrett, Mr Graham Douglas	Moreton, QLD	ALP
Phillips, Ms Fiona Evon	Gilmore, NSW	ALP
Pitt, Hon. Keith John	Hinkler, QLD	NATS
Plibersek, Hon. Tanya Joan	Sydney, NSW	ALP
Porter, Hon. Charles Christian	Pearce, WA	LP
Price, Hon. Melissa Lee	Durack, WA	LP
Ramsey, Mr Rowan Eric	Grey, SA	LP
Rishworth, Hon. Amanda Louise	Kingston, SA	ALP
Robert, Hon. Stuart Rowland	Fadden, QLD	LP
Rowland, Ms Michelle Anne	Greenway, NSW	ALP
Ryan, Ms Joanne Catherine	Lalor, VIC	ALP
Sharkie, Ms Rebekha Carina Che	Mayo, SA	CA
Sharma, Mr Devanand Noel	Wentworth, NSW	LP
Shorten, Hon. William Richard	Maribyrnong, VIC	ALP
Simmonds, Mr Julian Graham John	Ryan, QLD	LNP
Smith, Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn	Casey, VIC	LP
Smith, Mr David Philip Benedict	Bean, ACT	ALP
Snowdon, Hon. Warren Edward	Lingiari, NT	ALP
Stanley, Ms Anne Maree	Werriwa, NSW	ALP
Steggall, Ms Zali	Warringah, NSW	IND
Stevens, Mr James William	Sturt, SA	LP
Sukkar, Mr Michael Sven	Deakin, VIC	LP
Swanson, Ms Meryl Jane	Paterson, NSW	ALP
Taylor, Hon. Angus James	Hume, NSW	LP
Tehan, Hon. Daniel Thomas	Wannon, VIC	LP
Templeman, Ms Susan Raye	Macquarie, NSW	ALP
Thistlethwaite, Hon. Matthew James	Kingsford Smith, NSW	ALP
Thompson, Mr Phillip	Herbert, QLD	LNP
Thwaites, Ms Kate Lynne	Jagajaga, VIC	ALP
Tudge, Hon. Alan Edward	Aston, VIC	LP
Vamvakinou, Ms Maria	Calwell, VIC	ALP
van Manen, Mr Albertus Johannes	Forde, QLD	LP
Vasta, Mr Ross Xavier	Bonner, QLD	LP
Wallace, Mr Andrew Bruce	Fisher, QLD	LNP
Watts, Mr Timothy Graham	Gellibrand, VIC	ALP
Webster, Dr Anne Elizabeth	Mallee, VIC	NATS
Wells, Ms Anika Shay	Lilley, QLD	ALP
Wicks, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth	Robertson, NSW	LP
Wilkie, Mr Andrew Damien	Clark, TAS	IND
Wilson, Mr Joshua Hamilton	Fremantle, WA	ALP
Wilson, Mr Richard James	O'Connor, WA	LP
Wilson, Mr Timothy Robert	Goldstein, VIC	LP
Wood, Mr Jason Peter	La Trobe, VIC	LP

### **Members of the House of Representatives**

Members	Division	Party
Wyatt, Hon. Kenneth George, AM	Hasluck, WA	LP
Young, Mr Terry James	Longman, QLD	LNP
Zappia, Mr Antonio	Makin, SA	ALP
Zimmerman, Mr Trent Moir	North Sydney, NSW	LP

### **PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

AG—Australian Greens; ALP—Australian Labor Party; CA—Centre Alliance;  
IND—Independent; KAP—Katter's Australia Party; LNP—Liberal National Party;  
LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals;

### **Heads of Parliamentary Departments**

Clerk of the Senate—R Pye  
Clerk of the House of Representatives—C Surtees  
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic  
Acting Parliamentary Budget Officer—L Ward

## MORRISON MINISTRY

TITLE	MINISTER
<b>Prime Minister</b>	The Hon Scott Morrison MP
<b>Minister for the Public Service</b>	The Hon Scott Morrison MP
<b>Minister for Women</b>	Senator the Hon Marise Payne
<b>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet</b>	The Hon Greg Hunt MP
<b>Minister for Indigenous Australians</b>	The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP
<i>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet</i>	<i>The Hon Ben Morton MP</i>
<b>Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development</b>	The Hon Michael McCormack MP
<b>Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management</b>	The Hon David Littleproud MP
<b>Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts</b>	The Hon Paul Fletcher MP
<b>Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure</b>	The Hon Alan Tudge MP
Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government	The Hon Mark Coulton MP
Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education	The Hon Andrew Gee MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport</i>	<i>The Hon Scott Buchholz MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</i>	<i>The Hon Kevin Hogan MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories</i>	<i>The Hon Nola Marino MP</i>
<b>Treasurer</b>	The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP
<b>Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure</b>	The Hon Alan Tudge MP
Assistant Treasurer	The Hon Michael Sukkar MP
Minister for Housing	The Hon Michael Sukkar MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Superannuation, Financial Services and Financial Technology</i>	<i>Senator the Hon Jane Hume</i>
<b>Minister for Finance</b> (Vice-President of the Executive Council) (Leader of the Government in the Senate)	Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann
<i>Assistant Minister for Finance, Charities and Electoral Matters</i>	<i>Senator the Hon Zed Seselja</i>
<b>Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management</b>	The Hon David Littleproud MP
<b>Minister for the Environment</b>	The Hon Sussan Ley MP
<b>Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia</b>	The Hon Keith Pitt MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management</i>	<i>The Hon Trevor Evans MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries</i>	<i>Senator the Hon Jonathon Duniam</i>
<b>Minister for Foreign Affairs</b>	Senator the Hon Marise Payne
<b>Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment</b> (Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate)	Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham
Minister for International Development and the Pacific	The Hon Alex Hawke MP
Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment	The Hon Andrew Gee MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Regional Tourism</i>	<i>Senator the Hon Jonathon Duniam</i>



<b>Attorney-General</b> (Leader of the House)	The Hon Christian Porter MP
<b>Minister for Industrial Relations</b>	The Hon Christian Porter MP
<b>Minister for Health</b>	The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians	Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck
Minister for Youth and Sport	Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck
Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government	The Hon Mark Coulton MP
<b>Minister for Home Affairs</b>	The Hon Peter Dutton MP
<b>Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management</b>	The Hon David Littleproud MP
Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs	The Hon David Coleman MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs</i>	<i>The Hon Jason Wood MP</i>
<b>Minister for Education</b>	The Hon Dan Tehan MP
<b>Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business</b>	Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education	The Hon Andrew Gee MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships</i>	<i>The Hon Steve Irons MP</i>
<b>Minister for Industry, Science and Technology</b>	The Hon Karen Andrews MP
<b>Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction</b>	The Hon Angus Taylor MP
<b>Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia</b>	The Hon Keith Pitt MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Northern Australia</i>	<i>The Hon Michelle Landry MP</i>
<b>Minister for Defence</b>	Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC
<b>Minister for Veterans' Affairs</b>	The Hon Darren Chester MP The
<b>Minister for Defence Personnel</b> (Deputy Leader of the House)	Hon Darren Chester MP
Assistant Defence Minister	The Hon Alex Hawke MP
Minister for Defence Industry	The Hon Melissa Price MP
<b>Minister for Families and Social Services</b> (Manager of Government Business in the Senate)	Senator the Hon Anne Ruston
<b>Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme</b>	The Hon Stuart Robert MP
<b>Minister for Government Services</b>	The Hon Stuart Robert MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Children and Families</i>	<i>The Hon Michelle Landry MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services</i>	<i>The Hon Luke Howarth MP</i>

Each box represents a portfolio. **Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.** As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a minister in all cases. Ministers are sworn to administer the portfolio in which they are listed under the 'Minister' column and may also be sworn to administer other portfolios in which they are not listed. Assistant Ministers in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the *Ministers of State Act 1952*.

## SHADOW MINISTRY

Title	Shadow Minister
<b>Leader of the Opposition</b>	The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
<i>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</i>	<i>Senator Jenny McAllister</i>
<b>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</b>	The Hon. Richard Marles MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Defence</b>	The Hon. Richard Marles MP
Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel	The Hon. Shayne Neumann MP
Shadow Minister Assisting for Defence	Mr Pat Conroy MP
Shadow Minister for Defence Industry	Mr Matt Keogh MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence</i>	<i>The Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM MP</i>
<b>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</b>	Senator the Hon. Penny Wong
<b>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs</b>	Senator the Hon. Penny Wong
Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific	Mr Pat Conroy MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister to the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</i>	<i>Senator Jenny McAllister</i>
<b>Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</b>	Senator the Hon. Kristina Keneally
<b>Shadow Minister for Home Affairs</b>	Senator the Hon. Kristina Keneally
<b>Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship</b>	Senator the Hon. Kristina Keneally
Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs	Mr Andrew Giles MP
Shadow Minister Assisting for Immigration and Citizenship	Mr Andrew Giles MP
Shadow Minister for Disaster and Emergency Management	Senator Murray Watt
<b>Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations</b>	The Hon. Tony Burke MP
<b>Shadow Minister for the Arts</b>	The Hon. Tony Burke MP
<b>Manager of Opposition Business in the House of Representatives</b>	The Hon. Tony Burke MP
<b>Shadow Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme</b>	The Hon. Bill Shorten MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Government Services</b>	The Hon. Bill Shorten MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Carers</i>	<i>Ms Emma McBride MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Education and Training</b>	The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Education and Training</i>	<i>Mr Graham Perrett MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Skills</i>	<i>Ms Ged Kearney MP</i>
<b>Shadow Treasurer</b>	Dr Jim Chalmers MP
Shadow Assistant Treasurer	Mr Stephen Jones MP
Shadow Minister for Financial Services	Mr Stephen Jones MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Treasury</i>	<i>The Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Charities</i>	<i>The Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Financial Services</i>	<i>The Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy</b>	The Hon. Mark Butler MP
<b>Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House of Representatives</b>	The Hon. Mark Butler MP
Shadow Minister Assisting for Climate Change	Mr Pat Conroy MP

Title	Shadow Minister
<b>Shadow Minister for Health</b>	The Hon. Chris Bowen MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health</i>	<i>Ms Emma McBride MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development</b>	The Hon. Catherine King MP
Shadow Minister for Cities and Urban Infrastructure	Mr Andrew Giles MP
Shadow Minister for Northern Australia	Senator Murray Watt
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Tourism</i>	<i>Senator Carol Brown</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Tasmania</i>	<i>Senator Carol Brown</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Northern Australia</i>	<i>The Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Road Safety</i>	<i>Senator Glenn Sterle</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Resources</b>	The Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP
Shadow Minister for Western Australian Resources	Mr Matt Keogh MP
<b>Shadow Special Minister of State</b>	Senator the Hon. Don Farrell
<b>Shadow Minister for Sport</b>	Senator the Hon. Don Farrell
<b>Shadow Minister for Tourism</b>	Senator the Hon. Don Farrell
<b>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader of the Opposition</b>	Senator the Hon. Don Farrell
<b>Shadow Attorney-General</b>	The Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Constitutional Reform</b>	The Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for the Republic</i>	<i>The Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Communications</b>	Ms Michelle Rowland MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Communications</i>	<i>Mr Tim Watts MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Cyber Security</i>	<i>Mr Tim Watts MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Finance</b>	Senator Katy Gallagher
<b>Shadow Minister for the Public Service</b>	Senator Katy Gallagher
<b>Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate</b>	Senator Katy Gallagher
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Government Accountability</i>	<i>Senator Kimberley Kitching</i>
<i>Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate</i>	<i>Senator Kimberley Kitching</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Families and Social Services</b>	The Hon. Linda Burney MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians</b>	The Hon. Linda Burney MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Reconciliation</i>	<i>Senator Patrick Dodson</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians</i>	<i>Senator Patrick Dodson</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians</i>	<i>The Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Ageing and Seniors</b>	The Hon. Julie Collins MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Women</b>	The Hon. Julie Collins MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Aged Care</i>	<i>Ms Ged Kearney MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Employment and Industry</b>	The Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Science</b>	The Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Small and Family Business</b>	The Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP
Shadow Minister for Innovation, Technology and the Future of Work	Ms Clare O'Neil MP

Title	Shadow Minister
Shadow Minister Assisting for Small and Family Business	Mr Matt Keogh MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Manufacturing</i>	<i>Senator Louise Pratt</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Employment Services</i>	<i>Senator Louise Pratt</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government</b>	The Hon. Jason Clare MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness</b>	The Hon. Jason Clare MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for External Territories</i>	<i>The Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education</b>	The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Youth</b>	The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP
<b>Shadow Minister for the Environment and Water</b>	Ms Terri Butler MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for the Environment</i>	<i>Mr Josh Wilson MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Trade</b>	Ms Madeleine King MP

Each box represents a portfolio. **Shadow Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.**

## CONTENTS

WEDNESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2020

### Chamber

#### COMMITTEES—

Selection Committee—	
Report.....	1741

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS—

National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework—	
Reference to Federation Chamber .....	1754

#### BILLS—

Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Improving Assistance for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Families) Bill 2020—	
First Reading .....	1754
Second Reading.....	1754
Australian Education Amendment (Direct Measure of Income) Bill 2020—	
First Reading .....	1756
Second Reading.....	1756

#### STATEMENTS—

Paid Parental Leave .....	1759
---------------------------	------

#### BILLS—

Farm Household Support Amendment (Relief Measures) Bill (No. 1) 2020—	
Second Reading.....	1760
Third Reading.....	1762

#### BUSINESS—

Rearrangement .....	1762
---------------------	------

#### BILLS—

Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2019-2020—	
Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2019-2020—	
Second Reading.....	1762

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS—

Solomon Electorate .....	1805
Noosa World Surfing Reserve .....	1806
Paterson Electorate: Roads.....	1806
Brighton & Seacliff Yacht Club .....	1807
Apprenticeships.....	1807
Reid Electorate: Coronavirus .....	1808
Global Security.....	1808
Townsville: Floods .....	1808
Sydney Harbour Federation Trust .....	1809
Herbert Electorate: Pittsworth State High School .....	1809
Dobell Electorate: Little Creek Cheese Factory .....	1810
Hawkesbury River Mangrove Planting Project.....	1810
Aged Care .....	1811
Fairfax Electorate: Local Sporting Champions .....	1811
Small Business: Bushfires .....	1812
Flynn Electorate: CQUniversity .....	1812
Centrelink.....	1812

## CONTENTS—*continued*

Barker Electorate: Kingston SE RSL Sub-Branch .....	1813
Petition: Closure of Mornington Peninsula Centrelink Office .....	1813
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE—	
Centrelink .....	1814
Economy .....	1815
Welfare .....	1816
Infrastructure .....	1816
Aged Care .....	1818
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS .....	1818
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE—	
Economy .....	1819
Economy .....	1820
Economy .....	1820
Energy .....	1821
Apprenticeships .....	1822
National Security .....	1822
Community Sport Infrastructure Grant Program .....	1823
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS .....	1825
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE—	
National Security .....	1826
Community Sport Infrastructure Grant Program .....	1826
Cybersafety .....	1828
Community Sport Infrastructure Grant Program .....	1828
Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme .....	1830
MOTIONS—	
Prime Minister .....	1831
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE—	
Space Industry .....	1839
DOCUMENTS—	
Presentation .....	1840
MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE—	
Infrastructure .....	1841
RESOLUTIONS OF THE SENATE—	
Consideration of Senate Message .....	1856
MOTIONS—	
Morrison Government .....	1860
BILLS—	
Statute Update (Regulations References) Bill 2020—	
Second Reading .....	1869
Third Reading .....	1873
Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2019-2020—	
Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2019-2020—	
Second Reading .....	1880
ADJOURNMENT—	

## CONTENTS—*continued*

Domestic and Family Violence .....	1901
Australian Parliament .....	1901
Barker Electorate: Timberlink .....	1902
Barker Electorate: Herd of Hope .....	1902
National Disability Insurance Scheme .....	1903
Hewlett, Councillor Lance .....	1904
Iraq: Protests .....	1906
Nuclear Energy .....	1907
NOTICES .....	1909
<b>Federation Chamber</b>	
CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS—	
People with Disability .....	1910
Tasmania: Health Care .....	1910
Hamere Noah Kidane Mehret Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church .....	1911
Women in Sport .....	1912
Water .....	1913
Australian Bushfires: Rural and Regional Australia .....	1914
Macarthur Electorate: Australia Day Awards .....	1914
Page Electorate: Australia Day Awards .....	1915
Hunter Electorate: Health Care .....	1916
Mining .....	1917
Ovarian Cancer .....	1918
Mitchell Electorate: Australia Day Awards .....	1918
Lalor Electorate: Chemical Contamination .....	1920
Calare Electorate: Parkinson's Disease .....	1920
Gilmore Electorate: Bomaderry High School .....	1921
Ryan Electorate: Roads .....	1922
Newcastle Electorate: Centrelink .....	1923
Forrest Electorate: Emergency Services .....	1924
Ballarat Electorate: Bushfires .....	1924
Clontarf Foundation .....	1925
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS—	
Closing the Gap .....	1926





*Wednesday, 26 February 2020*

**The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith)** took the chair at 09:30, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

## **COMMITTEES**

### **Selection Committee**

#### **Report**

**The SPEAKER** (09:30): I present *Report No. 12* of the Selection Committee relating to the consideration of committee and delegation business and private members' business on Monday, 2 March, 2020. The report will be printed in the *Hansard* for today and the committee's determinations will appear on tomorrow's *Notice Paper*. Copies of the report have been placed on the table.

*The report read as follows—*

#### **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

#### **SELECTION COMMITTEE**

#### **REPORT No. 12**

Committee and delegation business

and

private Members' business

**26 February 2020**

#### **MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

Chair

Hon A. D. H. Smith MP, Speaker

Members

Mr B van Manen MP (Chief Government Whip)

Mr C Hayes MP (Chief Opposition Whip)

Hon D Drum MP (Chief Nationals Whip)

Mr R Broadbent MP

Ms N Flint MP

Ms P Murphy MP

Mr K O'Dowd

Mr R Ramsey MP

Ms J Ryan MP

Ms R Sharkie MP

Ms A Stanley MP

Mr L O'Brien MP, Deputy Speaker

Secretary

Mr R Selth

Committee support

Ms F Hall

Mr D Pecar

Mr G Taylor

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

1. The committee met in private session on Tuesday, 25 February 2020.
2. The Committee deliberated on items of committee and delegation business that had been notified, private Members' business items listed on the Notice Paper and notices lodged on Tuesday, 25 February 2020, and determined the order of precedence and times on Monday, 2 March 2020, as follows:

**Items for House of Representatives Chamber (10.10 am to 12 noon) PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**Notices**

**1 MR BANDT:** To present a Bill for an Act to recognise and declare a climate change emergency, and for related purposes. (*Climate Emergency Declaration Bill 2020*)

(*Notice given 25 February 2020.*)

*Presenter may speak to the second reading for a period not exceeding 10 minutes — pursuant to standing order 41. Debate must be adjourned pursuant to standing order 142.*

**2 MS CLAYDON:** To move—That this House:

(1) notes that:

- (a) International Women's Day will be held on Sunday, 8 March 2020; and
- (b) the theme for 2020 is 'Each for Equality', which calls on all of us to 'Celebrate women's achievement. Raise awareness against bias. Take action for equality';

(2) recognises that entrenched gender inequities remain, including:

- (a) high rates of family and domestic violence, sexual violence and harassment;
- (b) the under-representation of women in leadership roles; and
- (c) pay inequity and the undervaluation of work in traditionally female industries; and

(3) calls on the Government to:

- (a) make gender equality a central priority;
- (b) commit to urgent action to improve Australian women's:
  - (i) safety and physical security;
  - (ii) economic security and retirement incomes;
  - (iii) health and reproductive rights; and
  - (iv) representation in Australian parliaments; and
- (c) reinstate the Women's Budget Statement.

(*Notice given 25 February 2020.*)

*Time allotted — 50 minutes.*

*Speech time limits —*

*Ms Claydon — 5 minutes.*

*Other Members — 5 minutes each.*

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 10 x 5 mins]

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

**3 MR PEARCE:** To move—That this House:

(1) notes that new Defence projects such as the Boxer Combat Reconnaissance Vehicles built under the \$5 billion LAND 400 Phase 2 Mounted Combat Reconnaissance Capability program support the development of defence industry and small business in electorates across Australia;

(2) supports job creation in construction and sustainment;

(3) recognises this project presents an exciting opportunity for Australian industry to play a vital role in delivering leading-edge capability and technology to Australia's army; and

(4) acknowledges the Government's significant \$200 billion investment in Australia's defence capability.

*(Notice given 11 February 2020.)*

*Time allotted — 30 minutes.*

*Speech time limits —*

*Mr Pearce — 5 minutes.*

*Other Members — 5 minutes each.*

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

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

**4 MR T. R. WILSON:** To move—That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) the Jewish Australian Internet Radio (J-AIR) is an outstanding broadcasting service that brings together Jewish culture, news, analysis, music, comedy, personalities and performers for audiences in Melbourne and through the internet;

(b) since 2014, the volunteers at J-AIR have worked tirelessly to give Jewish people a voice and provide awareness of the ongoing safety and security challenges faced by Melbourne's Jewish community;

(c) as demonstrated by the 2019 Executive Council of Australian Jewry report, the character of anti-Semitism has worsened in Australia and services like J-AIR play a crucial security role;

(d) J-AIR has begun working closely with the Community Security Group (CSG) to combat the rise of anti-Semitism and ensure the safety and security of the Jewish community in Victoria; and

(e) the absence of a community broadcasting licence limits of the capacity of J-AIR to fulfil these critical functions; and

(2) calls on the Australian Communications and Media Authority to consider the new relationship with the CSG and allocate J-AIR a community broadcasting licence in the Melbourne Radio Licence Area.

*(Notice given 25 February 2020.)*

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

*Speech time limits —*

*Mr T. R. Wilson — 5 minutes.*

*Other Members — 5 minutes each.*

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

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

**Items for Federation Chamber (11 am to 1.30 pm) PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**Notices**

**1 MR SHORTEN:** To move—That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) on 20 January 2020 the final report from the review of the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* was handed down by Mr David Tune AO PSM; and

(b) the report made 29 recommendations that have been endorsed by the disability sector, including people with disability, service providers and carers; and

(2) calls on the Government to act on the recommendations of the review as soon as possible.

(*Notice given 12 February 2020.*)

*Time allotted — 45 minutes.*

*Speech time limits —*

*Mr Shorten — 5 minutes.*

*Other Members — 5 minutes each.*

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 9 x 5 mins]

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

**Orders of the day**

**1 DISABILITY RELATED HEALTH SUPPORTS:** Resumption of debate (*from 9 September 2019*) on the motion of Mr C. Kelly—That this House:

(1) notes the Council of Australian Governments Disability Reform Council met on 28 June 2019 and resolved a number of long-standing issues, including the interaction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) with the health system;

(2) welcomes the council's agreement to a range of disability-related health supports that will be provided through the NDIS; and

(3) notes the:

(a) NDIS will fund disability-related health supports where the supports are required as a result of the participant's disability and assist the participant to undertake activities of daily living;

(b) types of health supports that will be funded by the NDIS include continence supports, dysphagia and nutrition supports, respiratory supports and supports for wound and pressure care; and

(c) approach agreed to by the council to fund disability related health supports under the NDIS recognises participants need to be placed at the centre of all decisions.

*Time allotted — 30 minutes.*

*Speech time limits —*

*All Members — 5 minutes each.*

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

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

**Notices – continued**

**2 MR GILES:** To move—That this House expresses its sincere sorrow at the death of the Honourable John Cain, and acknowledges his extraordinary contribution to public life and to the State of Victoria, in particular as Premier from 1982 to 1990.

(*Notice given 24 February 2020.*)

*Time allotted — 30 minutes.*

*Speech time limits —*

*Mr Giles — 5 minutes.*

*Other Members — 5 minutes each.*

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

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

### **Orders of the day – continued**

#### **2 MEDICARE: Resumpt**

ion of debate (*from 25 November 2019*) on the motion of Dr Gillespie—That this House:

(1) notes the Government's commitment to Medicare;

(2) further notes:

(a) the record level of funding to Medicare in 2018-19 of \$24.1 billion, which is an increase of 3.5 per cent in benefits paid in the 2017-18 financial year;

(b) that the national GP bulk billing rate of 86.2 per cent is a four percentage point increase on the 2012-13 figure of 82.2 per cent when Labor were last in office; and

(c) that patients made 136.5 million bulk billed GP visits in 2018-19, up 3.3 million visits on the previous financial year;

(3) acknowledges that on 1 July 2019, the Government increased the patient rebate for further GP items on the Medicare Benefits Schedule, and that specialist procedures, allied health services and other GP services such as mental health and after hours services, were indexed; and

(4) congratulates the Government for ensuring the Medicare Benefits Schedule Review will continue to ensure that Medicare services are effective and appropriate for patients now and into the future

*Time allotted — remaining private Members' business time prior to 1.30 pm*

*Speech time limits —*

*All Members — 5 minutes each.*

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 9 x 5 mins]

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

### **Items for Federation Chamber (4.45 pm to 7.30 pm) PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

#### **Notices – continued**

**3 MS SHARKIE:** To move—That this House:

(1) thanks the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) for its service in delivering vital emergency broadcasts and comprehensive coverage during the catastrophic fires;

(2) acknowledges the dramatic rise in emergency broadcasts—from 256 in 2017 to 371 in 2018-19 and 673 so far this year, which have been delivered without additional funding to cover the resources which have been poured into the emergency broadcast effort;

(3) recognises that since Boxing Day, as bushfires raged across Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia, the ABC handled more than 100 emergency broadcasts in a single week, receiving widespread praise for the practical, life-saving information and the professionalism on display;

(4) notes the heavy damage sustained to ABC radio and television network infrastructure during the bushfires, particularly at Bateman's Bay in New South Wales and East Gippsland in Victoria;

(5) commends the ABC for mobilising to restore local radio stations as a priority because of their critical role in providing information to communities during disasters;

(6) acknowledges that the ABC should not be put into a position of having to economise on its emergency broadcasting due to Government funding cuts; and

(7) calls on the Government to reverse the \$83.7 million paused in indexation funding as a matter of urgency.

*(Notice given 24 February 2020.)*

*Time allotted — 45 minutes.*

*Speech time limits —*

*Ms Sharkie — 5 minutes.*

*Other Members — 5 minutes each.*

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 9 x 5 mins]

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

#### **Orders of the day – continued**

**3 ONLINE SAFETY:** Resumption of debate (*from 10 February 2020*) on the motion of Mr Connelly—That this House:

(1) recognises:

(a) that society is more connected online than ever before in history; and

(b) the importance of keeping Australians safe online;

(2) notes that:

(a) the Government established the world's first Children's eSafety Commissioner in 2015, and expanded this role to cover all Australians in 2017;

(b) in 2018 the Office of the eSafety Commissioner undertook research to examine some of the challenges faced by young people aged 8 to 17 in Australia online; and

(c) this research indicated that:

(i) 25 per cent of young people have been contacted by strangers/someone they did not know;

(ii) 13 per cent of young people reported receiving repeated unwanted online messages from someone; and

(iii) 13 per cent of young people reported having lies or rumours spread about them;

(3) further notes the bipartisan support for the work of the Office of the eSafety Commissioner; and

(4) congratulates the Government for this world first initiative.

*Time allotted — 40 minutes.*

*Speech time limits —*

*All Members — 5 minutes each.*

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 8 x 5 mins]

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

#### **Notices – continued**

**4 MS TEMPLEMAN:** To move—That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) there are 120,000 older Australians waiting for their approved home care package, with many waiting more than two years for the care they have been approved for;

(b) more than 16,000 older Australians died waiting for their approved home care package they were assessed for in 2017-18—sadly, that was around 300 older Australians that died each week in that year waiting for care;

(c) there are around 14,000 older Australians who entered residential aged care prematurely because they couldn't get the care they were assessed and approved for in 2017-18—sadly, that was around 200 older Australians each week having no other choice but to enter residential aged care; and

(d) the number of older Australians waiting for home care grew from 88,000 to 120,000 since 2017; and

(2) condemns the Government for its inadequate response to the Royal Commission's interim report and not providing the home care older Australians need.

*(Notice given 25 November 2019.)*

*Time allotted — 40 minutes.*

*Speech time limits —*

*Ms Templeman — 5 minutes.*

*Other Members — 5 minutes each.*

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 8 x 5 mins]

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

#### **Orders of the day – continued**

**4 EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING:** Resumption of debate (*from 24 February 2020*) on the motion of Mr Pearce—That this House:

(1) notes the:

(a) creation of 1.2 million jobs since the Coalition Government was elected, with 140,000 young Australians securing employment over that time period;

(b) strong commitment of the Government to reform the vocational education and training sector to better meet the demands of the modern Australian economy; and

(c) leadership of the Government in November 2018 to commission the Joyce Review, a comprehensive expert review of the Australian vocational education and training system which was delivered in March 2019; and

(2) welcomes the implementation of the Skills Package, a \$525 million suite of measures that includes:

(a) a National Careers Institute and the appointment of a National Careers Ambassador;

(b) the Foundation Skills for Your Future program—an initiative which will support workers by improving literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy;

(c) a streamlined Incentives for Australian Apprenticeships program, which will encourage employers to take on apprentices and trainees;

(d) additional incentives to both employers and apprentices in areas affected by skills shortages under the Additional Identified Skills Shortage Payment measure;

(e) establishing ten industry training hubs in areas of high unemployment;

(f) further addressing youth unemployment in regional areas by funding 400 Commonwealth Scholarships for Young Australians;

(g) a National Skills Commission and pilot skills organisations that will promote a nation-wide approach to skills development and enhance the role of industry in designing training courses;

(h) an extension of the National Rugby League's VET Apprenticeship Awareness Program; and

(i) Energising Tasmania—a partnership between the Commonwealth and the Tasmanian Government to train a skilled workforce for jobs for the future in pumped hydro and energy infrastructure; and

(3) welcomes the prospect of creating a further 80,000 apprenticeships in occupations with skills shortages over the coming five years.

*Time allotted — remaining private Members' business time prior to 7.30 pm*

*Speech time limits —*

*All Members — 5 minutes each.*

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 8 x 5 mins]

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

**THE HON A. D. H. SMITH MP**

Speaker of the House of Representatives 26 February 2020

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework**

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and Deputy Leader of the National Party) (09:31): by leave—Today, Mr Speaker, I will talk to you about keeping Australians safe from disaster. I want to tell you about long-term work underway across the nation to reduce the potential for harm and enable a prosperous and resilient future. This is my first annual statement to parliament on the national effort to reduce the risk of disasters and build resilience, and next year I will be updating parliament again on progress made across the country.

This bushfire season is unprecedented. The heartbreaking and devastating loss we have seen continues to unfold. The season is not over. Our crews and volunteers are out there continuing to fight fires as I address you here today. They have been fighting these fires since the season started early in August last year. We've had flooding, storms, cyclones and there's more to come. We have seen more fires this year than in the last three years combined. Our thoughts are with the families and friends of those 33 people who have lost their lives, including nine firefighters who so bravely served the Australian community. Small rural and regional communities have been hard-hit and over 3,000 homes have been destroyed. We hope we do not see that number rise any more. Thousands have also been evacuated. More than 12.6 million hectares have been burnt out, with thousands of head of livestock lost and significant impacts to farming infrastructure. Millions of native animals have also been lost. We've heard stories of horror and loss. Many of the communities affected had already endured years of drought; some have not long ago been devastated by flood. I acknowledge every Australian who has suffered during these bushfires, families who have lost loved ones and Australians who have lost their homes and businesses. To you I say: we will stand by you and support you, for the long term.

The Australian government has established the National Bushfire Recovery Agency, with a \$2 billion fund to help communities recover from these bushfires. This fund is on top of already-existing disaster recovery payments and allowances that have been made available. The Australian government has already announced a range of measures to support families, farmers, businesses and local governments, including direct financial support, counselling



services and mental health support, assistance with clean-up, and support for tourism and protection of wildlife.

I also want to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of Australia's dedicated emergency services personnel and volunteers, who give themselves selflessly to protect our communities. I thank the foreign countries who have generously provided us with their expertise and equipment and the bravery of their personnel, and the many more who have offered their support. I particularly acknowledge those three United States firefighters who tragically lost their lives when their large air tanker crashed into the Snowy Monaro on 23 January.

I acknowledge the state governments who have supported this response and recovery. I acknowledge local leaders—and in particular the courage and vision of the local mayors at the forefront with their communities.

I am proud of the resilience of the Australian people. Australians support each other when times are tough. But we'll keep being tested. These unfolding disasters highlight the reality that we need to be prepared for more events like this in the future.

The Australian government has announced a national royal commission into Australia's natural disaster arrangements following the devastating 'black summer' bushfires. The royal commission is not going to duplicate the work of other inquiries. It will work with other inquiries announced by the states and it will also review the work and recommendations of previous inquiries.

This inquiry has a national focus and will look at improving natural disaster management coordination across all levels of government; improving Australia's preparedness, resilience, response to and recovery from natural disasters, across all levels of government; and the legal framework for the Commonwealth's involvement in responding to national emergencies and how we work with state and territory legal frameworks.

We're not just looking at how we recover from this season's devastating fires but how we prepare for the future. Our world-leading science agencies have told us that we can expect more extremes into the future, longer disaster seasons, and compounding events, flooding rains after drought, bushfires and storms, which test our capacity to cope.

The economic cost of natural disasters is currently estimated to be \$18.2 billion a year. We are yet to see the total cost of this bushfire season. Recent events show how impacts are felt beyond the fireground.

The costs of disasters are projected to rise to \$39 billion by 2050 even without accounting for a changing climate. The broader social costs are estimated to be at least double this. Disasters not only cost the economy. They hit hip pockets hard. In some parts of Australia insurance is increasingly unaffordable. Reducing risk is the only sustainable way to address affordability.

But we don't need to deal with this issue just to reduce insurance premiums. We need to reduce the potential for damage, disruption, suffering and loss. These events become disasters when they rob us of the things that we value: our homes, loved ones and our communities; our livelihoods, our safety and security.

Natural hazards will increasingly test our limits and our capacity to cope. We have to change the way we think about and prepare for disaster. We need to take a long-term view of how we shape our society, adapt to changing climate, build resilience and create the

communities we want to live in. If you put the investment in upfront to build your resilience, then you're more likely to get through. The overall cost could ultimately be less.

We will continue to invest in our world-class emergency response capabilities and do the work needed to ensure we are ready to respond to whatever comes. But as the scale and complexity increases, that on its own is not enough. The Australian government is committed to reducing the causes and impact of disasters on Australian communities and the economy. In this we stand shoulder to shoulder with state and territory governments. Reducing disaster risk is part of the efforts and must become business as usual as we adapt to a changing climate.

In 2019 the Australian government released the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework. This framework represents a shared effort by representatives across government, the private sector and community groups to reduce disaster risks and the associated loss, suffering and cost. All states and territories are committed to implementing the framework. The framework describes what governments, industries, communities and individuals—working together—must do to maintain our prosperity, despite our increasing vulnerability to natural hazards. It sets the new agenda for action needed to reduce disaster risk, prevent risk being created in decisions we make today for the future and ensure we have the information we need to do this.

The Australian government is working across sectors, and with state and territory governments, to finalise the national action plan to reduce disaster risk. All state and territory emergency management ministers have committed to finalise this important roadmap as soon as possible. We are also investing \$130.5 million over five years from 2019-20 to deliver initiatives that reduce risk at the national, state and local level. The Australian government has established an Emergency Response Fund. As part of this fund, an additional \$50 million per year will be available to build preparedness to future natural disasters, and build the long-term sustainability of communities that are at risk of being affected by a future natural disaster.

The Australian government is also helping communities to 'build back better' after disasters occur by investing in resilience. The extraordinary nature of these events has highlighted the need to build more resilience within affected communities to better prepare them for bushfires. Part of the \$2 billion National Bushfire Recovery Fund will be available to rebuild infrastructure to a better, more resilient standard. Through the joint Commonwealth-state Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, including the \$100 million infrastructure Betterment Fund in Queensland, the Australian government is:

- allowing states and territories to use the savings they generate from rebuilding essential public assets under the DRFA towards disaster risk reduction projects; and
- encouraging states and territories to restore damaged assets to a more resilient standard.

The Australian government will also be partnering with the private sector to unlock commercial financing opportunities to invest in reducing risk and building resilience.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework is about doing better for the Australian people. We need a clearer picture nationally of which Australian communities are most at risk of disaster, and we need to work with those communities to take action to reduce it. This means building knowledge about how disasters impact us now and into the future. It isn't enough to rely on how things have been in the past. Events are occurring in locations and on

an intensity and on a scale that we haven't seen before. We will need to expect that we will see another bushfire season like this, and we need to be better prepared.

We can't predict the future. We must keep making better use of the scientific information that already exists to anticipate how we may be impacted in the future. We have outstanding capabilities in this country—within our leading science agencies, universities and private companies. We are stepping up our national disaster and climate risk capabilities to ensure people get the information they need to plan for the future.

Reducing disaster risk is more than understanding the hazard. We also have to really understand what makes us vulnerable to disaster. Reducing vulnerability can make a significant difference to how we experience hazards when they strike. We need to better understand that we are trading off values in the decisions that we all make and understand that these values shift. When things are going well we may value efficiency and cost-effectiveness, but when faced with disruption the need for safety and security come into sharper focus. We must then take what we know and act on it.

Every day, decisions are made across Australia that have real impacts for our society—decisions like where and how we live; how we build our cities and regions; how we plan and maintain our infrastructure and buildings; and how we protect our unique natural assets. These are all matters the Prime Minister has asked the CSIRO led review to make recommendations on this year. The review will ensure these decisions are informed by science and ensure we build greater resilience for the future. We must ensure that we can better plan and account for the reality of disasters in all kinds of decisions—decisions in cabinet rooms, board rooms, council chambers, community halls and around dining tables across the country.

To guide those decisions, the Australian government will support an accelerated national effort to enable business and communities to reduce their risk and build resilience. The government cannot do this alone. No one state or territory can do this alone. No one local council or community can do this alone. No one sector, business, or organisation can do this alone. But working together, collectively, is when real change can happen. The National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework sets the direction for this coordinated national effort. The government is working through arrangements to ensure strong private industry and community sector advice on what action is needed to build national resilience.

We need to be sure that our effort is making a difference. To keep us accountable, we will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this effort, identify gaps and deliver real change for Australians. The reviews, both nationally and within states and territories, will point to areas for action. Over time, it will help us understand what is working and what we can do better.

We will share our experience and knowledge and learn from counterparts in our region during the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which we are hosting in Brisbane in June 2020. This will provide an important opportunity to come together to address the mutual challenge of accelerating disaster risk reduction efforts.

Reducing disaster risk is everyone's business. I call on Australians in government and business and as members of communities to consider how you can join this national effort to understand and reduce the risk within your control. We have an opportunity. Together we can

create safe, resilient and prosperous Australian communities now and for the future. I present a copy of my ministerial statement.

**Ms CATHERINE KING** (Ballarat) (09:44): I take note of the minister's statement and I want to thank him for providing the House with an update on the government's response to this unprecedented bushfire season. I would like to join with the minister in extending my deepest sympathies to the families that have lost loved ones during this bushfire season. I'd also like to extend my sympathies to people across Australia who've lost homes, businesses, crops or livestock through these bushfires. I'd like to express my sincere appreciation to the thousands of firefighters, both career and volunteer, who have spent months battling these fires. They've been supported by emergency services personnel, our Defence Force, local and state governments, not-for-profits, public servants and so many communities.

This bushfire season has been unprecedented. The level of destruction witnessed across Australia has, frankly, shocked the world. Thirty-three people have lost their lives and over 3,000 homes have been destroyed. Over one billion animals have perished in the fires and over 12.6 million hectares of land has burned.

The members opposite would like to badge this bushfire season as 'black summer'. But the truth is this bushfire season is stretching well beyond the confines of our summer, as we can expect for every bushfire season in the years to come. The level of destruction witnessed over the past six months is indeed unprecedented. But it was not unexpected. In fact, the government had been warned for many months that they must prepare for longer and more intensive bushfire seasons caused by climate change.

In April, a group of former fire chiefs with hundreds of years of experience between them wrote to the Prime Minister requesting a meeting to discuss this year's bushfire season. They warned the government that they were not prepared for the catastrophic conditions Australia was likely to face. They reached out again in September as the bushfire season began in earnest. And twice they were ignored. Following the federal election in May, the Department of Home Affairs warned incoming ministers:

The physical effects of climate change, population growth, and urbanisation mean that without effective action more Australians' livelihoods will be impacted by disasters into the future and the cost of those disasters will continue to grow.

Coordinated national action to drive efforts to reduce these risks and improve national resilience is required.

Despite this, no action was taken by the government to prepare for this bushfire season.

In November last year, the Leader of the Opposition wrote to the Prime Minister requesting that he call an urgent COAG meeting to discuss Australia's natural disaster preparedness. The Leader of the Opposition requested that COAG discuss a compensation scheme for volunteer firefighters, expanding the capacity of Australia's National Aerial Firefighting Centre, and developing a new national strategy for disaster preparedness, among other things. But, instead of taking these constructive suggestions on board, the Prime Minister pushed them aside, claiming he would give due consideration to using COAG as forum to discuss Australia's national disaster preparedness, should the need arise. Once again, the government refused an opportunity to prepare for this bushfire season before it was too late.

As the true devastation of this bushfire season began to dawn on the government, it became very clear that they did not have a plan. Instead of working to fix this, the Prime Minister went missing in action. When he returned, he sought to blame the states at every opportunity and he scrambled to catch up on what he should have prepared for months ago. When confronted with why the request for increased annual funding for aerial firefighting was allowed to sit in a corner collecting dust for 18 months, the Prime Minister claimed that he had provided the resources required, before turning around and then committing to annual funding for the centre. When asked why he was not doing anything to compensate volunteer firefighters, the Prime Minister claimed that it wasn't necessary and that volunteer firefighters wanted to be there, before turning around and announcing compensation for volunteer firefighters. When asked why he would not convene a COAG meeting to discuss natural disaster preparedness, the Prime Minister said he wasn't going to give in to knee-jerk responses, before turning around and announcing that disaster preparedness would be discussed at a COAG meeting in March.

The government was one step behind the entire way because they had no plan. Because the Prime Minister entered the bushfire season with no plan, the recovery effort, though desperately needed, has been disappointing and confusing for people in bushfire affected areas—people like Rae Harvey, who lost her home in the bushfires and was living on her property with no running water, electricity or wi-fi. She had applied for the disaster relief payment twice and been rejected twice because she couldn't provide the bank account details for a government payment from 25 years ago.

There were businesses like the Ulladulla Surf School, which had most of its summer bookings cancelled because of the bushfire season and was struggling to make ends meet. The owner, Mr Simon Twitchen, was excited to hear about the loan program for small businesses announced on 20 January. The Prime Minister's media release published the same day said that small-business support would be immediate. It took nearly a month for that funding to be made available. It's no wonder that only one loan across all of Australia has been approved for a small business, despite the huge need across communities to support them.

The sad reality is that the Prime Minister has been more focused on trumpeting recovery announcements than getting the money actually out the door. People deserve much better than announcements; they deserve action. That's why this statement by the member for Maranoa is frankly a little galling. The minister has come into this chamber and announced that this will serve as his first ministerial statement on the national effort to reduce risk of disasters and to build resilience. But the member has been the minister for natural disaster and emergency management since May last year. This statement would have been useful before the bushfire crisis, where he could have outlined what the government was doing to prepare for natural disasters, particularly as we went into the worst bushfire season we have seen for a long time. Instead, it is another case of too little, too late.

Unfortunately, what the minister has outlined in his statement today is another case of trumpeting announcements but delivering very, very little. Minister Littleproud mentions the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, an initiative famously pushed out of sight after the coalition won government. But the minister cannot outline what outcomes the framework has delivered, only what it will deliver. The minister mentions the \$50 million set aside for disaster mitigation within the Emergency Response Fund, an amendment Labor fought to be

included and delivered. The Emergency Response Fund was passed by the parliament in October, but five months on the minister can only talk about what funding will be available through the fund, not what the funding has delivered for communities.

There will be a few lasting memories from this bushfire season. The red skies of Mallacoota as thousands of people fled to the beach will be one of them. The choking smoke blanketing our capital cities will be another, as will the images of our fireys standing ready against walls of flame. And people will remember what was absent: the Prime Minister, who went missing in action, who ignored all of the warning signs and refused to listen to the experts, who sat on crucial funding for firefighting services for years, who even now is leaving people waiting weeks and months for vital help clearing away debris and supporting their small businesses.

As we have seen since before the bushfire season, the opposition stands ready to support the government and these communities so that they can get back on their feet. But we don't need more spin, more statements; we need more money getting out the door. I would hope that the next time the member for Maranoa makes this annual statement we will see actual proof of that.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and Deputy Leader of the National Party) (09:53): I move:

That the House take note of the document.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Reference to Federation Chamber**

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and Deputy Leader of the National Party) (09:54): by leave—I move:

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

Question agreed to.

### **BILLS**

#### **Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Improving Assistance for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Families) Bill 2020**

##### **First Reading**

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by **Mr Tehan**.

Bill read a first time.

##### **Second Reading**

**Mr TEHAN** (Wannon—Minister for Education) (09:55): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Improving Assistance for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Families) Bill 2020 makes a number of improvements to the operation of the additional childcare subsidy (child wellbeing), the childcare subsidy and some other technical drafting improvements.

The government is committed to improving access to child care for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families. The changes in this bill will streamline access to the

additional childcare subsidy (child wellbeing) by cutting red tape for families and childcare providers. The changes will also further support vulnerable and disadvantaged families to access quality and affordable early learning and child care by enhancing a childcare provider's ability to provide early access to the additional subsidy to vulnerable and disadvantaged families where appropriate. Notably, the amendments continue to maintain appropriate safeguards to support the integrity of the payment.

Just over 18 months into implementation of the childcare package and it is clear that the government is delivering on its goals to create a more affordable, accessible and flexible childcare system.

We have been listening to stakeholders regarding areas for improvement, and the key measures contained in this bill are in direct response to feedback received from the childcare sector on the operation of the additional childcare subsidy (child wellbeing) payment.

This bill makes amendments to the A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 by extending the backdating of additional childcare subsidy (child wellbeing) certificates and determinations from 28 days to up to 13 weeks in defined exceptional circumstances. This will mean gaps in subsidy entitlement will be avoided where a child has been identified as 'at risk' and it takes longer than 28 days to be able to provide a certificate or apply for a determination, due to circumstances outside the provider's control.

The bill also extends the period from 13 weeks to up to 12 months that additional childcare subsidy (child wellbeing) determinations can be made for certain defined classes of children, such as children on a long-term child protection order, including those in foster care. This will reduce unnecessary red tape for providers, families and state and territory governments by no longer requiring them to reapply for subsequent determinations with supporting evidence every 13 weeks for such children whose circumstances mean they will continue to be 'at risk' for longer periods of time.

A further amendment will clarify that a provider is eligible for additional childcare subsidy (child wellbeing) in respect of certain defined classes of children, such as foster children. This will mean that providers can receive the additional subsidy in respect of a foster child who is at risk of serious abuse or neglect (for a maximum of 13 weeks) while the foster family confirms its childcare subsidy eligibility. This will ensure these children have immediate and streamlined access to child care.

The measures in this bill will enhance the Australian government's commitment to provide additional support to children at risk of serious abuse and neglect by streamlining access to ACCS (child wellbeing). In particular the bill will enhance a childcare provider's ability to provide early access to the additional subsidy to vulnerable and disadvantaged families.

The bill also makes some other amendments that are more technical in nature, including an amendment to the A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 to modify the calculation used at childcare subsidy balancing for individuals that changed their relationship status through partnering, separating or bereavement during the year. The changes will bring the calculation into line with other government payments.

The calculation method proposed in the bill will ensure families' childcare subsidy entitlements are fair, consistent and accurate to reflect their financial circumstances

throughout the year by recognising periods and the actual incomes associated with those periods when they were single with their own income or partnered with a combined income.

Lastly, the bill makes two minor technical amendments to add clarity to previously drafted matters. These will:

- provide exceptions to when the secretary may vary the approval of a childcare provider to remove a service; and
- correct the omission of the civil penalty amount in section 204K(5).

In conclusion, this bill demonstrates that the government remains committed to making life easier for providers and vulnerable and disadvantaged families and continues to make improvements based on feedback on how the childcare package is operating.

The changes in this bill will reduce regulatory and administrative burden on families and childcare providers, support vulnerable and disadvantaged families to access quality early learning and child care, and help parents to access financial assistance.

I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

### **Australian Education Amendment (Direct Measure of Income) Bill 2020**

#### **First Reading**

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by **Mr Tehan**.

Bill read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Mr TEHAN** (Wannon—Minister for Education) (10:00): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today I'm introducing the Australian Education Amendment (Direct Measure of Income) Bill 2020. It supports the broader Australian government commitment to provide every child with a quality education, regardless of where they live and what school they attend, by providing funding that is fairly and transparently distributed, and allocated according to need.

The funding of non-government schools in Australia is a shared responsibility between the parents and guardians of the students attending those schools, the Australian government and the state and territory governments.

Through this bill, the Australian government is introducing a more accurate methodology to calculate the capacity of a non-government school community to contribute to the cost of schooling.

This more targeted and accurate direct measure of income will support the Australian government needs based funding model for Australian schools.

Under the government's Quality Schools Package, there will be more Commonwealth government money for disadvantaged students through loading payments, including those from remote and regional areas, those with a disability and Indigenous students.

For the first time, real needs based funding will be provided and will grow from \$17.5 billion dollars in 2017 to \$32.5 billion dollars in 2029.



Through this bill, the new methodology will use the best available data to estimate the capacity of parents and guardians to contribute to the cost of schooling, which will ensure more funding flows to the schools that need it the most.

The bill proposes changes to the capacity to contribute methodology and schools' transition to the uniform Commonwealth share of the schooling resource standard. The financial impact of these changes is an estimated additional \$1.3 billion in Commonwealth recurrent funding over the budget and forward estimates from 2019-20 and 2022-23, and an estimated \$3.4 billion increase in recurrent funding over ten years from 2019-20 to 2028-29. This will see the Commonwealth's investment in education increase to a total of over \$314 billion dollars from 2018 to 2029.

The bill also includes measures to support financial certainty by allowing schools time to plan as the new arrangements are implemented.

Separate to this bill, but as part of our broader reforms to education funding, the government has also established a \$1.2 billion Choice and Affordability Fund that will assist schools during the transition to the new direct measure of income contained in this bill as well as support parental choice and affordability of schools, assist schools in regional and remote areas and in drought affected areas, enhance student wellbeing and support initiatives and lift outcomes in underperforming schools.

The Australian government contributes funding to government and non-government schools through the Australian Education Act 2013.

As the Australian Education Act currently stands, recurrent school funding is calculated by reference to a base amount of funding for every primary and secondary student, along with six loadings that provide extra funding for disadvantaged students and schools. This is commonly referred to as the 'schooling resource standard'. For most non-government schools the base component of the schooling resource standard is discounted by a 'capacity to contribute percentage'.

The current capacity to contribute discount is calculated using an area based measure. Under this methodology, a school community's capacity to contribute is calculated by averaging certain indicators of the socioeconomic status (SES) for each Australian Bureau of Statistic (ABS) Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1) in which the students at the school reside—that is, the SES score for a school is based on an averaging of characteristics of all people residing in a certain geographical area (SA1), not just families of students attending the school. This methodology uses data from the ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing.

The new methodology included in this bill was the result of recommendations made by the National School Resourcing Board in its *Review of the socio-economic status score methodology: final report June 2018*.

As part of the review, the board consulted widely, it received 34 substantive responses to the issues paper, including a number of detailed proposals which informed the board's consideration and analysis. The board also received 261 submissions which were largely part of a coordinated standard response from individuals or school communities.

Board members undertook 38 face-to-face consultations in all states and territories with non-government education authorities, school leaders and communities, state and territory government agencies, researchers, policy analysts and other interested parties.

The Australian government agreed to all six recommendations made by the board and this bill gives effect to the relevant recommendations to implement the capacity to contribute function.

The review found that recent innovations mean that a better measure is now available to calculate a school community's capacity to contribute, based on a more robust and reliable set of data.

The new direct measure of income is a targeted, more accurate approach, ensuring funding flows to the schools that need it most. The bill gives effect to the changes required to the calculation of financial assistance for non-government schools and rates of transition to the nationally consistent Commonwealth share under the act. Over 2020 to 2022, schools will move to the new direct measure of income when it is most financially beneficial for them to do so. During 2020 and 2021, the capacity to contribute percentage of schools will be based on the best of one of three options including the current SES methodology, the SES methodology using more recent data and the new direct measure of income. This will allow schools time to plan and adjust to the new measure.

As a result of the changes proposed in the bill there is also the need for future amendments to the Australian Education Regulation to give effect to the new direct measure of income. The Australian Education Regulation outlines the financial accountability and other conditions that are required to enable funding to be provided under the Australian Education Act.

I will provide a summary of our proposed changes to the Australian Education Regulation to state and territory governments and the non-government school sector as part of our consultation on the implementation of the new measure. It will also assist with the consideration of this bill.

The amendments to the regulation will cover how the direct measure of income capacity to contribute scores are calculated. The amendments will also include how non-government schools transition to the nationally consistent Australian government share of the Schooling Resource Standard.

The Australian government will continue to consult with schools on the new direct measure of income and how it affects them. We will continue to provide information as soon as possible to help schools plan financially for their future.

In addition, the bill will amend the Australian Education Act to clarify the authority and appropriation to continue to support the making of GST inclusive payments of non-government schools funding. This will preserve the longstanding arrangements for the payment of GST-inclusive amounts.

In summary, the bill will:

- amend terminology from 'SES score' to capacity to contribute or 'CTC score';
- enable the regulation to prescribe a new method for calculating a non-government school's CTC score by reference to a direct measure of income of a school community;
- enable the regulation to alter the way in which the Commonwealth share for a non-government school is calculated, and alter the period over which that transition occurs, in

order to manage any adverse financial impacts arising from the change in capacity to contribute score methodology;

- broaden the definition of a 'majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' school and enable the minister to make a determination that a school is likely to be a majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school for the year to avoid any unintended application of the capacity to contribute methodology; and

- amend the act to provide clear authority and appropriation to continue to make GST-inclusive payments, where necessary.

Government schools will continue to receive record levels of total Australian government funding, with an estimated \$127.8 billion dollars of recurrent funding expected to flow to government schools from 2018 to 2029 providing strong growth in funding.

In fact, the government's spending is growing fastest for state schools at around 6.4 percent per student each year from 2018 to 2023, compared to per student growth of five percent for the non-government sector.

As a result of this bill, the school funding model will remain sector blind and Australian government funding for non-government schools will continue to transition to 80 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard. The government will continue to refine the model over time.

The Australian government is delivering needs based funding arrangements that ensure students with the same need in the same sector attract the same level of support so that every Australian child, no matter where they live, can have access to a world-class education.

I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

## STATEMENTS

### Paid Parental Leave

**Ms MURPHY** (Dunkley) (10:10): by leave—Yesterday when speaking on the paid parental leave bill I related my mother's story of career and motherhood as I've always understood it to be. In the afternoon I sent my mum and dad the *Hansard* greens. Last night my parents called me to say they were impressed with and proud of my speech as parents do, but they also wanted me to know that I had made a small factual error. Although in the early seventies many professions still required women to resign when they got married, in New South Wales in 1971 that wasn't the case: married female teachers were allowed to continue to teach if they so chose. So I wanted to thank my mum and dad for giving me that information and the opportunity to clarify that to this House and also for reminding me of the golden rule: never relate a family history, even as you have always genuinely believed it to be, without fact-checking it with your mum first. Thank you.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell):** Your mum will expect a very good present, I presume, this year!

**BILLS****Farm Household Support Amendment (Relief Measures) Bill (No. 1) 2020****Second Reading**

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:

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

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House criticises the Government on its failed record in assisting drought affected farmers"—

**Mr TEHAN** (Wannon—Minister for Education) (10:11): This bill is the last instalment by the government to implement the recommendations made in the independent review, *Rebuilding the Farm Household Allowance: a better way forward for supporting farmers in financial hardship*.

The bill demonstrates the government's continued responsiveness to the needs of farm communities in rural Australia. Removing business income reconciliation means farmers and their partners will no longer be distracted due to predicting income, reducing anxiety and frustration felt by farmers during the period of financial hardship. Providing flexibility on the time frame to conduct farm financial assessments ensures our farmers and their partners can receive the best financial assessment possible to improve their financial situation.

The bill benefits current and future farm household allowance recipients and the communities they live in. I thank members for their contribution and commend the bill to the House.

**The SPEAKER:** The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Hunter has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting words. So the question now is that the amendment moved by the member for Hunter be agreed to.

The House divided. [10:13]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....	66
Noes .....	76
Majority .....	10

**AYES**

Albanese, AN  
Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burney, LJ  
Butler, MC  
Byrne, AM  
Champion, ND  
Claydon, SC  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD  
Elliot, MJ  
Freeland, MR

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Chalmers, JE  
Clare, JD  
Coker, EA  
Conroy, PM  
Dreyfus, MA  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S

## AYES

Giles, AJ  
 Gosling, LJ  
 Husic, EN  
 Katter, RC  
 Keogh, MJ  
 King, CF  
 Leigh, AK  
 McBride, EM  
 Mitchell, RG  
 Murphy, PJ  
 O'Connor, BPJ  
 Owens, JA  
 Perrett, GD  
 Plibersek, TJ  
 Rowland, MA  
 Smith, DPB  
 Stanley, AM (teller)  
 Templeman, SR  
 Thwaites, KL  
 Watts, TG  
 Wilson, JH

Gorman, P  
 Hill, JC  
 Jones, SP  
 Kearney, G  
 Khalil, P  
 King, MMH  
 Marles, RD  
 Mitchell, BK  
 Mulino, D  
 Neumann, SK  
 O'Neil, CE  
 Payne, AE  
 Phillips, FE  
 Rishworth, AL  
 Ryan, JC (teller)  
 Snowdon, WE  
 Swanson, MJ  
 Thistlethwaite, MJ  
 Vamvakinou, M  
 Wells, AS  
 Zappia, A

## NOES

Alexander, JG  
 Andrews, KJ  
 Archer, BK  
 Broadbent, RE  
 Chester, D  
 Conaghan, PJ  
 Coulton, M  
 Dutton, PC  
 Evans, TM  
 Flint, NJ  
 Gee, AR  
 Goodenough, IR  
 Hammond, CM  
 Hawke, AG  
 Howarth, LR  
 Irons, SJ  
 Kelly, C  
 Landry, ML  
 Ley, SP  
 Liu, G  
 Martin, FB  
 McIntosh, MI  
 Morrison, SJ  
 O'Brien, LS  
 O'Dowd, KD  
 Pearce, GB  
 Porter, CC  
 Ramsey, RE (teller)  
 Sharkie, RCC

Allen, K  
 Andrews, KL  
 Bell, AM  
 Buchholz, S  
 Christensen, GR  
 Connelly, V  
 Drum, DK (teller)  
 Entsch, WG  
 Falinski, JG  
 Frydenberg, JA  
 Gillespie, DA  
 Haines, H  
 Hastie, AW  
 Hogan, KJ  
 Hunt, GA  
 Joyce, BT  
 Laming, A  
 Leaser, J  
 Littleproud, D  
 Marino, NB  
 McCormack, MF  
 McVeigh, JJ  
 Morton, B  
 O'Brien, T  
 Pasin, A  
 Pitt, KJ  
 Price, ML  
 Robert, SR  
 Sharma, DN

## NOES

Simmonds, J  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

Steggall, Z  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

Question negatived.

Original question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

**Third Reading**

**Mr ROBERT** (Fadden—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services ) (10:22): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**BUSINESS****Rearrangement**

**Mr ROBERT** (Fadden—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services ) (10:22): I move:

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

Question agreed to.

**BILLS****Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2019-2020****Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2019-2020****Second Reading**

Cognate debate.

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

**Dr CHALMERS** (Rankin) (10:23): Thank you for the opportunity to speak on Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2019-2020 and Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2019-2020. The bills outline the additional spending for the 2019-20 financial year, which are primarily the measures that were in the mid-year update in December, but also some of the measures which are related to the response to the bushfires over this very challenging summer. All of the totals are obviously in the bills and, consistent with the way that we usually approach these kinds of

bills, Labor will be supporting the appropriation of this money in the usual way. We will also take the opportunity to speak about what we think is some fairly substantial mismanagement of the economy over recent years, well before some of the challenges of the summer emerged.

It is definitely true that the coronavirus and the bushfires over this summer will have a substantial impact on the Australian economy and on other economies, and clearly that means that there will be an impact on the budget as well. We have acknowledged that all along. We've acknowledged when it comes to coronavirus that we will be as constructive as we can in listening to and accepting the advice provided by medical experts and extending, where possible and where appropriate, the hand of bipartisanship as the country works through what will be a fairly substantial impact from the virus as well as from the fires and drought.

But the point that we make and the point that those opposite are desperate for Australians to forget is that we entered this summer from a position of relative economic weakness, not strength. We entered the summer with a report card on the national accounts for the September quarter last year, which we got in December, that showed some very troubling developments but also some longstanding weaknesses in the Australian economy. The last national accounts that we got—and we'll get an update on the December accounts next week—had some very troubling numbers. Quarterly growth slowed in those figures. Annual growth was only 1.7 per cent, which is well below the budget forecast. The economy was barely growing faster than the population. GDP per capita didn't grow at all in that most recent quarter. The private domestic economy went backwards for two quarters and has now experienced the biggest decline since the global financial crisis.

I heard the Prime Minister talking yesterday about how the difficulties in the international environment mean we need to lean more heavily on the domestic economy. The domestic economy has gone backwards on his watch before the fires and before any of us had even heard of coronavirus. Total private business investment went backwards in that last quarter. Wages were growing at only one-fifth the pace of profits. Productivity declined in the quarter and over the year. There are so many indicators in the national accounts released in December which prove beyond any argument that the economy was underperforming substantially before these difficulties emerged this summer.

We also know that because, in the government's own midyear update—which, again, came out in the middle of December, not that long ago—the government itself downgraded expectations for wages growth. They said unemployment would be a higher than expected. So all of this rubbish that the economy was somehow all humming along perfectly, and then we had the fires and coronavirus, and those are the only reasons why things are tough at the moment, is completely and utterly wrong in every way. The economy was floundering under those opposite before the fires and before coronavirus. They are desperate for the Australian people to forget that.

But Australians understand that their wages have been stagnant not just for the last few weeks but for the last few years. Australians understand that it hasn't just all of a sudden, since the outbreak of coronavirus, got more difficult for people to pay for child care or electricity or their health costs. These have been longstanding economic challenges. They are the consequence of a government which had a plan to win an election but not a plan to grow the economy in a meaningful way—not a plan to grow wages or deal with energy to get cheaper and cleaner energy into our economy, which are good for families and businesses.

Absolutely no idea how to go about all of that! And that's why we've got economic weakness which is longstanding. It hasn't just arrived on our doorstep with the first cases of coronavirus. Those opposite should stop pretending that that is the only reason. Coronavirus and the fires on their own do not explain or excuse what has been that longstanding economic weakness in our economy, which Australians have felt for too long because they have a government which is incapable of coming up with a plan to support the economy through a very difficult period.

A lot of the talk in the last few days relevant to this appropriation bill is about the government's promise of a surplus this year. The point we make about that—and we've made this responsibly and consistently—is that the priority should be supporting bushfire affected communities, families, workers and businesses and our emergency services, who have done such an extraordinary job in the most difficult circumstances over the last few months. We've said for a long time now that that's got to be the priority. We've been very responsible about that—far more responsible in this case than those opposite were when the floods hit Queensland in the latter years of the Gillard government. The reason we've done that is that we do think that these are difficult and challenging times for the economy and difficult and challenging times for the budget. But the point that I would make about the surplus is this: it wasn't us that asked for the Treasurer and the Prime Minister to be judged on one criteria and one criteria alone—whether they hit a surplus in 2019-20. It was the Treasurer himself and the Prime Minister himself. In the absence of any other commitments or any other plan, they begged the Australian people to judge them on just that one criteria—

**Mr Giles:** To buy the mug!

**Dr CHALMERS:** That's right. They wanted to flog a few mugs from the Liberal Party website, at 35 bucks a pop, that say 'back in black'

**Mr Giles:** Didn't do much to boost domestic demand, did it?

**Dr CHALMERS:** It didn't do much to boost domestic demand, as the member at the table says in the last point that he'll make on this subject!

The point I'm making is: this is a test that the government set for itself. This is a test that the government asked to be judged on. It remains to be seen whether there will be a surplus this year. We won't actually technically know the budget position in final terms until September of this year. So we will wait and see what happens in the budget and in the final budget outcome. But they've begged to be judged on this, and I think it's appropriate that people now say: 'Well, if you can't tell us that you'll definitely get to surplus, why did you promise that you would? Why did you print the mugs? Why did you do all the dodgy ads? Why did you do all the sloganeering? Why did you claim victory?' It's the equivalent of claiming victory for next year's premiership. I think it will be humiliating for the Treasurer if he falls short, not because we set the test for him but because he would be failing a test that he set for himself.

At the start of the government, three treasurers ago, but in the same Liberal-National government, those opposite said that there would be a surplus in the first year and every year after that, and they're none for six and they can't guarantee that they won't be none for seven. I think they should be held accountable for their own test. One of the reasons why this matters is that those opposite have enjoyed relatively good economic conditions—challenging at the moment, challenging at times. But overall they're in their seventh year and in their third term



and they've experienced nothing like the global turbulence that the former Labor government experienced—absolutely nothing like it. So they have no excuse, now into their seventh year, into their third term, for such a long and damaging period of economic mismanagement. Because they've had those six deficits, despite promising they'd all be surpluses, what we have seen is that net debt in this country has actually more than doubled on their watch. That's an important point. Whenever you hear those opposite talk about debt, remember that most of the debt in the Commonwealth budget is Liberal debt. Most of the debt in the budget has actually been accumulated under the life of this government and not under the life of the former, Labor government.

Net debt has never been higher in this country. It's now \$403 billion. It was \$175 billion in September 2013 when government changed hands. So it's a 130 per cent increase in net debt. For those who like to bang on about debt, every Australian needs to know and needs to remember that most of the debt in the Commonwealth budget is Liberal debt. Most of it has accumulated on the watch of those opposite. They have more than doubled net debt. If you want to talk about gross debt, it's through half a trillion dollars. It's the only government in the history of Australia that's had more than half a trillion dollars of gross debt. It's \$570 billion at the moment. It is more than double what it was when the Liberals took office. It was \$280 billion back then; it's \$570 billion now. So there is a 104 per cent increase in gross debt. That's not something those opposite like to talk about, but it is a fact, nonetheless.

The point we make about all of this, the point that marries up the seventh year and the third term of economic mismanagement, incompetence, inertia, inaction and ineptitude with what we're seeing now with the coronavirus is that they had no plan for the economy before the virus hit and they have no plan now. The Prime Minister, the Treasurer, the Minister for Health and the Chief Medical Officer did a long press conference yesterday where they talked about the significance of the challenge. And I don't quibble with that; it will be a significant challenge. I've said many times that the hit to the economy from the coronavirus will be substantial. But in all of those words that were spoken yesterday at that press conference—probably thousands of words—there was not one word of a plan. There was nothing to give the Australian people confidence that, having been told that this would be a big economic event, the government is actually prepared to do something about it.

The government had no plan before the virus. They had a plan to get through the election; they did that; they got to the other side of the election. I think one of the reasons Australians are so disappointed in the Prime Minister and the Treasurer is that, having won the election, they had no plan to take the country forward—to support growth in the economy when it is flagging, to support wages in the economy when they are stagnant, or to even meet some of the tests they set themselves around deficits and surpluses in particular. As a consequence of that, we've got all that data I mentioned a moment ago—slowing growth and bad outcomes for productivity, wages, business investment, household debt and the private domestic economy. All those things are a consequence of a government that didn't have a plan before the virus and doesn't have a plan now.

Australians are crying out for two things: leadership from the Prime Minister—and he has been found wanting—and some kind of economic plan that will give them confidence that those opposite understand the challenges in the economy but are also prepared to act on them and do something about it. Instead of that, the government spends most of its time talking

about the Labor Party and none of its time coming up with a plan to support families, workers and businesses when the economy is as soft as it is today.

Labor has been saying since August last year that the weakening in the economic situation warranted the government doing something about it. Under the member for Grayndler's leadership, we are determined to not just point out where the government has got things wrong but to also be as constructive as possible where we think we can help the government get things right. That's why, way back in August, we went out and said: 'The government doesn't have a plan for this soft economy. Here are some ideas'—and we put some ideas on the table to try and help the government through that. The disappointing bit is that the government hasn't picked up and run with any of those ideas; they are prepared to vandalise and jeopardise the economy in the interests of playing day-to-day politics.

But what has been heartening is the absolute avalanche of businesses, business peak organisations, the Reserve Bank, other credible organisations, expert economists and others in our community who have come in behind some of the proposals we have made. For example, the Australian Industry Group has been very positive about our suggestions for business investment. It has pointed out, as have others, that the Reserve Bank is doing the best it can by cutting interest rates to a quarter of what they were during the global financial crisis. But that, on its own, has not been enough. It has also puffed up asset prices; and it has hurt savers at the same time, as it doesn't really flow through to the real economy. The Reserve Bank can't do it all on its own. That's a point Ai Group has made, and I commend it for making that point repeatedly. Deloitte said that the pain in our economy has been homegrown. EY talked about the economy losing momentum. The BCA said we need to pull all the levers if we really want to get a sustained rise in investment to lock in future productivity growth and income growth.

The point I am making—and it is a bit the same with zero net emissions by 2050—is that there is an extraordinary alliance of Labor, business groups, community groups, unions, the RBA and the IMF. All of these groups know and understand that something has to change in our economy; we cannot continue to limp on like this. Unfortunately, the only ones who think everything is hunky-dory—'What are people whingeing about?'—are those who occupy the Treasury bench. That's why we've had such a prolonged period of weakness, and that's why you have had the Reserve Bank cut interest rates repeatedly but with diminishing effect. That's why you have had the Governor of the Reserve Bank repeatedly calling for the government to do something so that fiscal policy, the budget, the government is doing something to support the efforts of the Reserve Bank in monetary policy.

There's one other point that the Treasurer in particular likes to make. He likes to make some international comparisons, and I wanted to briefly touch on some of those before I make some other points. The Treasurer likes to talk about the IMF forecast—I think he did it again this morning on that interview he did with Fran Kelly on Radio National. He talks about the IMF forecasts over the coming years. Well, let's talk about the IMF forecasts. The IMF has actually downgraded their expectations for our economy by more than they've downgraded the other advanced economies. The government, themselves, as I said a moment ago, downgraded their own forecasts for growth and for wages and for the unemployment rate. And the Reserve Bank has actually downgraded their expectations for Australian economic growth three times over the last little while since the election. I think that speaks volumes

about the government's actual performance rather than what the forecast might be going forward.

I do understand as well that for a lot of people in the Australian community, when they switch on the radio or catch snippets of the TV news, the conversation about the economy can be quite technical. There are lots of numbers and all the rest of it, and there's a contest of economic policy in this building. But I think what it really boils down to is this: the economy is not delivering for ordinary working people. All of the data shows that. But really, you don't need to be a genius to know that people are struggling. You just need to talk to real people in real communities who are doing it tough. They're doing it tough because wages have been so stagnant for so long now and they can't keep up with some of those costs of living that I mentioned a moment ago. That's why people are doing it so tough in our community. If you look at wages in particular, we had more wages numbers out, I think, last week, and they were stagnant again. They keep falling short of the budget forecasts. Those opposite have actually got the worst record on wages on record. They've downgraded wages growth in almost every budget and budget update since 2013, and the Reserve Bank says that weak wages under this government has become the 'new normal'. This is what we're talking about here. And at the same time we've got rising unemployment, and those two things are related—the unemployment rate increased last week. Almost two million Australians are looking for work or more work, and 1.2 million Australians are looking for more hours but they can't find those extra hours that they need to feed their families and look after each other. Youth unemployment is bad. There is something like 280,000 extra underemployed Australians since the government came to office.

I could go on and on, but the point is really this: the people-facing part of the economy, the part of the economy that people understand best, the part which is about wages and consumption and household debt, if the government hasn't seen the flashing amber light in that part of the economy, you've got to wonder what they've been doing for three terms and seven years. It beggars belief that having seen what's going on in the economy those opposite are prepared to do absolutely nothing to turn things around.

There's a hint in why that's the case, particularly when it comes to wages, and that is that the finance minister, who has been the finance minister for every day of this third-term government, was asked not that long ago—I think in maybe May—about wages being stagnant, and he described that outcome as a deliberate design feature of the government's economic policy. That was remarkably frank, remarkably honest. I commend him for that. But it really speaks volumes. This is a deliberate outcome. Those opposite celebrate low wages. It's a deliberate design feature of their economic policy architecture. That's what the finance minister said. He's been in the cabinet every day of this government and he belled the cat. It really does speak volumes about those opposite that that is their economic priority. When it comes to stagnant wages, if that's what they were looking for, well, mission accomplished, because that's what we've had for a long time now.

Those opposite like to talk about risk in the economy. The riskiest outcome is this inertia, inaction, incompetence and ineptitude on the economy. Australians can't afford more and more years of stagnant wages or record household debt. They can't afford to go on under a government which cares so little about them that they won't come up with a plan to turn

things around. It's true in the economy, it's true in energy policy and it's true right across the board—no leadership, no plan.

There is one thing that has made people particularly angry in communities around Australia. There are council campaigns in my part of the world, and there are the same in the minister's part of the world at the moment. We're doing a lot of doorknocking. When you get to people's doors in communities right around South-East Queensland, one of the main things that people want to raise with you is the absence of leadership, particularly over the fire season. When things got difficult in Australia, they wanted their Prime Minister to step up. He didn't do it. That's probably the dominant sentiment that people are talking about when you knock on their door at the moment.

What's getting them really, really steamed up, what is making them so disappointed in and so angry with this Prime Minister, is that this is a guy who has said for some time that he can do a better job managing taxpayer money than anybody else. Then, after all the times where he has said, 'It's not our money; it's your money,' and all of these slogans from this adman masquerading as a Prime Minister, they turn on the TV and see these sports rorts, road rorts and change room rorts—all of these rorts that those opposite have been responsible for. They see \$100 million go out the door, principally to support the government's political prospects, rather than to support the good work of many other sporting groups who were deemed more eligible and more worthy by the relevant commission and the relevant independent experts. The audit office said that it was dodgy from beginning to end, so people do get steamed up about that. You want to talk about economic management? Well, economic management is about getting bang for the taxpayer buck, and using taxpayer money for such egregious pork-barrelling to support their own political interests gets people very angry, and I think for good reason.

We're up for a debate. We're up for a contest of ideas on the economy, and that contest really boils down to one thing: on this side of the House, we're prepared to provide the economic leadership necessary to come up with an economic plan which makes the economy work for ordinary Australians and not against them. Those opposite are either unwilling or unable to show that leadership, to come up with that plan, and we see the consequences of that in years of economic stagnation, wage stagnation and slowing growth. We see that in years of our economy underperforming when we look at the economies that we compare ourselves to. We see that in rising unemployment. And the problem with that is, when we do approach legitimate challenges like this coronavirus, which will have a substantial impact, we do so from a position of weakness because those opposite couldn't be bothered supporting the economy and making it as strong as they could when things started to turn down some time ago. There was no plan before the virus, no plan during it and no sign of a plan afterwards. That sells the ordinary working people of this country short. They have a right to expect leadership from the Prime Minister and a plan for the economy, and they're not getting either of those things.

**Mr VAN MANEN** (Forde—Chief Government Whip) (10:49): It's always interesting to listen to contributions from my electoral neighbour the member for Rankin. The Morrison government have a great story to tell, especially in my electorate of Forde where we're delivering record investment in education, health, the environment and local infrastructure. That's in stark contrast to the comments we've just heard from the member for Rankin. What

he neglected to share with the House in his contribution is what those opposite were prepared to do in the lead-up to the election. If they had won, they would have slugged the Australian economy with \$387 billion of new taxes, and my electorate of Forde would have paid a direct price.

I'm proud to have worked and to continue to work with so many wonderful groups and people to deliver funding for some truly wonderful projects across my electorate—projects big and small, from upgrading the M1 to the tune of over a billion dollars to something as small as new equipment in our local schools to ensure they can continue to educate the bright minds of the future. Whether you live in Upper Coomera in the south of my electorate, Shailer Park in the north or Beenleigh in the heartland of the electorate, you're reaping benefits from one of the greatest investments in education, health and infrastructure in a generation. These are long-lasting investments that will see more money for local schools, more money for Medicare and hospitals, more money for roads and rail, more money for mental health—particularly for services like headspace—and more money to fix and ensure the sustainability of our environment.

There is no question that mental health, especially youth mental health, is one of the many great challenges of our time. Sadly, we are seeing more and more young people suffer from the devastating effects of depression, anxiety and many other mental health conditions. I'm concerned for the young people across Australia and in my electorate of Forde and the growing issues that they are facing in this space, but I'm pleased to say that this government, through its \$503 million youth mental health and suicide prevention plan, is working to assist those facing mental health issues. There is \$375 million to strengthen the headspace network and establish an additional 30 new headspaces, including in Upper Coomera in my electorate of Forde. I'm pleased to say that this is the result of work jointly done by myself and the member for Fadden, who's in the chamber, at the table at the moment. It just shows the value of colleagues working together to achieve an outcome for communities where we share a common interest.

We are strengthening our Indigenous suicide prevention programs by investing \$34.1 million in tailored initiatives, such as the national plan for culturally appropriate care. We are strengthening early childhood and parenting support by investing \$11.8 million in initiatives such as Kids Helpline. Locally, we are delivering \$974,000 in funding in 2019-20 to headspace Meadowbrook for the essential mental health services for young people across Logan, including in the member for Rankin's electorate, and there is an additional \$750,000 over three years, from 2019-20, to address demand and reduce wait times for services at headspace at Meadowbrook. I want to take this opportunity to thank the team at headspace Meadowbrook for the terrific work that they do each and every day. In addition, we've secured \$761,000 in new funding for the establishment, through the Gold Coast public hospital network, of a new headspace centre at Upper Coomera with \$926,000 of ongoing funding from 2020-21. The new services are expected to commence in 2020-21 and the residents of the northern Gold Coast, from Yatala and Ormeau, all the way to Upper Coomera, Oxenford and Coomera on the eastern side of the highway, and residents in areas up to Mount Tamborine, will benefit from the new services.

As the member for Fadden knows, the northern Gold Coast is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, with more and more young families moving there every day. These

young families expect improved road infrastructure, better health services and great schools, all of which, I'm pleased to say, this coalition government is delivering. All these families are moving there because there are opportunities for them, and it is those opportunities we want to see them be able to pursue. Our retirees and our small-business owners across the northern Gold Coast want to see increasing infrastructure upgrades, particularly on the M1. During the election campaign we announced more commuter car parking for the Coomera train station—again, this was announced in partnership with the member for Fadden—Medicare funded MRI services and, as I just touched on, additional mental health support.

Last November I had the opportunity to welcome the Prime Minister back to the northern Gold Coast to make some key announcements. We went to exit 41, which is one of the worst traffic hotspots on the northern Gold Coast. It services the Yatala Enterprise Area. Congestion at this interchange, particularly in morning peak hour, can lead to long queues of traffic tailing back onto the M1. This creates a serious safety issue both for those seeking to exit and for those continuing to travel through on the M1. Quite predictably, with the traffic on the M1, the PM was late. But importantly, together with the member for Fadden and the state member for Coomera, Michael Crandon, who has been an advocate for the projects for many years, we announced increased funding of \$1.9 billion to boost road and rail projects in Queensland, including an additional \$46.3 million in funding to upgrade exits 41 and 49 in Yatala and Pimpana on top of the \$50 million we had already committed at the election last year.

This will mean that businesses and residents in those areas will be able to get home sooner and safer. As I touched on earlier, the most important aspect of this is the safety aspect at those two interchanges. With funding to flow from next year, I know the residents on the northern Gold Coast will be excited to see the shovels hit the ground later this year at exit 41. Some of the plans released recently by the state government actually look very good. Business owners and residents across Yatala, Ormeau and Pimpana have been fighting fiercely for these upgrades for many years, and it is tremendous to be able to announce the federal government's commitment and funding to those upgrades.

The northern Gold Coast is also benefitting from the investments we've made in health, with the delivery of a fully Medicare funded MRI licence to Qscan in Upper Coomera, which will mean residents right across the area no longer have to travel to Southport or further south on the Gold Coast to obtain an MRI or a range of other radiology facilities that Qscan have provided in their new facilities. In talking to the Qscan team last week, they were saying that the need and the requirement for the services at their new facility at Upper Coomera has far exceeded what they had originally anticipated. Some 2,537 MRI services have already been delivered at Qscan Upper Coomera since their opening on 9 September 2019. Again, it just goes to show that these wise investments by the Morrison government in fast-growing communities right across my electorate of Forde have had such a positive effect.

This bill gives me the opportunity to remind those opposite that this is what is possible when good governance meets good economic management, which was simply unthinkable when they were last in power. Since coming to government, we have committed more than \$25.7 billion towards infrastructure across the great state of Queensland and around \$10.5 billion of that will be delivered across the state over the next four years. We have brought forward nearly \$650 million in funding and committed more than \$680 million in new

funding: more money and more projects than what those opposite ever dreamt about. This includes new and fast-tracked funding for projects in my electorate of Forde, with funding to flow from the 2020-21 year. This includes projects like the M1 Pacific Highway upgrades between Eight Mile Plains and Daisy Hill. In addition, we've also made a long-term commitment to funding for the final part of those upgrades from Daisy Hill to Logan Motorway. In addition, on the southern end of the Gold Coast we've made commitments to funding the M1 upgrades from Varsity Lakes to Tugun once the current project from Mudgeeraba to Varsity lakes is completed.

There's the relocation of the Loganlea train station to meet future demand, with better integration with Logan Hospital and the TAFE campus, with \$50 million in funding to flow from next year on top of the \$15 million we already committed for new commuter car parks at Loganlea train station during the election campaign. There is the business case for the Salisbury to Beaudesert passenger rail. I know that the people out at Boronia Heights, Park Ridge, Greenbank and more generally in the west of Logan, which also goes into the member for Wright's electorate, are very happy to see further progress on this vital rail link to service these growing communities in the west of Logan City.

Since coming to government we've delivered record funding for health, which is delivering results right across my electorate of Forde. Funding for the Medicare Benefits Schedule is now up over \$5.5 billion since Labor was last in government. In my electorate of Forde, MBS funding has increased by over \$50 million since Labor was last in government. We've increased the GP headcount in Forde from 168 to 205. That's an additional 37 doctors in my electorate alone, an increase of over 20 per cent since we came to government in 2013. GP services in Forde have also increased by almost 300,000, to 1.4 million services on the most recent figures. PBS funding has also increased, with over 2,000 new medicines listed since we entered government in 2013. PBS funding in Forde has increased by over 30 per cent, with 21,000 new people accessing the PBS since we came to government in 2013. It is these figures that tell a story and show that our ability to manage the budget and the economy is delivering results for the Australian people: the ability to deliver record funding on health and ensuring that Australians can continue to access essential services to lead a stronger and healthier life.

On education we're delivering a record \$314 billion package of recurrent funding from 2018 to 2019 under the Quality Schools Package. Locally, this means students in schools like Boronia Heights State School in my electorate can expect to see their funding increase from \$3,095 per student in 2019 to over \$4,600 per student in 2029. That's an increase of almost 50 per cent over the next 10 years. In addition to that, we were successful in obtaining funding for Norfolk Village State School and Eagleby State School to the tune of \$500,000 each to build children's health and wellbeing hubs to bring critical medical services to the school, so that those parents who struggle to take their kids to various medical services during school hours in either Brisbane or the Gold Coast can have those services at the school. We hope that, through that, those students will get more timely assistance where they require it. The Australian people have been misled time and again by those opposite, whether it's on health or education, and time and again the facts have proved them wrong.

In conclusion, I'd like to touch on the issue of the environment, which is critically important to all of our communities. But once again it is this government that is delivering for

my electorate of Forde by funding local projects and getting local results on the ground. The Communities Environment Program has provided up to \$150,000 in funding for community led environmental projects in Forde, including \$18,000 for the Indigenous Gardens for Wildlife project at Norfolk Village State School; \$18,000 for Conservation Volunteers Australia to rehabilitate a Yugambeh site near the Albert River; \$18½ thousand for Beenleigh State High School for a waste management system; \$19,000 for North East Albert Landcare Group for their Ormeau bottle tree preservation project and many others. These are just some of the projects, along with record funding in health and education, that will continue to deliver better results for my community over the years to come.

**Mr THISTLETHWAITE** (Kingsford Smith) (11:04): These are of course the appropriation bills, which seek appropriations from the budget for the ordinary course of delivering government throughout Australia. Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2019-2020 relates to the ordinary annual government services—that is, by continuing expenditure for government on services, to fund existing policies—and Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2019-2020 seeks appropriations for funding of new expenses as well as payments to the states and territories.

The remarkable thing about this government is that, despite the fact that they have been in office for close to seven years now, they still do not have an economic plan for this country. We've been through one of the most tumultuous economic periods in the nation's history, with growth still not having recovered to trend rates from the global financial crisis. We've had the trade war that's occurred between the United States and China that has had a dramatic effect on supply chains for Australian businesses and directly on our economy.

Over the summer we saw just how ill-prepared this government was for the bushfire crisis that affected nearly all states and territories throughout the country and resulted in 33 Australians losing their lives and countless numbers of properties being destroyed, and, despite this, we've still got those on the opposite side who deny that climate change science is real and are still fighting this war against a decent climate change policy in this country.

Now all of this is being compounded by the coronavirus. We've been pointing out that this government's economic management was bad prior to the coronavirus. The coronavirus is only going to make it worse and much more difficult for many Australians, because this government, for the last seven years, has not had an economic plan for this nation, and the Australian people are suffering and they're beginning to ask the question: 'What is the point of the Morrison government? What have they done in terms of economic management that has moved our nation forward—that has stimulated business investment, productivity and growth?' And the answer is: 'Nothing.' The country is in an economic malaise. People are really struggling. And this government just doesn't get it—they do not understand just how much working Australians and small business people and pensioners are struggling at the moment.

We've had growth below trend for many, many years and the IMF and the RBA are continuing to downgrade Australia's economic growth forecast for the coming financial year. The incomes of Australians haven't been increasing. Wages have been stubbornly stuck at that two per cent level and below for the last five years. And it has all been compounded by this government through their support for cuts to penalty rates in awards. So wages haven't been increasing, which means that families have been struggling, and this government has gone and made it worse by supporting cuts to some of the lowest paid workers in the country.



Those workers are actually having the amount of money that they take home each week in their pay packets cut because this government supports cutting penalty rates in the hospitality and service sector awards for people who work on weekends. That says everything about the government's approach to economic management and trying to stimulate growth in our economy.

Household debt in Australia is at record levels. We have one of the highest levels of household debt in the OECD. I think we are second in the OECD in terms of the proportion of household debt that the average family in Australia is carrying compared to their income and their assets. In fact, the level of households that are overindebted—this is something that the ABS measures every few years—has been increasing under this government, and that is the level of debt compared to assets and income.

So we've got low wages and increasing debt, and the result is that Australian families are really, really struggling. And they're cutting back on spending as a result. They're cutting back on that discretionary spending that is so important for consumption and small business in our economy. Families are just spending on the basics. They're just spending enough to get by, on the necessities: transport, housing, education and childcare.

That is having a dramatic effect on consumption. Ask any small business in any main town or suburb throughout the country how they are doing under the Morrison government and they will tell you how badly they are struggling. We are seeing that reflected in our national accounts, with very low consumption figures for the last five or six years. Because of that, business investment is falling. Businesses aren't investing in new capital, new equipment, more employees and new technology to increase productivity, reduce costs and create economies of scale.

That's been reflected in the business growth figures that are published regularly by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Business investment as a share of nominal GDP has fallen under this government. There was 17 per cent growth in business investment compared to nominal GDP in 2013. It has fallen to 11 per cent under this government. This is the government that claims to be pro-business! This government claims to be for capital deepening, for ensuring we are improving business investment in this country. But we've seen a reduction in business investment under this government. It says everything about their approach to economic management.

And that, of course, is affecting productivity. It is having an effect on the productivity of the nation and our ability to efficiently use resources to produce income. For the first time in decades, labour productivity in this country has fallen. In the last financial year, labour productivity fell by 0.2 per cent. To put that in context, it means workers produced less in the last financial year than in the previous financial year. That is having a dramatic effect on businesses and growth in our economy.

Ever since we started recording labour productivity in Australia, it has always increased. Labour productivity in Australia has always grown—but not under the Morrison government; it is now falling. That is a complete demonstration of what a bad economic manager this government really is. It is extraordinarily bad, to the point that it is the first time this has happened since we started measuring labour productivity in the 1970s. But not only that, labour productivity growth has been slowing down since 2013. Since this government was elected, it has been slowing down. And it's not only in the space of labour productivity; it's

also in overall productivity, particularly relating to capital deepening or investment in new technology and machinery that will grow our economy into the future.

The classic case of this is this government's approach to telecommunications and, specifically, the National Broadband Network. If you want a policy that highlights just how moribund and bad this government is when it comes to infrastructure and economics, look no further than the National Broadband Network. The former Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, promised that his new approach to the National Broadband Network—and let's not forget that, when they got elected, they said they were ditching Labor's policy of fibre-optic cable to every single household and business throughout the country and going with a multimedia mix of new technology; and that would involve fibre to the node connecting to the copper wire and also the HFC network, the overhead wires that run through many suburbs throughout the country. As a result of that the former Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, said the cost would be reduced. They promised that the NBN rollout would cost \$29.5 billion. Well, have a guess how much it has actually cost. It has cost \$51 billion! They've doubled the cost of the NBN through their multitechnology approach and we have inferior technology that doesn't work. That's how good they are at managing infrastructure projects and economics!

It doesn't end there, because Malcolm Turnbull also promised minimum speeds of 25 megabits per second by 2020 for everyone throughout the country. Well, there are plenty of households in the electorate that I represent that are still waiting for that knock on the door and that letter in the mailbox from the NBN to say that they're going to roll out in their street. The rollout is four years behind schedule. It shows how completely moribund and hopeless this government is when it comes to managing infrastructure projects—double the cost to \$51 billion and four years behind schedule. What makes it worse is that the people in rural and regional areas are the ones that are really suffering. Is it any wonder the National Party is under such electoral pressure, because they are a complete disaster in coalition with this Morrison government when it comes to the provision of infrastructure in rural and regional areas.

The HFC rollout that Malcolm Turnbull promised would be the saviour and reduce cost is so bad that they stopped the rollout. They stopped it. They said, 'We can't put businesses and households through this anymore because it simply doesn't work.' Thank you, Malcolm Turnbull, for what you've done to telecommunications in this country! Thank you, Scott Morrison, for completely stuffing Australia's telecommunications network through the NBN!

The results speak for themselves. Some may say that I'm taking a partisan approach to this, but you only need look objectively at what the international rankings of internet speeds say about Australia to see just how bad this government is and how much they've stuffed up the NBN rollout. Australia has now fallen to 68th in the world when it comes to global rankings of internet speeds. Over the last year we've fallen from 62nd to 68th—just in one year. That fall has occurred every year since this government took office and took over the management of the National Broadband Network rollout. In terms of the OECD, we rank 32nd out of 35 nations when it comes to internet speeds. There are developing countries in this world that have higher internet speeds than we do here in Australia. That is the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government's legacy when it comes to managing infrastructure projects, particularly the National Broadband Network under this government.

We all know that it's not only the NBN that infrastructure investment has stalled in. For many years now the RBA Governor has been saying if you want to get growth going again, if you want to stimulate the economy, this government needs to invest in infrastructure projects. They often talk about dams on that side of the chamber and how we should be building dams to make sure that we're conserving our water resources. They've been in government for seven years and they haven't started one! They haven't even got to the architecture stage of planning one. It is unbelievable how much they mislead the Australian public. And now they want the government to put taxpayers' dollars into building coal-fired power stations in Queensland, believe it or not, just to appease that mad lunatic fringe they have in their party that don't believe in climate change and believe that we should be promoting more coal in Australia. They want the government to underwrite to the tune of \$17 billion because no-one in the private sector will touch a coal-fired power station with a ten-foot pole. For good reason: it's becoming outdated technology, and in a few years renewable energy will be cheaper to produce than coal fired power. But no! Those in the National Party want this government to underwrite to the tune of \$17 billion a study into coal fired power. That is their infrastructure plan for this country. Is it any wonder that the place is in such a mess and Australians are struggling?

This is their record: low growth, low wages, businesses struggling, businesses not investing, falling labour productivity, one of the worst telecommunication systems in the country and no plan from this government. In fact, the only plan that they had was tax cuts for businesses. And how has that gone for the average Australian? They promised if they cut corporate taxes that that would feed through into wages. What's happened? Wages haven't increased at all; the average worker hasn't seen it in their pay packet one bit. You need only go and ask the average family: how are the tax cuts coming through to you in wages? They're not. But what's happened to company profits? They're up by 10 per cent. They've grown by 10 per cent since the tax cuts were introduced. It hasn't gone into wages; it's gone into company profits. It says everything about this government and their economic management. They are hopeless when it comes to economic management and hopeless when it comes to infrastructure.

**Mr YOUNG** (Longman) (11:20): I rise in support of these bills, Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2019-2020 and Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2019-2020. These bills are fundamental to our country, to the people of Australia and to our future, because when we invest in Australia we are investing in the people who live and work here. We are helping vital projects get off the ground through funding; rewarding aspirations and goals; creating resilience; supporting our local schools, hospitals and businesses; boosting our strong economy; helping Aussies get access to life-saving medicines and treatments; building roads and infrastructure; protecting our environment; helping jobseekers find work; and providing support when national disasters threaten our communities and those who live in them. Investing in our country is something we must continue to do so Australia can continue to grow and our future as a great nation in set in stone.

Last week we held the Moreton Bay Jobs Fair in Morayfield in the electorate of Longman, which I am proud to represent. The fair was free to all who came along and proved to be a shining beacon of hope for many jobseekers who just wanted the chance to meet with employers, develop their interview skills, share their hopes for their careers, improve their

skills, improve their resumes and talk about the different career opportunities on offer. We are talking about people who may have struggled to find work for days, weeks and even years. They were hungry for jobs. They wanted to work and they wanted to provide for their families. All they needed was support, motivation and confidence.

The Moreton Bay Jobs Fair gave them that confidence, motivation and support. You had to be there to see it and believe it. And let me tell you: to see all those jobseekers and employers in one room was incredible. Not only did we provide ample opportunity for many people who want to work but we helped employers who were hiring on the day come together to find the skilled workers they needed in order to build a stronger and more confident workforce.

On the day, we saw 1,966 attendees come through the door at the Morayfield Sport & Events Centre, with 40 exhibitors and 737 jobs on offer. Due to the coalition government's investment, because of the funds they spent on making this job fair happen, we've opened up a pathway to part-time or full-time work for many people. People who two weeks ago were at their wits end and thought they would ever find a job now have more hope because the Morrison government knew what they needed, believed in them and provided this for them.

People can often find it hard to get their foot in the door when it comes to employment, and many have lost motivation after getting rejected over and over again for jobs. Sometimes all it takes is tweaking your resume or brushing up on your interview skills. It was great to see people feeling more confident as the Moreton Bay Jobs Fair showcased hundreds of diverse employment opportunities in the region from local businesses and apprenticeships, traineeships and service providers.

We saw people of all ages come in, many dressed in their very best, to speak directly to employers hiring on the day about jobs available and to employment service providers, who can assist them in finding and obtaining work. There were also free workshops and information sessions that offered practical tips on resumes and interviews. There was the opportunity to hear from local employers about what they were looking for in an employee. There were sessions on job search techniques, along with advice on transferring their skills.

I would like to thank the Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, Senator Michaelia Cash, for spending time with me last week while talking to local businessowners across the electorate of Longman and being there for the Moreton Bay Jobs Fair. Thank you to the Morrison government for investing funding, time and labour into making this jobs fair happen. Now more people are getting up in the morning and lacing up their boots and heading to work or have the motivation they need to keep going on their journey to achieving their dream career.

That is why these bills are important, as they request legislative authority for top-up appropriations to fund expenditure on activities that require additional funding or on new activities agreed to by the government since the introduction of the 2019-20 appropriation bills in July 2019. These bills also provide funding for the government's response to the recent bushfires. The bills ensure there is sufficient preparation to cover estimate variations related to existing programs—for instance, changes in costs for demand-driven programs. Passage of the bills will ensure continuity of government programs, commencement of new activities agreed by the government since July 2019, and the Commonwealth's ability to meet its obligations for 2019-20 as they fall due.

Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2019-2020 proposes appropriations of approximately \$3.3 billion. Of this amount, major elements include: \$948 million to the Department of Home Affairs, mainly to continue implementing the government's border protection policies and to support people impacted by the recent bushfires; and \$592 million to the Department of Social Services, due to higher than expected participant client numbers being supported by the Disability Employment Services program and for the recent bushfire response package with additional emergency relief and financial counselling for affected communities, which provides \$50 million in 2019-20 for communities affected by the recent bushfire emergency. The appropriations proposed under this bill also include: \$488 million to the Department of Defence, including \$88 million for the Australian Defence Force's contribution to the bushfire response through Operation Bushfire Assist and foreign exchange supplementation due to movement in exchange rates under no-win, no-loss funding arrangements; \$287 million to Services Australia to support individuals, families and communities to achieve greater self-sufficiency; and \$170 million for the Department of Health, including \$70 million to support access to medicines and medical treatments, \$68 million in departmental funding to support the delivery of government programs, and \$30 million towards mental health, Indigenous health and preventative health activities. There is also \$66 million for the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, which includes funds for wildlife and habitat recovery in response to the recent bushfire emergency, busting congestion in the environmental assessment process, responding to African swine fever and strengthening the Australian Antarctic Program.

Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2019-2020 proposes appropriations of approximately \$2.2 billion. Of this amount, major elements include: additional loan drawdowns in 2019-20, due to a revised drawdown schedule for NBN Co, which cost \$1.2 million; additional equity injections in 2019-20, due to a revised schedule for equity injections for the Australian Rail Track Corporation and the Western Sydney Airport, of \$176 million; \$166 million for the Australian Government Drought Response, Resilience and Preparedness Plan; and \$235 million for loans through the Regional Investment Corporation to farms and small businesses affected by drought conditions.

Last year the Morrison government announced that the electorate of Longman had received a funding boost of \$4.5 million through the Roads to Recovery program. This funding is part of the \$139 million that the Australian government announced would be delivered to 310 local government authorities nationwide for safer and better-maintained roads. This funding is great news for the community of Longman and will ensure that our local council, the Moreton Bay Regional Council, can progress a number of high-priority projects using local knowledge to deliver safer and better roads for our community. The electorate of Longman has received \$1.5 million in funding for Aerodrome Road in Caboolture and to upgrade the T-intersection at Lear Jet Drive with traffic signal control including pedestrian crossings, as well as \$2 million for McKean Street in Caboolture and \$1 million for Pates Road at Wamuran. The Australian government has committed an additional \$100 million per year to the Roads to Recovery program from 2019-20 as part of the local and state government road safety package announced in the 2019-20 budget. The Australian government is also contributing \$530 million to upgrade the Bruce Highway from four lanes to six lanes between the Caboolture Bribie Island Road turn-off and the Steve Irwin Way exit, which will improve safety and reliability, increase highway capacity, reduce travel times and congestion, and raise

the highway at flood-prone locations. This project is to be commenced this year. This is on top of the \$120 million that we've also contributed to the New Settlement Road overpass, which is a duplication of the Boundary Road overpass—it has begun with surveyors, and we'll see workmen there this year as well. This project will alleviate major congestion issues and will mean commuters spend less time in their vehicles and more time at home, which can only be a good thing for the health of our community. This is what the Morrison government is all about: better and safer local roads for the people of Longman.

Investing in our country also means investing in our communities, helping projects get off the ground and supporting our local schools and community organisations. If it weren't for the investment and funding by the coalition government, many local, community and environment projects wouldn't see the light of day. So far, we have granted \$423,530 to local organisations and schools through the Stronger Communities Program, the Communities Environment Program and the Local Schools Community Fund. We have also got many applications coming in for other government grants, so I've no doubt that this list will grow.

I'm proud to be part of a government that, to date, has delivered much-needed funds to the following organisations: \$11,000 for the Pumicestone State School's Parents and Citizens Association, \$8,000 for Bribie Respite and Support Services, \$6,000 for the Caboolture Senior Citizens Centre, \$4½ thousand for the St Michael's College Parents and Friends Association, \$7½ thousand for the Creche and Kindergarten Association, \$4,200 for the Caboolture Bridge Club, \$4,200 for Beachmere District Men's Shed, \$3½ thousand for St Vincent de Paul, \$11½ thousand for Volunteer Marine Rescue Bribie Island, \$10,000 for Spiders Boxing Club, \$11,250 for Caboolture Junior Rugby League, \$3½ thousand for the Vietnam Veterans Association, \$4,000 for Woodford Agricultural, Pastoral & Industrial Association, \$11,250 for Caboolture Branch Little Athletics Centre, \$6,000 for Bribie Island Road Saddle Club, \$2½ thousand for Endeavour Foundation, \$10,000 for Banksia Beach Primary P&C Association, \$7½ thousand for Beachmere Junior Rugby League and \$12½ thousand for Woodford Golf Club. That's through the Stronger Communities Program.

Then we've got the Communities Environment Program, with funds going to the following organisations: \$20,000 for OzFish, \$16,000 for Conservation Volunteers Australia, \$5,130 for Bribie Island Environmental Protection Association, \$16,500 for Burpengary State School, \$16,000 for Woodfordia, \$16½ thousand for Moreton Bay Birali Steiner School, \$16,000 for the Caboolture Region Environmental Education Centre and \$10,878 for Carmichael College.

Lastly, through the Local Schools Community Fund, we've provided the following: \$20,000 for Northpine Christian College, \$14,775 for St Peter's Catholic Primary School, \$20,000 for Elimbah State School, \$20,000 for Dakabin State High School, \$20,000 for St Paul's Lutheran Primary School and Kindergarten in Caboolture, \$20,000 for Caboolture Montessori School, \$11,305 for Australian Christian College, \$14,430 for Jinibara State School, \$20,000 for Caboolture Special School, \$19,490 for Horizons College and \$20,000 for Alta-1 College.

It's an enormous list, and I'm so proud that we've been able to provide these grants. This is why it's important that we're able to continue to invest in Australia in the future. With that being said, I commend this bill to the House.

**Mr HAYES** (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (11:32): I support the passage of this appropriations bill. In doing so, I take the opportunity to raise awareness of recent human

rights issues in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in countries with which Australia has both a defence and foreign aid relationship—principally, in Vietnam and in the Philippines. In this place I often speak about human rights. I believe that as members of a concerned global community we all have a part to play in advocating for social justice and human rights, particularly within our sphere of influence.

In Vietnam, the crackdown on dissidents continues. The Vietnamese government maintains a monopoly on political power that is supported by a justice system which certainly appears to operate at the whim of government—rather than dispensing justice without fear or favour. To this end, I continue to express my deep concern about the plight of an Australian citizen, Mr Van Kham Chau. In November last year, he was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment, after being charged with terrorism under article 113 of the Criminal Code of Vietnam. Mr Chau is a prominent member of the Vietnamese community in Australia. He has lived in Western Sydney, with his family, for more than 30 years. Clearly, he has had a long and abiding commitment to the notion of human rights. Indeed, like many of us, including in this place, he has been critical of Vietnam's human rights record. But what he hasn't done is participate in or support any acts of violence against the Vietnamese authorities or anyone else for that matter.

Mr Chau has been imprisoned without a fair trial and without access to proper defence lawyers. It's disheartening to see that the human rights situation in Vietnam continues to worsen with its crackdown on basic human rights and freedoms very much intensifying. In the case of Mr Chau, I should indicate he's a retired baker who lived in Berala in Western Sydney. He still supports his wife and he raised his family there. Since he's been incarcerated in Vietnam, he's been twice hospitalised due to a serious deterioration in his health.

With no evidence presented by the Vietnamese authorities to substantiate a charge of terrorism, it is imperative that the Vietnamese authorities adhere to their human rights obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. With Mr Chau's case listed for appeal next week, I reiterate the call for the Vietnamese judiciary to uphold the international norms of due process and respect for the rule of law. If Mr Chau is going to have any opportunity of fairness or equality before the law, he must be given proper access to legal representation.

Recently human rights concerns were brought to my attention about a protest that took place between the police and land rights activists in the village of Dong Tan in Vietnam. I'm advised that approximately 3,000 officers from the police riot squad and security forces violently entered the village, resulting in the death of an elderly villager, Mr Le Dinh Kinh, as well as three police officers. There were also reports that over 30 villagers were arrested by the Vietnamese authorities following this confrontation.

I understand Mr Kinh was killed as a result of a targeted attack on his home. Mr Kinh was 84 years of age and a prominent advocate for land rights. He was an activist. He represented and spoke up for the people of the village, particularly in relation to land confiscations by the Vietnamese authorities. I'm advised Mr Kinh suffered a violent death, with several of his children and grandchildren being arrested. I understand, at this stage, many of them remain in detention without charge.

The issue of land confiscation for economic gain by the authorities in the Dong Tan area is not a new issue; it's been ongoing for some time with unfair and arbitrary land seizures being

a major problem in the country. Once again it appears that the authorities have flouted the rule of law with police displaying disproportionate force against local citizens.

I'd also like to speak about the Philippines. Extrajudicial executions have been the principal human rights concern for some time and have escalated under the nationwide drug campaign which has seen in excess of 27,000 people executed over the last three years. These are extrajudicial executions, involving no court, no judiciary, simply empowering the police to use deadly force. President Duterte certainly acts with some impunity, regardless of the UN Human Rights Council resolution which has now determined that there should be a transparent inquiry into these extrajudicial executions in the Philippines.

The way he deals with many of his detractors is similar to the case we see with respect to Senator Leila de Lima. She's an elected senator of the Philippines parliament, but she continues to be detained on trumped up charges, certainly politically motivated, and has still not had access to a fair trial. She has been incarcerated for more than three years. She was a known critic of the president and the way he has administered his antidrug campaign and deals with human rights advocates. Senator de Lima's commitment to democracy, justice and respect for the rule of law is certainly commendable and, in these circumstances, most courageous.

The United Nations human rights resolution certainly demonstrates that the international community is no longer willing to remain silent in the face of these blatant attacks on human rights. I'm proud of the fact that Australia supported the intervention of the UN human rights commission to conduct an investigation into these mass killings. As members of the concerned international community, we have a moral if not legal responsibility to do all we can to encourage countries, particularly in our region, to adhere to their international obligations. This is even more so given Australia's strategic and defence relationships with the Philippines. The Philippines should not be allowed to continue to flout the UN resolution simply because it has the backing of the People's Republic of China. I note in terms of the vote on the UN Human Rights Council with regard to this particular issue in the Philippines that many that opposed the resolution were countries that themselves have a dubious human rights record. You would expect that those countries that sought to be on the UN Human Rights Council would have an overall commitment for the protection and promotion of human rights, but, alas, it doesn't appear the case. People can be corralled against supporting a resolution that was carried by the UN Human Rights Council, as it was on this occasion.

I would like to use this as a background for drawing some attention to a mechanism which is gathering momentum internationally and also proving effective in promoting human rights through its use of foreign policy and is currently being investigated as part of an inquiry by the subcommittee of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. This mechanism is premised on the use of targeted sanctions against serious human rights violators abroad, including issues of visa bans and asset freezes. This is not a new concept, but certainly one which has been enacted in the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom and is seen to be part of what is known as the global Magnitsky movement. I also understand that the European Union is advanced in a process of developing their own global human rights sanctions regime which is similar to what is provided under the Magnitsky provisioning.

The introduction of such legislation ensures that serious human rights abusers are held accountable for their actions and that Australia does not become a haven for a global



corruption and human rights violators. I certainly agree with the words of Elaine Pearson, the Australian director of Human Rights Watch, when she says:

By joining other countries with similar laws, Australia will be sending a strong message to abusive leaders everywhere that there are far-reaching consequences for their actions.

As a country with a significant presence in the Pacific region, I believe we do have a major role to play in the promotion and protection of human rights, and certainly particularly within our sphere of influence. This is particularly so with countries that we have a strategic relationship with, as well as with those countries we provide humanitarian aid to. On all sides of this parliament we have a commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights. We need to assert ourselves in respect of human rights and social justice and in our respect for the rule of law. One thing I am absolutely convinced of is that when the rule of law is set aside or deconstructed, inevitably the first casualty always is human rights itself. We do have a role to play.

**Dr MARTIN** (Reid) (11:45): I rise today to speak to Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2019-2020 and update the House on a number of key developments in my electorate of Reid. Since I was elected I have had the opportunity to hear from constituents who have contacted me through mobile offices that I have conducted, community events and surveys, and they've provided valuable feedback about their vision for our electorate.

One issue that is important to residents of Reid is better hospital and health outcomes. Our government's strong economic record means that we have been able to invest in our healthcare system, in Reid and across Australia. Reid is home to the Concord Repatriation General Hospital, which not only provides outstanding care for our community but also has strong historic links to our veteran community. Last year, the Morrison government invested \$6.7 million to develop the Soldier On Fussell House accommodation facility, to be co-located at Concord Hospital. The project includes the National Centre for Veterans' Health, an Australian-first state-of-the-art centre for specialised care for veterans.

Fussell House will provide accommodation to the families of those ex-Australian Defence Force personnel who require treatment at the hospital and at other hospital facilities within the Sydney region. During its first year of operation, an estimated 140 veterans and family members are expected to use Fussell House. This federal funding contributes to the New South Wales government's redevelopment of our Concord site to create the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare. It will provide integrated and holistic specialist services to veterans who have been physically and mentally impacted by their service to our country. I am very proud that the Morrison government is supporting this very worthwhile development, and that Reid's strong connection to its veteran community can be supported through this historic hospital.

Through the Morrison government's landmark \$1.25 billion Community Health and Hospitals Program, we have provided \$2.2 million for the expansion of community midwifery services and a new outpatient clinic at Concord hospital. The federal government investment has allowed up to 350 women a year to access care closer to home. This is fantastic news for expecting mothers and families who live in Reid.

We've also been able to deliver Medicare funding at record levels. Almost nine out of 10 Australians who visit their doctor have no out-of-pocket costs, with GP bulk-billing rates at a record 86 per cent—up from 82 per cent under Labor. Reid has one of the highest bulk-billing

rates in New South Wales, with the GP bulk-billing rate coming in at over 90 per cent. Medication is also more affordable under our government through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Since coming into government, the coalition has invested \$10.6 billion to add more than 2,000 new medication listings to the PBS. This means that residents of Reid can access life-saving medication. Australia's healthcare system is being consistently enhanced through our government's strong economic record and our prioritisation of Australian people.

An issue that is frequently raised in Reid is the need for affordable and reliable energy. Many people and small businesses in Reid are struggling with the cost of their power bills. This month the Morrison government announced that it is expanding its electricity price protections to ensure that one million extra consumers get a fair deal on energy. The government has extended the coverage of the default market offer to Australian households and businesses with solar systems and with flexible or time-of-use tariffs in New South Wales from 1 July this year. This means that over one million extra electricity customers will have access to these consumer protections.

For customers who find pricing and discounts confusing or who do not want to negotiate further for a better deal, the default market offer will be a strong price safety net and a reference point to help consumers compare offers and find the cheapest deal. Diversifying our energy sector through sustainable technology will drive down electricity prices and prepare Australia for a global post-carbon economy. Our government has established a \$1 billion Grid Reliability Fund to support investment in new energy generation, storage and transmission. This builds on our Underwriting New Generation Investments program to improve competition and reduce wholesale prices. We will keep working to lower the prices on your power bills and secure affordable energy through new technologies.

Our government has also recently secured a commitment from the New South Wales government to inject an additional 70 petajoules of supply into the east coast gas market annually. The \$2 billion deal also includes emissions reduction projects to deliver carbon abatement, with \$960 million in federal funding dedicated to a responsible transition of the New South Wales electricity sector to lower emissions technologies. To keep power prices low, we are securing traditional energy sources while developing our renewable energy investment in New South Wales. I look forward to updating the House about the ways we are securing affordable and reliable energy to residents in Reid and for all residents across the state.

It is always wonderful to share good news in this place about how the Morrison government is supporting projects that are meeting the needs of our growing community. One such project that is almost completed is the amenities upgrade to Concord's Cintra Park netball court. The Morrison government contributed \$1.2 million to the upgrade as part of the Community Development Program, with a further \$400,000 supplied by the City of Canada Bay Council. The netball courts are primarily used by the Inner Western Suburbs Netball Association, which now has over 3,700 members and has been experiencing year-on-year growth of approximately five per cent. It is not hard to imagine then why this upgrade was so needed. The president of the Inner Western Suburbs Netball Association, Leanne Blackmore, is thrilled that the new facilities will soon be able to cater for the growing number of players.

Since the election last year, I have worked closely with the community and council to see that this project received the funding and attention it needed. I am so proud to say that the new fit-for-purpose facility is due to open next month. The new amenities will support growth of netball in the inner west of Sydney and provide upgraded facilities for the local community to enjoy. The upgrade will mean that the community can now enjoy a new canteen, an outdoor covered barbecue space, covered spectators areas, repurposed meeting rooms, office and administration spaces, change rooms catering for both males and females, a medical room, storerooms and showering facilities. I am sure our local sporting groups and school communities will enjoy these new facilities very soon, and I very much look forward to their upcoming official opening.

A strong economy ensures that we as a government can support essential upgrades and infrastructure for our community. Reid is home to one of the most diverse electorates in Australia, and I am so proud to represent Reid. I am so proud that the Morrison government continues to support the many cultural and religious groups that make up Reid and make it such a vibrant place to live. One example of this fantastic diversity is the Sri Karphaga Vinayakar Temple, which officially opened early last year and now serves the Hindu community of Reid and Western Sydney.

I recently joined Reid's Hindu community at the temple for their first inaugural chariot parade, an annual festival known as Ratha Jatra. Hundreds of devotees attended for the service offerings and street procession that took place in Homebush West. Last year the Morrison government delivered \$135,000 of federal funding for an upgrade to the temple's security system through the Safer Communities Fund program. Most recently, the temple received \$19,000 through the Morrison government's Stronger Communities Program for upgrades to kitchen facilities and amenities and for the purchase of an electronic monitor. In the Hindu tradition, it is common to serve food to devotees as an act of virtue and charity, so the new kitchen facilities will be highly valued by the community.

A strong economy means we can support our local communities. As a government, we have ensured that the new temple in Homebush West can meet the needs of our large Hindu community in Reid. Having seen the way the temple brings people together through a shared faith, tradition and culture, I know how valuable this funding has been for our electorate. Strong economic management means that our government can continue to support the key priorities of the constituents in Reid. It means we can look after the needs of residents and small businesses, make sure our healthcare system is strong and provide essential infrastructure to our community groups. I look forward to updating the House on a number of federally funded projects that will improve the lives of the residents in Reid during the coming months.

**Mr HILL** (Bruce) (11:56): I want to make some remarks about partner visas. Now, it is a fact of life in modern Australia that Australians fall in love with people from other countries and they may get married here or overseas. It's only natural then that people want to bring their spouses or partners here to build a life, and often there are children involved too. Our country has seen this and benefited from these relationships for many decades, but I want to air my serious concerns about the growing backlog and the delays in processing spouse and partner visa applications under this government.

There are now over 90,000 Australians whose family lives are stuck in limbo. They are waiting, waiting, waiting for years for their wife, husband or partner to get a visa. The queue and the processing times have been growing steadily for years, and this is a growing scandal. I see it every week in my electorate office. Some weeks, I see it every day. I open the emails in the morning and there it is—another case. These are people who can't get an answer, who can't understand why it takes so long. Many are separated from loved ones and children. They're running down savings, hopping between countries, unable to establish a household, unable to accept employment and unable to get on with their lives. Thousands of others are living in Australia just hanging out for years on bridging visas.

The issue, for once, in the department is not a shortage of resources, because people now pay \$8,000 for a partner visa application. It appears that spouse and partner visas are being deliberately held up because the government has imposed a legally questionable limit on the number of places. This year, the government again cut the number of partner visa places to 39,799. That's a cut of 8,000 places from the previous two years. It's harsh and it's cruel. That's a separate argument, though. For most of the family migration program, and this is important, the minister has a clear legal power to cap and queue the number of places. Except, under the Migration Act, spouse and child visa applications are different. They're supposed to be processed on a demand driven basis. Indeed, section 87 of the act, which has been there for decades, explicitly provides that the minister's power to cap certain visas does not apply to spouse and child visa applications, so there's a genuine legal question over the minister's behaviour.

In 1989 the Hawke government introduced legislation seeking a power for the minister to cap annual spouse and child visa numbers. That didn't get through. In 1996 the Howard government again sought such a power for the minister, yet on both occasions this parliament rejected the legislation. The Senate then did not want the minister to be able to cap the number of spouse visas issued. There was a view that Australians should be free to settle here with their spouses. I'll quote Philip Ruddock, who was the shadow minister in 1989 and then later became the immigration minister. He said:

I regard it as absolutely unconscionable for a government to say half way through the year, 'We have enough spouses in now ... no more husbands and wives ...

I've been told that the department has had legal advice, year after year, for many years, that what the minister is doing breaches the act. Yet the queue continues to grow. Why? Well, because the government is hiding behind their annual planning level to cap the number of spouse visas issued every year, which is contrary to the intention of the Migration Act—the law.

To explain: the Minister for Home Affairs loves to trumpet, at the moment, his so-called cut to migration. Remember that? He tells us now he has a ceiling of 160,000 places for 2019-20. He's cut migration to suck up to Pauline Hanson. But, within this, the government counts 39,799 partner visas they say they'll issue. But this whole cut to migration is a sham. It's a scam for a cheap headline to try and fool Australians and suck up to One Nation. There is no cut to migration, because more than 216,000 people now are just hanging out in Australia on bridging visas; most are waiting for their substantive visa to be processed. So he has cut the number of permanent visas, like partner visas, spouse visas, and he's just forcing them to wait for longer and longer in the community, so he can run around saying, 'I've cut migration,'

when he hasn't. This includes tens of thousands of husbands and wives of Australians waiting for their partner visas.

The delays are not about integrity. Of course dodgy applications should be weeded out. But the refusal rate has been about the same for a long time, at about 10 per cent. The delays are political. The government is deliberately not processing spouse visas, just to manipulate the headline migration number for their own political purposes. I'm reliably advised that the government knows this may not be legal. They quietly removed the child visas from the cap in 2016. They didn't say much about that. The child visas are not subject to an annual limit now, but spouse visas still are.

So what's the legal basis for this? The Department of Home Affairs is very secretive about this and what's really going on, but FOI documents have revealed that the government stops and starts processing to manipulate the numbers. There's an email to overseas staff processing partner visas—I will quote one; there's a whole bunch of them—that says: 'Effective immediately, there are to be no further grants in the family stream until I come back to you with the number of places left available to grant before 30 June 2018.' They're including the spouse visas, illegally, in this cap. The government also told staff not to tell applicants that their visa was ready to be granted, to cover up how they were manipulating the queue.

The human impact of this is profound. I represent one of the most multicultural electorates in the country. Migration is the biggest thing, every day, that comes through the door of my office—not Centrelink; not the NDIS mess; not the aged-care mess the government's made; it's migration.

The legality of this is highly dubious. The minister may claim it's just a planning level or a queue, but if it looks like a cap and it sounds like a cap then it's a cap. Even if this is somehow legal, as a matter of decency in policy more places should be made available. Australians love who they love. The Howard government at least had the decency then to admit that spouse visas could not be capped, and the then minister, Senator Vanstone, went to the government when the queue got too long and got extra places allocated to the program to meet demand and let people love who they loved.

But it's unsurprising, given these legally dubious caps, that the processing times for spouse visa applications have also increased significantly. Despite paying \$8,000, most onshore applicants are now waiting two years or more, and offshore applicants are now waiting more than 18 months. But basic mathematics tells you that, unless the government changes their approach, the only outcome there can be is that people will wait longer and longer: two years; 2½ years; three years; 3½ years; four years; five years—it's the only trajectory that's possible. It's a function of maths.

The government, of course, is not focused on any of this—any of the real problems in the migration system. Their current focus is their outrageous privatisation of the visa processing system—the billion-dollar tender that's out, still waiting. The Prime Minister has had to excuse himself from consideration because one of his Liberal Party mates, Scott Briggs, is in the running for the tender. The government should give away their privatisation plans and focus on fixing the system.

I also want to remark that the persecution and treatment of Julian Assange are unconscionable. He's an Australian citizen who has the same rights as you or me, and the

Australian government's ongoing failure to speak out against his extradition to the United States and demand his return is shameful. It's wrong. It's immoral. And it's offensive for the Prime Minister to say that he should 'face the music'—as if this is any ordinary case! It is not. It is entirely political. It corrupts our alliance with the United States when our government is too scared and too cowardly to defend our own. It corrupts our democracy when our government refuses to fight to defend Australian citizens just because they don't agree with their political philosophy. The precedent that extradition would set would dangerously undermine our sovereignty and have a chilling effect on journalism and the media's ability to hold power to account in this country and across the world.

We need to be very clear-eyed in this House as to what extradition would mean. One of our citizens, an Australian, would face what is effectively a death sentence. The current charges would see him confined in extreme isolation for 175 years. Indeed, it's possible in the state of Virginia, which has the death penalty, that more charges will be laid once he's extradited that would see him killed. Australia has a long history of opposing extradition—a proud history—wherever there is the risk of a death penalty.

If that's not enough, there's the torture which has been inflicted on him. It's an astounding phrase—'the torture that's been inflicted upon an Australian in the United Kingdom'. It should not be said lightly and must never become acceptable. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Nils Melzer, investigated Julian's case. He said he shows 'all the symptoms for prolonged exposure to psychological torture' and his health conditions are so dire that his life is now at risk. When the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture reports on one of our citizens, surely the Australian government should speak up and demand his return. There's nothing but silence from the government. It doesn't matter whether you agree with him, it doesn't matter whether you disagree with him, it doesn't matter whether you like him, it doesn't matter whether you dislike him; he's an Australian and he's entitled to the protection of the government.

Of course, if the death penalty or torture are not enough to spur this government to action, there are broader important principles at stake; there is a lot more to this inherently political case. Let's be clear. He's been persecuted to punish him for exposing war crimes and the misuse of state power. Those who committed the war crimes have never been prosecuted. He's been persecuted to silence him forever in his WikiLeaks project and to scare others into silence. I note that we've had a power failure.

**Ms Flint:** They're silencing you!

**Mr HILL:** They're silencing me! They've hacked the parliament! Are we on?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Vamvakinou):** The mics are on. You can continue.

**Mr HILL:** I don't personally agree with all that Julian Assange or WikiLeaks has done, but, if we're to protect our democratic values, that must never be the point. This case goes to the importance of journalism and journalists in a democracy holding power to account. Publishing embarrassing, classified footage of war crimes in Iraq is journalistic behaviour supposedly protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. I will quote Kevin Rudd. He said:

If their case is essentially that Mr Assange broke the law by obtaining and disclosing secret information, then I struggle to see what separates him from any journalist who solicits, obtains and publishes such information.

The claim we often hear in response is that 'he's not a journalist'. That is irrelevant. The protection exists in the law for journalistic activity, not some special class of persons. It should extend to all of us, to any Australian engaging in journalistic activity.

What Julian Assange has published is in principle no different than the Pentagon Papers, in 1971, which exposed the truth about the Vietnam War and the actions of two United States presidents. The chilling effect that this US case would have on the media globally is profound. The pursuit of Julian Assange is very deliberate; it's calculated to mute whistleblowing and investigative journalism. If Julian Assange is guilty of a serious crime for publishing classified material revealing war crimes, then democracies are weakened. Media across the world will be too scared to publish in the future if that's what they want. Then there's the dangerous principle of extraterritoriality, which is nerdy and boring and is getting lost in the propaganda. But let's be clear. If this American bid succeeds, the precedent is terrifying for our democracy.

What Julian Assange did in 2011 is not espionage. There's no evidence he attempted to hack into US government IT. There is no evidence he encouraged others to do so. There is no evidence that any lives were lost or serious harm done. Importantly, he's not a US citizen. His actions took place outside the USA. Let's be clear. Under the precedent of extradition that the United States is seeking in this case, anyone who publishes anything that the United States government brands as secret could be prosecuted under the US Espionage Act—anyone who publishes anything, anywhere in the world, could be extradited to the United States.

Now, unbelievably, the Trump administration has stated that Julian Assange has no First Amendment rights to free speech and free press because he's a foreigner. So, under this precedent, US criminal laws apply everywhere—even when people have never been to the United States, including journalists or any Australian wherever they are—but US constitutional protections don't apply to them. Our government should take this seriously and defend our sovereignty and freedom.

I'll just make some brief remarks on the sexual assault allegations. There has been conflicting and sensational reporting for years. Allegations of sexual assault and rape are incredibly serious matters that should not be weaponised for political purposes. The media confusion regarding this is deliberate. Julian Assange shone light and exposed corruption. Suddenly the bright lights turned back on him, and he's a hacker, a narcissist, a spy. He doesn't shower, you know; he's not clean. Then there's the story he doesn't even feed his cat properly. Then he's a creepy predator. Citizens mustn't suspend critical thinking or their analytical capabilities when such allegations are made.

I'd encourage people to read the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture case review. These are his conclusions, not mine. He concluded that he's been subjected to a preliminary investigation for nine years with no charges; that the police tampered and rewrote evidence to manufacture these charges; that he didn't run away from interview—he actually went to the police and authorities several times while in Sweden and was given their permission to leave the country. It was only when he was in London that he heard of the secret extradition proceedings in the United States to extradite him that he said he couldn't go back unless Sweden provided assurances that he wouldn't be extradited to the US. They refused to give those assurances. He offered repeatedly to give evidence from asylum, but the objective was

to keep the investigation alive, to keep him in suspended animation for nine years with no charges.

Then, magically, of course, the case was dropped, wasn't it, when he suddenly got into British custody and was allowed to face extradition to the United States. Despite all of this—an effective death sentence, torture and manifest injustice—our government refuses to speak up and defend this Australian. Ministers hide behind their weasel word talking points about legal processes and having his day in court. I say again: it doesn't matter if you agree with him, it doesn't matter if you like him, it doesn't matter if you dislike him; he's an Australian with the same rights as you or me and he's entitled to the protection of his government. As Andrew Wilkie and George Christensen—and I never thought I'd be in a club with them in this parliament—said aptly last week in London, 'Julian Assange is our ratbag, and we should bring him home.'

**Ms FLINT** (Boothby—Government Whip) (12:12): I'm delighted to speak on these bills today, because they illustrate the heart of the Morrison government's agenda for a strong economy. Securing Australia's prosperity depends on a thriving economy. More job opportunities, improved living standards and better essential services are only possible with the right economic settings in place. Our government is dedicated to creating more and better paying jobs, and I'm pleased that over 1.5 million more Australians are in jobs since our government was elected.

Unlike those opposite, on this side of the House, we believe that hardworking Australians should always keep more of their hard-earned money. I'm proud of our government's commitment to making taxes lower, simpler and fairer. We have delivered tax relief for over 10 million taxpayers around the nation, and our legislative plan means that, after six years, 94 per cent of taxpayers will pay no more than 30c in the dollar.

Small businesses, as we know, are the lifeblood of our local communities, and I'm proud that our government has delivered tax relief for the 3.4 million small and medium businesses employing over seven million Australians around the nation. Only a coalition government can be trusted to deliver tax relief for working families and businesses, and we fought, and we will continue to fight, Labor's plans for higher taxes, whether those taxes are on our retirees, on housing incomes or investments.

Under successive state and federal Labor governments, Australians were hit hard with creeping electricity prices. For many people, particularly our self-funded retirees, our age pensioners and those on fixed incomes, switching on the air conditioner or heater became an unaffordable luxury. Australians deserve better. This is why our government has worked to reduce power prices by stopping price gouging by big energy companies by passing our 'big stick' legislation, which introduces significant penalties for companies that rip off their customers. We've banned sneaky late-payment penalties. We require energies to pass on savings to customers. And we're investing in new power generation, with 12 projects shortlisted, including six renewable pumped-hydro projects, five gas projects and one coal upgrade project in the works.

Our strong record of responsible economic management has seen our government provide record funding for public hospital services, increasing funding from \$13.3 billion in 2012-13—before we came to government—to more than \$29 billion in 2024-25. With GP bulk-



billing rates at 86.2 per cent, which is up from 82.1 per cent when Labor was last in government, more Australians than ever are able to see a GP when they need to.

A fundamental pillar of our health system, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, continues to enjoy record investment under our government, with nearly 2,300 medical listings worth over \$10 billion added to the PBS since we came to government. In practical terms, this means that life-saving medicines which can normally cost hundreds of thousands of dollars are available in some cases for just \$6.60 for those who hold concessions or \$41 for general patients per script.

In the defence sector, our government is protecting Australia's future security and interests by investing over \$200 billion over the next 10 years to modernise Australia's defence capability, securing our nation while strengthening our defence industry and creating Australian jobs. Our defence industry is made up of highly skilled men and women, and I'm very excited about the growing defence industry job opportunities in South Australia, which will see increased demand for workers with trade, technical, science and technology skills. Of course, the most important thing is that we are doing this to protect the men and women of our defence forces, who work so hard and put their lives on the line to protect all of us here at home.

Just last week, I was delighted to have the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, Karen Andrews, visit the Tonsley Innovation District in my electorate of Boothby to announce a \$2.9 million project supported by Innovative Manufacturing CRC, BAE Systems and ASC Shipbuilding—great opportunities for students and people wanting to get into the defence sector. Underpinned by our commitment to a strong economy, our government is dedicated to ensuring that industry and researchers collaborate as much as they possibly can, working closely together and allowing us to grow Australian jobs and further develop our defence industry capability.

It's often said that an important measure of a society is how it treats its vulnerable, whether they are the very young or the elderly. Improving aged care for all senior Australians is one of our government's key priorities, and it's why one of the first acts of our Prime Minister was to call the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety to make sure we get care for our senior Australians right. In terms of aged-care funding, I'm delighted our government is delivering record investment across the aged-care system, up from \$13.3 billion in 2012-13, growing to \$21.4 billion in 2019-20, up to an estimated \$25 billion in 2022-23. That's an increase of over \$5 billion of extra support for older Australians over the forward estimates.

Australians are living, on average, longer than they were 50 years ago. Ensuring they have choice in aged care and that they have the proper support to remain in their homes if they wish to do so are essential to ensuring their quality of life. Since the 2018-19 budget, the government has invested in providing 44,000 new home-care packages at a cost of \$2.7 billion, and the number of home-care packages has increased from around 60,000 under Labor in their last year of government to almost 160,000 in the year 2022-23, which is an increase of over 160 per cent. Again, I might remind those opposite that, despite Labor's plans for \$387 billion in new taxes, at the election, Labor made no additional funding promises in their costings for home-care packages or additional funding for aged care quality workforce or residential aged care.

Only a Liberal government, a coalition government, can keep Australia's economy strong and support our senior Australians to receive the very best quality of care that they deserve. As such, it's wonderful to see the reactivation of the Repat Health Precinct underway in my electorate of Boothby. I've previously spoken many times in this place about the devastation that was felt across my community, South Australia and particularly in our veterans' community when the former South Australian state Labor government announced the closure of the Repat hospital in 2015. Labor's heartless, cruel decision hurt so many people. However, I'm delighted to say that the Morrison government is supporting the Marshall state Liberal government to reactivate the Repat and return this site to a thriving health precinct where people will once again receive the very best of health care available.

With \$30 million of Commonwealth funding provided for a specialist state-wide brain and spinal centre at the revitalised Repat precinct, the Repat will provide excellent care for people who have experienced acute brain and spinal injuries. The Repat will also provide the very best dementia care in South Australia, and I think it will be the best dementia care available in the nation as we are partnering with—and this is a landmark partnership—the nationally respected aged-care provider HammondCare. HammondCare will deliver an innovative cottage-homelike environment for people with dementia at the Repat site. The project represents a multimillion-dollar investment in caring for people with dementia and very severe dementia, and it will provide around 120 jobs for South Australians.

I'm very proud that the Morrison government will feature in this partnership, as we are providing funding for the operation of a Specialist Dementia Care Unit at the site as well. We are also ensuring that the much loved Repat Chapel, remembrance garden, museum and SPF Hall will be protected and preserved as community assets for future generations. And we are committed to once again making sure that the Repat is a centre for veterans in our community and, as such, we're providing \$5 million in federal funding to establish a Veterans' Wellbeing Centre in the heart of the Repat, where our veterans feel safe and feel loved.

I'm pleased to report that close by we are heading towards the finalisation and conclusion of the Flinders Link Project. That's expected to wrap up in the second half of this year. With joint state and federal funding, Flinders Link involves a 650m extension of the current Tonsley rail line up to Flinders Medical Centre and the Flinders University. This will finally link the Flinders Precinct with the city. Additionally, this project will see the construction of two new train stations and an integrated shared pedestrian and cycle path right next to the railway line, giving people new transport options. Fourteen of the 20 Flinders Link rail bridge girders have now been installed, and residents are beginning to see what an incredible impact this will have for our local community and the area.

Late last year I was delighted to have the Prime Minister; the Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure; Premier Steven Marshall; and the SA Minister for Transport visit the site with me to see this incredible project underway. The Flinders Link Project will mean that local residents have a brand-new public transport option. Staff and patients at Flinders Medical Centre will have a brand new public transport option and so, too, will 25,000 students at Flinders University, plus all of the staff who support them. This is going to unlock billions of dollars of local investment, including new student accommodation at Flinders University, new educational facilities and healthcare facilities. It is a really important and exciting project for our local area.

We're also working on a range of other local infrastructure upgrades to bust congestion around my electorate. Boothby is an electorate that is relatively close to the city, and we have a lot of people pass through our electorate every day on their way to and from work. Therefore, we are undertaking the Darlington upgrade, which is a \$600 million contribution by the federal government. There is also the joint state-federal upgrade of Fullarton and Cross Road intersection, the Hove Level Crossing project and the Goodwood, Springbank and Daws Road intersection upgrade. We're also investing in fixing the Mitcham Hills road corridor.

I was particularly excited to see the Australian Space Agency formally launched by the Prime Minister last week. This is incredibly exciting for South Australia. We've invested tens of millions of dollars to place the Australian Space Agency in Adelaide, which will act as a launching pad to triple Australia's space economy to \$12 billion and create up to 20,000 jobs by the year 2030, which will open the doors for so many local businesses here, and we look to attract many new businesses as well.

I am particularly proud of our government's strong record on environmental protection and emissions reduction through our \$3.5 billion Climate Solutions Package. This includes our \$2 billion Climate Solutions Fund, which will support practical emissions-reducing projects such as capturing methane from landfill and storing carbon in forests and soils. We're also investing \$1.4 billion in the Snowy 2.0 renewable energy project, which will supply many homes with zero-emission pumped hydro energy. We are also doing a range of other things in this space. Importantly for so many communities around the nation, we've also created the \$100 million Environment Restoration Fund to support practical action on waste and recycling. This will also protect our rivers, waterways and coasts and support our threatened and migratory native species. This is very important to my local residents, who include some very active volunteers in the hills and along the coast. They are people who care very deeply about the environment and do a lot of incredible work to protect our natural heritage, our native vegetation and our flora and fauna every day. I want to conclude by thanking them and all the other volunteers in my electorate for the wonderful work that they do each and every year in Boothby.

**Ms MADELEINE KING (Brand) (12:26):** Unlike some, Labor will always support appropriation bills moved by the government of the day. On behalf of the member for Rankin and shadow Treasurer, I move:

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

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes that:

- (1) after six years in office the economy is floundering on the Government's watch;
- (2) Australians are struggling with stagnant wages, with wage growth stalling further;
- (3) net debt has more than doubled under this Government;
- (4) the Government does not have a plan to boost wages or growth in the economy; and
- (5) it is because of the Government's failures that Australia meets the challenges and uncertainties of the bushfires and coronavirus from a position of weakness, not strength".

I also support those amendments.

Today I would like to pay tribute to my friend Ben Wyatt, the Treasurer in the McGowan Labor government of Western Australia, who yesterday announced in Perth that he will leave politics at the state election in March next year. Ben wants to spend more time with his wife

and his children, while they are still young, and we all in this place wholeheartedly commend him for that. This is a big loss for politics in my home state of WA. It's also a big loss for the Indigenous people of Western Australia. As well as being Treasurer, of course, Mr Wyatt is WA's Aboriginal Affairs Minister, and he is cousin to the federal Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon. Ken Wyatt, the member for Hasluck.

By any measure, Ben Wyatt has been one of the most successful state treasurers in Western Australia's history. When he came to the job in March 2017, he inherited a set of books that can only be described as disastrous. WA had lost its AAA credit rating, state debt was heading towards \$40 billion, and massive budget deficits were forecast for years ahead. The resources construction boom had come to an end in WA, which of course affected the state's finances. But that wasn't the main reason for the mess inherited by Ben Wyatt and the McGowan government. The main reason was the lavish overspending and poor financial management by the former Barnett government. Ben set out to prove yet again that Labor governments are better financial managers than the Liberals: he has succeeded, and it will always be one of his principal legacies as treasurer of our great state. The Western Australian economy has returned to growth and the government's finances have been restored. The budget is in surplus, and the McGowan government is the only state government in Australia that is reducing debt.

Mr Wyatt's spending restraint was not always popular in the community, or even with some of his colleagues at times, but the results speak for themselves. Ben and I studied together in the law school at the University of Western Australia, way back in the nineties—it's possible we shared a shandy or two during that time. As anyone that knows Ben will be able to confirm, he is great company and a good, honest man and we are lucky to have had him serve in the parliament and, particularly, as the Treasurer of Western Australia. Clearly, Ben will continue to contribute to the community as he moves out of politics.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Ben's family for allowing him to play such a pivotal role over the past 16 years in the success of our state of Western Australia. It is entirely a good thing that Ben will now spend more time with you, the whole Wyatt family, and I really wish him the best. Obviously we will miss him in political discussions, but I have no doubt that he will continue to contribute and give us a call when he thinks we can do things a bit differently. Best of luck, Ben. I really wish you all the best.

This summer has seen the best and worst of Australia. Catastrophic fires have devastated this country. We've lost precious wildlife and far too many homes, and, of course, 33 people have died, which has devastated their families and friends and entire communities. In January, the Labor shadow cabinet met in Batemans Bay and heard from Warren Sharpe, the local emergency management officer and economic development manager from the Eurobodalla council. He spoke of how he and his team coordinated the response to those terrible fires that went through the community. I thank Warren, his team and all his supporters, who gave their all to defend that community and that region. Now they turn to rebuilding it. It is a big task and I wish them the very best.

Many Australians are rightly angry and concerned that the government was asleep at the wheel leading up to and during summer's bushfire disaster. As we know, the Prime Minister refused to meet with experienced firefighters and fire chiefs, who had warned some time ago that such a disastrous bushfire was on its way. What I've seen on the ground in fire affected

communities has been, frankly, devastating. But the amazing and resilient people I've met across the country working on the recovery and rehabilitation of this great place have given me hope, and it should give us all hope. I'd really like to thank the people of Batemans Bay for their wonderful hospitality, particularly David at The Venetian cafe and coffee roasters, who is also part of the Empty Esky campaign. I'd also like to thank those at The Sandbar restaurant, a fusion of Japanese and modern Australian cuisine using local produce, which, of course, is challenging given the bushfires. The Sandbar is one of the finest restaurants I've ever had the pleasure of visiting in Australia. I thank them for their wonderful hospitality.

So much of our agricultural sector has suffered. Sometimes referred to as the 'forgotten farmers' in Australia, beekeepers around the country have experienced catastrophic losses because of this devastating summer of bushfires. While in Batemans Bay, I drove up the road a bit and met with Therese and Laurie Kershaw, who drove me to see where these bushfires had ripped through the New South Wales South Coast. The Kershaw family have been beekeepers for generations. Laurie knows those forests like the back of his hand. We drove for miles on the day I visited. It looks like this bushfire burnt forever. They showed me the burnt out sites and forests near Nelligen that used to sustain hundreds and hundreds of beehives. Now there is nothing left. There is no bush, there are no bees, there are no birds. It is all silent. It is difficult to describe the loss beekeepers and the bees have endured, not just the hives but the lost habitat that produces the buds and flowers that feed bees so that they can make the money that we consume. It is really hard to tell how that forest will recover from the devastation.

As we know, bees do much more than produce honey. The importance of honey bees to our lives cannot be understated. The importance of a healthy bee population to this country is critical to how we live and what we eat. Bees carry pollen between plants to fertilise them and help them reproduce. These pollination services can improve agricultural crop yield and quality, with pollination services contributing up to \$1,730 million to Australian agricultural production every year. Because of the loss of habitat from the bushfires, Laurie Kershaw now has to import a form of feed for his hundreds of beehives. He tells me that there is no way to tell how a weakened bee population will recover without the stronger natural food of pollen from flowers in the environment.

The strength of his beehives is important to the almond growers in the region, who rely on bees provided by Laurie to pollinate almond tree flowers. The Australian almond industry makes a significant economic contribution, with almond exports worth \$552 million every year. The export volume of Australian almonds grew from 54,000 tonnes in 2017-18 to over 60,000 tonnes in 2018-19. The market for this product has changed, with Australian almond exports to China and Hong Kong growing from two per cent of our total almond exports in 2017-18 to 20 per cent in 2018-19. In the last several years alone, the almond industry has undergone significant expansion, with a gradual increase in planting of their orchard stock to 50,000 hectares. But, due to this bushfire season and the loss of bees, this expansion is now at significant risk. While it is impossible to quantify the loss of Australian bees from the summer's bushfire crisis right now, what is clear is that it has had a devastating impact on the health of the existing population and the population overall.

I would like to thank the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council and Beechworth Honey for introducing me to hardworking and dedicated apiarists like Therese and Laurie Kershaw. I

will continue supporting Australia's beekeepers in their recovery efforts as best I can, and I urge all my colleagues in this place to do the same. I urge the whole community to always buy Australian honey. Check your labels. It is the best honey. It is the only sure way you will know you're buying pure honey, and it will support people that are doing it tough after this season. Also look for it at your local markets. I know local honey always costs a bit more, but as an amateur apiarist I can assure you there's a reason for that: you have to invest a lot in the equipment. It's worth every single extra cent you spend on honey to buy it from your local producers.

My own electorate was not immune to this summer's bushfires, though, luckily for us, all fires were quickly contained and damage was minimal. This was due in no small part to the many amazing volunteers across the country that assisted in battling fires, in evacuations and in recovery efforts. Gordon Hall of Secret Harbour in my electorate is one of those integral volunteers. Gordon serves as national chair of the SES Volunteers Association, representing over 30,000 SES volunteers across the nation. Last week, I met with Gordon in my electorate office in Rockingham to discuss the bushfire crisis and listen to his views regarding securing compensation and other help for tireless SES volunteers. Gordon expressed disappointment that the government's response to the bushfire crisis was announced without consultation with the emergency responder peak volunteer bodies. It is imperative that we, as policymakers, listen to Australians like Gordon, who have seen what disasters like the recent bushfire crisis can do on the front line. Volunteers like Gordon represent the best of Australia—mateship, selflessness and courage—and I sincerely thank all the volunteers who have worked over the summer assisting with these bushfires and countless other endeavours to support those on the front line.

In some sad news for my local electorate of Brand, and certainly for my local Rockingham-Safety Bay Labor branch, we had to say goodbye to branch stalwart Terry de San Miguel. Terry was the eldest brother of 10 and father to Norm and Rod. A Hope Valley-Mandogalup stalwart, Terry and the de San Miguel family eventually retired in Shoalwater, my home town. Terry worked on the Fremantle wharf for 30 years before finishing his career at Austal Ships in Henderson. In recent years, he volunteered at the SOUL Soup Patrol in the Rockingham area. Of course, Terry was a very strong Labor supporter and a very active branch member.

Terry was known in the Brand electorate office for his fruit and vegetables—well before I was elected as member for Brand. After a visit to Dwellingup, he'd always come back bearing gifts, often big bags of carrots, leading some in the Brand electorate office to call him 'Vegeterry'! He volunteered for the Labor Party in the state seats of Kwinana and Rockingham and federally in Brand for as long as any of us can remember. Terry was well known for his old MTT bus, which he would park at the Hope Valley polling booth, where he served as booth captain. The bus would, of course, be adorned with as much ALP paraphernalia as possible, and he would provide tea and coffee for all the Labor voters—I'm sure he wouldn't discriminate; Terry would have given tea and coffee to anyone who asked, because he was that kind of guy.

I first met Terry as I embarked on the 2016 election campaign. I knew that Terry could always be counted on to participate in doorknocking and leaflet drops and all the things you do in a campaign. All the little volunteer get-togethers that you have, Terry was always there.

On polling day, he was up before dawn, spent all day at the booth and then cleaned up—he was 80 when he was doing that, so I really thank Terry for his work—and then he followed up with a bit of scrutineering to boot. As we know, the 2016 election was in the middle of winter—obviously winter in Perth is not as bad as it is in the eastern states, but it's still pretty cold, and it was very good of Terry to put in that effort all day on a cold winter's morning in Rockingham.

Terry was a family man. He was a good Catholic and, of course, he was a Labor man. In his later years, I would often see Terry down at the St Joseph Chapel, a church in Safety Bay, on Sunday mornings, and I'd like to thank in particular Sister Kathleen and the other sisters at the chapel, who kept an eye on Terry in his later years and made sure he was looked after, kept well and always had a friend to talk to.

I'd also like to thank the wonderful staff at the Aegis nursing home in Shoalwater. They are wonderful people who cared for Terry in the Dolphin Cove ward. I'm very familiar with that ward. It's the dementia ward where my dad spent his last days before his death a number of years ago, and I thank the staff there for the care they gave my father. I know the care they gave Terry would have been the best available. We remember Terry for all that he contributed to the party and to the community, for his vegetables, for his good humour, for his commitment, for his fun and for his great spirit. He was always good to chat to because he was always ready for a chat, and he was a very kind, warm-hearted man. Vale, Terry de San Miguel.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta):** Is the amendment seconded?

**Mr Snowdon:** I second the amendment.

**Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (12:41):** I am pleased to support the latest appropriation bills—Appropriation Bill (No. 3) and Appropriation (No. 4) Bill—which seek authority from parliament to provide for additional expenditure on activities which require further funding or on new initiatives agreed to by the government since the 2019-20 budget appropriation bills No. 1 and No. 2.

In the time since I addressed parliament on 11 September on the first two appropriation bills, a number of significant events have occurred such as the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, the bushfire emergency and the coronavirus outbreak in China, hence the need for these appropriation bills to accommodate new measures. By maintaining strong fiscal discipline and spending restraint, our government is able to strengthen the nation's finances to be able to respond to natural disasters, domestic emergencies and international shocks. Our government must strive to keep taxes low and inflation under control. A low inflation environment helps keep interest rates low, maintaining housing affordability for millions of Australian households and families paying off mortgages on their homes and paying interest on small-business loans. We must be cognisant of the increasing cost-of-living pressures faced by Australian families, our key constituency, who are experiencing a reduction in their disposable income with reduced spending power. Recognising the financial pressure on households, our government must pursue policies which minimise increases in the cost of fuel, electricity, gas and utilities.

Labor's net zero emission target by 2050 is unrealistic and will drive up costs and make our industry less competitive. In particular, Australian industry is competing with emerging Asian

economies in our region that have become mechanised, automated and technologically advanced with access to affordable labour and cheap energy supplies. Our government must adopt policies which make Australia more productive and increasingly competitive in the context of a global economy.

Appropriation Bill (No. 3) provides for additional funding of \$3.3 billion to fund the ordinary annual services of the government, which includes the departmental costs of Australian government agencies and funding within administrative outcomes that have been previously endorsed by parliament. In particular, there are a number of key appropriations worthy of note. The Department of Home Affairs has been allocated \$948.4 million to continue implementing the government's border protection policies and support people impacted by the recent bushfires. By continuing to provide an appropriate level of resourcing to the Department of Home Affairs, the Morrison government is ensuring our national security, in particular by intercepting the smuggling of illicit drugs, weapons, contraband and prohibited weapons at the border before they enter our country to be distributed through organised criminal networks and cause harm on our streets. I am pleased to note the recent success stories of the Australian Border Force and the Royal Australian Navy in intercepting shipments of illegal drugs destined for our communities. Similarly, strict enforcement of visas by persons entering Australia ensures the integrity of our immigration system and preserves our national security.

The appropriation bill allocates an additional \$592.6 million in funding to the Department of Social Services due to the Disability Employment Services program supporting a higher than expected number of participant clients. Increasing workforce participation by making workplaces more accessible to people with disability is a positive initiative which allows people to achieve their full potential by contributing to society. In addition, an extra \$50 million in funding has been provided under the recent bushfire response package for additional emergency relief and financial counselling for affected communities to assist the recovery effort in communities affected by the recent bushfire emergency.

The Department of Defence has been allocated an additional \$488.8 million, including \$87.9 million for the Australian Defence Force's contribution to the bushfire response through Operation Bushfire Assist. I take this opportunity to formally acknowledge all Australian Defence Force personnel and reservists who assisted with the bushfire recovery efforts across our nation. Although there were no bushfires in Moore, our neighbouring communities of Yanchep, Two Rocks and Gingin were affected. Our response must be measured in the areas of fire management logistics, fuel load management, increasing water security, and apprehending arsonists who deliberately light fires. It was reported in the media that approximately 183 individuals were charged with lighting fires across Australia over a two-month period this summer. It is a national disgrace. Simply attributing bushfires to climate change and emissions reduction is irresponsible and shows a lack of understanding.

It is important to ensure that defence spending is increased to beyond two per cent of gross domestic product to ensure that the Australian Defence Force has the necessary resources and operational capability to protect Australia's national interest within our geopolitical region at a time when many of the emerging nations in our region are expending a significantly greater proportion of their gross domestic product on expanding their military. We need to invest more in upgrading our defence bases across Australia and in the acquisition of vessels,



equipment, armaments, technology and the training of our military personnel. Australia has a greater role to play in maintaining the security of our region by protecting key freight, trading and energy routes.

Additional funding of \$287.5 million has been allocated to Services Australia to support individuals, families and communities to achieve greater self-sufficiency. Access to aged-care services continues to be a key priority within my electorate, which currently has a high level of unmet demand and long waiting times for elderly residents. An increase in aged-care funding for additional places is one of the most important considerations in the upcoming budget. As of 30 June 2019, there were 434 residential aged-care places funded in my electorate, with a further 16 short-term restorative care and 121 transitional care places, bringing the total number to 581 places. However, this is still insufficient to meet demand. Local families require improved access to aged-care services and facilities to meet their individual care needs and financial circumstances. Forward planning is required in order to have sufficient resources available to meet the future aged-care requirements of our community.

The Department of Health is receiving \$170.6 million in additional funding, including \$70.3 million to support greater access to medicines and medical treatments; \$68.2 million in departmental funding to support the delivery of government programs; and a further \$30.2 million towards mental, Indigenous and preventative health activities. On behalf of my constituents, I am pleased to see subsidised access expanded to include new medications under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme; and subsidised access to a wider range of imaging and diagnostics services, pharmaceutical benefits and professional consultations. For instance, this year, subsidised access to medical services such as continuous glucose monitors for diabetics has been expanded to cover a wider range of eligible patients.

In terms of medical services, the federal government has delivered on its funding commitment of \$158 million towards the Joondalup Hospital expansion, due to commence later this year. However, the Western Australian state Labor government has failed to keep its 2017 election commitment to match federal funding, falling \$62 million short of its commitment in the current state budget. Electors in the northern suburbs will hold the McGowan government to account for this \$62 million shortfall, as demand for medical services in Joondalup continues to grow, as our regional city services the wider northern coastal corridor, and as waiting times get longer.

Recurrent funding of Medicare services continues to be a growing area of expenditure in the budget. A number of constituents have contacted me in relation to expanding federal subsidies to cover reimbursement for a greater range of out-of-pocket medical expenses. I forwarded these proposals to the Minister for Health for evaluation and consideration as part of the budget process.

This appropriation bill provides an additional \$66.2 million in funding for the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment for initiatives including wildlife and habitat recovery in response to the recent bushfire emergency, busting congestion in the environmental assessment process, responding to African swine fever and strengthening the Australian Antarctic Program.

Water security and agriculture are two very important issues in our region. Expanding the water supply to include non-rainfall-dependent sources to provide water security to Perth's

northern corridor is one of my main priorities. In the environmental context of a drier climate and the growing urban population over the past 20 years, increased groundwater abstraction has resulted in a fall in the watertable, with local lakes and wetlands drying up. Our horticultural industry, our businesses, our local governments and our households have all been impacted by water licensing, reduced allocations and sprinkler bans. Australia's first full-scale groundwater replenishment scheme is operating within the Moore electorate. Annually, 28 gigalitres of treated water from the Water Corporation's wastewater treatment plants in Craigie and Neerabup are being recharged into our groundwater supply, the Leederville and Yarragadee aquifers. New bores are being drilled—in Beldon, Heathridge and Neerabup—which are being connected to the plants via pipelines being constructed in Joondalup, Currambine and Neerabup. To secure the future water supply for our growing population, the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment must allocate the necessary funding to expand water recycling to other wastewater treatment plants to our north, such as Alkimos.

Moving on to Appropriation Bill (No. 4), an appropriation of approximately \$2.2 billion is provided to fund the non-ordinary annual services of government, including capital works; services; payments to the states and territories, and local government authorities; and funding for new administered outcomes not previously endorsed by parliament. Significant appropriations include additional loan drawdowns in 2019-20 arising from a revised drawdown schedule for NBN Co of \$1.2 billion; additional equity injections of \$176.9 million in 2019-20 due to revised schedules for the Australian Rail Track Corporation and the Western Sydney Airport; and a further \$166.9 million for the Drought Response, Resilience and Preparedness Plan.

The rollout of the National Broadband Network in the Moore electorate is largely completed. For the majority of residents, access to high-speed internet is now adequate to meet their needs. However, particularly in the older suburbs, in certain locations, there is still remedial work to be done to improve the level of service. As with any large technology rollout, there have been instances in which problems have been encountered and technical issues which required resolution.

My office has been working with NBN Co to resolve a number of concerns on behalf of residents. In my electorate the City of Joondalup receives financial assistance grant from the federal government for the purpose of road construction and also in the form of general-purpose financial grants. In the 2019-20 budget, the grant to the City of Joondalup totalled \$5,595,749, which greatly assists the City of Joondalup in providing essential services to ratepayers without significant increases in rates. It is essential that this level of funding continues to be maintained. *(Time expired)*

**Mr SNOWDON** (Lingiari) (12:56): I acknowledge the contributions of the member for Brand and the member for Moore. I will talk to some of the issues around climate change little later. Sadly, I disagree with him. I guess that's to be expected!

Recently we had the release of the *Closing the gap report*, which provided a salutary reminder of how far we've yet to go to improve the outcomes for First Nations people across this country. I have often stood up in this place and bemoaned the way in which this government—and, for that matter, previous governments—has addressed the needs of First Nations People in this country and the lack of engagement with them around what programs might work in their communities and around programs that affect them. I'll come to that in

more detail shortly. But it is clear that we need to be thinking about, and doing much better at, programs that are specific to First Nations communities across this country, reminding ourselves about the differences and diversity across First Nations populations in Australia.

Sadly, the *Closing the gap report* makes that very, very clear. It shows the difference in outcomes of people who live in major metropolitan centres across all domains and those who live in very remote communities, many of whom comprise a substantial proportion of the Aboriginal population who live in my electorate. What they emphasise, in my view, is that the appalling outcomes are in part a response to the failure by successive governments to engage with First Nations people, to provide the capacity for them to participate in the decision-making about programs that impact upon them and to give them the controlling decision-making over those programs. In fact, it's quite the opposite. There's been a dramatic withdrawal of those responsibilities, starting primarily with the abolition of ATSIC in the Howard government years, then the intervention in the Northern Territory which actually took away and denied any rights of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory to have any role in decision-making about things that affected their lives, and that's largely remained the case since then.

The Productivity Commission publishes the *Indigenous expenditure report* which provides estimates of Australian state and territory government's expenditure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. When combined with other information, these estimates contribute to a better understanding of the adequacy, effectiveness and efficiency of government expenditure on services for First Australians. The most recent edition of this expenditure report was released in 2017.

What this report showed us very clearly was that large proportions of First Nations budget are not being spent in areas characterised as being specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in programs directly controlled and managed by them, but in fact a movement away from direct funding of Aboriginal community controlled organisations and engagement with Aboriginal organisations to mainstream funding. There's been quite a significant decrease, so the proportion of total funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people away from specific programs has declined from 22.5 per cent to 18 per cent. That raises some very serious questions.

If we really want to address these close the gap figures and if we take the government at its word—and we've heard the Prime Minister in this place say these things: they want to walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, make sure things are not being done to them but with them. All of those are fine words, but they're simply rhetoric, sadly. The evidence is very clear: there's absolutely no intention by this government to actually sit down, discuss and respond to the concerns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the way in which government funding is affecting their lives.

Perhaps one of the best examples is the current determination by this government to impose the cashless debit card across the Aboriginal population in the Northern Territory when that population have said very clearly that they don't want that universally applied compulsorily across their communities. You can't, on the one hand, say that you are working with, understanding, listening to, talking to and allowing people to make their own decisions, and then ignore them. That's precisely what this government is doing.

This was built on the back of the appalling record of income management in the Northern Territory and the system which was applied as a result of the emergency response initiated by the Howard government with Prime Minister John Howard and then Minister Mal Brough imposing on the Northern Territory the intervention. The result was the provision of the compulsory BasicsCard. What study after study of compulsory income management has shown is that the BasicsCard and others don't work. Despite the fact that Aboriginal people say it doesn't work, despite the evidence it doesn't work, it's poorly targeted, it's not cost-effective, can result in very negative experiences—social stigmatisation, exclusion, financial hardship, increased stress, financial harassment, discrimination—and can damage financial management skills, the government's determined to now impose compulsorily, uniformly, across the Aboriginal population in the Northern Territory, 22,000 people, this new card.

You can't have it both ways. Sadly, this government fails to listen to what Aboriginal people have been saying. This is also true for another program which the government funds, and that is CDP. Aboriginal people have been telling the government that this program is a failure. All the evidence says it's a failure. Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory are saying, 'Don't do this to us. We want a new program.' They've been telling me very clearly they want a program which looks something like the old CDEP—Community Development Employment Projects. Whether it's the same or similar really doesn't matter. But what we know about CDP is that it lacks community control, it penalises participants and it breaks down community wellbeing. We've seen an increase in break-and-enters to steal food, predominantly by children and young people, an increase in disengagement in all programs by young people in particular, an increase in domestic and family violence, an increase in financial coercion and family fighting, and an increase in mental health problems, feelings of shame, depression, sleep deprivation and hunger, and a decrease in the amount of money that is being spent on essential food. That's a health problem, and we've seen that writ large across the Northern Territory.

Aboriginal people have made very clear what they want. They want to be engaged with and they want to have agency over their lives. What the Productivity Commission's reports demonstrate is that they're not given that agency. Predominantly, the mainstream funding goes through mainstream agencies and doesn't engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, except perhaps in one domain: health. The health department directly funds 150-plus Aboriginal community controlled health organisations across this country. But they are Aboriginal community controlled health organisations. None of the other departments do this. In education, for example, there is no equivalent. There's no real engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community around educational outcomes anymore. There's no real engagement around housing. We've seen less money going into housing than previously was the case, and that adds to the compounding effects of poor decision-making and a lack of awareness and concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the outcomes that they should be achieving through these budget measures. There are simple solutions: just do as you say you're going to do. Give Aboriginal people control instead of the position you've adopted. Hear the voice, provide them with the capacity to run their own lives and do things differently, and we will get better outcomes.

The other matter I want to talk to briefly today is climate change. I'm embarrassed, frankly, by the very nature of the debate in this chamber around climate change. We've seen the

hysteria, the hyperbole and the hypocrisy of the Morrison government, refusing to accept the legitimacy of a zero net emissions target for 2050, despite the evidence that's there for all to see. They have tried to maximise an opposition to this based on fallacies and they are ignoring the advice of people they would otherwise listen to. They are ignoring the actions of the state and territory governments, the international community, BHP, the Commonwealth Bank and other institutions, all of whom are supporting net zero emissions by 2050. Why is it so hard? The tragedy is that there are many on that side of the chamber who believe they should listen. Some would ordinarily listen to organisations such as the Rural Health Alliance.

I want to commend the Rural Health Alliance for producing a position paper on climate change and rural health. The Rural Health Alliance has acknowledged that 'climate change is having global health effects', that 'climate change is a risk multiplier in that it exacerbates pre-existing health and social issues', that 'rural, regional and remote communities are disproportionately at risk of direct climate change health effects from exposure', that 'climate change causes indirect health effects that are predominantly mediated through changes in the biosphere resulting in: an increase and change in the pattern of vector-borne, water-borne and zoonotic disease; air pollution from bushfires, dust and aeroallergens; food insecurity from changes in land use, crop yield, biodiversity loss and drought; issues of water scarcity, quality and affordability; migration and forced displacement; and social unrest and conflict'.

Well, hear, hear! The Rural Health Alliance represents the health interests of people who live outside of major metropolitan centres. These are the people in regional and remote Australia that the National Party and the Liberal Party say they represent, but they won't listen to them. What those people know is that they've got to mitigate the effects of climate change and take direct action around making sure that we effect a change in the way we do our business to avoid the monumental disaster that will happen to us with global warming. The ignorance which is being perpetrated by the government is astounding. As I said before, the hypocrisy, the hyperbole and the hysteria they're generating doesn't warrant the sort of attention they're being given. Let's have a reasonable discussion in this country about climate change and understand the priorities of the nation, not just your own political interests.

It's very clear that if we don't make the changes to our public policy on climate change that are being advocated by people such as the Rural Health Alliance and every other major interest group in this country that has an interest in the best outcomes for this country then we're going to fail Australians of this generation and subsequent generations, and that would be an enormous shame. The responsibility rests squarely—squarely—with the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Nationals and the members of the coalition.

**Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (13:12):** I rise in this place to support Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2019-2020 and Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2019-2020 and to speak about the work of the Morrison government and show that once again a coalition government can balance the books and provide for Australians when things get tough. The government hasn't wasted a day—not one day—in ensuring that Australians continue to live in the best country in the world.

Our priority is to plan for an even stronger economy that is built on resilience and rewarding aspiration—and lower taxes, so that you can keep more of what you earn. We're about reducing the cost of doing business, whether it be deregulation, finance, or getting paid on time. We want to equip Australians with the skills that Australians need in order to boost their success, delivering better wages and more jobs. We're about expanding our trade borders

so that we can access more markets and create more jobs. We are about building the infrastructure our economy needs to continue to grow. It's about keeping our budget strong to guarantee the essential services that Australians rely on and to help them deal with the challenges they face each and every day. We're about playing to our economic strengths and realising our opportunities.

We have a budget that's been returned to balance for the first time in 11 years. Contrast that with Labor, which racked up six record deficits totalling \$240 billion. Labor hasn't delivered a surplus since 1989. More than 1.5 million more Australians have found jobs since we came to government. More than 55 per cent of those are full-time jobs. Employment grew by 1.4 per cent through to January 2020. Since we came to government, over 837,000 more women have found jobs. That's 58 per cent of the total number of jobs created in that time. More Australians are finding jobs. The percentage of working-age Australians on welfare has fallen, and they're now at the lowest rate of welfare dependency in 30 years. More than that, we've delivered what I believe all Australians are proud of: a further \$158 billion of tax relief, building on our already legislated Personal Income Tax Plan. This is the biggest simplification of personal income tax since the early 1990s. We are abolishing an entire tax bracket, making income taxes lower, fairer and simpler. We are lowering the 32.5 per cent rate to 30 per cent in 2024-25 and ensuring a projected 94 per cent of taxpayers will face a marginal tax rate of no more than 30c in the dollar.

Earlier this month, the RBA governor, Philip Lowe, said that Australia's economic fundamentals remain very strong and provide a solid foundation for us to be optimistic about our future. So this is about getting the policies right. This is not about turning your head at the latest thing that comes around the corner. It's being strong, sensible and balanced. The Australian taxpayer understands that a Liberal-National government understands economics. We understand that the taxpayer needs to keep more of their money in their pocket. And if you've got a strong, certain and stable balanced budget moving forward, it means that you can invest in the services that all Australians want and deserve.

I'd like to focus for the next part of my speech on the record health funding that we've delivered. This is so important for someone like me, who had lived and worked in the healthcare system for my entire working career and spent a lot of time trying to improve the system. We have had record funding for public hospitals: \$22.5 billion in 2019-20. That's up from \$13.3 billion in the 2012-13 budget. That is an increase of 69 per cent over Labor's last budget.

It's not just about public health funding to hospitals; it's also about GP visits, and we had a record number of GP visits that were bulk-billed in 2018-19—a total of 136.5 million GP visits. This compares to 105.8 million GP visits bulk-billed in Labor's last year in government in 2012-13. So the bulk-billing rate has increased from 82 per cent under Labor to about 86 per cent today. I know Australians everywhere want the opportunity to be able to get health care that is fair and health care that is excellent.

Further than that, though, we've also invested in a very important initiative, which is the Youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan. In fact, the Prime Minister has articulated how important this is to him at a very personal level, and I'm very proud of the fact that Minister for Health Greg Hunt has been working very strongly in this area. It's an investment of \$503 million. This is the largest suicide prevention plan in Australia's history. More than

that, we're about expanding preventive health services and allowing people to get access to the mental health care that they need. We are expanding the headspace network and providing a significant boost to Indigenous suicide prevention, as well as early childhood and parenting support.

I want to turn now to the specifics of recent months. We all know that there have been external economic shocks across the globe; we've had droughts; we've had bushfires; and then, more recently, the coronavirus epidemic that's emerging. Australia has had an amazing response, and I'm very proud that we are a government that is ready to respond as this emerging epidemic occurs. As the Prime Minister has said, we are not immune as a country, but we are as prepared as we can be. Australia was one of the first countries in the world to declare coronavirus as a disease of potential pandemic. On 21 January it did this, and that was more than a week before the World Health Organization. That is because our government works very much hand-in-glove with the experts. Professor Brendan Murphy, the Chief Medical Officer for Australia, has also worked hand-in-glove with the experts across the states and territories. This shows a government that is organised, that is proportionate, that is reasonable and that is responding rapidly as things occur.

We all know now that at this point in time there have been 23 confirmed cases of coronavirus in Australia, and many of those have recovered—in fact, 15 of those have recovered. But a further eight cases have been identified on the *Diamond Princess*. I'm very pleased to say that, again, the Australian government has stepped up to respond and support those people in that situation. In fact, there have been two constituents of mine who have been on the *Diamond Princess*, and I've been in daily contact with them during this period of self-isolation. They have now been moved to Japan, which is really wonderful news because they are now out of that situation, which I'm pleased about.

I will also say that I have a further two constituents who have been moved with Qantas down to the Howard Springs area in order to make sure that they are going through a quarantine period for another 14 days. Again, I've been in daily contact with them. It's been very difficult for these people, but I'm very grateful for what they are doing to help ensure that all Australians are safe. They've undertaken a lot of personal sacrifice to go through this self-quarantine for 14 days while on the *Diamond Princess* and now a further 14 days in the Howard Springs area.

I would like to say that this has been a very important step that the Australian government has undertaken. It's been difficult, I know, for people who've had to change what they're doing with their daily life, but they are doing it for Australia and they're doing it to keep Australians safe. It's a very important initiative that we have undertaken, and we've been able to, at this point in time, contain the coronavirus outbreak.

Furthermore, all Australians quarantined on Christmas Island have been medically cleared and returned home. The National Security Committee of cabinet has agreed to extend the entry restrictions on foreign nationals who have recently been in mainland China for a further week until 29 February 2020, to again protect Australians from the risk of coronavirus. As before, Australian citizens and permanent residents will still be able to enter, as will their immediate family members.

Additionally to this, the Australian government is not just about excellent communication through all the experts and different levels of government with the people themselves who are

affected, but also about containment in order to ensure that we are not exposed to this rapidly emerging problem. We've also gone further to invest in finding a cure. This is very important, because medical research in Australia is amongst, if not, the best in the world. The government has recently announced a \$2 million investment to help develop a coronavirus vaccine. This morning we were receiving an update from the CSIRO, a wonderful institution which is on the front foot with regard to the development of the vaccine. These are decisions that are underpinned by medical advice and recommendations that are expert, and all Australians should feel very proud of the fact that Australia is taking the global lead in the response to the coronavirus epidemic. The Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity was the first institution to grow the virus—a very important step to finding a cure or a vaccine for this globally emerging problem.

I will say that on top of this, we have actually not only been able to manage this situation but also allow Australian-Chinese to return to Australia from mainland China. Most people may not know this fact, but there's been 34,000 people travelling from mainland China to Australia since 1 February 2020, and there's not been any human-to-human transmission cases in Australia. I would like to congratulate all of the staff who have been involved in making sure that there's a safe and secure passage of those people home from a difficult circumstance. But we continue to require Australian citizens who have been to mainland China to self-isolate for 14 days from the time that they left mainland China, and obviously these people are following that advice carefully since we've had no cases since the return home of those 34,000 people.

Australia is one of the 58 countries that has introduced some form of travel restriction on passengers who've been in mainland China. Our experts have advised that the situation has not been improving for the last two weeks. But we are hopeful that we are getting to a point where things will start to stabilise in mainland China itself. It is very concerning that things have been happening overseas in other countries where we haven't seen containment, and it is definitely a wait-and-watch scenario. But, as the Prime Minister has said, we want to get as many of the brightest and smartest minds in Australia working on this task. Australia is part of an ever globalised world health system, and it is very important that we show real leadership in our handling of the coronavirus. It is wonderful that we have this wonderful investment going into our medical research.

I'd also like to point out that Australia has also been investing in very important at-home concerns such as ovarian cancer. Today I wear the teal ribbon to recognise those that we have lost to ovarian cancer and to recognise the investment made by the Australian government of \$20 million into improving early detection, diagnosis and management of this terrible disease. Every day four women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer. It's a cancer that is so difficult to recognise because the symptoms are non-specific; they can be something like abdominal pain or distension of the abdomen. Women, if they have any new symptoms, should see their GP so that they can have the opportunity to have some early diagnosis or screening if they do indeed have a terrible problem like ovarian cancer. I'd like to recognise my co-ambassador, who is here today in the chamber, because it has been a very bipartisan response across the chamber and in the other place as well. Congratulations to all the work that you are doing in this area.



We should recognise the women who have lost the battle with ovarian cancer. It is one of those cancers that runs under the radar. It's wonderful to see that there is so much investment going into this area. Hopefully, like we've seen with breast cancer, where the rates of mortality have plummeted, and like we've seen with cervical cancer, where Australian research has been at the forefront of finding a vaccine for HPV, which therefore, again, has resulted in the plummeting of the incidence of cervical cancer, I'll be able to stand here in the chamber in future years to say that ovarian cancer has had an improvement in its outcomes, because 43 per cent survival at five years is not good enough.

Lastly, I'd like to say that I've been very proud to be part of a government that has continued to develop an economic plan and has maintained a AAA credit rating, and that we have a strong economic plan despite these external shocks, because we are resilient people and we made the right choice in May last year.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta):** I call the honourable member for Spence and welcome him back from the UN.

**Mr CHAMPION (Spence) (13:27):** Thank you, Deputy Speaker Vasta. You must be very prescient to know the topic of my speech, because I was going to say that it was a great honour to represent the parliament at the 74th United Nations General Assembly, along with you. Obviously we were well represented if I was there with you. I want to begin by thanking the post that we have in New York at the United Nations, particularly Ambassadors Gillian Bird and Mitch Fifield. We were privileged enough while we were there to see the transfer between these two ambassadors. Ambassador Bird had served five years at that mission; a very long stint. She did a great job representing our nation in what is a very complex multilateral forum. I'd also like to thank Ambassador Hockey for his kind assistance during our delegation. I'd like to thank all of the mission staff for putting up with us asking for briefings while they were busy on their committee work. We're particularly thankful to Peter Stone for looking after us and facilitating all the mechanics of our delegation visiting.

There is a tendency to take the multilateral institutions that were formed after the Second World War, after a period of total war, for granted. I think that all too often we think to ourselves that these things are permanent, that they're permanent fixtures, that they will exist whether we put a big effort in or a small effort in. That thought, which I think is there in the public, in our own national institutions and in this parliament, shouldn't be had. We should realise that this is a precious asset that was bequeathed to us by a generation of soldiers and statesmen, people who wanted a more peaceful, more just and more orderly world. In the limited time I have before 90-second statements, I want to say that there are some threats to that and we should be mindful of those threats.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta):** The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Solomon Electorate

**Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (13:30):** The Territorians turned out in force on the weekend for the Darwin Chinese New Year Festival. Well done to the Chung Wah Society, especially the lion dance troupe, who were incredible—they get better every year—and the Jade

Dragons. There was of course amazing Chinese food, including the return of the famous Chung Wah satees and food demonstrations by local chefs. Well done to them.

And well done to the Sri Lankan community. The Sri Lankan Australia Friendship Association put on a marvellous event for their independence day celebrations on Saturday night. There were incredible food and performances. Well done to them.

We're the capital of the north—as you're well aware, Deputy Speaker Vasta!—and the gateway to Asia. Air connectivity is essential, a key to our future, particularly to grow those people-to-people links. There has been some great news in recent times in that there'll be a Jetstar Asia flight connecting Darwin and Colombo in Sri Lanka. It's fantastic news. Let's make it work, Australia! Come up to Darwin. We have waterfalls, crocodiles, cold beer, national parks. It's an amazing place. Then you can duck over to another amazing place in Sri Lanka. In Darwin, the place that I'm so fortunate to represent, we have an amazing multicultural heritage, and we're all very proud of that.

#### **Noosa World Surfing Reserve**

**Mr LLEW O'BRIEN** (Wide Bay—Deputy Speaker) (13:31): Last Friday it was a real pleasure to join Phil Jarratt and his committee in the dedication of Noosa as the 10th world surfing reserve in the Noosa National Park. The Noosa World Surfing Reserve area covers the world-renowned and world-class point breaks, extending from Laguna Bay on Noosa Main Beach all the way around the beach break and the points to the north of Sunshine Beach.

World Surfing Reserves' mission statement is to proactively identify, designate and preserve 'outstanding waves, surf zones and surrounding environments around the world'. The World Surfing Reserves concept was launched in 2009 by the Save the Waves Coalition and National Surfing Reserves Australia. It provides a global model for preserving wave breaks and adjacent areas by recognising and protecting the key environmental, cultural, economic and community attributes of surfing areas. The Noosa beaches are iconic and well deserve this recognition.

It's been a long time in the making. In March 2015, World Surfing Reserves voted in support of Noosa's submission, which detailed the community's fight to protect its pristine coastline from pollution and rampant development and to highlight its famous surfing beaches. Noosa's surfing reserve is so inspirational that I went out and bought my first surfboard in 30 years, and I'm looking forward to trying it out.

#### **Paterson Electorate: Roads**

**Ms SWANSON** (Paterson) (13:33): I have here in my hands the hot-off-the-press Infrastructure Priority List from the independent—I am assured—Infrastructure Australia. I sincerely hope that this modest agency has not been politicised, but I have to ask. In my electorate, the Pacific Motorway—the key link between Sydney and Brisbane and between western New South Wales and the largest coal port in the world—is not even a high priority initiative; it's only a priority initiative. It hasn't moved for five years. When are we going to build the Raymond Terrace extension of this road? Looking at this document, it says itself that this is one of the main arterial roads in Australia. When is this going to happen? I am absolutely incandescent with rage about this decision.

As far as I'm concerned, at the moment, this list is hopeless. You have things like priorities and initiatives and projects. The language is confusing in the book. Why don't they design it

better and why don't they have a better look at some of the priorities that they've given? This is clearly not good enough, Infrastructure Australia. As for the New South Wales government, why don't you get on and do the business case, Gladys, instead of building stadiums?

### **Brighton & Seacliff Yacht Club**

**Ms FLINT** (Boothby—Government Whip) (13:34): The centenary year celebrations are continuing at the Brighton & Seacliff Yacht Club. On Sunday 2 February the club launched the book *Gold on Black*, celebrating 100 years, and I'm proud to be wearing gold on black today. I was delighted to address the many members who gathered for the book launch and to recognise the dedicated efforts of the club's book committee, who worked together for over a year to publish *Gold on Black*. Special thanks to the book committee members, Peter Gold, former commodore and life member; Jim Blake, former commodore and life member; Phil Scapens, rear commodore, who not only worked on the book but also emceed the book launch; and John Gratton and Rex Hunter, long-term club members.

Celebrations continued on 8 and 9 February with the centenary regatta that started from the jetty just as it did 100 years ago. Sincere congratulations to all at the club who have worked so hard to coordinate these activities, including Commodore Lisa Brock, Past Commodore Rob Turton, Vice Commodore Peter Woolman, Rear Commodore Phil Scapens and their committee members. I want to once again pay tribute to Commodore Lisa Brock, who has been a trailblazer for women in the club and last year became the first ever female commodore.

The Brighton & Seacliff Yacht Club has sailed into its 100th year stronger than ever. This is testament to the many hardworking volunteers who maintain the club itself and support the members; the men, women and families who sail and support the club; and our local community who support the club, restaurant and bar. Thank you and congratulations to you all.

### **Apprenticeships**

**Ms RYAN** (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:36): I rise today to draw the attention of the House to the trades crisis that we have in this country. Figures released today show that 140,000 apprentices have been lost under the watch of those opposite. This is an absolute crying shame. I taught in schools and taught young people who dreamt of being a tradesperson, dreamt about getting an apprenticeship as a plumber. And what do we find today? We find that those numbers are dropping. In Lalor, there are almost 400 fewer apprentices today than there were in September in 2013, and that is despite state government offering free TAFE to try and fill the gap left by this government doing nothing for seven years about our trashed TAFE sector.

I want to say this, because I think it's really important: this is not the time to give your mate Scott Cam a job, because he can't fix this. I'll tell you what can fix this: pulling together some people from the TAFE sector, from the industry sector and from business and having a good, strong conversation. This is not a culture war. This is about business thinking sometimes that there's a production line and off the end pops an apprentice or a tradesman. They don't. You need to put them on. You need to train them. Our young people deserve this; our country needs this. Please, Prime Minister, do better.

**Reid Electorate: Coronavirus**

**Dr MARTIN** (Reid) (13:38): Today I rise in support of the many Chinese Australian and Korean Australian businesses in my electorate of Reid who are facing significant challenges as a result of the outbreak of coronavirus. Many small businesses in Rhodes, Strathfield and Burwood have been impacted by lower customer numbers and fewer overseas visitors over the lunar new year. Businesses have also been impacted by disruptions to their supply chain on imported goods and materials from affected countries. I have written to the Treasurer and to the Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business in support of these businesses, and I also attended a round table discussion with the Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs to voice the concerns of our community.

I now call more broadly on our community to support Chinese Australian and Korean Australian businesses in the best way we can. This month I ask you, if you're dining out with family or friends or if you're out shopping in our area, to consider eating at our Chinese and Korean restaurants or buying goods from a shop that may be doing it tough. While usual good hygiene practices should, of course, be maintained, there is no reason to avoid public spaces. So, if you have not been exposed to coronavirus, please go out and dine out. Please remember: Burwood is open for business, as is Rhodes and as is Strathfield, and I encourage you to show your support for the multicultural communities at this challenging time.

**Global Security**

**Mr HUSIC** (Chifley) (13:39): In August last year, a shooter in El Paso took 22 lives and injured 24. Six months before that in Christchurch, to our nation's profound shame, one of our own took out 51 people and injured 49. Five months before that there were plots disrupted in London, France and Spain—all motivated by right-wing extremist ideology—and the threats appear to be surging supported by decentralised extremist networks online.

Our allies are taking this seriously as evidenced by the FBI that has recently elevated racially motivated violent extremism to a national threat priority. They've appeared before the House judiciary committee to say that they've outlined a number of steps that they're taking to combat this form of extremism. They're taking it seriously, along with the Department of Homeland Security that in September last year in its new counterterrorism strategy recognised white nationalism as a major threat.

They're taking it seriously. Our allies recognise that this is a growing threat. They recognise that anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are being used by these groups to justify terrorist acts both here and abroad. The person who's not taking it seriously is the home affairs minister who shouldn't have been playing word games yesterday. What he should be doing is ensuring there's a referral made to the PJCIS so the member for Canning, as that chair, can undertake a proper inquiry into this. *(Time expired)*

**Townsville: Floods**

**Mr THOMPSON** (Herbert) (13:41): I want to take this opportunity to reassure my community and the House that the federal government is fully supporting recovery efforts one year on from the Townsville floods. Unfortunately, there has been some misinformation doing the rounds of my community, suggesting that the local council is waiting on tens of millions of dollars worth of funding for recovery and repairs following last February's monsoon.

I want to confirm that all of the federal government's promised funding has been paid to the state government. That includes a \$109 million advance on 13 February last year just days after the disaster to restore essential services and provide hardship grants for individuals and small businesses. It also includes a \$242 million package in March, a month later, to cover all the local government areas affected by the floods, including Townsville. The federal government's 50 per cent share of \$121 million was transferred to the state government on 8 April.

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority, or QRA, is the state government authority for distributing these funds. The Townsville council applied for funding to the value of \$98.5 million, but the QRA determined that \$70 million of work was for assets not damaged during the monsoon or weren't eligible for funding. Council made further detailed submissions for category C and D funding in December that are currently being assessed. I want to encourage all levels of government—everyone involved—to work together to get our community back on track.

#### **Sydney Harbour Federation Trust**

**Ms STEGGALL** (Warringah) (13:42): The Commonwealth review of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust has cast quite the spotlight on the future of some of the most iconic parcels of land surrounding Sydney Harbour. The trust was established by former Prime Minister John Howard in 2001 to safeguard and restore various sites around the harbour.

My electorate of Warringah is proud to be home to two of the trust sites: Headland Park in Mosman and North Head Sanctuary in Manly. Situated at the gateway to Sydney Harbour, these iconic sites are places of remarkable Aboriginal, colonial and military heritage. They have irreplaceable cultural, environmental, historical and educational value and they are truly cherished by the local community. However, this current review has revealed that these precious community sites are at risk of being shut to the public and could result in private commercial developments blocking community access. The federal government must not let this happen.

The harbour trust should remain the custodian of the lands and continue as a Commonwealth entity. The harbour trust board should be modified and depoliticised with identified positions assigned to persons with experience and qualifications in Indigenous culture, military history, heritage and the environment. The Commonwealth should appropriately fund the trust on an ongoing basis, and these sites need to be protected from redevelopment. As places of national significance, they must be protected.

#### **Herbert Electorate: Pittsworth State High School**

**Dr McVEIGH** (Groom) (13:44): It was a great pleasure to attend the recent investiture of leaders at Pittsworth State High School on the Darling Downs. To be joined by other invited guests such as Ros Scotney, the former mayor of the Pittsworth Shire Council and previous councillor with Toowoomba Regional Council was equally a pleasure. I extend my congratulations to the principal, Mr James O'Neill, and his whole team on the young leaders they presented to our community.

Junior secondary leaders, including house leaders, were very impressive. Most particularly, seeing the senior leaders there on the day was indeed heartwarming: Lani Collins and Amy Sturgess, school captains; Deanna Macdonald and Mackenzie Rohde, vice captains; Meg

Fowler and Kirilly Mahon, Student Representative Council members; and the house leaders from Beauaraba, Condamine and Yandilla houses at this wonderful school. It was a great honour to present all of these young ladies with their leadership badges. I extend the best wishes of the whole Darling Downs community to them for this year. The school motto is 'prepared, productive, positive and proud'. Pittsworth State High School is most certainly shaping futures, as evidenced through these wonderful young ladies.

### **Dobell Electorate: Little Creek Cheese Factory**

**Ms McBRIDE** (Dobell) (13:45): There were cheesy smiles all round at the Little Creek Cheese factory in Wyong, when the 2020 Sydney Royal Cheese & Dairy Produce Show results were announced. The Central Coast's very own cheese factory in my home town, Wyong, Little Creek Cheese gained one gold, two silver and five bronze awards, in what was a very competitive event.

This family owned and operated handmade artisan cheese factory has been winning awards every year. This year they landed eight awards out of their 10 entries. Gold this year went to their club cheddar with cumin seed and silver to their club cheddar with peppercorn, and also their yogurt cheese balls with garlic and thyme. The bronze awards went to their club cheddar with fig and walnut, club cheddar with bacon, BBQ cheese, marinated goat salad cheese with garlic and dill, and marinated salad cheese, Aussie bush.

Sue Parsons, cheesemaker and owner, said, 'We are so proud of what we are producing right here in Wyong.' Her husband, Russell, said, 'We have been making award-winning cheese less than an hour from Sydney. This is the way cheese should taste. We make it with passion and love.'

The Little Creek Cheese factory is open from 10 am to 4 pm every day and has viewing windows to see the cheesemakers in action. This year they've introduced bookable experiences to show off just what they do at home in Wyong. Located within the Wyong Milk Factory, Little Creek Cheese is a must to visit. I want to congratulate Sue and Russell for their most recent achievements.

### **Hawkesbury River Mangrove Planting Project**

**Mr LEESER** (Berowra) (13:47): The Hawkesbury River is one of Australia's iconic treasures and one of the most beautiful features of the Berowra electorate. It's a wonderful ecosystem and is also enjoyed for recreation and commercial purposes. I'm delighted that \$18,000 of federal funding has been recently given for the planting of mangroves along the banks of the Hawkesbury.

This community project is being led by Hornsby Shire Council's ecologists and environmental scientists to protect and improve the estuary and build resilience in the estuarine foreshore through propagating and planting mangroves on the Hawkesbury. The project will be the first of its kind on the Hawkesbury and will enable the protection of the foreshore from erosion, the creation of habitat for fish and other wildlife, improvement of river water quality by removing sediment, and increasing fish stock in the waterway.

The Hawkesbury River mangrove planting project will involve collaborations between community groups, schools and the council. The grant will enable seed collecting and planting, the establishment of an onsite nursery in the estuary and the installation of sediment fences. Local school students will be given the opportunity to participate in the project, with

the project being used to educate students about the importance of mangroves in estuary management.

Planting mangroves contributes to carbon storage as carbon stocks build up in mangrove areas from the accumulation of organic matter such as dead leaves and branches. Protecting and increasing the resilience of the Hawkesbury through the mangrove planting project will ensure that this unique waterway on the edge of metropolitan Sydney can be enjoyed and utilised for leisure and industry for generations to come.

### **Aged Care**

**Ms WELLS** (Lilley) (13:48): Australia's aged-care system is in crisis. There is now not one part of our aged-care system that has not been compromised by the mismanagement of this government across seven years. A national crisis like this does not appear out of thin air. It takes years of mismanagement and years of policies focused on cuts rather than compassion for us to get to the dire straits that we are in now, and that system has rotted from the top. The Prime Minister himself was the architect of almost \$2 billion worth of cuts to aged care when he was Treasurer, and now under his leadership the neglect and abuse of older Australians in aged care is rife.

I have recently spoken with two nurses from my electorate of Lilley, and between them they have 86 years of experience in aged care—about 84 years more experience than the member for Ryan over there.

One nurse told me it was commonplace for one registered nurse to be responsible for 250 residents. People are getting left in beds, not getting toileted, not getting medication when they need it. And when she raised her concerns, they said, 'That is just the full-time load at the moment.' Another nurse told us residents are forced to pay \$45 for a shower—\$45 for a shower!—under this government and the way that they manage this sector. The company she works for is cutting even more staff. It is not good enough. Our older Australians built this country; they are overdue some respect and some dignity. They are not what this Treasurer calls them—that is, 'a burden'.

### **Fairfax Electorate: Local Sporting Champions**

**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (13:50): Everybody in this parliament knows that I represent the most important electorate in the country. But there's a hidden secret they don't know about.

**Mr Pasin:** Such a modest member, by the way!

**Mr TED O'BRIEN:** It is not my modesty, but it is true. We are also the greatest sporting region in the country. If the Sunshine Coast had represented themselves as a country at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, they would have come fifth. 'How do we do it,' you ask? Well, we do it by supporting young athletes at the grassroots level.

Thanks to the Morrison government, we have the Local Sporting Champions program. It is a grants scheme. It's open to anyone between the ages of 12 and 18. The government pays up to \$750 to help young athletes compete at state, national or international competitions, and it's that sort of support that makes Australian sportspeople great. It all starts at the grassroots. It starts with the government doing its bit. And it starts with us knowing that our local communities can make it work—not just in our streets or in our paddocks, but out where they

can actually earn the medals, and that's where the country also gains. So, God bless the Sunny Coast and God bless sport.

#### **Small Business: Bushfires**

**Mr CLARE** (Blaxland) (13:51): A couple of weeks ago I told the story in here of Paul Parker, the firefighter from Nelligen who gave the Prime Minister a mouthful, and I mentioned that the pub he drinks at had received phone calls from people all across Australia wanting to put money on the bar for Paul. After I made that speech, I got a call from the bloke who runs the pub, the Steampacket Hotel. His name is Joel Alvey, and last week I went down to Nelligen to meet with him. He told me two things: first, in the past week a lot more money has been put on the bar for Paul Parker and, second, the pub's in trouble and might have to close.

In summer, the pub is normally full—it's full of people from the caravan park across the road; hundreds of people go to the pub for a feed and a beer—but this summer it has been empty, and it has been empty because of the bushfires. The caravan park was first evacuated three months ago, on 26 November, and it has been evacuated three times since. No customers means the pub's in real trouble. They need help. They don't want a loan; Joel tells me he already has enough debt. He needs a small grant, but he has been told he's not eligible for it. If he doesn't get it, he tells me the pub might have to close. This is a small family business run by Joel, his wife, his mum, his dad and a couple of staff. It's the sort of business this government says it cares about, but this business feels like it has been abandoned. I ask the Prime Minister: please help this small business, and businesses like it, smashed by the fires.

#### **Flynn Electorate: CQUniversity**

**Mr O'DOWD** (Flynn—Deputy Nationals Whip) (13:53): Thursday 20 February was a big day for the CQUniversity, especially the Gladstone Marina campus in my electorate. They celebrated the opening of a new trade centre, a hair and beauty training salon, and aged-care training facilities. These are all brand new facilities that we opened. Present was the chancellor of the university, Mr John Abbott, AM; vice-chancellor, Nick Klomp; Professor Owen Nevin, the VC of the Gladstone campus; and the chairman of the Gladstone Foundation, Mr Tim Griffin OAM. Ten million dollars of the funding came from the Australian government, and I thank the government very much for that, while \$2.5 million was from CQUniversity funds and \$500,000 was from the Gladstone Foundation—a total of \$13 million.

The Trades Training Centre is a 3,000-square-metre shed containing workshop rooms—for electrical, autoelectrical and mechanical trades—and new teaching classrooms; an aged-care training facility; and a hair and beauty training salon of 250 square metres. This will help our skill shortage in central Queensland and help to train locals for local jobs.

#### **Centrelink**

**Mr DICK** (Oxley) (13:55): The Morrison government has been secretly closing down Centrelink offices around Australia. They have been doing this without public consultation. From Mornington and Newport in Victoria to Newcastle and Tweed Heads in New South Wales, local communities are waking up to find, in shock, that their Centrelink office has closed. The government are not informing the public of these plans and are leaving



jobseekers, the needy, pensioners and other vulnerable Australians out in the cold. My question to the government today is: how many Centrelink offices are you planning to close? Government services minister Stuart Robert must answer this question. I know, in my own community, the offices of Redbank, Goodna and Inala are under threat. Today I'll be writing to the minister, demanding that he keep these offices open, and I encourage every single member on this side of the chamber to hold this rotten government to account. I know the member for Dunkley, the member for Richmond and the shadow minister are standing up for Centrelink users in this country.

We all know what you on the other side think of people who visit Centrelink. We stand by them. We'll continue to support them. This minister has form when it comes to neglect in his portfolio. There's robodebt—we don't hear much from the government anymore about that. There's the underspend in the NDIS. And now there's the closure of Centrelink offices. How low will this government go? We stand for the vulnerable in Australia. Those opposite stand for closing down Centrelink offices. *(Time expired)*

#### **Barker Electorate: Kingston SE RSL Sub-Branch**

**Mr PASIN** (Barker) (13:56): I'm pleased to inform the House that, last Sunday, the Kingston SE RSL Sub-branch celebrated its centenary. Like so many RSL sub-branches around the country, they have supported returned veterans and their families since their establishment. The Kingston RSL was established when 10 returned soldiers met at the local council chambers in February 1920 and proposed the establishment of the sub-branch of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Imperial League. Meetings were initially held in council chambers on the last Saturday of every month at around 3 pm. Over time, that space became far too small, so they moved to the old town hall before purchasing their own premises in 1955.

The sub-branch was an integral part of the social fabric of the regional community, with horseraces, card parties, dances, balls, football carnivals, regattas, beach carnivals, and picnics—even an ugly man contest. I think I would have taken that out if I'd been there! The Kingston RSL supported ex-servicemen and their families socially and economically.

More recently, RSLs have helped us better focus on commemorative activities. Many have remarked on the growing popularity of Anzac Day parades, with growing attendance across the country. It is a credit to RSLs like the Kingston sub-branch that our younger generations continue to unite out of respect for and to support our veterans. Congratulations to the Kingston RSL on a fantastic 100 years.

#### **Petition: Closure of Mornington Peninsula Centrelink Office**

**Ms MURPHY** (Dunkley) (13:58): Following the exposure of Minister Robert's secret decision to shut down the Mornington Medicare and Centrelink office, the Mornington Community Information and Support Centre organised a petition to get this decision overturned. More than 2,600 locals have signed it, and I'm here today to present it.

According to local community groups, about 800 people a week access that Centrelink and Medicare centre. The decision to close it, under pressure, led to an announcement by Minister Hunt that there would be a replacement service, a permanent 'continuation of Medicare and Centrelink services in Mornington' of 15 hours a week. We now have information from Services Australia that says it is a three-month contract—that's not a permanent service—and

the 15 hours a week is outsourced. There are nine FTE front-of-house positions at the moment, to be replaced by one part-time outsourced person to help people get on to the computer. An elderly woman waited three hours last week at Mornington Centrelink; what's going to happen to her? What's going to happen to people in my community that go to Frankston Centrelink, which is already overwhelmed and which is going to be further overwhelmed to take up the slack? It's not good enough. I present the petition.

**The SPEAKER:** The document will be forwarded to the Standing Committee on Petitions for its consideration. It will be accepted subject to confirmation by the committee that it conforms to the standing orders. In accordance with standing order 43, the time for members' statements has concluded.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### Centrelink

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong) (14:00): My question is to the Prime Minister. Government lawyers have told the Federal Court that the government does not owe Centrelink recipients a duty of care. Is this the government's position?

**Mr ROBERT** (Fadden—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services ) (14:00): I thank the member for his question. Let me say categorically that we will not be lectured on duty of care by those opposite, who presided over 1,200 deaths at sea. Those opposite have the hypocrisy to walk in here—

**The SPEAKER:** The minister will resume his seat. I would just say to the Manager of Opposition Business that I was about to intervene. I would just say to the minister that it was a very specific question and he needs to address the policy topic of the question. The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order.

**Mr Burke:** I was also going to say that the language of the minister went well beyond what is normally acceptable in this chamber. It would certainly assist the House if he withdrew.

**The SPEAKER:** I didn't hear everything the minister said because the interjections were so loud.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** It's not helping, if you expect me to deal with the point of order, that the interjections continue. I am just making the point that I didn't hear everything the minister said.

**Mr ROBERT:** I withdraw.

**The SPEAKER:** The minister has withdrawn. The minister has the call.

**Mr ROBERT:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. There is no doubt that Australia supports a generous social welfare system as part of our social safety net. The government's primary service delivery arm, Services Australia, always aspires to provide a supportive customer experience. The Australian community expects the agency to be responsible stewards of taxpayer funds and ensure people are only paid what they are entitled to.

**The SPEAKER:** The minister will resume his seat for a second. The member for Maribyrnong on a point of order.

**Mr Shorten:** On direct relevance. My question was: was a duty of care—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Maribyrnong can resume his seat. I've got the question. It was, as I said, a very specific question. I'm just saying to the minister that he is allowed a brief introduction. He's been doing that for not many seconds at all actually, given the way the answer started, but he will need to bring himself to the specific question or wind up his answer.

**Mr ROBERT:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The member's question goes to technical legal matters that are currently before the court. It would be inappropriate to comment further when the matter is under active judicial review.

### **Economy**

**Mrs ARCHER** (Bass) (14:03): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House on how the Morrison government's plans for a stronger economy and a more resilient Australia are helping our nation address local and global challenges? Is the Prime Minister aware of the risks of alternative approaches?

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:03): I thank the member for Bass for her question. It is very true that Australia has been confronting a large number of challenges, particularly over recent months and, indeed, years. Whether it is the drought, whether it is the floods of a few years ago up in North Queensland, whether it is the fires that have ravaged the country over the black summer that we've been experiencing or whether it is the coronavirus, which I understand is causing great anxiety in the Australian community, what is important as we've faced up to each of these significant challenges is that we have plans that we have been putting in place over many years to ensure that, at times like this, Australia—the Commonwealth government—can act together with the states and territories to ensure we can protect the safety of Australians and provide the response that is necessary to these disasters.

It enables us, as we come here to this dispatch box, whether it's me, the Minister for Health, the minister for emergency management, the minister for drought, the minister for transport or anyone else, to say to the Australian people that we will get through this. We will get through the challenges of the coronavirus, just as we have been getting through the challenges of the drought, just as we've been able to put in place the \$2 billion national bushfire recovery fund, supported by the National Bushfire Recovery Agency, and we will do it without a tax. We're able to put the plans in place that ensure we have strong financial management and we have strong investments, whether they're in our health system, whether they're in our emergency management system or whether they're in our drought programs or our infrastructure projects going forward, and we take the tax burden off Australians, whether they're income tax payers on an individual income or, indeed, small businesses, ensuring that small businesses get paid more quickly under the arrangements we've put in place on government purchasing. All of this is designed to have plans in place to ensure you can deal with the crises as they present to the Australian government.

I'm asked about alternatives. There has been much said over the course of the last week, since the Leader of the Opposition's announcement about his target for 2050. The great problem with his announcement is that he does not have a plan for how he will achieve that. There is no plan. There are no costs. There is no countenancing of what the costs would be.

I'll tell you what: when I put out a plan, as I have, I put to the Australian people jobs, the cost of living, support for rural and regional Australians, the safety of Australians. That's how I construct a plan. This Leader of the Opposition has no plan and, as a result, no clue.

*Mr Perrett interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Just before I call the member for Maribyrnong, I mention the member for Moreton several times most days. I'm just telling him: no more interjections from him today.

*Dr Freeland interjecting—*

*Mr Gosling interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Macarthur can cease interjecting as well. And the member for Solomon is warned. I call the member for Maribyrnong.

### Welfare

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong) (14:07): My question is to the Prime Minister. The government's social security law guide, which was released on 10 February this year, states: Australian Government employees have a duty of care to the public when performing their duties.

But government lawyers, on 14 February this year, stated, in the robodebt class action, that the policy is that the government does not owe Centrelink recipients a duty of care. Prime Minister, does the government owe a duty of care to Centrelink recipients?

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:07): I'll tell you about the duty of care we have to the Australian people, including those who depend on their social services payments, which enable them to deal with the great difficulties in their lives and particularly at a time like this—at a time like this when the country is facing some very difficult challenges. I refer specifically to the impacts of the bushfires and the coronavirus. It means more and more Australians, because of the automatic stabilisers of social security payments which go to those who have been impacted by the economic shocks that we're now experiencing—what they deserve from a government is to be able to pay their bills, and we can ensure that we can make the payments that we can make to them, as we have. We ensure we do that. One of the ways as a government is being able to ensure that people can rely on the services of the essentials that the government delivers, whether it's their Centrelink payments, other support payments or their aged-care payments. You need to know how to manage money, and that means that, when you're making payments to those who deserve them, you pay them what they're entitled to.

### Infrastructure

**Mr CHRISTENSEN** (Dawson) (14:09): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development. Will the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House how the Morrison-McCormack government's infrastructure plan is creating jobs and driving the economy through the delivery of vital projects in regional Australia, particularly in my seat of Dawson? Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr McCORMACK** (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of the Nationals) (14:09): I thank the member for Dawson for his very timely question. Indeed, in Dawson, infrastructure projects

are driving jobs. They are driving growth in that fine area of North Queensland represented by that fine Queenslander himself.

I'll talk about the Walkerston Bypass—just getting a bit granular with this: it's 207 jobs. It was included on the Infrastructure Priority List today—a very good document.

*Ms Swanson interjecting—*

*Ms Ryan interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The members for Paterson and Lalor are warned!

**Mr McCORMACK:** And they should be warned—

**The SPEAKER:** No—

**Mr McCORMACK:** and they should be told to go home and read this document—read it tonight, tomorrow night and the next night, because it's a great document. I recommend page 155, where it talks about regional roads—

**Ms Swanson:** It's a disgrace, a complete disgrace!

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Paterson will leave under standing order 94(a).

*The member for Paterson then left the chamber.*

**The SPEAKER:** The Deputy Prime Minister has the call. He will continue.

**Mr McCORMACK:** I recommend that page, on the regional roads network in Queensland, and I know the Mayor of Flinders Shire, from Hughenden, Jane McNamara, came all the way down to hear the launch of this national infrastructure priority list from IA.

On the Mackay Ring Road—the member for Dawson had a novel way of making sure that this got funded—stage 1 has 543 jobs. It's all about jobs—1½ million jobs created since we came to government. The Mackay Northern Access Upgrade has 154 jobs, so there are 154 families benefiting from that work, and small businesses feeding into that process, making sure that they benefit—

*Mr Morrison interjecting—*

**Mr McCORMACK:** And that is a plan, Prime Minister; indeed it is a plan. It's a blueprint for our success. It's unlocking our potential. Whether it's in North Queensland regional areas or urban Australia matters not—everyone is benefiting from the infrastructure rollout. Did I mention it is \$100 billion over the next decade—\$100 billion! That's a record. That is a record amount of infrastructure that we are funding, and we can do it because the Treasurer knows how to balance the books.

Those opposite—they don't know how to balance the books. We have to go back to 1989 before we even find when they last produced a surplus.

But we know how to produce surpluses. We know how to balance the books. We know how to roll out infrastructure, and we're doing it, in every way, in every state, in every territory. We're making sure that Australians have the infrastructure that they need, want, expect and deserve. We're investing in the Bruce Highway Upgrade program—already 51 bridges and 27 new rest stops. That's protecting people on that road—122 kilometres of safer roadsides, building into the small businesses of Dawson and beyond. That's delivery. That's delivery in action. That's what we're doing, because we've got a plan. We've got a blueprint for the future. Get on board!

**The SPEAKER:** The Deputy Prime Minister's time has concluded. Again I'd just assure the Deputy Prime Minister: his microphone's in good working order—so far!

### **Aged Care**

**Ms COLLINS** (Franklin) (14:12): My question is to the Prime Minister. Why is the Prime Minister privatising aged-care assessments?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister for Health.

**Mr Bowen:** Is there any question you will take?

**The SPEAKER:** Members on my left!

**Mr HUNT** (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (14:13): We reject the proposition. We reject the proposition put forward by the member. That is inaccurate, it is untrue and it is false. I will make this point, though: what we are doing is following the advice of David Tune and the Tune report, which is to ensure that we are having a system which delivers better outcomes for patients who are seeking to enter residential aged care or have some form of aged-care assessment, and that's exactly what we're doing. In terms of the implementation, we'll work with the states, and I make this offer now, ahead of COAG at the end of the week: we are looking forward to working with the states in a flexible and a constructive fashion.

But I am very interested, because what the opposition is effectively saying is that they are going to abandon the practice that they had when they were in government of using non-government providers to assist with the assessment process—that's the change. Or are they not? So here is the question for the opposition to take away from this: are they now saying that they would abandon all of those current non-government providers—which were in place when they were in government and which they did not propose to change at the election—or is this a case of simply making it up as they go along? We know one thing: when they had the opportunity, only a few months ago—and the current shadow minister was the shadow minister going into the election—and a chance to invest in aged care, what did they provide for residential care?

*Mr Brian Mitchell interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Lyons.

**Mr HUNT:** Nothing. What did they provide for home care? Nothing. They know that, we know that and the Australian public knows that.

### **DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER** (14:14): Just before I call the Leader of the Greens, I would like to inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon members of the parliamentary delegation from Germany, led by Mr Wolfgang Kubicki, Vice-President of the Bundestag, and accompanied by the ambassador. On behalf of the House, I extend a very warm welcome to you.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Economy

**Mr BANDT** (Melbourne—Leader of the Australian Greens) (14:15): My question is to the Prime Minister. The climate crisis is hitting the economy hard with agriculture and tourism bearing the brunt, and now the coronavirus is hurting us as well. This is on top of the underemployment crisis in our country, plus wage stagnation and an inequality crisis. With a real risk that the economy is heading towards recession and the Reserve Bank running out of bullets, will you back a Green New Deal to fight the threat of recession? Specifically, will you lift public sector wages to boost wage growth across the economy, lift Newstart by at least \$95 a week to lift retail spending and invest \$6 billion to remove the grid bottlenecks holding back renewable investments and grow construction and manufacturing jobs?

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Members on my right! Just before I call the Prime Minister—I'm going to allow the question, so the Leader of the Greens can relax—but I'm just making the point with these 45-second questions the complaint often is there's a lot of preamble. I'm just flagging where there's a whole series of questions, and there were quite a number there, it does get close to the point where it would be better put on the *Notice Paper*, given the Prime Minister only has three minutes to answer them all. I will allow the question.

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:16): It will be a great relief to the Australian people that the government does not intend to adopt the economic policies of the Greens. I can't speak for the Labor Party, because they're known to like quite a few of the Greens' ideas when it comes to economic policy, and so I don't think they can provide that same assurance.

What our government will continue to do is lower taxes and to support small and family businesses around the country to ensure that we continue to expand our trade markets all around the world. We've seen trade deals for our country expand from 26 per cent of our trade to over 70 per cent of our trade, and we're heading to 90 per cent. We're going to continue to build the infrastructure that is necessary to grow our economy; \$100 billion is the plan that we've been rolling out now for many years. We will continue to invest in the skills that Australians need to ensure that they can be part of the vibrant economy that we know is ahead for this country when you get the right policy settings in place. We will continue to ensure that we put in place the fiscal discipline that ensures we treat taxpayers' money with great integrity and ensures that we are spending it on the things that matter to Australians on the ground—building their infrastructure, supporting their communities and giving them the opportunity to get ahead.

We will also invest in the climate resilience of this country going forward. We will continue to support, through myriad investments, the energy sector and, more broadly, investments in renewable energy. I'm pleased to let the member know, as he raised it specifically, that throughout 2019 the government's Renewable Energy Target and Emissions Reduction Fund carbon markets delivered more than 50 million tonnes of emissions reductions. This is expected to ramp up to more than 59 million tonnes in this calendar year, in 2020, I understand. This was a record year for carbon markets in Australia. Total renewable

investment grew strongly to a record of 6.3 gigawatts in 2019, and it's expected 2020 will achieve similar results.

Our policies are growing the Australian economy. Our policies have led to the creation of more than 1.5 million jobs in this country, while cutting taxes and relieving the burden on the cost of living for Australians. Energy prices have fallen. Electricity prices have fallen 3½ per cent in the last year as a result of the many measures we've put in place to ensure that customers get a fair deal. That includes legislation passed through this parliament—the big, thick legislation—which was championed by the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction and which those opposite have always wanted to have a bet on each way every time on that legislation. They were for it; they were against it; they were for it; they were against it. (*Time expired*)

### Economy

**Mr VAN MANEN** (Forde—Chief Government Whip) (14:19): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer remind the House why the Morrison government's responsible fiscal management plan is keeping our economy resilient while we meet the threat of uncertain economic challenges? Is the Treasurer aware of any alternative approaches which would undermine our capacity to do so?

**Mr FRYDENBERG** (Kooyong—Treasurer) (14:20): I thank the member for Forde for his question. I acknowledge his background in business and the fact that across his electorate there are more than 17,000 small businesses that are benefiting from our instant asset write-off, like RAMS Autocare in Beenleigh, which I visited recently.

When we came to government, we inherited an economy where unemployment was 5.7 per cent and rising, investment was falling and the budget was deep in the red, with a deficit of \$48½ billion. That was around five years after the GFC and the Labor Party had enjoyed iron ore prices at around \$180 a tonne, or more than twice what they are today. In contrast, since we've come to government we've helped to create more than 1½ million new jobs, legislated more than \$300 billion of tax cuts and delivered the first balanced budget in 11 years. That has helped build the resilience of the Australian economy to respond to drought, to respond to trade tensions between China and the US and to deal with the fires and the coronavirus.

I'm asked whether there are any alternative approaches. Yesterday we heard that the member for Rankin's alternative to a balanced budget was a 'wellbeing budget'. I want you to picture this alternative: the member for Rankin is about to deliver his first wellbeing budget. He walks, barefoot, into the chamber, robes flowing. Incense is burning. Beads in one hand and speech in the other hand. Gone are the seats, gone are the benches, and in their place meditation mats for all. The member for Rankin stands up to address the chamber, to announce that his wellbeing tour has gone national. Hugs for all! But there's a warning to every Australian: when the member for Rankin provides them with a hug and a kiss, he's going to take away their wallets.

### Economy

**Dr CHALMERS** (Rankin) (14:23): My question is to the Treasurer. Why doesn't the Treasurer, in these long and predictable answers, ever acknowledge that the domestic economy was already floundering before the coronavirus, with weak consumption, business investment going backwards and a big fall in construction?



**Mr FRYDENBERG** (Kooyong—Treasurer) (14:23): In December last year no-one was talking about the coronavirus, but what happened to unemployment? It fell to 5.1 per cent. What happened in the September quarter last year before the coronavirus? Household disposable income, off the back of our tax cuts, had its biggest increase in a decade. What happened to retail sales volumes in December last year before the coronavirus? They had their biggest jump since 2018.

The reality is that before the coronavirus, as the Reserve Bank governor had said, the economy had reached a gentle turning point and Australians could be confident about their economic future. Why? Because the current account surplus is occurring for the first time in more than 40 years, because we have the lowest welfare dependency in more than 30 years, because we've delivered the biggest tax cuts in more than 20 years and because the budget is back in balance for the first time in 11 years. Why is it that the member for Rankin and the Labor Party are always talking down the Australian economy? The reality is that investment is stronger, unemployment is lower, taxes are lower and there's more money in Australians' pockets as a result of this coalition government.

### Energy

**Mr SIMMONDS** (Ryan) (14:25): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. Will the minister outline to the House how the Morrison government's clear plan for energy security and emission reduction is able to provide a stronger economy and a more resilient Australia? And is the minister aware of any alternative approaches that would undermine this certainty?

**Mr TAYLOR** (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (14:25): I thank the member for Ryan for his question. I've seen firsthand his very strong focus on affordable, reliable energy for his constituents and his small businesses as we bring emissions down, and we're delivering. As you just heard from the Prime Minister, we've seen a 3½ per cent reduction in electricity prices and retail prices in the last year—four consecutive quarters for the first time since records began. We saw just this week that domestic emissions are down 2.3 per cent year on year and over three per cent in the electricity market. We're investing in new transmission and in storage projects like Snowy 2.0 and the Marinus Link to make sure we've got a secure, reliable grid.

I was asked about alternatives. The alternative is a target without a plan. They can't say what it would cost; they can't say how they're going to keep electricity secure and reliable in our electricity grid. It feels like groundhog day. I'm reminded of 2010, when Julia Gillard, just before the election, on election eve, said, 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.' On Sunday, the Leader of the Opposition failed to rule out a carbon tax seven times on *Insiders*. Then, on Monday, the member for Hunter failed to rule out a carbon tax on Sky News. Then, on Tuesday, the shadow minister for energy failed to rule out a carbon tax at a doorstep. Then again today, Wednesday, the Leader of the Opposition dodged questions on a carbon tax on FIVEaa.

We know why they are sidestepping these questions. This week, in the absence of a plan, the members opposite have had a CSIRO report. Mr Speaker, do you know what's in that report? That report says that their target will require a \$273 carbon tax, raising the price of electricity, the price of gas, the price of petrol and the price of diesel, and slashing agriculture and other industries—a massive carbon tax. It's groundhog day. We know how this ends; we

just don't know when. When will the Australian people find out that Labor are bringing back their carbon tax?

*Mr Gosling interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Just before I call the member for Sydney, I need the member for Solomon to come back to his seat. I'm going to request that he withdraw a grossly unparliamentary remark. I suggest to the member for Solomon that he move as quickly as he can, otherwise he can just keep going straight out the door.

**Mr Gosling:** I withdraw.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you.

### **Apprenticeships**

**Ms PLIBERSEK** (Sydney) (14:29): My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, why have nearly 140,000 apprentice and trainee places been lost under this seven-year-old government?

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:29): I thank the member for her question about apprentices and the trends that we're seeing in apprenticeship numbers. I am pleased to inform the House that, in the 2019-20 budget, the government provided \$585 million for skills measures to implement long-needed reforms in the VET sector, and we also created up to 80,000 new apprenticeship places through our new incentive scheme, which was kicked off on 1 July, 2019, which is after the period of the trends that the member is referring to. So the funding the government put in place to deal with these issues commenced from 1 July 2019. Apprentices and their employers have readily taken up this new scheme, with almost 6,000 additional apprentices signed up in just the first six months.

I note that, at the same time we have increased the funding to the VET sector, states and territories, which are responsible for the delivery of VET, including TAFE funding, have withdrawn their funding for VET from \$4 billion in 2013 to—on the most recent figures we have—\$3.1 billion in 2017. So the Commonwealth is stepping up and meeting our commitments to ensure we get more apprentices in place and to address the issues that the member has raised.

But I do note, to compare and contrast, that, when the Labor Party was last in power, between 2011 and 2013, Labor cut employer incentives to businesses that employ apprentices nine times, totalling \$1.2 billion. When the Leader of the Opposition was Deputy Prime Minister, Labor cut \$241 million from incentives to encourage employers to take on apprentices. In 2012-13, the number of apprentices and trainees in training collapsed under Labor by 22 per cent, or 110,000. I'm not going to cop lectures from a Labor Party that doesn't know how to manage money and doesn't know how to run an economy and does not have a plan.

*Ms Ryan interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Lalor will cease interjecting.

### **National Security**

**Mr HASTIE** (Canning) (14:31): My question is to the Attorney-General. Will the Attorney outline to the House how the Morrison government's legislative action is keeping

Australians safe as part of its stable and certain plans to strengthen our national security? Is the Attorney aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (14:32): I thank the member for his question and his excellent work on the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence and Security. There are 19 tranches of national security legislation that have been passed, as I noted yesterday, and of course yesterday the director-general of ASIO said that the critical counter-encryption legislation was used just 10 days after it was passed, in his words, to 'prevent a real risk of injury to Australians'. He also noted in that speech:

Encrypted communications damage intelligence coverage in nine out of 10 priority counter terrorism cases.

So we have a situation where, 10 days after those critical laws were passed, which prevented a real risk of injury to Australians, they were used. Five days before they were passed, the shadow Attorney-General would not support that bill. There were two reasons that he offered for the failure to support the bill. The first was that counter-encryption, in his view, should only be for terrorism and child sex offences and should not be extended to drug importation, serious fraud, murder and espionage. The second reason that he offered is that he did not support state police being able to issue under the counter-encryption system. I can inform the House today that I am advised by our departments that state police are actively using this system. Had our version of the bill not passed, had we not stood our ground, they would have been impeded from doing so.

I'm asked about alternatives, and the alternatives are very clearly represented by the position of the shadow Attorney-General. He wanted laws passed which would not have allowed counter-encryption for espionage offences. That was his position. And we now find out that the same person who said that the laws were not fit to pass parliament, the same person who does not believe these laws should be used for espionage operations, wants to be—can you believe it?—the leader of the Right faction of the Labor Party. Presumably, that's because Karl Marx is no longer available to fit into that position. In fact, one Labor member is quoted as saying that, on social and national security issues, the shadow Attorney-General 'is beyond Left'. I'm not so much interested in how he wants to be the leader of the right-wing faction of the Labor Party; I'm interested to know: how did the shadow Attorney-General end up in the Right faction to begin with? Did he just walk into the wrong room, sit down next to the member for Hunter and say, 'This is a nice chair; I think I might stay for the next 10 years'? Can I offer this observation, Mr Speaker: to protect Australia's national security, the person to determine your position is not someone who is 'beyond Left'.

### **Community Sport Infrastructure Grant Program**

**Mr ALBANESE** (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:35): My question is to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has claimed his office's only involvement in the corrupt sports rorts scheme was to pass along information. So why has the Audit Office told the Senate today that there were 136 emails about sports rorts going back and forth between the Prime Minister's office and Senator McKenzie's office in under six months?

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:35): Neither I nor my office were the decision-makers in the process that governs the sports grants program. The decision-maker was, as has been rightly identified through the Audit Office

processes and other reviews, the former sports minister. As I actually stated at the National Press Club when asked about these matters, what prime ministers have always done is support their colleagues, because—

*Mr Brendan O'Connor interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Gorton is warned.

**Mr MORRISON:** I trust the judgement of my colleagues about knowing what's best for their communities. I know that the member for Petrie knows what's best for his community. I know that the member for Boothby knows what's best for her community and that the member for Lindsay knows what's best for her community. And I listen closely to our communities right across the country—

*Mr Brian Mitchell interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Lyons is warned. The Prime Minister will resume his seat. The Leader of the Opposition on point of order.

**Mr Albanese:** The point of order goes to relevance. It was a very clear question about the 136 emails. It wasn't about—

**The SPEAKER:** I will just ask the Leader of the Opposition to resume his seat. As you know, I listen very carefully to the questions. I believe the Prime Minister's completely in order because of the preamble that said 'claims his office was only involved in' et cetera. The Prime Minister, essentially, reiterated that at the start of the answer and is now elaborating on that very point.

**Mr Albanese:** On the point of order, Mr Speaker, the first part of the question did go to his office's and the Prime Minister's claim he was passing on information. As for the members, the member for Lindsay wasn't elected at the time! That's one of the members who has just been mentioned, and that's why this—

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

*Mr Albanese interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the House on a point of order.

**Mr Porter:** The Leader of the Opposition said something that he knows needs to be withdrawn.

**Mr Dreyfus:** Rubbish!

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Isaacs will leave under standing order 94(a). The Manager of Opposition Business is seeking the call.

*The member for Isaacs then left the chamber.*

*Government members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Members on my right! The Manager of Opposition Business is entitled to seek the call without the member for Isaacs bellowing between us. If anyone is sympathetic, they're welcome to follow him—it's voluntary, you know.

**Mr Albanese:** Speaker, I refer to the various precedents where there is a difference between allegations that are made personally against a member and a description of a scheme or of government behaviour.

**The SPEAKER:** I'll just say I heard the Leader of the Opposition very clearly. He essentially reiterated the point he'd made in his question about the scheme. I've studied that very carefully, because he's gone very close to the line—leaned over it, almost, a couple of times—but not crossed it, in some of the motions. But I'm saying to the Leader of the Opposition that he made the point himself about what the first part of the question said. If he doesn't want the Prime Minister to address that, he shouldn't have had it in the question. But it doesn't mean that you can stand up on points of order and start trying to correct what you see as factual matters. You can do that in other forms of the House. The Prime Minister has the call.

**Mr MORRISON:** Mr Speaker, I'm happy to take the Leader of the Opposition's interjection, because what I know about the member for Lindsay—even if she wasn't in this place—is she knew what was right for her community. And guess what, Mr Speaker?

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**Mr MORRISON:** The people of Lindsay agree with me, because they elected the member for Lindsay because the member for Lindsay knows what's best for her community. Now the Leader of the Opposition may think you're not allowed to consult with communities—

*Honourable members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Members on both sides!

**Mr MORRISON:** He may think that those who are outside of this place have no knowledge of what's right for their communities. But on our side we understand that people who have a deep understanding of their community are in a very good position to advocate. So whether we're members or anyone else, our office made representations, as did I, on what was in the best interests of those programs and in the best interests of those communities, but we were not the decision-maker. As I said at the National Press Club, my office provided information based on the representations made to us, including information about other funding options or programs relevant to project proposals. But I can tell you what smells about Leader of the Opposition. What smells about the Leader of the Opposition is he—

**The SPEAKER:** I'm going to say to the Prime Minister, even though this question had a preamble, it didn't go to any alternative policies. Ministers who've been asked about alternative policies today have been at pains to point out that they've been asked about alternatives. This is not an opportunity to go beyond the subject matter that was in the question.

**Mr MORRISON:** So I've set out the role that my office played. All I know is that, when the Leader of the Opposition was a minister, he threw the rulebook away and knowingly funded ineligible projects. Do you want to talk about corruption?

### **DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER (14:41):** I'd like to inform the House we have present in the gallery this afternoon Mr David Pisoni, the South Australian Minister for Innovation and Skills. On behalf of the House, I extend a very warm welcome to you.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### National Security

**Mr VASTA** (Bonner) (14:42): My question is to the Minister for Home Affairs. Will the minister outline to the House how the Morrison government is protecting Australian families from the threat posed by dangerous noncitizen criminals through its stable and certain border security plans? Is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr DUTTON** (Dickson—Minister for Home Affairs) (14:42): Thank you to the member for Bonner, who works very hard in his electorate to make sure that he can keep his constituents safe. That's the work of all of those members of the House. We wanted to make sure—and, in fact, we promised at the last election—that we had a plan, that we would do whatever it took to keep Australia safe. We've done that, as the Attorney-General pointed out before, through now 19 tranches of national security legislation, which were opposed by those opposite. There want people in their electorates to believe that they supported them, but they actually watered down or opposed the legislation in each of those instances.

In relation to border protection, we promised that we would clean up Labor's mess—get the kids out of detention that they put there and make sure that we closed detention centres and didn't have people drowning at sea. They opposed us every step of the way, even to this very day. They are still utterly divided on the issue of border protection.

At the last election, we took a plan to the Australian people saying that we would keep them safe by cancelling the visas of noncitizens who had committed offences in our country against Australian citizens. I'm proud of the fact that the coalition under this Prime Minister has cancelled 5,122 visas of criminals who have committed offences in our country. It includes 270 outlaw motorcycle gang members, people who are the biggest distributors of ice and amphetamines in towns across the country. We have cancelled the visas of 225 people who have been convicted of or charged with rape or other sexual offences and 469 people for child sex and child sexual exploitation material offences. Less than a quarter of that number were cancelled under Labor—43 for rape and other sexual offences; and 97 for child sex and child sexual exploitation material offences, compared to our 469.

It doesn't stop there, because, under the Labor government when the Leader of the Opposition sat around the National Security Committee, he was responsible for the cancellation of people who had committed assault in this country on 92 occasions. We have cancelled the visas of 922. I just say to the Australian public: don't look at what the Labor Party tell you at an election; look at what they do when they're in government and what they do when they're in opposition. We had a plan. We made a promise. We are delivering on it. When you look at this Leader of the Opposition, know that he places an each-way bet on every issue. He is weak when it comes to national security, and it continues in relation to every aspect of this country's security. *(Time expired)*

### Community Sport Infrastructure Grant Program

**Mr ALBANESE** (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:45): My question is addressed to the Prime Minister, and it follows his extraordinary answer to my last question. The Prime Minister has said about the corrupt sports rorts program: 'All we did was provide information.' So why did the Audit Office tell the Senate that the Prime Minister's office

emailed Senator McKenzie's office indicating, 'These are the ones we think should be included in the list of approved projects'?

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:46): I repeat what I just said. I said to the House, in response to the last question, that we passed on information about other funding options or programs relevant to project proposals and we provided information based on the representations made to us. That's exactly what I said. Why does the Leader of the Opposition have an issue with the government talking to people in communities about what their priorities for community projects should be? He makes reference to my earlier answer. I know, and the Auditor-General reported, that the leader of the Labor Party, when responsible for a program—

**The SPEAKER:** The Prime Minister will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business.

**Mr Burke:** You made a ruling yesterday with respect to, when we refer to an earlier answer, that gives rise to the question but doesn't change the relevance rule to then refer to anything that was in the previous answer. The Prime Minister is now using exactly that device to try to use information that would not otherwise be relevant to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes. I'm just going to make the point, because it's important for everyone to understand: when a question is asked that refers to an earlier answer, it enables the question to go to something said in the earlier answer. What it doesn't enable the answer to do is to refer to things that weren't in the question. I hope I've expressed that as clearly as I can. I'm listening to the Prime Minister carefully. I also said that, whilst he is on the policy topic, he is able—and this has been the case with rulings of, I think, probably all Speakers in the last 20 or 30 years—to compare and contrast briefly, but he doesn't have the licence of the earlier answer to repeat everything he's said.

**Mr MORRISON:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to refer to the evidence provided by the ANAO at the committee in the Senate in relation to the matter that the Leader of the Opposition has now raised. He has said: 'Yes, it wasn't the case that we could see that those which came directly from the Prime Minister's office were more successful than those that came from a local member direct to the minister's office rather than through the Prime Minister's office.' I hope that the Leader of the Opposition would be more truthful about these things. I would certainly hope that, when he had to appear as a witness at the Labor criminal conspiracy trial, he was more truthful there.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition is seeking to table a document?

**Mr Albanese:** Yes, Mr Speaker. The evidence of Mr Boyd from the ANAO to the Senate in which he said, 'These are the ones'—

Leave not granted.

**The SPEAKER:** I was just about to say, I wasn't even going to ask the Leader of the House for leave, because, if we get to the point where we're tabling our own *Hansard*, I think—

*An opposition member interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, well—

**Mr Fitzgibbon:** Don't say it, Mr Speaker!

**The SPEAKER:** Same as the Senate. Yes, you know my soft spot. But, no.

### **Cybersafety**

**Dr MARTIN** (Reid) (14:49): My question is to the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts. Will the minister outline to the House how the Morrison government is delivering on its plan to keep Australians, and in particular women and children, safe online?

**Mr FLETCHER** (Bradfield—Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts) (14:49): I thank the member for Reid for her question, and of course I acknowledge her deep professional expertise in this matter as a very experienced child psychologist. The Morrison government is very strongly committed to keeping Australians safe online. We've had a particular focus on keeping women and children safe online. In 2020, using the internet is a normal part of childhood, even for very young children. In fact, the evidence shows that 81 per cent of children have become users of the internet by the age of four. And, sadly, the threats to women's safety in the physical world are equally prevalent in the online world. One of many sobering statistics is that nearly half of all women aged 18 to 24 have experienced online abuse or harassment.

The Morrison government, our Liberal-National government, has a strong track record in this area. We established the world's first Children's eSafety Commissioner in 2015. Since being established, that body's remit has been steadily expanded to include adult online safety as well as children's online safety. It now administers a specific regime to deal with the unauthorised sharing of intimate images, backed by measures to have those images taken down, and it administers a regime to deal with abhorrent, violent material online.

There are key measures to deal with women's online safety as part of the Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, including \$4 million for specialised online safety support for women with intellectual disabilities and women of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

We're not stopping there. At the 2019 election we committed to further strengthen safety measures for Australians who are going online. That includes reducing from 48 to 24 hours the time within which social media platforms must take down material found to be cyberbullying. It includes extending the protection of the eSafety Commissioner to all online places where children interact, including gaming platforms. It includes establishing a new adult cyberabuse scheme. Of course, it has a higher threshold than the scheme for children, recognising that adults are more resilient and recognising free speech issues appropriately, but it will give new protections to adults and particularly to women who, sadly, are disproportionately targeted by online abuse and it will give them the capacity to seek to have this material taken off the internet.

The internet is an extraordinary social and economic resource—a powerful force for good—but, for it to stay a force for good, we need to make sure the internet is safe, and that is what the Morrison government is very focused on.

### **Community Sport Infrastructure Grant Program**

**Mr ALBANESE** (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:52): My question is again to the Prime Minister. Why did his office receive copies of the multiple versions of the colour-coded spreadsheet for the corrupt sports rorts program? Why did Mr Gaetjens rely on just one



version of these spreadsheets when the Auditor-General told the Senate there were dozens? Did Mr Gaetjens ignore the other versions of the spreadsheet, or wasn't he ever given them?

**The SPEAKER:** The Prime Minister has the call. The Leader of the House on a point of order.

**Mr Porter:** The Prime Minister is obviously responsible for portfolio matters within the prime ministerial role.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** No, hang on! Members on my left will cease interjecting. The member for Spence, I'm actually going to hear the entire point of order. The more you interject, the longer it takes, but I'm telling you I'm going to listen to the point of order. The Leader of the House has the call.

**Mr Porter:** He can't be responsible for individual email traffic of members of his department nor would he be expected to know about those things.

*Mr Husic interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order. The member for Chifley is warned.

**Mr Burke:** Thanks, Speaker. If what the Leader of the House has put forward is true, then it means you can't ask the Prime Minister about an inquiry that he instigated—

**An opposition member:** With the head of his department!

**Mr Burke:** that was run by the head of his own department, the department called 'Prime Minister and Cabinet', and you can't then ask about whether documents were provided to that person, by the Prime Minister, who set it up—and it was being run by the head of his own department. If this is not in order, I'm not sure what's left.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, I'd just say to the Leader of the House: the question's quite in order, and the Prime Minister has the opportunity to answer it. Whether he has knowledge of some things or others, he has the opportunity to answer it or to seek further information. But the question's certainly in order.

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:55): In initiating that inquiry by the head of Prime Minister and Cabinet—

*Mr Champion interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Spence will leave the House.

*The member for Spence then left the chamber.*

**Mr MORRISON:** which was done promptly after the release of the Auditor-General's report, the head of the PM&C had access to whatever document he required—as would be appropriate, because it was a serious inquiry. And I note that the head of Prime Minister and Cabinet was able to have whatever document he sought, to conduct those inquiries—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Members on my left!

**Mr MORRISON:** and the Prime Minister's Office complied with all requests of the secretary. What I can go back to, just to highlight again what the Auditor-General said about the matters that the Leader of the Opposition is raising—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**Mr MORRISON:** Settle down! Settle down! What he said was: 'For us to see that there was some driver, in this, that we would have to identify, in those representations, there was a bias, there was a correlation between what in those representations and what was the outcome'—he, the Auditor-General, said: 'We didn't see that.' The Auditor-General has been quizzed on these very matters, and he has found no correlation, from the representations that were made from my office, with these outcomes. So the Leader of the Opposition is trying to throw mud while he himself sits in an absolute swamp. We know the Leader of the Opposition had a spreadsheet in his office, when he ran a similar program, which had a column on it that said: 'Labor or Liberal'. That's what he had. And then he threw the rulebook away and gave the money to the projects he wanted to.

**The SPEAKER:** The Prime Minister will resume his seat.

**Mr MORRISON:** He's a hypocrite!

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**Mr Albanese:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition? You're seeking—

**Mr Albanese:** The call.

**The SPEAKER:** I think the Prime Minister has concluded his—

**Mr Albanese:** He's finished. No-one else is jumping.

**The SPEAKER:** No, no, no. We're not going to do that. No, the call alternates. The Manager of Opposition Business?

**Mr Burke:** The Prime Minister should withdraw that final remark.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes. I just say to the Prime Minister: many Speakers have not allowed the word 'hypocrite', and he needs to withdraw it.

**Mr Morrison:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** And I thank the Manager of Opposition Business, because we'd moved on.

### **Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme**

**Ms HAMMOND** (Curtin) (14:58): My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister outline to the House how the Morrison government's plan for a stronger economy and a more resilient Australia is helping it make life-changing medicines available on the PBS, including for those Australians suffering from COPD and other respiratory conditions? And is the minister aware of any alternative approaches that would undermine this stable approach?

**Mr HUNT** (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (14:58): I want to thank the member for Curtin for her work in advocating for medical research in her current role but also in helping to oversee the training of medical students and to lead, in particular, medical research in that area of chronic

pain as the Vice Chancellor of Notre Dame university, where she brought into being a chair in chronic pain.

We know that it's immensely important, though, to be able to support medical research, medical students and the listing of new medicines through a strong budget position, and we know this for historical reasons, through clear evidence. It was not that long ago, in 2011, when the budget papers said: 'Due to fiscal circumstances'—because we have difficult fiscal challenges now, but then, due to fiscal circumstances—'the government will defer the listing of some new medicines until fiscal circumstances permit.' And what did that mean? That meant that medicine for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma, Symbicort in particular, were denied to the Australian people by a government, the then Labor government, which decided not to list the recommendations of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee. And it wasn't just chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma; it included medicines for schizophrenia, for IVF and for endometriosis. They did that because they ran out of money, and the evidence of that is there in the budget papers.

Fortunately, because we have a very clear plan for the economy, a very clear plan for the budget, we are able to invest in new medicines. More than 2,300 new medicines are on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme—one a day—and, significantly, a 40 per cent reduction in listing times. And as of 1 March we will have expanded medicines for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Trelegy will be available to more than 16,000 patients, at a saving of approximately \$1,100 a year. It will literally mean that these 16,000 patients can breathe more easily.

At the same time, there is another important medicine—Imfinzi—which will be available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Imfinzi, which would otherwise cost \$100,000, will be available for 1,300 patients with non-small-cell lung cancer. It's a medicine that can save their lives, extend their lives and improve their lives. It would never be possible to support a medicine like this without a strong budget position, without an absolute commitment to meeting the requirements, without the ability to pay for these new medicines, and that's why having a plan is critical and that's why, above all else, we're committed to supporting Australian patients. *(Time expired)*

## MOTIONS

### Prime Minister

**Mr ALBANESE** (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (15:01): I seek leave to move the following motion:

That the House:

(1) notes:

(a) the Prime Minister claims his only involvement in the corrupt sports rorts scheme was the passing of information by his office;

(b) the Audit Office found there were 136 emails between the Prime Minister's office and Senator McKenzie's office over a six month period about the corrupt sports rorts scheme;

(c) the Audit Office also found the Prime Minister's office emailed Senator McKenzie's office about projects under the corrupt sports rorts scheme indicating 'These are the ones we think should be included in the list of approved projects';

(d) the Audit Office found the colour-coded spreadsheet was shared between Senator McKenzie's office and the Prime Minister's office on multiple occasions with multiple versions; and

(e) in preparing his report, the Prime Minister's former Chief of Staff and now Secretary of his Department relied on only one version of the colour-coded spreadsheet when there were dozens of versions; and

(2) therefore, calls on the Prime Minister to:

(a) correct his repeated misleading statements to the Parliament that only eligible projects were funded under the corrupt sports rorts scheme when paragraph 4.32 and 4.33 of the audit of the scheme show 280 ineligible projects were funded;

(b) explain how his story can withstand the findings of the Audit Office; and

(c) explain why he has used taxpayer money as though it was his own personal marketing fund.

Today we saw the Prime Minister give it up when he pointed to a Liberal candidate as being able to—

Leave not granted.

**Mr ALBANESE:** I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Leader of the Opposition from moving the following motion immediately—That the House:

(1) notes:

(a) the Prime Minister claims his only involvement in the corrupt sports rorts scheme was the passing of information by his office;

(b) the Audit Office found there were 136 emails between the Prime Minister's office and Senator McKenzie's office over a six month period about the corrupt sports rorts scheme;

(c) the Audit Office also found the Prime Minister's office emailed Senator McKenzie's office about projects under the corrupt sports rorts scheme indicating 'These are the ones we think should be included in the list of approved projects';

(d) the Audit Office found the colour-coded spreadsheet was shared between Senator McKenzie's office and the Prime Minister's office on multiple occasions with multiple versions; and

(e) in preparing his report, the Prime Minister's former Chief of Staff and now Secretary of his Department relied on only one version of the colour-coded spreadsheet when there were dozens of versions; and

(2) therefore, calls on the Prime Minister to:

(a) correct his repeated misleading statements to the Parliament that only eligible projects were funded under the corrupt sports rorts scheme when paragraph 4.32 and 4.33 of the audit of the scheme show 280 ineligible projects were funded;

(b) explain how his story can withstand the findings of the Audit Office; and

(c) explain why he has used taxpayer money as though it was his own personal marketing fund.

This rort knows no bounds—

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:05): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is the Leader of the Opposition be no further heard.

The House divided. [15:10]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....73  
 Noes .....67  
 Majority.....6

## AYES

Alexander, JG  
 Andrews, KL  
 Bell, AM  
 Buchholz, S  
 Christensen, GR  
 Connelly, V  
 Drum, DK (teller)  
 Entsch, WG  
 Falinski, JG  
 Flint, NJ  
 Gee, AR  
 Goodenough, IR  
 Hastie, AW  
 Hogan, KJ  
 Hunt, GA  
 Joyce, BT  
 Laming, A  
 Leaser, J  
 Littleproud, D  
 Marino, NB  
 McCormack, MF  
 McVeigh, JJ  
 Morton, B  
 O'Brien, T  
 Pasin, A  
 Pitt, KJ  
 Price, ML  
 Robert, SR  
 Simmonds, J  
 Sukkar, MS  
 Tehan, DT  
 van Manen, AJ  
 Wallace, AB  
 Wicks, LE  
 Wilson, TR  
 Wyatt, KG  
 Zimmerman, T

Andrews, KJ  
 Archer, BK  
 Broadbent, RE  
 Chester, D  
 Conaghan, PJ  
 Coulton, M  
 Dutton, PC  
 Evans, TM  
 Fletcher, PW  
 Frydenberg, JA  
 Gillespie, DA  
 Hammond, CM  
 Hawke, AG  
 Howarth, LR  
 Irons, SJ  
 Kelly, C  
 Landry, ML  
 Ley, SP  
 Liu, G  
 Martin, FB  
 McIntosh, MI  
 Morrison, SJ  
 O'Brien, LS  
 O'Dowd, KD  
 Pearce, GB  
 Porter, CC  
 Ramsey, RE (teller)  
 Sharma, DN  
 Stevens, J  
 Taylor, AJ  
 Thompson, P  
 Vasta, RX  
 Webster, AE  
 Wilson, RJ  
 Wood, JP  
 Young, T

## NOES

Albanese, AN  
 Bandt, AP  
 Bowen, CE  
 Burney, LJ  
 Butler, MC  
 Chalmers, JE  
 Claydon, SC  
 Collins, JM

Aly, A  
 Bird, SL  
 Burke, AS  
 Burns, J  
 Butler, TM  
 Clare, JD  
 Coker, EA  
 Conroy, PM

## NOES

Dick, MD  
 Fitzgibbon, JA  
 Georganas, S  
 Gorman, P  
 Haines, H  
 Hill, JC  
 Jones, SP  
 Kelly, MJ  
 Khalil, P  
 King, MMH  
 Marles, RD  
 Mitchell, BK  
 Mulino, D  
 Neumann, SK  
 O'Neil, CE  
 Payne, AE  
 Phillips, FE  
 Rishworth, AL  
 Ryan, JC (teller)  
 Shorten, WR  
 Snowdon, WE  
 Steggall, Z  
 Thistlethwaite, MJ  
 Watts, TG  
 Wilkie, AD  
 Zappia, A

Elliot, MJ  
 Freeland, MR  
 Giles, AJ  
 Gosling, LJ  
 Hayes, CP  
 Husic, EN  
 Kearney, G  
 Keogh, MJ  
 King, CF  
 Leigh, AK  
 McBride, EM  
 Mitchell, RG  
 Murphy, PJ  
 O'Connor, BPJ  
 Owens, JA  
 Perrett, GD  
 Plibersek, TJ  
 Rowland, MA  
 Sharkie, RCC  
 Smith, DPB  
 Stanley, AM (teller)  
 Templeman, SR  
 Thwaites, KL  
 Wells, AS  
 Wilson, JH

Question agreed to.

**The SPEAKER** (15:12): Is the motion seconded? The Manager of Opposition Business?

**Mr BURKE** (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (15:12): Seconded. He is up to his neck in it, this Prime Minister—up to his neck in a corrupt scheme.

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. The Leader of the House?

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:12): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is the Manager of Opposition Business be no further heard.

The House divided. [15:13]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....	73
Noes .....	68
Majority .....	5

## AYES

Alexander, JG  
 Andrews, KL  
 Bell, AM

Andrews, KJ  
 Archer, BK  
 Broadbent, RE

## AYES

Buchholz, S  
Christensen, GR  
Connelly, V  
Drum, DK (teller)  
Entsch, WG  
Falinski, JG  
Flint, NJ  
Gee, AR  
Goodenough, IR  
Hastie, AW  
Hogan, KJ  
Hunt, GA  
Joyce, BT  
Laming, A  
Leeser, J  
Littleproud, D  
Marino, NB  
McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
Morton, B  
O'Brien, T  
Pasin, A  
Pitt, KJ  
Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

Chester, D  
Conaghan, PJ  
Coulton, M  
Dutton, PC  
Evans, TM  
Fletcher, PW  
Frydenberg, JA  
Gillespie, DA  
Hammond, CM  
Hawke, AG  
Howarth, LR  
Irons, SJ  
Kelly, C  
Landry, ML  
Ley, SP  
Liu, G  
Martin, FB  
McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Brien, LS  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC  
Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Sharma, DN  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

## NOES

Albanese, AN  
Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burney, LJ  
Butler, MC  
Chalmers, JE  
Claydon, SC  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S  
Gorman, P  
Haines, H  
Hill, JC  
Jones, SP  
Kelly, MJ

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Clare, JD  
Coker, EA  
Conroy, PM  
Elliot, MJ  
Freeland, MR  
Giles, AJ  
Gosling, LJ  
Hayes, CP  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, G  
Keogh, MJ

## NOES

Khalil, P  
 King, MMH  
 Marles, RD  
 Mitchell, BK  
 Mulino, D  
 Neumann, SK  
 O'Neil, CE  
 Payne, AE  
 Phillips, FE  
 Rishworth, AL  
 Ryan, JC (teller)  
 Shorten, WR  
 Snowdon, WE  
 Steggall, Z  
 Templeman, SR  
 Thwaites, KL  
 Wells, AS  
 Wilson, JH

King, CF  
 Leigh, AK  
 McBride, EM  
 Mitchell, RG  
 Murphy, PJ  
 O'Connor, BPJ  
 Owens, JA  
 Perrett, GD  
 Plibersek, TJ  
 Rowland, MA  
 Sharkie, RCC  
 Smith, DPB  
 Stanley, AM (teller)  
 Swanson, MJ  
 Thistlethwaite, MJ  
 Watts, TG  
 Wilkie, AD  
 Zappia, A

Question agreed to.

**Mr MARLES** (Corio—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:15): More nervous than a baboon in Camperdown—that's what this bloke is!

**The SPEAKER:** The deputy leader will resume his seat. The Leader of the House has the floor.

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:15): I move:

That the question be put.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is the motion be put.

The House divided. [15:16]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....73  
 Noes .....68  
 Majority.....5

## AYES

Alexander, JG  
 Andrews, KL  
 Bell, AM  
 Buchholz, S  
 Christensen, GR  
 Connelly, V  
 Drum, DK (teller)  
 Entsch, WG  
 Falinski, JG  
 Flint, NJ  
 Gee, AR  
 Goodenough, IR  
 Hastie, AW

Andrews, KJ  
 Archer, BK  
 Broadbent, RE  
 Chester, D  
 Conaghan, PJ  
 Coulton, M  
 Dutton, PC  
 Evans, TM  
 Fletcher, PW  
 Frydenberg, JA  
 Gillespie, DA  
 Hammond, CM  
 Hawke, AG

---

CHAMBER



## AYES

Hogan, KJ  
Hunt, GA  
Joyce, BT  
Laming, A  
Leeser, J  
Littleproud, D  
Marino, NB  
McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
Morton, B  
O'Brien, T  
Pasin, A  
Pitt, KJ  
Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

Howarth, LR  
Irons, SJ  
Kelly, C  
Landry, ML  
Ley, SP  
Liu, G  
Martin, FB  
McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Brien, LS  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC  
Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Sharma, DN  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

## NOES

Albanese, AN  
Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burney, LJ  
Butler, MC  
Chalmers, JE  
Claydon, SC  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S  
Gorman, P  
Haines, H  
Hill, JC  
Jones, SP  
Kelly, MJ  
Khalil, P  
King, MMH  
Marles, RD  
Mitchell, BK  
Mulino, D  
Neumann, SK  
O'Neil, CE  
Payne, AE  
Phillips, FE  
Rishworth, AL

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Clare, JD  
Coker, EA  
Conroy, PM  
Elliot, MJ  
Freeland, MR  
Giles, AJ  
Gosling, LJ  
Hayes, CP  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, G  
Keogh, MJ  
King, CF  
Leigh, AK  
McBride, EM  
Mitchell, RG  
Murphy, PJ  
O'Connor, BPJ  
Owens, JA  
Perrett, GD  
Plibersek, TJ  
Rowland, MA

## NOES

Ryan, JC (teller)  
 Shorten, WR  
 Snowdon, WE  
 Steggall, Z  
 Templeman, SR  
 Thwaites, KL  
 Wells, AS  
 Wilson, JH

Sharkie, RCC  
 Smith, DPB  
 Stanley, AM (teller)  
 Swanson, MJ  
 Thistlethwaite, MJ  
 Watts, TG  
 Wilkie, AD  
 Zappia, A

Question agreed to.

**The SPEAKER** (15:21): The question is that the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition be agreed to.

The House divided. [15:21]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....68  
 Noes .....73  
 Majority.....5

## AYES

Albanese, AN  
 Bandt, AP  
 Bowen, CE  
 Burney, LJ  
 Butler, MC  
 Chalmers, JE  
 Claydon, SC  
 Collins, JM  
 Dick, MD  
 Fitzgibbon, JA  
 Georganas, S  
 Gorman, P  
 Haines, H  
 Hill, JC  
 Jones, SP  
 Kelly, MJ  
 Khalil, P  
 King, MMH  
 Marles, RD  
 Mitchell, BK  
 Mulino, D  
 Neumann, SK  
 O'Neil, CE  
 Payne, AE  
 Phillips, FE  
 Rishworth, AL  
 Ryan, JC (teller)  
 Shorten, WR  
 Snowdon, WE  
 Steggall, Z  
 Templeman, SR

Aly, A  
 Bird, SL  
 Burke, AS  
 Burns, J  
 Butler, TM  
 Clare, JD  
 Coker, EA  
 Conroy, PM  
 Elliot, MJ  
 Freeland, MR  
 Giles, AJ  
 Gosling, LJ  
 Hayes, CP  
 Husic, EN  
 Kearney, G  
 Keogh, MJ  
 King, CF  
 Leigh, AK  
 McBride, EM  
 Mitchell, RG  
 Murphy, PJ  
 O'Connor, BPJ  
 Owens, JA  
 Perrett, GD  
 Plibersek, TJ  
 Rowland, MA  
 Sharkie, RCC  
 Smith, DPB  
 Stanley, AM (teller)  
 Swanson, MJ  
 Thistlethwaite, MJ

## AYES

Thwaites, KL  
Wells, AS  
Wilson, JH

Watts, TG  
Wilkie, AD  
Zappia, A

## NOES

Alexander, JG  
Andrews, KL  
Bell, AM  
Buchholz, S  
Christensen, GR  
Connelly, V  
Drum, DK (teller)  
Entsch, WG  
Falinski, JG  
Flint, NJ  
Gee, AR  
Goodenough, IR  
Hastie, AW  
Hogan, KJ  
Hunt, GA  
Joyce, BT  
Laming, A  
Leeser, J  
Littleproud, D  
Marino, NB  
McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
Morton, B  
O'Brien, T  
Pasin, A  
Pitt, KJ  
Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

Andrews, KJ  
Archer, BK  
Broadbent, RE  
Chester, D  
Conaghan, PJ  
Coulton, M  
Dutton, PC  
Evans, TM  
Fletcher, PW  
Frydenberg, JA  
Gillespie, DA  
Hammond, CM  
Hawke, AG  
Howarth, LR  
Irons, SJ  
Kelly, C  
Landry, ML  
Ley, SP  
Liu, G  
Martin, FB  
McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Brien, LS  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC  
Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Sharma, DN  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

Question negatived.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Space Industry

**Mr STEVENS** (Sturt) (15:25): My question is to the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology. Will the minister outline to the House how the Morrison government's plan for a stronger economy and a more resilient Australia is allowing the government to back

Australia's emerging space industry; and is the minister aware of the risks associated with any alternative approaches?

**Mrs ANDREWS** (McPherson—Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) (15:25): I thank the member for Sturt for his question. It was great to have him join the Prime Minister, the Premier of South Australia and me in Adelaide last week for the official opening—in fact, the launch!—of the Australian Space Agency's headquarters right in the heart of Adelaide.

I'm happy to say that I am a space nerd. As well as being a space nerd, the other thing that makes me so excited about opportunities in the space industry is the jobs that we know are going to be created as we continue to build and grow the Australian space sector. Let me put this into a little bit of context. The global space industry is projected to be about US\$1 trillion by 2040. Because this government has managed our economy, we are in a position to invest almost \$700 million in the space sector right here in Australia. Of that, \$150 million will go towards supporting Australian businesses to be part of the NASA program that will go to the moon and then on to Mars. That's \$150 million that will support Australian businesses. It will go directly to Australian businesses so that they can build their capacity so that they can be part of the NASA program.

We know that it's important to support our space businesses, but it is not just about the space businesses directly. It's the other businesses that support them—the other small and medium enterprises that support our space industries. There are numerous examples. One is Gilmour Space Technologies, on the Gold Coast, who are doing some fantastic work with rockets. There are about 300 Australian businesses that are supporting the work that they are doing. They are absolutely working with businesses to make sure that they are growing the sector.

The other important thing about space is what it does for everyday Australians. Yes, we're about jobs, but we're also about making sure that everyday Australians are supported. Farmers are going to be able to use space capabilities to monitor the health of their products. Emergency workers are going to be able to track the progress of fire fronts. We all use Google Maps or a GPS; that's only available to us because of space technology.

While those opposite have their heads down, gazing at their navels, we're the ones reaching for the stars.

**Mr Albanese:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr Morrison:** Mr Speaker, on that note, I ask that further questions be placed on the *Notice Paper*. Mate, you haven't been getting going for a long time!

## DOCUMENTS

### Presentation

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:29): Documents are tabled in accordance with the list circulated to honourable members earlier today. Full details of the documents will be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE****Infrastructure**

**The SPEAKER** (15:29): I have received a letter from the honourable member for Griffith proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The failure to provide adequate infrastructure for Australia's needs.

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

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

**Ms BUTLER** (Griffith) (15:29): This seven-year-old chaotic government was supposed to deliver water security for Australians, but instead our country is desperately seeking national leadership on water. Australians have faced the worst drought on record and are crying out for the federal government to take water security seriously, but water security is a mess. Regional towns at the point of or on the brink of running out of water have been forced to truck it in, and they have been calling out for help. Independent body Infrastructure Australia has noted that crises like the Menindee fish kill have undermined confidence in the governance and management of Australia's water resources.

You might ask, Mr Deputy Speaker O'Brien, 'Why did the Labor Party set up Infrastructure Australia when they were last in government?' Why did we do that? Was it because we needed to take the politics out of infrastructure to try to ensure that future governments didn't use the infrastructure budget like some sort of personal piggy bank, to avoid boondoggles, rorts and the political apportionment of public funds? I think it was all pretty important, and I think we've seen pretty recently, through sports rorts, urban congestion rorts and all of the different corrupt rorting programs that we've seen under this government, exactly why we need independent advice that can talk to government about what is needed.

When it comes to water management, Infrastructure Australia have today put water security and the need for a national water strategy at the heart of the release of the national priority list for infrastructure, and they've done that because, frankly, this government has vacated the field when it comes to water security and water infrastructure. The country is crying out for leadership, but the Liberals and the Nationals have left a leadership vacuum in water management and water security, and it's now been left to someone else to fill that vacuum.

As I said, Infrastructure Australia has noted that crises like the Menindee fish kill have undermined confidence in the governance and management of Australia's water resources. I would add that, between inadequate water management, big subsidies being paid to partly foreign-owned corporations, speculators in the water market and scandals involving Liberal and National government ministers, Australians do not trust the Liberals and Nationals to manage water fairly. Meanwhile, infighting within the Nationals and infighting about water between the Nationals and the Liberals is at its peak. The Liberals and Nationals have mismanaged our most precious resource, water, with Australian farmers, communities and our natural environment paying a massive price. Their woeful track record has left a massive leadership vacuum.

As I said, Infrastructure Australia has today launched its 2020 Infrastructure Priority List. The list sets out the nationally significant infrastructure investments Australia needs over the next 15 years, and, with the Liberals and Nationals so hopeless and unreliable when it comes to water, it has fallen to Infrastructure Australia to take the lead. For the first time the list contains priority initiatives in relation to the need for a national water strategy and in relation to water security for towns and cities.

Infrastructure Australia are clearly deeply concerned about this government's abject failure to deliver water security, so they've called for a national water strategy to fill the void. Under the Liberals and Nationals, water management has been beset by broken promises and mismanagement. The mismanagement started really early. Do people remember—I'm sure you do—that in 2014, after talking a big game on water from opposition, the new government came in and did what? They axed the National Water Commission. They axed it. Do you know why they said it could be axed? They said it was because there was no longer adequate justification for a standalone agency to monitor Australia's progress on water reform. How wrong can you be? Absolute genius it was to get rid of the National Water Commission!

It took them a while, but they finally worked out their error because, before last year's election, the government, seemingly admitting that it was wrong to axe the commission, scrambled to try to reverse the damage. The now Deputy Prime Minister promised to take the politics out of water—where have we heard that before?—by creating, guess what, an independent statutory authority! We had an independent statutory authority in the National Water Commission, but they created—actually, they set aside; they haven't created it at all. They made a promise to create an independent statutory authority—the National Water Grid Authority.

But they broke the promise. This is a broken promise from this government. Instead, there's no independent statutory authority. There is a so-called National Water Grid Authority, but it's a group within the department; it's not independent, it's not statutory. The government has been caught out breaking a central plank of their election commitment to drought-ravaged Australian communities. The planned authority has turned out to be a mirage. In drought-stricken regional communities, the Nationals pinned their credibility to the establishment of the National Water Grid Authority, which was to be independent and statutory—to take the politics out of water—and they did that to win votes. But it was just a fib. The Deputy Prime Minister claimed that it would be established, but no such body exists. The deputy secretary of the responsible department at the time, Dr Rachel Bacon, confirmed in Senate estimates in October that it's not actually an independent authority. There is no independent statutory authority. This is just another example of this loose-with-the-truth government saying one thing and doing another, and it is absolutely not good enough.

Infrastructure Australia has also joined the growing list of organisations sounding the alarm about the impact of climate change on water availability and water security in this country. But this government is just too busy with its internal ideological warfare to have a meaningful and serious approach to climate change. And now the Liberals and Nationals have a new water minister with a track record of opposing climate action. After the member for New England dumped him, in 2017, the new minister made it back into the ministry three months later. But he then resigned from the ministry, less than six months after that, because he thought even the Morrison government's non-existent climate policy was too much. The new

minister must also be honest with the Australian people about the government's intentions when it comes to water. He must face up to the fact that climate change is hitting water availability and water security hard.

Perhaps most egregious is that, before coming to office, the coalition said they were going to build 100 dams. The member for New England said at the time that it was a key election commitment. And what have they done? There are not 100 new dams. These guys have now been in government for seven years. Have they built the promised, much-lauded 100 new dams? People across this country are crying out for water storage. They're crying out for a proper approach to water management and water security. This mob claimed that they were going to build 100 dams—how many have they built? It's just a deeply embarrassing situation, isn't it? In fact, the only thing that they are able to point to is a contribution they made to a dam that was built in a project in Tasmania that Labor had kicked off. So much for 100 dams; they've gotten nowhere on 100 dams.

Last year in October we saw a spectacular example of how the government talks out of both sides of its mouth when it comes to dams and water storage. We had the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the member for New England stand up in October and claim that they were going to work with the New South Wales government to put in 50 per cent for new dam investments. Within 48 hours that claim was trashed: it wasn't 50 per cent, it was 25 per cent. We tried to get the Prime Minister to correct the record, and to come in and fess up to the fact that he'd made this claim to the people of New South Wales that wasn't accurate. But he didn't want to. Because, do you know what, Deputy Speaker? This Prime Minister never likes to admit it when he is wrong. And he certainly doesn't like to admit it when he's been caught out saying something that's not true. We saw some evidence of that today in question time today, didn't we? Here is a man who is so stubborn and so arrogant—who cannot lie straight in bed!—that he will never admit that he is wrong. And do you know what his reaction is when he's caught out, like he was today? He doesn't come in and correct the record. He's not apologetic. He doesn't apologise to the Australian people for what he's said. He just doubles down. He thinks he can spin his way out of anything, because he is an adman without a plan. He is someone that the Australian people cannot trust when it comes to water.

All of these reasons are why Infrastructure Australia, which is where we started—and which Labor established—is so important. Regional roads, sports grounds, Urban Congestion Fund roads—this government just can't be trusted to manage public money without using it for their own political purposes. Labor established Infrastructure Australia so that infrastructure spending would be based on the business case, not the political case—so that it would be spent on public benefit, not on ideas that have been run through colour-coded spreadsheets; and so that it would be spent on productivity, not Liberal-National target seats. This government must pay close attention to today's Infrastructure Australia list and start standing up for Australians, not just for themselves.

**Mr HOGAN** (Page—Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister) (15:39): What a gift it is to the government to talk about the MPI. The MPI statement says 'adequate infrastructure for Australia's needs'. With due respect to the member for Griffith, who did spend much of her time talking about water infrastructure, I will get to water infrastructure later, because we have a list of projects that I'm very happy to elaborate on that are under

construction and that are well into the planning stage as well. I will deal with the water infrastructure issues that she raised.

In the context of the MPI stating 'provide adequate infrastructure for Australia's needs', I have a list of nation-changing projects for Australia that have been instigated and commenced under this government, and I'm going to run through a few of them. The three that I'm going to start with are major projects. The opposition were involved in one, but wanted to cut funding, and I don't think they ever would have funded the other two at all. The first one is the very important Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail project. This project has been spoken about for decades. I'm sure you are aware of it, Deputy Speaker O'Brien. This is a \$9 billion project that has been discussed for many decades. Work has started under this government. What a very important nation-building project it is.

The other one that has been talked about that they couldn't get off the ground—excuse the pun, because I'm talking about the Western Sydney Airport. Again, a \$5 billion project that's very important for Sydney. It's very important for it to keep its international city reputation. The existing Sydney Airport, as we know, is very congested. The Western Sydney Airport began, was announced and is getting built under this government.

The third one, before I go to some other projects, is the very important Pacific Highway project. The Pacific Highway project, at one stage, was the largest regional project underway throughout the country. It just happened to be that the last stage of it, the Woolgoolga to Ballina section, is completely in my electorate. That is a \$5 billion project. You might be questioning yourself, Deputy Speaker. You might ask, 'Didn't Labor support that project, and weren't they funding it?' They were, actually. They were funding it at 80 per cent. Then, when there was a change in the New South Wales state government to a Liberal-Nationals government, they decided they only wanted to fund it at 50 per cent. They wanted to not fund the project as they originally were. I had discussions with Warren Truss, who was then the Leader of the Nationals—your predecessor, Deputy Speaker. We recommitted that, if we got elected in 2013, we would fund that project at 80 per cent, and we have. Six years on, a lot of that money has been spent and, weather permitting, that project will be completed by the end of this year.

Why do we do that? Why is that important? The reason that any dual duplication is so important is that it reduces fatalities—an issue that I know is very dear to your heart, Deputy Speaker. In fact, fatalities on the Pacific Highway are at a multi-decade low. When you consider the increased traffic that it has seen over the decades, the fact that fatalities are at a record low is a wonderful thing. That being said, there's still work to do. The dual duplication isn't completed, but when it is I'm sure that fatalities will decrease even further.

The importance of all of the infrastructure projects that I'm going to talk about is that they are job creating in the building of them. In this particular project there are 2,500 to 3,000 direct jobs. The number of indirect jobs is huge, so it's very important to regional economies like mine. One of the projects I'm going to mention later is the Bruce Highway—again, a project that I know is dear to your heart, Deputy Speaker. What is very important is post the build. It brings those communities closer. The tyranny of distance decreases. It brings an economic tourism boom or whatever. Your manufacturers and any businesses in your region are suddenly closer to more customers. It's very important for that as well.



I have a list. I think I'll read it. It goes through the different states. But I will, out of due respect to the member for Griffith, get to some water infrastructure projects, because she's right: water infrastructure projects are important. Water is a very valuable resource. I will get to some of those projects and what we're doing there.

But let me first go through some of the significant infrastructure projects across the states. In New South Wales there is \$5.5 billion for the Pacific Highway, \$3.5 billion for Westconnex and \$3.3 billion for the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan. In Victoria there is \$1.75 billion for the North East Link, \$687 million for the Monash Freeway and \$467 million for the Ballarat rail line upgrade. In Queensland, there is \$10 billion for the Bruce Highway, \$860 million for the Gateway Motorway and \$1.1 billion for the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing. In Western Australia there is \$820 million for North Link, \$116 million for the Armadale Road duplication, \$275 million for the Great Northern Highway. In South Australia there is \$4.5 billion for the North-South Corridor, \$220 million for the Gawler rail line electrification and \$190 million for the Goodwood-Torrens Junctions project. In Tasmania there is \$460 million for the Bridgewater Bridge, \$60 million for rail freight revitalisation and \$38 million for the Hobart to Sorell corridor. In the Australian Capital Territory there is \$100 million for the Monaro Highway upgrade, \$30 million for the Kings Highway upgrade and \$20 million for the William Slim Drive duplication. In the Northern Territory there is \$180 million for the Central Arnhem Road Upgrade, \$62 million for the Arnhem Highway and \$30 million for the Garramilla Boulevard.

We have announced as well \$100 billion—yes, you heard it right—over the 10 years. This government has had some notable achievements since it was first elected in 2013. That includes the free trade agreements that we have initiated and the lower tax regime that we have initiated. And I think the third tranche of that is infrastructure, which is why I am so pleased that infrastructure has been brought up in this MPI. And that's why we have record employment growth and unemployment levels where they are.

The member for Griffith mentioned the Urban Congestion Fund and the Roads of Strategic Importance program. One of the roads in my electorate getting an upgrade through the Roads of Strategic Importance program is the Clarence Way. Mr Deputy Speaker, if I took you there, you might say, 'Why is this road getting an upgrade?' It's quite remote. It is getting an upgrade because of the amount of employment that relies on it. There is one of the biggest cattle producers there. There is blueberry production down the road as well. So while that road is remote, it has created a lot of jobs—and a lot of jobs depend on that road.

Before I get to water, I want to mention some other significant infrastructure projects that are important—and a couple of them were initiated under this government. I'm going to go first to the one that I have listed third on my list. It is an infrastructure program that was initiated by us, not Labor—it didn't exist prior to 2013—and that is the Bridges Renewal Program. It has been very important in my region as well. This program is not about the big, sexy bridges on national highways or important state roads. In my region, there are a lot of wooden bridges that maybe only 20 or 30 properties need to drive across. Those properties are productive. Those bridges are important for them in getting to schools, shops and hospitals. They are also important because they are in productive areas—areas that are producing food and fibre. One bridge that is being built is helping a company that supplies 80 per cent of the soybeans to Vitasoy in Australia. You wouldn't believe it if you drove past. It is a great

industry, a great business. That bridge is really important to the people who work in that processing plant. That's why we focus on that. Local governments have their own cost pressures. A lot of local governments don't have the resources, especially with a small ratepayer base, to keep that infrastructure up. So we as a coalition government saw that as important, and that's why we announced that program.

I'm running out of time. I really wanted to get to the water infrastructure projects as well, because there are so many. I'm certain that some of my colleagues will talk about the wonderful water infrastructure projects. In fact, I'll give them my list—which will take up their whole five minutes. Again, I think one of the great stories of ours is the infrastructure—*(Time expired)*

**Ms CATHERINE KING** (Ballarat) (15:49): I also rise to contribute to this matter of public importance debate. The Infrastructure Australia priority list released today is a reminder of just how important it is to have an independent body establishing the infrastructure priorities of the nation. Labor established Infrastructure Australia to take some of the politics out of infrastructure funding and to establish a long-term pipeline of projects for the nation. Water infrastructure has been highlighted today, but there is also the growing problem of urban congestion choking our cities. If ever we needed a reminder of why it is important to take the politics out of the allocation of infrastructure funding, we've had it this week with the revelations about how this government has treated its Urban Congestion Fund.

This week it was exposed that the Liberal and National parties are addicted to rorting infrastructure funding. Labor uncovered that, of the \$3 billion allocated for the Urban Congestion Fund, \$2.5 billion—some 83 per cent—went to Liberal seats and seats that were being targeted by the Liberal Party.

*Mr Hogan interjecting—*

**Ms CATHERINE KING:** I hear the member interjecting. I want to go again to this issue: the \$3 billion. This isn't just a small grants program; this is \$3 billion of public funding that the Liberal and National parties have rorted for their own political interest. That is what you have done. You have rorted it for your own political interests: \$3 billion, 83 per cent of which went to coalition seats and seats you were targeting in the 2019 election campaign. More than \$2.1 billion, or 70 per cent, went to Liberal seats alone. The poor old Nats didn't get a look in on the Urban Congestion Fund—not a cent. Seventy per cent went to seats held by the Liberal Party. Across the country, projects went to every single urban Liberal seat that was marginal or under threat. The Morrison government even extended urban congestion funding to four marginal seats in regional Australia. Meanwhile, 37 urban and regional city Labor seats missed out completely.

Let's look at a few specific examples from around the country. The Prime Minister found \$290 million for four congestion-busting projects in the seat of Higgins, but Lalor in Melbourne's west, where commuters have to get to the car park before 7 am to get a spot, did not get a single dollar. Over in South Australia, the two marginal Liberal seats received 58 per cent of the funds allocated to that state, but there was nothing for Hindmarsh, Kingston or Spence. In New South Wales, the marginal Liberal seat of Robertson scored 94 per cent of the \$105 million allocated for the New South Wales Central Coast, leaving residents in neighbouring Dobell stuck in the slow lane. Up in Queensland, Brisbane Road on the Sunshine Coast in the Liberal seat of Fisher received \$12 million, but the Labor seat of

Griffith in the heart of Brisbane didn't receive a single cent. Of course, the Liberals cared so little about urban congestion in Brisbane, they refused to spend a dollar on Cross River Rail, which for years was Infrastructure Australia's No.1 congestion-busting project. Over in Perth, every single individual project went to a Liberal seat. The Attorney-General's marginal seat of Pearce received the biggest prize in the west: five projects worth \$10 million.

Does this Prime Minister really think that congestion stops when drivers hit a road that isn't on his partisan list of political priorities? On Monday, we asked him: do you think this was fair? The Prime Minister's only defence was that the projects were all election commitments. However, we know this is simply not true. The Urban Congestion Fund was established in the 2018 budget, a year before the election. We also saw that nothing happened in the first year of that fund. There were no guidelines. There was no transparency. There was no call for applications for any of this funding. When you establish a fund with a strategic purpose a year before an election, do nothing and then suddenly roll out projects just before and during an election—I don't know what else to call it but, simply and utterly, a slush fund. An absolute and utter rort is what it was. The Prime Minister couldn't even speak to the alleged benefits of it. This Urban Congestion Fund has been a— *(Time expired)*

**Mr BUCHHOLZ** (Wright—Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport) (15:55): It is an absolute privilege to be able to stand to make a small contribution to the matter of public importance this afternoon. Let me go straight to the point around Queensland water projects. The Liberal-National coalition, under the leadership of Mr Morrison, is absolutely committed to water infrastructure. We know full well that partnership needs to be in place with the relevant state governments.

I'd like to start with Queensland and share some of the headaches that we're having. We have buckets of money on the table to build significant infrastructure in our great state of Queensland, which has been suffering as a result of drought for many years. The fires have also taken a toll. Safe, secure and regionalised water infrastructure provides prosperity not only to households but to communities. We know full well the importance of having significant water infrastructure in place.

Not too long ago it was on the front page of our state paper, *The Courier Mail*, where townships such as Stanthorpe and Warwick were having water trucked in from the coastline because their water infrastructure was lacking. The Australian government has committed more than \$513 million towards 26 infrastructure projects in Queensland alone and \$1.5 billion to the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund. To capitalise on those, our investments include \$11.6 million to modernise the \$28.1 million Mareeba-Dimbulah Water Supply Scheme, which will provide more than 8,000 megalitres in new water for irrigators and create more than 290 jobs that boost the value of production annually by \$20 million. That money is on the table.

*Ms Butler interjecting—*

**Mr BUCHHOLZ:** The member for Griffith on the other side says, 'Get on with it.' I would ask her to put pen to paper and write to her state colleagues, who are hampering the progress. They are stopping the rollout. Our money is on the table. It is good for everyone. Your state government in Queensland are sitting on their hands. They have done it for years and they will continue to do it. There is a state election coming up this year. Deb Frecklington

and the LNP will commit to water infrastructure. They will abandon these bizarre policies where the Queensland government has no commitment to dams.

In addition to that, we've also made capital commitments. While you put pen to paper talking to your Premier, also ask her about the Rookwood Weir. There is \$176.1 million to build the \$352.2 million Rookwood Weir. The federal government has no jurisdiction on water in the state—and that is not only in Queensland. The good member knows that. It's impossible to come in and make the assertion that this federal government is holding up water infrastructure. Our money is on the table, and I suggest you know that. There is \$42 million to build the \$84 million Emu Swamp Dam. Again, time after time, we provide evidence that our money is on the table, so just get on and build it.

*Ms Butler interjecting—*

**Mr BUCHHOLZ:** Don't squawk at me! Put pen to paper. Get onto your Labor state government and tell them to put some bulldozers on the ground and start building the water infrastructure. The people of Queensland deserve a better state government. The people of Queensland deserve better representation than what they're getting from you at the moment. I'd also like to suggest that \$30 million—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien):** Point of order from the member for Paterson.

**Ms Swanson:** The member must address his comments through you, Deputy Speaker, as the chair. For him to say, 'Don't squawk at me'—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I take the member's point of order. I am watching it closely. I would encourage the member to refer his remarks through the chair.

**Mr BUCHHOLZ:** I'd also remind the good member of the standing order of speaking while I'm on my feet. If you want to look at the standing orders, have a look at all of them, because they are all relevant.

There is \$30 million to support the construction of the Big Rocks Weir and \$180 million to support the construction of the Hughenden Irrigation Project. Those on the other side of the House come into this place and say that, as a government, we are only interested in building in Liberal and National seats. The member for Kennedy is one of the beneficiaries in northern Australia of our major infrastructure projects, and he also shares our frustration with the Queensland state government. I'll tell you what I might do, just out of interest. I might write to the water minister in Queensland and ask if they have received any representation from federal Labor members supporting any of our projects. I would suggest the answer is going to be a big fat no. *(Time expired)*

**Mr GILES (Scullin) (16:00):** That was actually a contribution by a member of the government—a member of the government supposedly speaking up for his government's record on infrastructure. I think it says everything about this government's approach to it. So perhaps you can join the Prime Minister in maybe taking consolation with a couple of emotional support baboons to work your way through the fact that you have delivered nothing when it comes to infrastructure in seven years in government. I think you will probably get promoted, because you share with the Prime Minister his singular characteristic: his refusal to take responsibility for anything, for absolutely anything.

You have just spoken for five minutes and you cannot tell a story about your government's record of achievement, because it's absolutely zero. That is why I rise to support this matter of public importance. We can think about this government's record more recently: first the sports rorts and second the road rorts, but now we have 'pork 'n' ride'. If you don't know what pork 'n' ride is—and I suspect perhaps you don't, although some members here have benefited very nicely from it—allow me to explain. The \$500 million national Commuter Car Park Fund sits within the \$4 billion Urban Congestion Fund, a fund announced not as an election commitment but in the 2018 budget.

My friend the member for Ballarat spoke quite a bit about how this has been appallingly misused under this government. But I'm going to correct her on one thing. She said it did nothing in its first year of operation. That's not true. They spent \$40 million—not on infrastructure but on an advertising campaign. Our adman Prime Minister without a plan spent \$40 million on advertising in the first year of this fund and not a single cent on infrastructure. That was because, presumably, they were getting the spreadsheets ready, bouncing them back and forwards. Perhaps Senator McKenzie was playing a role, though I think we all know she perhaps didn't play that much of a role. We all know that now. There were 136 emails that went backwards and forwards.

The Prime Minister says, 'We treat taxpayer money with respect.' He said that in question time today in an extraordinary, angry performance. The Deputy Prime Minister, too: 'Everyone is benefiting from the infrastructure projects.' That just isn't truthful. All of these car parks are supporting the political agenda of the government. In Melbourne \$30 million is going towards train station car parks on the Sandringham line, including at Brighton Beach, North Brighton and Sandringham—not growth areas but areas in the electorate for the member for Goldstein. There is not a cent for the car parks at nearly 40 stations on the Werribee, Williamstown and Sunbury lines, in the rapidly growing west. Melbourne's western suburbs are booming. The demand for car parks at train stations is huge, yet they don't get a cent. That is pork 'n' ride.

Urban seats, as occasionally the National Party members remind us, are predominantly held by the Labor Party, yet 83 per cent of the projects funded under the Urban Congestion Fund are in Liberal-held or Liberal target seats. That's why it's so important to call this government out. This is burning taxpayer money. We know that urban congestion is the greatest drag on productivity in the Australian economy. We on this side of the House know that it isn't just about the economic impact; it's about the impact on people's lives—people stuck in traffic, not spending time with their family, not spending time with their friends, not being able to do the things in life they want to do. But this government says that if you live in a Labor seat, or even a National Party seat, you get nothing.

This is just a Liberal Party slush fund dressed up as a government program—and not dressed up very convincingly. It is a multibillion dollar slush fund for pork barrelling, whether it's pork 'n' ride through commuter car parks or the more general nuclear rorts the member for Ballarat has so effectively highlighted in recent days. That's why I've written to the Auditor-General about this. The Auditor-General has had a lot of business under this government because this government has shown itself to be unfit for its responsibilities, unfit to administer public money.

A proud Labor legacy is the establishment of Infrastructure Australia. I was there today at the launch of its 2020 infrastructure priority list and heard the words 'process' and 'cost-benefit analysis' spoken. We should approach infrastructure based on need—not on shameless politicising, short-changing our economy and damaging people's lives, all for an adman's short-term political gain. *(Time expired)*

**Mr RICK WILSON** (O'Connor) (16:07): I want to thank the member for Griffith for the dorothy dixer that she's put up here today. You don't often get that in an MPI, so thank you very much. I enjoyed the irony of the member for Ballarat using the word 'rort' at the dispatch box. It's a word that's become synonymous with the member for Ballarat, so I think we all enjoyed the irony there.

**Mr Giles:** Deputy Speaker, he's reflecting on a member.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien):** I didn't hear the comment, but if the member for O'Connor was making a reflection on another member—

**Mr RICK WILSON:** It was a light-hearted comment.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** it would assist the House if you withdrew it.

**Mr RICK WILSON:** But, if those on the other side are upset by that, I will withdraw it.

**Mr Giles:** You should withdraw!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Scullin, I'm running the show here, thanks. If the member did make a reflection upon another member, I'd ask him to assist the House by withdrawing.

**Mr RICK WILSON:** I did withdraw, Deputy Speaker, but I'll withdraw again.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for O'Connor.

**Mr RICK WILSON:** Any responsible government is going to invest in infrastructure in the areas where it's going to bring the best return for the nation, such as in my electorate of O'Connor. We produce over \$10 billion worth of mineral exports every year and over \$6 billion of agricultural exports. Among other industries like tourism, these sectors that bring export income into this country are particularly important, and of course we need infrastructure to get those products off the farms, out of the mines, and to the ports and onto boats.

I want to mention a couple of projects that have been particularly important in my electorate and that reflect that priority of the government. There is the Albany Ring Road. Albany is the largest regional city in my electorate. Over two million tonnes of grain and woodchip go through that ring road annually, with triple trailer road trains interacting with passenger vehicles and tourist caravans. We've announced \$140 million to top up the \$28 million that the Western Australian government has put up for a project to produce a bypass road that will take two million tonnes of traffic out of the ring road. There are massive road safety benefits there, and also efficiencies in getting that freight to the Albany port and onto the boats as quickly as possible.

Among other infrastructure schemes that are productive and lead to increased economic activity not only for my electorate and my region but also for the nation, is the Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme, and we announced \$40 million for that. To their great credit, the Western Australian Labor government have supported this project—and I want to

acknowledge the minister, Alannah MacTiernan, who has been supportive of this project—unlike some other states that we've heard about here this afternoon. That project is going through environmental approvals at the moment. If those environmental approvals are found to be okay, then that project will proceed. It will have total funding of \$70 million, which will be transformational for the Southern Forests area around Manjimup and Pemberton in my electorate, and it will boost the national economy—and that's what this investment is all about.

Today Infrastructure Australia announced their priority initiatives list, and I've pulled out some of the initiatives that are relevant to my electorate and that we're already investing in. One is mobile telecommunications coverage in regional areas. In this day and age, we all rely on our mobile devices, be they phones or iPads and so on; and most modern machinery that operates across the agricultural parts of my electorate requires connectivity to interact and interface with other machines and with the owners. So this is a very important priority that Infrastructure Australia have identified. I'm very pleased to say that, so far, I've had 129 mobile phone towers announced for my electorate in the first four rounds of the Mobile Black Spot Program, and that has made a massive difference to many people across my electorate. I'm also pleased to say that at the election we announced another three rounds of the program, \$50 million per annum. While Infrastructure Australia have identified that as a priority, the government is already contributing to that program.

As I mentioned earlier, the road network is critical to getting grain and minerals to port, and the Wheatbelt's Secondary Freight Network has been identified by Infrastructure Australia. I couldn't be there myself, but I was pleased when the Deputy Prime Minister came to Western Australia last week to launch that project. We've put \$70 million into it, the state government has topped it up a little and the local shires are contributing. It's a great project, and I'm very proud of that.

**Ms MURPHY (Dunkley) (16:10):** We're at a time in politics in Australia where people are crying out for government that delivers substance over spin, where people are crying out for decisions on things like infrastructure projects and sporting facilities to be delivered on the basis of merit, not political expediency. So is it any wonder that at the moment trust in government is at an all-time low? Sadly, we've witnessed spin and political expediency rather than substance and merit.

The people in my electorate of Dunkley know better than to fall for political expediency and spin, because they live in a state with a Labor government that has been delivering infrastructure projects that it has promised, when it's promised them or earlier. In Frankston, the state government has removed the Overton Road and the Seaford Road level crossings. It has done an amazing redevelopment of Frankston TAFE and Frankston train station—all without a single cent of Commonwealth government funding, notwithstanding that this Liberal government has been in office for seven years. In fact, the state Labor government achieved these infrastructure projects, and so many more, despite having a former Liberal member for Dunkley who campaigned against the state government most of the time. This includes the level crossing removals, which have been so overwhelmingly welcomed by my community and have made a difference for many people. And of course we have a state Labor government investing an enormous amount of money into a brand new redevelopment of Frankston Hospital, which will service people in my electorate and beyond.

So compare that to the infrastructure announcements that have been made by the Liberal government for the seat of Dunkley in the lead-up to the last election. We saw the former Liberal member for Dunkley campaigning and handing out flyers that said the Liberal government was 'building' the extension of the metro line to Baxter, was 'delivering' a new station in Langwarrin with 1,000 car parks for park-and-ride, was apparently 'budgeting' \$38.5 million for car parking—free commuter car parking in Frankston, Seaford and Kananook—and 'budgeting' \$30 million for funding to update and upgrade intersections on Ballarto Road. It has been nine months since the federal election, and I wonder: has my community seen the Commonwealth do any of those things? Of course not! What we do know about Ballarto Road and the car parking, particularly in Seaford and Kananook, is there has been no consultation with the community, as far as anyone can see there has been no consultation with the council and there certainly has been no consultation with the state government. Announcements were pulled out of the air; those opposite said they were budgeted for and they would be delivered. There is no doubt we need more commuter car parking at Frankston, and had Labor won the election we would have delivered it, but under this government Frankston hasn't seen it being built yet.

The Infrastructure Australia report handed down today listed, for the first time, Frankston public transport connectivity as a priority initiative—not a high priority, but a priority initiative. The report said this means a proposal has been included to 'indicate that further development and rigorous assessment of this proposal is a national priority' and to 'encourage decision-makers to take proactive steps to develop solutions to future problems and opportunities'. Well, here's hoping it encourages the federal government to release the business case for the extension of the train line from Frankston to Baxter that it has been in possession of since October last year. I wrote three weeks ago to the minister to say, 'You've had this for a long time.' I gave him time and said, 'On behalf of my community, release it.' Have we seen it? No. It is not public, and we do not know what is in it.

What we do know is that this government has been saying for years now that it has budgeted a mere \$225 million for that project, which any reasonable estimate would say is over a billion dollars. It would be spent over four years, and the project could be completed. It tried to get more money from the state government before the business case was concluded. Now that it's been concluded it appears the federal government have lost it behind the couch. Stop the spin and the politicisation, release the business case and deliver what you promised to my community now that it's Labor.

**Ms BELL** (Moncrieff) (16:15): Yes, it is a gift to stand and rise to speak on the infrastructure that the Morrison government is delivering for all Australians. We are investing in \$100 billion over 10 years—that's \$10 billion a year for 10 years: quite an incredible and groundbreaking investment in infrastructure across Australia to manage our growing population and get Australians home sooner and safer.

The Gold Coast is one of Australia's fastest-growing and most dynamic cities. Currently 605,000 is the population, and the ABS projected those numbers to swell to more than 1.2 million by 2050. The rapid growth presents challenges—there's no doubt. I've been pleased, however, to work with my Morrison government colleagues, including the Deputy Prime Minister, to deliver vital infrastructure for our city. We're still celebrating the additional \$157 million that was announced in November last year and injected into Gold Coast Light Rail



Stage 3A, which will go from Pacific Fair in Broadbeach all the way to iconic Burleigh Heads—6.7 kilometres of transport infrastructure that residents and visitors alike will be able to enjoy as they can board and ride all the way from Burleigh to Helensvale and then interchange to heavy rail to Brisbane. The connection will make the Gold Coast an even better place to live and work. It will create more than 760 jobs in my electorate, which I'm so thrilled about, and it will boost the local economy.

Recently we announced around \$4 billion over the forward estimates of accelerated project funding, bringing forward road projects across the country to drive jobs and strengthen the Australian economy. On the Gold Coast this means \$46 million was brought forward for the M1 Pacific Motorway upgrades for exits 41 and 49 in Yatala. Funding for this upgrade will flow through this year to deliver on our promise to the people of the Gold Coast to spend more time with their families, instead of looking at brakelights on the motorway.

Further to this, we've invested in upgrades between Varsity Lakes and Tugun. This includes upgrading the existing four-lane motorway to six lanes; a direct northbound off-ramp from the M1 to Southport-Burleigh Road; ramp upgrades with ramp controls; auxiliary lanes; pavement; reconstruction works; and better active transport connectivity. This upgrade will create 837 jobs and improve commute times to and from Brisbane. To the north of my electorate, between Eight Mile Plains and Daisy Hill, we're investing in upgrades which include widening the motorway from six to eight lanes and ramp consolidation. This will create 721 jobs.

I understand firsthand that Gold Coasters feel frustration when they use the road for their daily commute. I used it for many years, having to go to Brisbane and Springvale to work. So this is going to be fantastic. This is why the coalition government has invested more than \$1.7 billion into the M1.

In stark contrast, we have the Queensland Labor government who've been sitting on their hands for years—in fact some would say decades—that they've been in power. I'd like to use this opportunity to comment on some of the claims made earlier today by the state Labor transport minister and state Labor member for Gaven which falls in my electorate of Moncrieff. As usual, state Labor are lying about our commitment to infrastructure. They've once again misled Gold Coasters by saying the federal government is not prioritising the Coomera Connector.

We made a commitment in the last budget of \$10 million to undertake a business case. This comes on top of the \$1.7 billion we have committed to M1 upgrades. The facts are that Infrastructure Australia is an independent body that provides advice to government. Labor knows that. The members opposite know that because they set it up. It's not representative of the government. It's up to the state governments to make a credible and detailed submission to the priority list and to meet the requisite conditions for a submission to be accepted onto that list. To be clear: the M1 Pacific Motorway capacity remains a high priority, which indicates that Infrastructure Australia view it as a key priority.

Just this morning in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* we see intersections across my electorate which are in dire need of upgrades—and they are state roads under Annastacia Palaszczuk in Queensland, a failing state Labor government that is going to lose at the next election. Can I just put a warning out to all Queenslanders, particularly those on the Gold Coast, that if they vote for Labor at the upcoming by-election in Currumbin they'll see another 10 years of 'rail

fail' and they'll see another decade of weak, failing, Labor state governments. And if they also vote for Labor on 31 October, for the seat of Gaven, they will see further failure— (*Time expired*)

**Mr DICK** (Oxley) (16:20): I rise to speak on this MPI, and I will just make a few comments about the member for Moncrieff, who started her contribution talking about the virtues of the light rail project on the Gold Coast and saying how proud she was of that project—and she's so proud of it that the Liberals actually do turn up when the state Labor government opens those projects. What she neglected to tell the House is that she campaigned against it. She campaigned against light rail on the Gold Coast. When the former Rudd government announced the first \$200 million, the member for Moncrieff and all of the other Gold Coast Liberal MPs were on the sides of the roads, holding up signs saying, 'Don't support this project.' 'Businesses will close.' Forget that it's a transformative project that delivered the Commonwealth Games; they campaigned against it. I mean, hypocrisy—how do you spell hypocrisy? L-N-P—that's exactly what you get. So let's not have any crocodile tears.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I'll tell you why we're having the by-election in Currumbin, considering the member mentioned this. It's because the LNP bullied out one of its own members. There's silence on that side when I say that—silence for the former member, Jann Stuckey, who said she was bullied out of parliament. The member for Moncrieff worked for the member for Currumbin, so I would actually defend her rather than criticising the fact that state Labor has helped build the Gold Coast—the convention centre, the Gold Coast hospital, light rail, delivering infrastructure. What has the Gold Coast seen from the LNP? Cutting, sacking and selling, the last time the LNP was in power in Queensland. Wall-to-wall Liberals on the Gold Coast, state, local and federal, and what do you get out of it? Zero. Time and time again, the Gold Coast has been taken for granted by the LNP. So let's not have any lectures—as the Prime Minister likes to say in question time—today from the member for Moncrieff about light rail. She campaigned against it—a \$200 million transport project. The member for Burleigh is still campaigning against light rail. When are you going to start listening? You don't think that people are on to you? I tell you what they're on to in the Gold Coast: the fact that the LNP does not deliver on its promises.

Let's talk about the state of Queensland, which I proudly represent, and today's MPI. The Queensland coalition seats, and some marginal seats, received 89 per cent of the funds that we're talking about. Let's put that into perspective: nine out of 10 dollars went to coalition marginal seats. The member for Moncrieff said, 'We're about people getting home quicker and sooner'—well, only if you live in an LNP seat! Let's look at the seats that missed out completely on this funding: the seat of Grayndler, the seat of Kingsford Smith, the seat of Sydney—apparently all of the congestion has been busted in the capital of New South Wales, with not one dollar being spent on congestion-busting in that city— and the electorates of Macquarie, Werriwa—I'm pretty that the member for Werriwa will say, 'we've got congestion in our seat'—Fowler, Blaxland, Chifley, Parramatta, Watson, Griffith, Spence, Hindmarsh, Kingston—and I see the member for Cooper is in the chamber: there's no congestion in inner Melbourne! Forget it, job done, tick; well done—Wills, Hotham, Isaacs, Gellibrand, Lalor and Maribyrnong. They have missed out, time and time again. Then you get into the regional cities and the electorates of Canberra, Bean, Fenner, Paterson, Newcastle, Richmond,

Whitlam, Cunningham, Solomon, Corio, Bendigo and Ballarat. Magically, they have no congestion at all. But I'll tell you where this magical congestion was: where 95 per cent of the funds in Western Australia went—that is, to every coalition seat. Not one single project went to a Labor seat. The marginal seat of Pearce received \$11 million for five small projects. In Queensland, every coalition seat in Brisbane received funds. Meanwhile, apparently the seat of Griffith has no congestion. Take a drive down Annerley Road or Ipswich Road—all done! It's just open traffic. The skies are free wherever you go, time and time again.

*Ms Swanson interjecting—*

**Mr DICK:** That's right! Level crossings—nothing to see here. We're just cruising around. In fact, you can just run into anyone because the roads are so free. This is utter rubbish. This fund was a slush fund on steroids. In fact, they know it and the government today has not proved once to defend against the fact that they only favoured LNP seats. They think that congestion stops when you enter a Labor seat. They are dreaming. I know from my own city and my own home state. If the coalition continue to do this, forget what the member for Moncrieff says—they're going to be in opposition for a very, very long time if this arrogance continues. *(Time expired)*

**Mr RAMSEY** (Grey—Government Whip) (16:25): As I've been sitting here listening to that contribution, I actually looked up the definition of 'own goal'. It is 'an unintentional deflection that causes a score to the opponent's team'. I'm given to reflect that when I look at the topic of this MPI: the failure to provide adequate infrastructure for Australia's needs. I think the member for Griffith has indeed caused an own goal. My colleagues have spoken about the \$100 billion commitment this government had to transport infrastructure in Australia over 10 years. Since 2014, this government has spent more than \$30 billion on road and rail in regional projects.

In Grey, which covers a considerable part of South Australia, it must be said that more than \$500 million is committed for major regional transport infrastructure assets within the electorate. A few days ago, I detailed the \$88 million that have come through the Roads to Recovery fund to local councils. The government has committed more than \$11 billion per annum to transport projects across Australia.

I might point out that fuel excise in Australia ranges around \$15 billion a year, and we are now spending about \$11 billion. My thoughts are that we should aim to balance that. We should aim to spend \$15 billion a year on transport infrastructure. Having said that, I've been on this pony cart for a fair while, and this is the highest percentage of that fuel excise that—I think in the last 30 years at least—has been spent on the road and rail infrastructure of the nation. I think that is an absolute win-win. We're heading in the right direction.

Just to have a little bit of a look at those things that are happening in the Grey electorate and that are committed to—and all of these amounts that I mention are being added to at the rate of 20 per cent by the state government. We are spending \$160 million on the second Joy Baluch AM Bridge at Port Augusta. Work is underway on the clearance there already. At Port Wakefield, for the overpass and dual lanes, we've put in \$72 billion. There's \$44 million for the upgrade of the Horrocks Highway. There is \$100 million for the Eyre Highway west of Port Augusta and for contributory roads on the Eyre Peninsula, which have come under increasing loads since the closure of the narrow-gauge railway there less than 12 months ago. We have earmarked \$32 million of that amount for roads in that area. There is \$64 million for

the duplication of the Augusta Highway. When we get the dual lane through Port Wakefield and the overpass on the northern side, we're going to start running those dual lanes right through to the dual bridges in Port Augusta, which is the Joy Baluch AM Bridge. That's the kind of infrastructure plan you can have when you have long-term committed governments and understand the needs of people's individual electorate. As we speak, there is \$85 million being spent on an upgrade to the road into the APY lands in the far north-west of South Australia. There is \$50 million earmarked for the Barrier Highway.

These are enormous investments—the kinds of investments we have not seen in a generation or longer in an electorate like Grey. So I'm pretty pleased to be part of a government that has recognised those needs. I spoke on the Road to Recovery fund, which has gone up by 25 per cent. That, along with the FAGs to council and in South Australia the Special Local Road Program, is the lifeblood of local councils as they seek to maintain and improve their road network.

There has been \$10 million from the federal government to support \$25 million for 1,600 kilometres of new dog fencing. This is a generational investment in the pastoral industry in South Australia. There has been \$11.4 million for a new accident and emergency unit at the Whyalla hospital and more than \$40 million allocated through the Building Better Regions Fund.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien):** Order! The time for this debate has expired.

## RESOLUTIONS OF THE SENATE

### Consideration of Senate Message

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien) (16:30):** The Speaker has received the following message from the Senate:

The Senate transmits to the House of Representatives the following resolution which was agreed to by the Senate this day:

That the Senate—

(a) notes that:

- (i) all Australians deserve the best possible healthcare, especially older Australians,
- (ii) our community is ageing, with population projections for Australia suggesting that there will be 4 million people aged between 65-84 years by 2022, with the over 65 and over 85 cohorts rapidly accelerating over the next decade,
- (iii) a third of this cohort live outside of major cities in rural and regional Australia,
- (iv) as our population ages, our community will increasingly rely on appropriate aged care services for good health, support and dignity,
- (v) Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT) are teams of experienced, qualified and highly trained medical, clinically and allied health professionals who are responsible for assessing the level of government-funded care that ageing Australians should receive,
- (vi) in 2018-19, ACATs provided over 178,000 assessments,
- (vii) ACAT teams are local, know their communities, have enormous expertise over 30 years, and their role is to independently assess what older Australians need and identify the best options,

(viii) ACAT teams are independent of private service providers and owe no allegiance or preference for any particular provider, and

(ix) the Morrison Government has announced it intends to privatise the ACAT workforce and put out a tender for these vital services; and

(b) rejects the Morrison Government for its plans to privatise ACAT, which would threaten the quality and independence of services provided to ageing Australians, and jeopardise the jobs and independence of Australian healthcare professionals.

The Senate requests the concurrence of the House in this resolution.

**Mrs MARINO** (Forrest—Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories) (16:30): I move:

That consideration of the message be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

**Ms COLLINS** (Franklin) (16:30): I move:

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

"the message be considered immediately."

This government should be ashamed of what it is doing to privatised aged-care assessments. Older Australians rely on these assessments. The states and territories are cross about these—

**Mrs MARINO** (Forrest—Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories) (16:31): I move:

That the question be put.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the question be put.

The House divided. [16:35]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....	73
Noes .....	70
Majority .....	3

# AYES

Alexander, JG  
 Andrews, KJ  
 Archer, BK  
 Broadbent, RE  
 Chester, D  
 Conaghan, PJ  
 Coulton, M  
 Dutton, PC  
 Evans, TM  
 Fletcher, PW  
 Frydenberg, JA  
 Gillespie, DA  
 Hastie, AW  
 Hogan, KJ  
 Hunt, GA  
 Joyce, BT  
 Laming, A  
 Leaser, J  
 Littleproud, D  
 Marino, NB

Allen, K  
 Andrews, KL  
 Bell, AM  
 Buchholz, S  
 Christensen, GR  
 Connelly, V  
 Drum, DK (teller)  
 Entsch, WG  
 Falinski, JG  
 Flint, NJ  
 Gee, AR  
 Hammond, CM  
 Hawke, AG  
 Howarth, LR  
 Irons, SJ  
 Kelly, C  
 Landry, ML  
 Ley, SP  
 Liu, G  
 Martin, FB

## AYES

McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
Morton, B  
O'Brien, T  
Pasin, A  
Pitt, KJ  
Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Brien, LS  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC  
Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Sharma, DN  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

## NOES

Albanese, AN  
Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burney, LJ  
Butler, MC  
Byrne, AM  
Champion, ND  
Claydon, SC  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD  
Elliot, MJ  
Freeland, MR  
Giles, AJ  
Gosling, LJ  
Hill, JC  
Jones, SP  
Kelly, MJ  
Khalil, P  
King, MMH  
Marles, RD  
Mitchell, BK  
Mulino, D  
Neumann, SK  
O'Neil, CE  
Payne, AE  
Phillips, FE  
Rowland, MA  
Sharkie, RCC  
Smith, DPB  
Stanley, AM (teller)  
Swanson, MJ  
Thistlethwaite, MJ  
Vamvakinou, M

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Chalmers, JE  
Clare, JD  
Coker, EA  
Conroy, PM  
Dreyfus, MA  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S  
Gorman, P  
Haines, H  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, G  
Keogh, MJ  
King, CF  
Leigh, AK  
McBride, EM  
Mitchell, RG  
Murphy, PJ  
O'Connor, BPJ  
Owens, JA  
Perrett, GD  
Rishworth, AL  
Ryan, JC (teller)  
Shorten, WR  
Snowdon, WE  
Steggall, Z  
Templeman, SR  
Thwaites, KL  
Watts, TG

## NOES

Wells, AS  
Wilson, JH

Wilkie, AD  
Zappia, A

Question agreed to.

**The SPEAKER** (16:40): The question now is that the consideration of the message be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

The House divided. [16:40]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....73  
Noes .....70  
Majority.....3

## AYES

Alexander, JG  
Andrews, KJ  
Archer, BK  
Broadbent, RE  
Chester, D  
Conaghan, PJ  
Coulton, M  
Dutton, PC  
Evans, TM  
Fletcher, PW  
Frydenberg, JA  
Gillespie, DA  
Hastie, AW  
Hogan, KJ  
Hunt, GA  
Joyce, BT  
Laming, A  
Leeser, J  
Littleproud, D  
Marino, NB  
McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
Morton, B  
O'Brien, T  
Pasin, A  
Pitt, KJ  
Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

Allen, K  
Andrews, KL  
Bell, AM  
Buchholz, S  
Christensen, GR  
Connelly, V  
Drum, DK (teller)  
Entsch, WG  
Falinski, JG  
Flint, NJ  
Gee, AR  
Hammond, CM  
Hawke, AG  
Howarth, LR  
Irons, SJ  
Kelly, C  
Landry, ML  
Ley, SP  
Liu, G  
Martin, FB  
McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Brien, LS  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC  
Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Sharma, DN  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

## NOES

Albanese, AN  
 Bandt, AP  
 Bowen, CE  
 Burney, LJ  
 Butler, MC  
 Byrne, AM  
 Champion, ND  
 Claydon, SC  
 Collins, JM  
 Dick, MD  
 Elliot, MJ  
 Freeland, MR  
 Giles, AJ  
 Gosling, LJ  
 Hill, JC  
 Jones, SP  
 Kelly, MJ  
 Khalil, P  
 King, MMH  
 Marles, RD  
 Mitchell, BK  
 Mulino, D  
 Neumann, SK  
 O'Neil, CE  
 Payne, AE  
 Phillips, FE  
 Rowland, MA  
 Sharkie, RCC  
 Smith, DPB  
 Stanley, AM (teller)  
 Swanson, MJ  
 Thistlethwaite, MJ  
 Vamvakinou, M  
 Wells, AS  
 Wilson, JH

Aly, A  
 Bird, SL  
 Burke, AS  
 Burns, J  
 Butler, TM  
 Chalmers, JE  
 Clare, JD  
 Coker, EA  
 Conroy, PM  
 Dreyfus, MA  
 Fitzgibbon, JA  
 Georganas, S  
 Gorman, P  
 Haines, H  
 Husic, EN  
 Kearney, G  
 Keogh, MJ  
 King, CF  
 Leigh, AK  
 McBride, EM  
 Mitchell, RG  
 Murphy, PJ  
 O'Connor, BPJ  
 Owens, JA  
 Perrett, GD  
 Rishworth, AL  
 Ryan, JC (teller)  
 Shorten, WR  
 Snowdon, WE  
 Steggall, Z  
 Templeman, SR  
 Thwaites, KL  
 Watts, TG  
 Wilkie, AD  
 Zappia, A

Question agreed to.

## MOTIONS

## Morrison Government

**Mr BURKE** (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (16:41): I seek leave to move following motion:

That the House:

(1) notes:

- (a) the Government is privatising the Aged Care Assessment Teams, the only part of the aged care system that is working well, before the Aged Care Royal Commission has even finished its work;
- (b) the Minister representing the Minister for Aged Care won't even own up to these plans;



(c) this Government routinely prevents debate on issues of vital importance to this nation, including today's message from the Senate;

(d) the extent to which this Government is silencing debate in the House of Representatives is without precedent in the history of Federation; and

(e) this Government has not granted leave for a single urgent Opposition motion in this term of Parliament, has routinely shut down suspension of standing order motions, and even passed legislation where not a single person spoke other than the Minister; and

(2) therefore, asserts:

(a) this should be a chamber where elected representatives come together to debate; and

(b) this Government's practice of constantly silencing voices other than its own has no place in democracy.

Leave not granted.

**Mr BURKE:** I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Manager of Opposition Business from moving the following motion immediately—That the House:

(1) notes:

(a) the Government is privatising the Aged Care Assessment Teams, the only part of the aged care system that is working well, before the Aged Care Royal Commission has even finished its work;

(b) the Minister representing the Minister for Aged Care won't even own up to these plans;

(c) this Government routinely prevents debate on issues of vital importance to this nation, including today's message from the Senate;

(d) the extent to which this Government is silencing debate in the House of Representatives is without precedent in the history of Federation; and

(e) this Government has not granted leave for a single urgent Opposition motion in this term of Parliament, has routinely shut down suspension of standing order motions, and even passed legislation where not a single person spoke other than the Minister; and

(2) therefore, asserts:

(a) this should be a chamber where elected representatives come together to debate; and

(b) this Government's practice of constantly silencing voices other than its own has no place in democracy.

There has never been a more precious Prime Minister unwilling to hear any—

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. The Leader of the House?

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (16:44): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is the Manager of Opposition Business be no further heard.

The House divided. [16:49]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....73

Noes .....70

Majority.....3

## AYES

Alexander, JG  
 Andrews, KJ  
 Archer, BK  
 Broadbent, RE  
 Chester, D  
 Conaghan, PJ  
 Coulton, M  
 Dutton, PC  
 Evans, TM  
 Fletcher, PW  
 Frydenberg, JA  
 Gillespie, DA  
 Hastie, AW  
 Hogan, KJ  
 Hunt, GA  
 Joyce, BT  
 Laming, A  
 Leaser, J  
 Littleproud, D  
 Marino, NB  
 McCormack, MF  
 McVeigh, JJ  
 Morton, B  
 O'Brien, T  
 Pasin, A  
 Pitt, KJ  
 Price, ML  
 Robert, SR  
 Simmonds, J  
 Sukkar, MS  
 Tehan, DT  
 van Manen, AJ  
 Wallace, AB  
 Wicks, LE  
 Wilson, TR  
 Wyatt, KG  
 Zimmerman, T

Allen, K  
 Andrews, KL  
 Bell, AM  
 Buchholz, S  
 Christensen, GR  
 Connelly, V  
 Drum, DK (teller)  
 Entsch, WG  
 Falinski, JG  
 Flint, NJ  
 Gee, AR  
 Hammond, CM  
 Hawke, AG  
 Howarth, LR  
 Irons, SJ  
 Kelly, C  
 Landry, ML  
 Ley, SP  
 Liu, G  
 Martin, FB  
 McIntosh, MI  
 Morrison, SJ  
 O'Brien, LS  
 O'Dowd, KD  
 Pearce, GB  
 Porter, CC  
 Ramsey, RE (teller)  
 Sharma, DN  
 Stevens, J  
 Taylor, AJ  
 Thompson, P  
 Vasta, RX  
 Webster, AE  
 Wilson, RJ  
 Wood, JP  
 Young, T

## NOES

Albanese, AN  
 Bandt, AP  
 Bowen, CE  
 Burns, J  
 Butler, TM  
 Chalmers, JE  
 Clare, JD  
 Coker, EA  
 Conroy, PM  
 Dreyfus, MA  
 Fitzgibbon, JA  
 Georganas, S

Aly, A  
 Bird, SL  
 Burke, AS  
 Butler, MC  
 Byrne, AM  
 Champion, ND  
 Claydon, SC  
 Collins, JM  
 Dick, MD  
 Elliot, MJ  
 Freeland, MR  
 Giles, AJ

---

 CHAMBER

## NOES

Gorman, P  
Haines, H  
Hill, JC  
Jones, SP  
Kelly, MJ  
Khalil, P  
King, MMH  
Marles, RD  
Mitchell, BK  
Mulino, D  
Neumann, SK  
O'Neil, CE  
Payne, AE  
Phillips, FE  
Rowland, MA  
Sharkie, RCC  
Smith, DPB  
Stanley, AM (teller)  
Swanson, MJ  
Thistlethwaite, MJ  
Vamvakinou, M  
Wells, AS  
Wilson, JH

Gosling, LJ  
Hayes, CP  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, G  
Keogh, MJ  
King, CF  
Leigh, AK  
McBride, EM  
Mitchell, RG  
Murphy, PJ  
O'Connor, BPJ  
Owens, JA  
Perrett, GD  
Rishworth, AL  
Ryan, JC (teller)  
Shorten, WR  
Snowdon, WE  
Steggall, Z  
Templeman, SR  
Thwaites, KL  
Watts, TG  
Wilkie, AD  
Zappia, A

Question agreed to.

**The SPEAKER** (16:49): Is the motion seconded?

**Ms COLLINS** (Franklin) (16:49): Seconded! If they have nothing to hide, then have a debate about their ACAT privatisation—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Franklin will resume her seat. The Leader of the House?

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (16:50): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the member for Franklin be no further heard.

The House divided. [16:51]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....73  
Noes .....70  
Majority.....3

## AYES

Alexander, JG  
Andrews, KJ  
Archer, BK  
Broadbent, RE  
Chester, D  
Conaghan, PJ

Allen, K  
Andrews, KL  
Bell, AM  
Buchholz, S  
Christensen, GR  
Connelly, V

## AYES

Coulton, M  
Dutton, PC  
Evans, TM  
Fletcher, PW  
Frydenberg, JA  
Gillespie, DA  
Hastie, AW  
Hogan, KJ  
Hunt, GA  
Joyce, BT  
Laming, A  
Leeser, J  
Littleproud, D  
Marino, NB  
McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
Morton, B  
O'Brien, T  
Pasin, A  
Pitt, KJ  
Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

Drum, DK (teller)  
Entsch, WG  
Falinski, JG  
Flint, NJ  
Gee, AR  
Hammond, CM  
Hawke, AG  
Howarth, LR  
Irons, SJ  
Kelly, C  
Landry, ML  
Ley, SP  
Liu, G  
Martin, FB  
McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Brien, LS  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC  
Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Sharma, DN  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

## NOES

Albanese, AN  
Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Chalmers, JE  
Clare, JD  
Coker, EA  
Conroy, PM  
Dreyfus, MA  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S  
Gorman, P  
Haines, H  
Hill, JC  
Jones, SP  
Kelly, MJ  
Khalil, P  
King, MMH

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Butler, MC  
Byrne, AM  
Champion, ND  
Claydon, SC  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD  
Elliot, MJ  
Freelander, MR  
Giles, AJ  
Gosling, LJ  
Hayes, CP  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, G  
Keogh, MJ  
King, CF  
Leigh, AK

## NOES

Marles, RD  
Mitchell, BK  
Mulino, D  
Neumann, SK  
O'Neil, CE  
Payne, AE  
Phillips, FE  
Rowland, MA  
Sharkie, RCC  
Smith, DPB  
Stanley, AM (teller)  
Swanson, MJ  
Thistlethwaite, MJ  
Vamvakinou, M  
Wells, AS  
Wilson, JH

McBride, EM  
Mitchell, RG  
Murphy, PJ  
O'Connor, BPJ  
Owens, JA  
Perrett, GD  
Rishworth, AL  
Ryan, JC (teller)  
Shorten, WR  
Snowdon, WE  
Steggall, Z  
Templeman, SR  
Thwaites, KL  
Watts, TG  
Wilkie, AD  
Zappia, A

Question agreed to.

**The SPEAKER** (16:52): The question is that the motion be agreed to. The member for Cooper—sorry; the member for Cooper will resume her seat. The Leader of the House?

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (16:52): Mr Speaker, I move:

That the question be put.

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business—

**Mr Burke:** Mr Speaker, a point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, on a point of order.

**Mr Burke:** When someone's given the call, normally they are allowed to say a word before the Leader of the House gets up and routinely silences them.

**The SPEAKER:** I'll speak on that point of order. I did call the member for Cooper. The Leader of the House rose straightaway. Under the—

*Mr Brian Mitchell interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Lyons is about to not vote. Under the standing orders, whenever anyone rises on a point of order, it's my obligation to call them. The Manager of Opposition Business expects me to call him immediately when he rises on a point of order. I don't think the point he's making is a reflection on me. That's just the standing orders.

*Ms Kearney interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Well, I'd say to the member for Cooper, some people approach the dispatch box talking!

**Mr Burke:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, sure, to the point of order.

**Mr Burke:** To the point of order: I take the point absolutely that you've just made, and there have been occasions where one of us has risen to move a motion and you thought we were rising on a point of order and you then told us to sit down again.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes.

**Mr Burke:** If you thought—and the understanding was—the Leader of the House was rising on a point of order, he then didn't. He sought to move a resolution. And, under those circumstances, I simply ask that the member for Cooper be allowed to at least commence her speech.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Cooper has the call.

**Ms KEARNEY (Cooper) (16:53):** A community of baboons looks after its elderly better than—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Cooper will resume her seat. The Leader of the House?

**Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (16:53):** I move:

That the question be put.

**The SPEAKER:** I'd just say to the Leader of the House—

*Honourable members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** if those could stop interjecting—I just want him to repeat what motion he moved.

**Mr PORTER:** I move:

That the question be put.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the question be put.

The House divided. [16:55]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....	73
Noes .....	70
Majority .....	3

#### AYES

Alexander, JG  
Andrews, KJ  
Archer, BK  
Broadbent, RE  
Chester, D  
Conaghan, PJ  
Coulton, M  
Dutton, PC  
Evans, TM  
Fletcher, PW  
Frydenberg, JA  
Gillespie, DA  
Hastie, AW  
Hogan, KJ  
Hunt, GA  
Joyce, BT  
Laming, A  
Leeser, J  
Littleproud, D  
Marino, NB

Allen, K  
Andrews, KL  
Bell, AM  
Buchholz, S  
Christensen, GR  
Connelly, V  
Drum, DK (teller)  
Entsch, WG  
Falinski, JG  
Flint, NJ  
Gee, AR  
Hammond, CM  
Hawke, AG  
Howarth, LR  
Irons, SJ  
Kelly, C  
Landry, ML  
Ley, SP  
Liu, G  
Martin, FB

## AYES

McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
Morton, B  
O'Brien, T  
Pasin, A  
Pitt, KJ  
Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Brien, LS  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC  
Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Sharma, DN  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

## NOES

Albanese, AN  
Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Chalmers, JE  
Clare, JD  
Coker, EA  
Conroy, PM  
Dreyfus, MA  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S  
Gorman, P  
Haines, H  
Hill, JC  
Jones, SP  
Kelly, MJ  
Khalil, P  
King, MMH  
Marles, RD  
Mitchell, BK  
Mulino, D  
Neumann, SK  
O'Neil, CE  
Payne, AE  
Phillips, FE  
Rowland, MA  
Sharkie, RCC  
Smith, DPB  
Stanley, AM (teller)  
Swanson, MJ  
Thistlethwaite, MJ  
Vamvakinou, M

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Butler, MC  
Byrne, AM  
Champion, ND  
Claydon, SC  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD  
Elliot, MJ  
Freeland, MR  
Giles, AJ  
Gosling, LJ  
Hayes, CP  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, G  
Keogh, MJ  
King, CF  
Leigh, AK  
McBride, EM  
Mitchell, RG  
Murphy, PJ  
O'Connor, BPJ  
Owens, JA  
Perrett, GD  
Rishworth, AL  
Ryan, JC (teller)  
Shorten, WR  
Snowdon, WE  
Steggall, Z  
Templeman, SR  
Thwaites, KL  
Watts, TG

## NOES

Wells, AS  
Wilson, JH

Wilkie, AD  
Zappia, A

Question agreed to.

**The SPEAKER** (17:00): The question now is the motion moved by the Manager of Opposition Business be agreed to.

The House divided. [17:00]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....70  
Noes .....73  
Majority.....3

## AYES

Albanese, AN  
Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Chalmers, JE  
Clare, JD  
Coker, EA  
Conroy, PM  
Dreyfus, MA  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S  
Gorman, P  
Haines, H  
Hill, JC  
Jones, SP  
Kelly, MJ  
Khalil, P  
King, MMH  
Marles, RD  
Mitchell, BK  
Mulino, D  
Neumann, SK  
O'Neil, CE  
Payne, AE  
Phillips, FE  
Rowland, MA  
Sharkie, RCC  
Smith, DPB  
Stanley, AM (teller)  
Swanson, MJ  
Thistlethwaite, MJ  
Vamvakinou, M  
Wells, AS  
Wilson, JH

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Butler, MC  
Byrne, AM  
Champion, ND  
Claydon, SC  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD  
Elliot, MJ  
Freeland, MR  
Giles, AJ  
Gosling, LJ  
Hayes, CP  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, G  
Keogh, MJ  
King, CF  
Leigh, AK  
McBride, EM  
Mitchell, RG  
Murphy, PJ  
O'Connor, BPJ  
Owens, JA  
Perrett, GD  
Rishworth, AL  
Ryan, JC (teller)  
Shorten, WR  
Snowdon, WE  
Steggall, Z  
Templeman, SR  
Thwaites, KL  
Watts, TG  
Wilkie, AD  
Zappia, A



## NOES

Alexander, JG  
 Andrews, KJ  
 Archer, BK  
 Broadbent, RE  
 Chester, D  
 Conaghan, PJ  
 Coulton, M  
 Dutton, PC  
 Evans, TM  
 Fletcher, PW  
 Frydenberg, JA  
 Gillespie, DA  
 Hastie, AW  
 Hogan, KJ  
 Hunt, GA  
 Joyce, BT  
 Laming, A  
 Leaser, J  
 Littleproud, D  
 Marino, NB  
 McCormack, MF  
 McVeigh, JJ  
 Morton, B  
 O'Brien, T  
 Pasin, A  
 Pitt, KJ  
 Price, ML  
 Robert, SR  
 Simmonds, J  
 Sukkar, MS  
 Tehan, DT  
 van Manen, AJ  
 Wallace, AB  
 Wicks, LE  
 Wilson, TR  
 Wyatt, KG  
 Zimmerman, T

Allen, K  
 Andrews, KL  
 Bell, AM  
 Buchholz, S  
 Christensen, GR  
 Connelly, V  
 Drum, DK (teller)  
 Entsch, WG  
 Falinski, JG  
 Flint, NJ  
 Gee, AR  
 Hammond, CM  
 Hawke, AG  
 Howarth, LR  
 Irons, SJ  
 Kelly, C  
 Landry, ML  
 Ley, SP  
 Liu, G  
 Martin, FB  
 McIntosh, MI  
 Morrison, SJ  
 O'Brien, LS  
 O'Dowd, KD  
 Pearce, GB  
 Porter, CC  
 Ramsey, RE (teller)  
 Sharma, DN  
 Stevens, J  
 Taylor, AJ  
 Thompson, P  
 Vasta, RX  
 Webster, AE  
 Wilson, RJ  
 Wood, JP  
 Young, T

Question negatived.

**BILLS****Statute Update (Regulations References) Bill 2020****Second Reading**

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

**Mr DREYFUS** (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (17:04): I move:

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

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House:

(1) notes the Government's increasing use of regulations to implement its policies, which has the effect of bypassing the parliamentary scrutiny that is fundamental to the legislative process;

(2) expresses concern that seeking to govern by regulation undermines the long-standing conventions of transparency and accountability which are an integral part of our democracy; and

(3) calls on the Government to return to the principles of transparency and accountability that have until recent years defined Australia as a democratic nation governed under the rule of law".

The Statute Update (Regulations References) Bill 2020 makes a series of minor technical changes to 10 principal acts to update references to regulations. The amended acts are the Age Discrimination Act 2004, the Airports Act 1996, the A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999, the Australian Citizenship Act 2007, the Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011, the Customs Act 1901, the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, the International Monetary Agreements Act 1947, the Judicial Misbehaviour and Incapacity (Parliamentary Commissions) Act 2012, and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004.

It does appear that the changes made by this bill really are, as the government claims in its explanatory memorandum, technical minor changes that constitute no more than statutory housekeeping. However, we did have to check. We had to check because this government recently tried to pass off a significant and sweeping change to Commonwealth criminal law as a minor technical matter. It is unclear whether this was due to this government's generally slap-dash approach to lawmaking or whether it was a deliberate deception to try to slip through a major change to criminal law without debate or scrutiny. In any event, the issue with the amendment to the Commonwealth Criminal Code that I refer to was spotted by Professor Jeremy Gans of the Melbourne Law School at the University of Melbourne. It was spotted while the bill in question was being reviewed by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee.

I raise this example because it demonstrates the fundamental importance of our parliamentary processes. It is through these processes—in particular the process of consultation on bills with the wider Australian community—that mistakes in government bills are detected. It also provides an important safeguard against any subterfuge by the government. Through this scrutiny by the parliament and by the wider Australian community, defects in proposed laws can be discovered and rectified before the laws are passed. Scrutiny of this kind is fundamental to the health of our democracy because, through such scrutiny, the government of the day can be held accountable for what it does in this place. This is yet another example of the wisdom of the observation by United States jurist Louis Brandeis that sunlight is the best disinfectant. It's a matter of great concern and regret to me that many in this government run from sunlight and would sooner try to govern in the shadows. Is it because they know that their government would wither in the sunlight? Is it because they know that the Australian people would not stand for their behaviour if they could see what they got up to behind the closed doors of their parliamentary offices?

It's often said that fish rots from the head, and recent events around the sports rorts affair would seem to prove the truth of this adage. How could a government claim to respect transparency and accountability when, in response to an explosive scandal regarding the unprecedented unlawful rorting of taxpayer funds to fund their re-election campaign, this Prime Minister's claim is only that there's nothing to see here? How can a government claim

to respect transparency and accountability when, in response to a public report by the independent Auditor-General, the Prime Minister commissions a secret report by his former political staffer and then claims that his old staffer said it was all just fine by him?

I commend this bill to the House.

*(Quorum formed)*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S Georganas):** Is the amendment seconded?

**Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (17:11):** I second the amendment. This government is frightened of transparency. As the member for Isaacs pointed out, this government should be doing more to ensure that everything it does is done in a transparent way. It is hiding from the Australian public every single time it can. We saw that today when it tried to shut down several debates. It continues to hide away from the public every single time.

**The SPEAKER:** The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Isaacs has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The immediate question before the House is that the amendment moved by the member for Isaacs be agreed to.

The House divided. [17:18]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....	69
Noes .....	72
Majority .....	3

#### AYES

Albanese, AN  
Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burney, LJ  
Butler, MC  
Byrne, AM  
Champion, ND  
Claydon, SC  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD  
Elliot, MJ  
Freeland, MR  
Giles, AJ  
Gosling, LJ  
Hayes, CP  
Jones, SP  
Kelly, MJ  
Khalil, P  
King, MMH  
Marles, RD  
Mitchell, BK  
Mulino, D  
Neumann, SK  
O'Neil, CE  
Payne, AE  
Phillips, FE  
Rowland, MA

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Chalmers, JE  
Clare, JD  
Coker, EA  
Conroy, PM  
Dreyfus, MA  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S  
Gorman, P  
Haines, H  
Hill, JC  
Kearney, G  
Keogh, MJ  
King, CF  
Leigh, AK  
McBride, EM  
Mitchell, RG  
Murphy, PJ  
O'Connor, BPJ  
Owens, JA  
Perrett, GD  
Rishworth, AL (proxy)  
Ryan, JC (teller)

## AYES

Sharkie, RCC  
Smith, DPB  
Stanley, AM (teller)  
Swanson, MJ  
Thistlethwaite, MJ  
Watts, TG  
Wilkie, AD  
Zappia, A

Shorten, WR  
Snowdon, WE  
Steggall, Z  
Templeman, SR  
Vamvakinou, M  
Wells, AS  
Wilson, JH

## NOES

Alexander, JG  
Andrews, KJ  
Archer, BK  
Broadbent, RE  
Chester, D  
Connelly, V  
Drum, DK (teller)  
Entsch, WG  
Falinski, JG  
Flint, NJ  
Gee, AR  
Hammond, CM  
Hawke, AG  
Howarth, LR  
Irons, SJ  
Kelly, C  
Landry, ML  
Ley, SP  
Liu, G  
Martin, FB  
McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Brien, LS  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC  
Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Sharma, DN  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

Allen, K  
Andrews, KL  
Bell, AM  
Buchholz, S  
Conaghan, PJ  
Coulton, M  
Dutton, PC  
Evans, TM  
Fletcher, PW  
Frydenberg, JA  
Gillespie, DA  
Hastie, AW  
Hogan, KJ  
Hunt, GA  
Joyce, BT  
Laming, A  
Leeser, J  
Littleproud, D  
Marino, NB  
McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
Morton, B  
O'Brien, T  
Pasin, A  
Pitt, KJ  
Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

Question negatived.

Original question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

**Third Reading**

**Ms PRICE** (Durack—Minister for Defence Industry) (17:24): I seek leave of the House to move the third reading immediately.

Leave not granted.

**Ms PRICE:** I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the motion for the third reading being moved without delay.

**Mr BURKE** (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (17:25): Today goes to the stupidity of the government's insistence that no-one other than themselves will be allowed to make a speech. You then end up with a situation where the only thing that elected members of parliament have available to themselves is to make the point to the government that we will continue to push back until this becomes a democratic chamber again. We will continue to do so. So, when people sit over there and vote for member after member to not be heard, when people over there move that question after question be put, don't be surprised when you spend the day with division bells ringing and, when you seek the support of the opposition for leave on a matter, you don't get it. It's not a surprise.

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

**Ms PRICE** (Durack—Minister for Defence Industry) (17:25): I move:

That the question be now put.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the question be put.

The House divided. [17:30]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....73  
Noes .....69  
Majority.....4

**AYES**

Alexander, JG  
Andrews, KJ  
Archer, BK  
Broadbent, RE  
Chester, D  
Conaghan, PJ  
Coulton, M  
Dutton, PC  
Evans, TM  
Fletcher, PW  
Frydenberg, JA  
Gillespie, DA  
Hastie, AW  
Hogan, KJ  
Hunt, GA  
Joyce, BT  
Laming, A  
Leeser, J  
Littleproud, D  
Marino, NB

Allen, K  
Andrews, KL  
Bell, AM  
Buchholz, S  
Christensen, GR  
Connelly, V  
Drum, DK (teller)  
Entsch, WG  
Falinski, JG  
Flint, NJ  
Gee, AR  
Hammond, CM  
Hawke, AG  
Howarth, LR  
Irons, SJ  
Kelly, C  
Landry, ML  
Ley, SP  
Liu, G  
Martin, FB

## AYES

McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
Morton, B  
O'Brien, T  
Pasin, A  
Pitt, KJ  
Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Brien, LS  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC  
Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Sharma, DN  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

## NOES

Albanese, AN  
Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burney, LJ  
Butler, MC  
Byrne, AM  
Champion, ND  
Claydon, SC  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD  
Elliot, MJ  
Freeland, MR  
Giles, AJ  
Gosling, LJ  
Hayes, CP  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, G  
Keogh, MJ  
King, CF  
Leigh, AK  
McBride, EM  
Mitchell, RG  
Murphy, PJ  
O'Connor, BPJ  
Owens, JA  
Perrett, GD  
Rishworth, AL (proxy)  
Ryan, JC (teller)  
Smith, DPB  
Stanley, AM (teller)  
Swanson, MJ  
Thistlethwaite, MJ  
Vamvakinou, M

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Chalmers, JE  
Clare, JD  
Coker, EA  
Conroy, PM  
Dreyfus, MA  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S  
Gorman, P  
Haines, H  
Hill, JC  
Jones, SP  
Kelly, MJ  
Khalil, P  
King, MMH  
Marles, RD  
Mitchell, BK  
Mulino, D  
Neumann, SK  
O'Neil, CE  
Payne, AE  
Phillips, FE  
Rowland, MA  
Sharkie, RCC  
Snowdon, WE  
Steggall, Z  
Templeman, SR  
Thwaites, KL  
Watts, TG

## NOES

Wells, AS  
Zappia, A

Wilson, JH

Question agreed to.

**The SPEAKER** (17:33): The question now is that the motion moved by the minister to suspend standing orders be agreed to.

The House divided. [17:34]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....73  
Noes .....69  
Majority.....4

## AYES

Alexander, JG  
Andrews, KJ  
Archer, BK  
Broadbent, RE  
Chester, D  
Conaghan, PJ  
Coulton, M  
Dutton, PC  
Evans, TM  
Fletcher, PW  
Frydenberg, JA  
Gillespie, DA  
Hastie, AW  
Hogan, KJ  
Hunt, GA  
Joyce, BT  
Laming, A  
Leeser, J  
Littleproud, D  
Marino, NB  
McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
Morton, B  
O'Brien, T  
Pasin, A  
Pitt, KJ  
Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

Allen, K  
Andrews, KL  
Bell, AM  
Buchholz, S  
Christensen, GR  
Connelly, V  
Drum, DK (teller)  
Entsch, WG  
Falinski, JG  
Flint, NJ  
Gee, AR  
Hammond, CM  
Hawke, AG  
Howarth, LR  
Irons, SJ  
Kelly, C  
Landry, ML  
Ley, SP  
Liu, G  
Martin, FB  
McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Brien, LS  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC  
Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Sharma, DN  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

## NOES

Albanese, AN  
 Bandt, AP  
 Bowen, CE  
 Burney, LJ  
 Butler, MC  
 Byrne, AM  
 Champion, ND  
 Claydon, SC  
 Collins, JM  
 Dick, MD  
 Elliot, MJ  
 Freeland, MR  
 Giles, AJ  
 Gosling, LJ  
 Hayes, CP  
 Husic, EN  
 Kearney, G  
 Keogh, MJ  
 King, CF  
 Leigh, AK  
 McBride, EM  
 Mitchell, RG  
 Murphy, PJ  
 O'Connor, BPJ  
 Owens, JA  
 Perrett, GD  
 Rishworth, AL (proxy)  
 Ryan, JC (teller)  
 Smith, DPB  
 Stanley, AM (teller)  
 Swanson, MJ  
 Thistlethwaite, MJ  
 Vamvakinou, M  
 Wells, AS  
 Zappia, A

Aly, A  
 Bird, SL  
 Burke, AS  
 Burns, J  
 Butler, TM  
 Chalmers, JE  
 Clare, JD  
 Coker, EA  
 Conroy, PM  
 Dreyfus, MA  
 Fitzgibbon, JA  
 Georganas, S  
 Gorman, P  
 Haines, H  
 Hill, JC  
 Jones, SP  
 Kelly, MJ  
 Khalil, P  
 King, MMH  
 Marles, RD  
 Mitchell, BK  
 Mulino, D  
 Neumann, SK  
 O'Neil, CE  
 Payne, AE  
 Phillips, FE  
 Rowland, MA  
 Sharkie, RCC  
 Snowdon, WE  
 Steggall, Z  
 Templeman, SR  
 Thwaites, KL  
 Watts, TG  
 Wilson, JH

Question agreed to.

**Ms PRICE** (Durack—Minister for Defence Industry) (17:35): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Mr DREYFUS** (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (17:36): Labor are supporting the Statute Update (Regulations References) Bill 2020, but there are a couple of further comments that we would wish to make in respect of this legislation. As I said earlier in the debate, although it's been suggested by parliamentary counsel and by the government that this is a bill which will improve the usability of quite a number of pieces of legislation, the real purpose of this bill is in fact to remove references to specific regulations that presently appear in quite a number of important acts that are being amended here. They are not obscure acts. They are not acts that no-one ever looks at. They are acts which I would think—looking



at the names of them—quite a number of Australian citizens would have occasion to refer to quite frequently.

The first act that's on the list is the Age Discrimination Act. That's a bill that's a matter of deep concern to not just the shadow minister for the ageing but all of our senior citizens. Another one is the Airports Act. Another one is a quite significant piece of tax legislation. Another is an act that I introduced to this parliament in 2011, the Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011, which is a significant part of the Australian effort to reduce our carbon emissions. So we've got here quite a number of acts which are significant acts, but no longer will we see in them reference to specific regulations. Rather, we will see in them references more generically to regulations made under those acts. As I said earlier in this debate, our concern is that we should always be careful before this parliament legislates to reduce transparency of legislation or of regulations made under legislation. And this is very much a government which is not interested in transparency. We see that every day that this government continues: it is not interested in transparency in any way; it wants to govern as far as possible in secret.

What I would also say about this legislation is that it will no longer be the case—and perhaps we should all be relieved by this—that this government will come into the parliament trumpeting statute update bills, of which this is an example, as some mighty deregulatory effort, or red-tape-busting effort, or perhaps, as we've heard from them before, 'bonfire regulations'. I think that was how the now Treasurer but then parliamentary secretary, the member for Kooyong, liked to boast in 2014 when they embarked on this supposed massive effort to reduce the size of the statute book. In fact, what's happened under this government in its seven years is that we've seen an increase in the size of the statute book and an increase in regulations. Perhaps that's why they're no longer talking about making any kind of deregulatory effort, because they've actually failed in that objective. As I say, perhaps we should all feel thankful that no longer does this ageing government, in its seventh year, pretend that it's engaged in any kind of serious deregulatory effort. Still less, I hope never to hear again that they are trying to boast that an ordinary piece of statute update or statute revision is to be badged as deregulation. I do commend the bill to the House.

*(Quorum formed)*

**Mr KEOGH (Burt) (17:42):** I also wish to speak in respect of the third reading of this very interesting piece of legislation that we have before the House. The Statute Update (Regulations References) Bill 2020 is interesting because it forms one of those critical pieces of legislation that we require when we see such dramatic increase in the expanse of Commonwealth regulation through legislation but also regulation and delegated legislation. Because, as we see that infinite increase in Commonwealth law and Commonwealth regulation, we find that the references to that delegated legislation tend to age, a bit like one of the acts that's referred to in this particular bill. It tends to lose its currency. It's important that we make sure periodically that those references that are made to delegated legislation in our statutes do refer properly to them. Interestingly here, in this particular piece of legislation—probably fortuitously, because it will save considerable parliamentary time in the future, I would suggest—we will see references updated in legislation to ensure that, instead of having to continually change the referencing within legislation to specific regulations, those provisions will be amended so as to refer generically to such prescribed legislation,

delegated legislation through regulation specifically, so that as those regulations are repealed, updated, changed or consolidated they will continue to have the required force under law because they will continue to be picked up by this relevant legislation that is being amended here today.

It is interesting, for those of us who have had the great pleasure of spending probably too many years at law school, to see the degree of specificity that has been detailed in this bill, particularly when one bears in mind the degree to which interpretive regard is to be had by the courts to the headings in legislation, which—for those who are interested, and I can see there still seem to be a few—is almost none. This bill changes, for some particular reason, the headings of many of the provisions in the legislation that is being amended. It may not be apparent to many members of the House just how important these changes are. A number of them change the phrase 'mentioned in' to 'covered by', and I think we're all grateful to ensure that that change is made in this legislation, because otherwise certain regulations would not have the force of law! And I join with the minister at the table in celebrating the fact that this legislation will produce such an amazing result for the good governance, really, of this nation.

As the shadow Attorney-General mentioned, there are a number of pieces of legislation that are picked up by this bill. We have the Age Discrimination Act, an important piece of legislation. In fact, when we look at the Age Discrimination Act and we think about the concepts that it covers in the discrimination against people on the basis of age, we should think about the way they are discriminated against by government when it comes to ensuring that there's adequate funding for the provision of aged care for our elderly Australians, as well. We should also think about whether it's appropriate for the assessment of their care to be outsourced, and, in fact, privatised by this government. We have the Airports Act, a piece of legislation that probably causes more angst in my community than anyone ever intended that it would—because, of course, it ensures that noise requirements and planning are maintained with the Commonwealth. As someone who is surrounded by two airports, one of them being the busiest in Australia, it's important we get the references to legislation in that act correct.

One of my favourite titles for an act is this one: A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999. One might suggest that was quite an Orwellian title at the time. When we think about updating legislation and making sure that we have correct references to regulations and that legislation is modernised, I don't think we can still regard it as a 'new' tax system. But that's the title. That particular title is not changing under this legislation. Look, it is very catchy, and it gave rise to—and some members of the chamber may still remember it—some particularly eye-catching advertising at the time in the lead-up to a certain election.

The Australian Citizenship Act is an act that I have constant reference to, as I have the great joy of attending many citizenship ceremonies throughout my electorate. One of the great things about these, of course, is that we get the opportunity of having new citizens join our community. No-one is unhappy at a citizenship ceremony. Everyone is happy at a citizenship ceremony. They are such a pleasure to attend. The Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011 is also mentioned in this bill, as is one of the oldest pieces of legislation since Federation, the Customs Act 1901. It's remarkable that we've made it to 2020 and have now decided that there are a few references to regulations made under this act that need to be updated to make sure that those regulations continue to have force. I'm really glad that 119 years later we as a legislature have turned our minds to getting this fixed.

The Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 is quite possibly the longest piece of legislation in the Commonwealth statute book; yet, remarkably, to make the changes that are required, we have this bill that is only yea thick—only a couple of pages long. The International Monetary Agreements Act 1947 is one of those landmark pieces of legislation that has ensured that Australia is a keen participant in the international framework that it was part of establishing after World War II. There is the Judicial Misbehaviour and Incapacity (Parliamentary Commissions) Act 2012, and I'm going to go out on a limb and suggest there is possibly only one person in this chamber right now who has read it, maybe two. The Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004, favourably known by all of us as the MRCA, is a piece of legislation that, just in the mere 3½ years that I have been in this parliament, I think has been amended eight times. Once again, it's remarkable, when you think that it's been amended that many times, that we still have to include it in an omnibus statutory update bill for changing the regulatory references. You might have thought that the government could have picked those up one of the many times that it has amended the legislation before.

To make some concluding remarks, the point that I think is worthwhile all of us being apprised of when it comes to looking at this bill—which, as I pointed out before, is not the thickest piece of legislation that we've had come through this chamber in recent times—is that what it really demonstrates is that it's about as thick as the government's plan for government. This weighty tome that I hold here is actually a testament to the complete lack of plan by this government—a lack of plan on climate change, a lack of plan on Australian industry content for our defence industry, and our ship and submarine build, and a lack of plan on actually anything to do in government. After this, there really can't be much more to do. And we have another two years until the next election!

I urge those opposite—it would be really great if they could turn their minds to thinking about any of those topics that I've just mentioned that could use a bit more statutory intervention; some executive intervention might definitely be an idea. As we were touching on before—and I mentioned the Age Discrimination Act—when thinking about discrimination against the elderly in our community, maybe they could fund some of the home-care places there is a huge backlog for in our nation right now, which is causing many people in my community great angst.

Of course we completely support this legislation. It's very necessary legislation. It's important that we fix this with these very important changes that are required to referencing regulation in this nation that fall under important pieces of legislation. My favourite, as I mentioned before, is the conversion of the phrase 'mentioned in' to 'covered by'. I was blessed by the learnings and the teachings of the member for Curtin in my law school years, and I thank her for all of that. It's given me great application to be able to understand this weighty tome of legislation that is before us today, and I commend it to the House.

*(Quorum formed)*

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2019-2020****Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2019-2020****Second Reading**

Cognate debate.

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:

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

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes that:

- (1) after six years in office the economy is floundering on the Government's watch;
- (2) Australians are struggling with stagnant wages, with wage growth stalling further;
- (3) net debt has more than doubled under this Government;
- (4) the Government does not have a plan to boost wages or growth in the economy; and
- (5) it is because of the Government's failures that Australia meets the challenges and uncertainties of the bushfires and coronavirus from a position of weakness, not strength".

**Mr CHAMPION** (Spence) (17:54): Before question time I was drawing the House's attention to the precarious state of the world and the fragility of the postwar rules that were made, these institutions that were created, after a period of total war—the Second World War. Really what we find now is that the United Nations is at its weakest since the Suez Crisis. I think, in witnessing this closely when we were at the General Assembly—the member for Bonner and myself—the first thing that struck us was the precariousness of the institution itself.

Before we left I got the Parliamentary Library to give us a bit of an overview on the United Nations budget. Its finances, as of 30 April 2019, had unpaid assessments totalling \$1.7 billion, which is an increase of \$146 million on the previous years. In recent years the UN's regular budget has been facing financial crisis, and 2018 was considered to be the worst year in the past 10 years. I can tell you that we saw that upfront at the General Assembly, because on 4 October the secretary-general wrote to member states and drew their attention not just to a budget crisis but also to a continuing liquidity crisis at the United Nations due to unpaid assessed contributions. He followed it up on 10 October with a memorandum regarding the financial situation of the organisation and went through, chapter and verse with member states, the budget cuts and the efficiencies that were being made because there was a liquidity crisis—that is, there was this great threat that the UN would actually have to cease operations for periods.

You saw the effect of this in the institution—the withdrawal of interpretation services for many of the meetings and other budget measures around the place. I guess one question is whether an institution can run if it's constantly underfunded. We now know that we need the United Nations more than ever. We face continuing international crises, so this precarious state of finances is a particular concern, and I think it has serious consequences for us.

We tend to think that this institution will always be there, but really what we see is crumbling infrastructure on the part of the rules based system. We constantly see national leaders now say that they're in favour of a rules based order but then go on to give very nationalist speeches. You saw that in the case of the US, you saw that in the case of Brazil, you saw that in the case of Iran and you saw that in the case of Turkey. Many other nations at Leaders Week were almost using the UN as a forum to communicate domestic messages. That is a particular concern that I observed at the General Assembly.

The second thing that I think the House should be aware of is peacekeeping, which was amongst the most important things that we have done in our time with the UN. We are still great contributors. Australia is still a great financial contributor to peacekeeping efforts. When we think of the budget, some of these peacekeeping operations are basically budgeting month to month, so you can imagine how precarious some of these missions are.

Being the eighth-highest contributor out of 102 states is an important thing, but we have allowed the operational involvement to wane over the last decade or so, and we've got less than 40 personnel on peacekeeping missions around the world. Perhaps that's understandable given the pace of the ADF's contribution to other coalition efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands, and certainly I understand that it's been a very busy time for the ADF. The void is now being filled by other countries—by Pacific countries, which I think we would all think is a good thing, but we also see increased involvement from China. We need to accept that this is the consequence of Western nations retreating from peacekeeping.

We see China both gaining operational experience, which we know the People's Liberation Army is short on, and forming relationships with other nations and other regions. When part of a multilateral, rules based order, we might welcome this and think it's a good thing. But in an age of unilateralism it could be problematic, particularly if the Western world is retreating from the tough, difficult and dangerous work of peacekeeping. Australia has important capabilities in training, logistics, transport and encountering improvised explosive devices. We could put that to great use on these peacekeeping missions. I think it's not just a duty. Peacekeeping makes the world much safer and it keeps the uncivilised forces of chaos further from our shores.

We tend to take the multilateral, rules based order for granted. I think it has been common for democratic leaders—and we saw the Prime Minister do this—to give almost nationalistic speeches presenting fairly unilateral ideas, even as they profess to a rules based order. That is a very dangerous thing, because we're fooling ourselves that if we say 'Australia first' or 'America first' or any other nation first, the other country is not going to adopt the exact same posture, the exact same behaviour. What it creates is a culture where the leaders, over time, keep pushing the limits. Of course, that is a very dangerous thing.

I think we are facing a world where we're seeing the old rules existing in name only and unilateralism being the order of the day. Blocks of countries are acting in coalitions or there are fragile kaleidoscopes of nations. I think this is a consequence of George Bush's invasion of Iraq, but it was probably inevitable in any event in a multipolar world and in a world where we see the foreign policies of countries like Russia and China not just try to escape the rules when it suits them or to reshape the rules when it suits them but also try to colonise the architecture of the United Nations and other international agencies.

As I said before, if we were in a time of peace and harmony and multilateralism and international cooperation, this might be a desirable thing. But we are not in that era. If people think this is something that's just going to occur with countries that we don't have much in common with, I'd urge them to read the Royal United Services Institute's Whitehall report *Taking control*. They are an influential body in the United Kingdom. The report's executive summary encourages the UK to, in effect, abandon the rules based order and to 'focus on the homeland' and to 'secure the neighbourhood'. So we see even nations that have a long history of involving themselves in the affairs of the world—the United Kingdom had a long history of that—now retreating from that world. We see the foreign policy voices saying that that would be a desirable thing.

I don't think it's a desirable thing. I think the only approach that Australia can take to a time when international relations are more dangerous, more unpredictable, more short term and more unilateral than ever before is that we should have a greater investment in our Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. We should have a bigger network of diplomatic posts around the world, we should put more emphasis on protecting the rules based order and we should be careful to set an example ourselves as a parliament—as should the government. I went and watched the Prime Minister's speech, because we play for Team Australia when we go on these delegations. But we do need to be more savvy about the sort of situation we now face; it is a very, very dangerous one. People say it's the most dangerous since the 1930s, but it's probably actually the most dangerous ever because, of course, we have nuclear weapons. We have a whole range of international challenges that demand cooperation.

With those remarks, I'd just like to say that it was a pleasure and a great honour to represent the parliament at the United Nations General Assembly, the 74th session, and I hope that I can use that experience in some way while I'm deputy chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade by bringing some of what I saw to our deliberations—and to the deliberations of the parliament.

**Mr CRAIG KELLY** (Hughes) (18:06): I'm very pleased to see all my colleagues here to listen to me during this most important speech on the Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2019-2020. When I was at school, I remember hearing the story of the world's longest heatwave. The record was set in Marble Bar in 1923-24. For 160 days, it was—using the old measurement—over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. That gave me a greater appreciation of the struggles and the efforts of previous generations of Australians, and the hardships that they went through to build this country up. The Bureau of Meteorology used to have a whole page about this record, the Marble Bar heatwave of 1923-24, on their website, under 'Climate education'. It said:

The world record for the longest sequence of days above 100°Fahrenheit (or 37.8° on the Celsius scale) is held by Marble Bar in the inland Pilbara district of Western Australia. The temperature, measured under standard exposure conditions, reached or exceeded the century mark every day from 31 October 1923 to 7 April 1924, a total of 160 days.

Surprise, surprise! That's no longer on the Bureau of Meteorology website. It has disappeared, maybe down a memory hole. I'm not sure. It gets more interesting. There's a gentleman called Chris Gillham, a researcher from Western Australia, who has found out that, as the bureau have gone about what they call their 'homogenisation of the data', or the adjustment of the data, that record—

**Mr Burke:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I seek to make an intervention under standing order 66A.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon):** Is the member for Hughes—

**Mr CRAIG KELLY:** No, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm not doing that.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You're declining permission?

**Mr CRAIG KELLY:** At the moment, yes. He may wish to ask at the end, and I may consider it at the end, but I wish to finish the point that I'm making.

**Mr BURKE** (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (18:08): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the member for Hughes be no further heard.

The House divided. [18:13]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....69  
Noes .....73  
Majority.....4

# AYES

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Chalmers, JE  
Claydon, SC  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD  
Elliot, MJ  
Freeland, MR  
Giles, AJ  
Gosling, LJ  
Hayes, CP  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, G  
Keogh, MJ  
King, CF  
Leigh, AK  
McBride, EM  
Mitchell, RG  
Murphy, PJ  
O'Connor, BPJ  
Owens, JA  
Perrett, GD  
Plibersek, TJ  
Rowland, MA  
Sharkie, RCC  
Smith, DPB  
Stanley, AM (teller)  
Swanson, MJ  
Thistlethwaite, MJ  
Vamvakinou, M

Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burney, LJ  
Butler, MC  
Byrne, AM  
Clare, JD  
Coker, EA  
Conroy, PM  
Dreyfus, MA  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S  
Gorman, P  
Haines, H  
Hill, JC  
Jones, SP  
Kelly, MJ  
Khalil, P  
King, MMH  
Marles, RD  
Mitchell, BK  
Mulino, D  
Neumann, SK  
O'Neil, CE  
Payne, AE  
Phillips, FE  
Rishworth, AL  
Ryan, JC (teller)  
Shorten, WR  
Snowdon, WE  
Steggall, Z  
Templeman, SR  
Thwaites, KL  
Watts, TG

## AYES

Wells, AS  
Zappia, A

Wilson, JH

## NOES

Alexander, JG  
Andrews, KJ  
Archer, BK  
Broadbent, RE  
Chester, D  
Conaghan, PJ  
Coulton, M  
Dutton, PC  
Evans, TM  
Fletcher, PW  
Frydenberg, JA  
Gillespie, DA  
Hastie, AW  
Hogan, KJ  
Hunt, GA  
Joyce, BT  
Laming, A  
Leeser, J  
Littleproud, D  
Marino, NB  
McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
Morton, B  
O'Brien, T  
Pasin, A  
Pitt, KJ  
Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

Allen, K  
Andrews, KL  
Bell, AM  
Buchholz, S  
Christensen, GR  
Connelly, V  
Drum, DK (teller)  
Entsch, WG  
Falinski, JG  
Flint, NJ  
Gee, AR  
Hammond, CM  
Hawke, AG  
Howarth, LR  
Irons, SJ  
Kelly, C  
Landry, ML  
Ley, SP  
Liu, G  
Martin, FB  
McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Brien, LS  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC  
Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Sharma, DN  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

Question negatived.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon)** (18:17): I give the call to the member for Hughes.

**Mr CRAIG KELLY** (Hughes) (18:17): I'm pleased that the Labor Party actually called that—because there are many members here in the chamber to hear these facts I'm talking about. Our historic Marble Bar temperature record, the longest heatwave in the nation, the longest heatwave record in the world, is no longer—because our Bureau of Meteorology staff,



sitting in their offices in Canberra, have looked back into the past and found that the people taking that temperature record almost 98 years ago made a mistake and measured it too hot. I will give you a few examples. On 7 March 1924, the raw recording at Marble Bar was 40.8 degrees. But, as I said, 98 years later, someone sitting in an office in Canberra worked out that they made a mistake and the temperature was actually only 39 degrees—1.8 degrees cooler. On 15 February 1924, the raw recording from Marble Bar was 44.3 degrees. Again, they didn't know what they were doing and they read it wrong; we know that because of the adjustments that have been made almost 100 years later. The true temperature, according to the BOM, was 43.2 degrees, down 1.1 degrees. Yet there was one day they actually got the temperature right. On 23 January 1924 they recorded 44 degrees up at Marble Bar. Yet the bureau says that number was right!

This cooling of the past temperature records has reduced that 160-day world record heatwave back in 1923-24 to 128 days, which makes it no longer a record—

**Mr BURKE** (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (18:19): I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

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

**The SPEAKER:** I'm calling off the division. The bells will stop ringing. The motion moved by the Manager of Opposition Business can only be moved between speakers, not while the speaker is speaking. I call the member for Hughes.

**Mr CRAIG KELLY** (Hughes) (18:20): What a shame that the Manager of Opposition Business doesn't want to hear the facts. Here we have a historic record that should make us all realise what our pioneers went through, living through the longest heatwave in history. But this is no longer. The past has been changed according to the Bureau of Meteorology. They know better today, sitting in an office 4,000 miles away, what the temperature was back in—  
(Time expired)

**Mr BURKE** (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (18:21): I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

**The SPEAKER:** The question, moved by the Manager of Opposition Business, is that the debate be adjourned.

The House divided. [18:25]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....65  
Noes .....73  
Majority.....8

# AYES

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Chalmers, JE  
Clare, JD  
Coker, EA  
Conroy, PM

Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burney, LJ  
Butler, MC  
Byrne, AM  
Champion, ND  
Claydon, SC  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD

## AYES

Dreyfus, MA  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S  
Gorman, P  
Hayes, CP  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, G  
Keogh, MJ  
King, MMH  
Marles, RD  
Mitchell, BK  
Murphy, PJ  
O'Connor, BPJ  
Owens, JA  
Perrett, GD  
Plibersek, TJ  
Rowland, MA  
Shorten, WR  
Snowdon, WE  
Swanson, MJ  
Thistlethwaite, MJ  
Vamvakinou, M  
Wells, AS  
Zappia, A

Elliot, MJ  
Freeland, MR  
Giles, AJ  
Gosling, LJ  
Hill, JC  
Jones, SP  
Kelly, MJ  
King, CF  
Leigh, AK  
McBride, EM  
Mitchell, RG  
Neumann, SK  
O'Neil, CE  
Payne, AE  
Phillips, FE  
Rishworth, AL  
Ryan, JC (teller)  
Smith, DPB  
Stanley, AM (teller)  
Templeman, SR  
Thwaites, KL  
Watts, TG  
Wilson, JH

## NOES

Alexander, JG  
Andrews, KJ  
Archer, BK  
Broadbent, RE  
Chester, D  
Conaghan, PJ  
Coulton, M  
Dutton, PC  
Evans, TM  
Fletcher, PW  
Frydenberg, JA  
Gillespie, DA  
Hastie, AW  
Hogan, KJ  
Hunt, GA  
Joyce, BT  
Laming, A  
Leeser, J  
Littleproud, D  
Marino, NB  
McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
Morton, B  
O'Brien, T  
Pasin, A  
Pitt, KJ

Allen, K  
Andrews, KL  
Bell, AM  
Buchholz, S  
Christensen, GR  
Connelly, V  
Drum, DK (teller)  
Entsch, WG  
Falinski, JG  
Flint, NJ  
Gee, AR  
Hammond, CM  
Hawke, AG  
Howarth, LR  
Irons, SJ  
Kelly, C  
Landry, ML  
Ley, SP  
Liu, G  
Martin, FB  
McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Brien, LS  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC

## NOES

Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Sharma, DN  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

Question negatived

**The SPEAKER** (18:28): Is the member for Dawson seeking the call to speak on the bill?

**Mr Christensen:** I'm seeking the call to extend the member for Hughes's time by no longer than 10 minutes.

**The SPEAKER:** The motion's not in order, because the member for Hughes's time had concluded. The member for Dawson hasn't got the call. I'll give him the call.

**Mr Christensen:** Mr Speaker, with all due respect, I had jumped before the Manager of Opposition Business had jumped, but you didn't see me.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, I know, but the motion's still not in order—I'm sorry. Just for the clarity of the member for Dawson, it was a difficult situation because he'd concluded his speech. If he'd actually got in first that would have happened and it would have been in order, but we've now moved past that point. The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Brand has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. So the immediate question before the House is that the amendment be agreed to.

**Mr BRIAN MITCHELL** (Lyons) (18:30): Today's release of the annual Infrastructure Priority List from Infrastructure Australia confirms that Tasmanian infrastructure is stuck in the slow lane. IA has again declared that the business case for the Bridgewater Bridge requires further development and anticipates this project will not be delivered until 2030. That is six years longer than the government has been telling people in my electorate, after a long delay already. The IA report states that the business case was evaluated by Infrastructure Australia in June 2019. The project is undergoing further planning and assessment with support from the Australian government and the Tasmanian government. This revelation comes after the Tasmanian government advertised the position of project director as a five-year fixed term contract ending in 2025, despite telling the public that cars will be driving over the new bridge by 2024. So either somebody's being paid more than \$200,000 a year as project director to twiddle their thumbs for a year or the Liberals know that the Bridgewater Bridge is going to take longer than they are telling the public.

The fact is that, under the Liberals and the Nationals, Australian infrastructure is being treated as a massive slush fund. Whether it's the \$3 billion in urban congestion funds that have gone overwhelmingly to Liberal seats and seats that the government is targeting, somehow bypassing the Labor-held seats that have higher congestion needs, or the hundreds of millions

of dollars in rorted sports and community infrastructure, this corrupt government knows no shame when it comes to dipping its hands into the public purse for its own political purposes. The only Labor seats that got a look-in with infrastructure funding are the seats that the Liberals targeted at the last election, including my own. But the people of Lyons were not fooled. I am pleased to say they re-elected me with, I'm humbled to note, an increased majority. The fact is that infrastructure funding should go where it is needed in order to meet community requirements and not prop up Liberals and Nationals with dodgy pork-barrelling.

Tasmania is drier than ever before. Average rainfall across the state is down and, when rain does come, it's hard, it's fast and it's in shorter bursts. Our farmers are struggling to feed stock. Our cities and towns have their water rationed. Our dams are at increasing risk of running low, threatening the viability of our hydroelectricity system. Tasmania needs a statewide water strategy. As I told the House last night, Tasmania has a number of water authorities and each does a fine job in looking after its own narrow interests, but what we need is a water strategy that pulls everything together and looks at water security in a holistic way. Tasmania needs a water strategy that examines where water is plentiful and where it's not, whether we can move it, how we would do it, how much it costs and who pays. This strategy should examine the infrastructure that is required to meet our irrigation, our drinking and our hydro needs and whether efficiencies can be gained via shared resourcing.

I'm sure there is plenty of information buried in numerous reports produced by these individual agencies, but I am yet to see evidence that anybody has pulled it all together into a whole-of-state strategy that takes into account the likelihood of a drier and warmer Tasmania.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks):** The member for Lyons will resume his seat. The member for Fisher on a point of order?

**Mr Wallace:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I refer you to pages 516 and 517 of the *Practice*. I would ask that the honourable member withdraw his comment about a corrupt government. He's referring to a group of individuals. Speaker Sneddon—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Fisher will resume his seat. It would assist the House if the member for Lyons would withdraw and then continue.

**Mr BRIAN MITCHELL:** I withdraw, Deputy Speaker. I call on the National Water Grid Authority to work constructively with the Tasmanian government to develop a Tasmanian water strategy. Let's not quibble about whether it's a local, state or federal responsibility. Let's get the strategy researched and written and have the fight later about who pays to put it all into action. The fact is that Tasmanian farmers cannot wait another decade before seeing real action when it comes to Tasmanian water security.

Labor has released a policy for zero net carbon emissions by 2050, and don't those opposite just love it! They've responded to our announcement with childish outbursts and histrionics which illustrate all too well how they intend to conduct themselves in any debate about climate change action. There will be no debate. There will be only war. There will be no regard for science nor for facts. There will be only hysteria. There will be no mature acknowledgement that more than 70 countries, Australian state governments, including Liberal governments, and major business groups and peak bodies have all announced net zero targets. There will be only a stubborn shaking of heads before stuffing those heads in the sand.

I've said before in this place that I truly lament the political weaponisation of climate change action, because climate change is a scientific fact, like relativity, gravity and ageing. It simply is. It's not Left. It's not Right. But that is how it's being shaped. If you want climate change action, you're a raging greenie who wants to tear down civilisation and force everyone to wear Birkenstock sandals. Any cost associated with climate change action is labelled a tax, while the higher costs of inaction are not. The fact is that Labor's 'Net zero by 2050' policy offers enormous opportunity for jobs and economic growth, especially in our regions. It offers opportunities for our farmers to diversify their income by expanding into carbon sequestration, something that will also help provide more canopy and restore denuded soils. Moving to zero net emissions is not about shutting down our \$200 billion resources industries, which is how those opposite paint it in public. It's about grasping the opportunities of the 21st century and ensuring that we do not become an economic backwater while our international partners and competitors rocket ahead with new technologies that drive stronger economies.

There's a group called Farmers for Climate Action. It understands the need for Australia to take stronger action on climate change and that action in the regions can make a big difference. Recently I had the pleasure of being shown the work being done by the Derwent Catchment Project, a grassroots community organisation guided by evidence and science, which is working with farmers in the Derwent Valley to implement better land management practices and long-term strategies to prevent land degradation. This not only benefits the environment but results in better outputs and more productivity. The people running this project are experts in agriculture and environmental science. They are not political commentators. They are working in collaboration with local farmers who not only understand the benefits of sound environmental management but who are now seeing the benefits in the production of their goods. The Morrison government, meanwhile, is too caught up in itself and its own interests. It's too busy pandering to the hard Right of the party to appreciate the real work being done for the benefit of our agricultural sector. It's too busy fighting with itself, with the so-called modern Liberals squeaking away in the corner. They occasionally put their heads up above the parapet and make their voices heard, but they get slapped down and shouted down by their colleagues, so they disappear and don't put their votes on the line when it counts. They are too busy fighting amongst themselves to recognise that without climate change action our agricultural industries face further challenges.

As a member of a largely rural and regional electorate, I am very familiar with the poor telecommunications coverage that rural and regional communities face. Several towns across my electorate—towns like Miena, Broadmarsh and Lachlan—are all subject to intermittent or non-existent phone and internet connectivity. The unreliability of these services is an enormous disadvantage to those Australians who live and work in our regions, disconnecting them from the digital communications opportunities that their urban counterparts are so familiar with. We all rely so heavily upon our phones and a stable internet connection for work and for recreation. We use them as tools for learning and shopping, and to access health care and welfare services. Our regional residents are not so fortunate. Importantly, and this is particularly relevant given the bushfires so many Australians have just experienced, not having reliable telecommunications can place people in danger during natural emergencies like bushfires and flooding. I know many people in the community of Woodsdale, for

instance, are concerned about their inability to use a phone and what that would mean in the case of medical emergencies and road accidents.

This is not news to me. I've spoken to countless constituents across my electorate who have to live with the reality of poor telecommunications and internet infrastructure, and I have raised it several times in this chamber. I acknowledge that many of my constituents are benefiting from the results of the Mobile Black Spot Program, a program I do hope to see supported well into the future despite some of the delays in some of the rounds that are yet to occur.

Infrastructure Australia includes this issue of telecommunications as a priority. IA recognises that poor coverage is a barrier to inclusion and is preventive to economic growth. It is well established that addressing these gaps is expensive, and, even when it is done, quality can be poor and there can be minimal returns on the investment. But we shouldn't look at telecommunications coverage in the regions as a business analysis; it's a community analysis. People need phone coverage, and we need to put out more mobile phone coverage and more broadband and internet coverage. The Morrison government talks a lot and uses a lot of slogans, and it's just so smug, but the reality is it's overseeing a rotting infrastructure and is failing to address the critical issues that are affecting so many people in my electorate and across the country.

On Monday night, I'm proud to announce, the Brighton Council carried unanimously a motion for this government to increase Newstart payments. The Brighton Council represents an area in my electorate which includes Bridgewater and Gagebrook, areas of high socioeconomic need and very low incomes. A lot of people are on Newstart and other income measures. Brighton Council, fed up with this government's reluctance to increase Newstart, carried a motion unanimously, and there are people of all political persuasions on that council—people with Liberal leanings, people with One Nation leanings, people with Labor leanings and there may even be a Green. People of all political colours came together on that council to say to this government: 'Increase Newstart. People cannot live on the rate at which it is now,' with rents skyrocketing, with cost of living going through the roof and with transport costs in Tasmania—and for appalling public transport in the Brighton Council; it's absolutely abysmal. People can't afford to live on the meagre income that is provided by Newstart. So I genuinely implore those opposite—I'm sure there are people with good heart over there—increase Newstart. Increase Newstart: give Australians who are on income support a better chance at a decent life.

Northern Tasmania, some of which is in my electorate, has been hit very hard by this government's tradie crisis, with 684 local apprentices and trainees gone in northern Tasmania. That's been the result of seven years of Liberal government—684 local apprentices and trainees gone in northern Tasmania. That's an absolute disgrace. We've seen evidence from the shadow minister this week and figures today about the fall in the number of apprenticeships under this government's watch at a time when we need to be growing our economy and growing our skills base. What this government has presided over, over the last seven years, is a reduction in the skills and training of young Australians. They seem content with that. They seem content with robbing young Australians and young Tasmanians of a future in trades and skills. They should stand condemned for it.

**Ms BELL** (Moncrieff) (18:44): It's with pleasure that I rise to speak to highlight across a number of sectors how the Gold Coast has benefited since the May election last year, and in particular in my seat of Moncrieff. Whether you are from Southport in the north, Miami in the south or Nerang to the west, the Morrison government has delivered for the people of Moncrieff.

The Gold Coast is one of Australia's fastest growing and dynamic cities. According to the ABS, it's projected to be home to more than 1.2 million people by 2050.

*An honourable member interjecting—*

**Ms BELL:** Please come up and have a holiday, anytime you please! This rapid growth presents challenges. I've been pleased to work with my Morrison government colleagues, including the Deputy Prime Minister, to deliver vital infrastructure for our city. And I must disagree with the member for Lyons, who talked about \$100 billion as being 'rotting'—\$100 billion across 10 years is not infrastructure rotting away; that is the Morrison government delivering for all Australians around the country, including in my electorate of Moncrieff.

We are still celebrating, actually, the additional funding that we received in November—the \$157 million extra that was injected into the Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 3A, which will go from Pacific Fair, my local shopping centre, all the way to iconic Burleigh Heads, where, I must say, we have fantastic fish and chips, and a beautiful view of the ocean from a grassy knoll where you can sit and watch surfers surfing away on the waves, and of course it's a wonderful local domestic holiday destination. But locals and visitors alike will be able to jump on board at Broadbeach at Pacific Fair and they'll be able to ride all the way to Burleigh or go the other way and ride to Helensvale and then catch the heavy rail to Brisbane if they need to. This connection will make the Gold Coast an even better place to live and work and will also take cars off the road, to bust congestion. It will create more than 760 jobs in my electorate, which I'm thrilled about. It'll boost the local economy. And, ultimately, it'll deliver more customers to small business along the route.

In addition, \$45 million was brought forward for the M1 Pacific Motorway upgrade, which affects all those who travel to and from Brisbane and Tweed Heads. Funding for this upgrade will flow through this year to deliver on our promise to the people of the Gold Coast on getting home sooner and safer—a Morrison government promise across the board.

I'd like to talk about aged care and what we've delivered in that sector. Improving aged care for senior Australians continues to be the government's key priority. Every Australian has the right to age well and with dignity. Our older generations have fought to defend our democracy and have worked hard to build the Australia that we all enjoy today. That's why one of the first acts of our Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, was to call a royal commission into aged-care quality and safety, and I commend him for his leadership. The findings of the interim report into Australia's aged-care system demonstrated that aged care in this country needs significant change to ensure our older Australians receive the best possible care in their most vulnerable years. We do not shy away from our responsibility as a government to ensure our elderly are looked after and respected.

In our very swift response to the interim report, the government announced a funding package of \$537 million. This response focuses particularly on three areas. The first is: more home-care packages to reduce wait times and connect people to care sooner. The second is: to

better manage medicine and physical restraints. And the third is: to help the transition of young people out of residential aged care. We've set an ambitious target: to end younger people entering aged care by 2022. Since the election of this coalition government, we've delivered increased investment across the aged-care system. We'll deliver \$5 billion in funding boosts in the forward years to 2022-23. The government remains committed to supporting senior Australians to live in their own homes longer.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks):** Order. The member for Moncrieff will resume her seat. The member for Lilley on a point—

**Ms WELLS (Lilley) (18:48):** I move:

That the member for Moncrieff be no longer heard.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the member be no longer heard.

The House divided. [18:50]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....65

Noes .....73

Majority.....8

#### AYES

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Butler, MC  
Byrne, AM  
Champion, ND  
Claydon, SC  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD  
Elliot, MJ  
Freeland, MR  
Giles, AJ  
Gosling, LJ  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, G  
Keogh, MJ  
King, CF  
Leigh, AK  
McBride, EM  
Mitchell, RG  
Murphy, PJ  
O'Connor, BPJ  
Owens, JA  
Perrett, GD  
Plibersek, TJ  
Rowland, MA  
Shorten, WR  
Snowdon, WE  
Swanson, MJ  
Thistlethwaite, MJ  
Vamvakinou, M  
Wells, AS

Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Chalmers, JE  
Clare, JD  
Coker, EA  
Conroy, PM  
Dreyfus, MA  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S  
Gorman, P  
Hill, JC  
Jones, SP  
Kelly, MJ  
Khalil, P  
King, MMH  
Marles, RD  
Mitchell, BK  
Mulino, D  
Neumann, SK  
O'Neil, CE  
Payne, AE  
Phillips, FE  
Rishworth, AL  
Ryan, JC (teller)  
Smith, DPB  
Stanley, AM (teller)  
Templeman, SR  
Thwaites, KL  
Watts, TG  
Wilson, JH



## AYES

Zappia, A

## NOES

Alexander, JG  
 Andrews, KJ  
 Archer, BK  
 Broadbent, RE  
 Chester, D  
 Conaghan, PJ  
 Coulton, M  
 Dutton, PC  
 Evans, TM  
 Fletcher, PW  
 Frydenberg, JA  
 Gillespie, DA  
 Hammond, CM  
 Hawke, AG  
 Howarth, LR  
 Irons, SJ  
 Kelly, C  
 Landry, ML  
 Ley, SP  
 Liu, G  
 McCormack, MF  
 McVeigh, JJ  
 Morton, B  
 O'Brien, T  
 Pasin, A  
 Pitt, KJ  
 Price, ML  
 Robert, SR  
 Simmonds, J  
 Sukkar, MS  
 Tehan, DT  
 van Manen, AJ  
 Wallace, AB  
 Wicks, LE  
 Wilson, TR  
 Wyatt, KG  
 Zimmerman, T

Allen, K  
 Andrews, KL  
 Bell, AM  
 Buchholz, S  
 Christensen, GR  
 Connelly, V  
 Drum, DK (teller)  
 Entsch, WG  
 Falinski, JG  
 Flint, NJ  
 Gee, AR  
 Haines, H  
 Hastie, AW  
 Hogan, KJ  
 Hunt, GA  
 Joyce, BT  
 Laming, A  
 Leaser, J  
 Littleproud, D  
 Martin, FB  
 McIntosh, MI  
 Morrison, SJ  
 O'Brien, LS  
 O'Dowd, KD  
 Pearce, GB  
 Porter, CC  
 Ramsey, RE (teller)  
 Sharma, DN  
 Stevens, J  
 Taylor, AJ  
 Thompson, P  
 Vasta, RX  
 Webster, AE  
 Wilson, RJ  
 Wood, JP  
 Young, T

Question negatived

**Ms BELL** (Moncrieff) (18:56): I will move on now to veterans. There is a large veteran community living in my electorate, with more than 1,000 men and women who have served our country, and have served our country well. There are three RSLs in Moncrieff—Nerang, Surfers Paradise and Southport—and Gold Coast veterans and their families will benefit from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, known as DVA Building Excellence in Support and Training—BEST—grants program. This funding will help Gold Coast ex-service and community organisations to continue to put veterans and their families first.

The Vietnam Veterans' Federation received a \$135,506 grant through the Department of Veterans' Affairs, known as DVA BEST grants program. This funding means the federation can continue to provide support through their advocacy service to all local military veterans and war widows by assisting them with their entitlements and their claims. The service of the advocates is in very high demand because of their skills and outstanding records of results. It's through the dedication and hard work of ex-service and community organisations that veterans and their families receive services, support and opportunities that allow them to continue having active roles in their local communities.

We've also established a national commissioner and family advocate for veterans' affairs. This powerful new body will tackle the very difficult area of ADF and veteran suicides. This means we will get to the bottom of each and every case and learn lessons that can help improve the lives of our veterans and their families into the future. The government also supports transition to civilian life for at-risk veterans. Research shows that veterans under 30 who are involuntarily discharged are at a higher risk of suicide than the general population. We want to ensure that they get the support they need as they navigate the range of government services on offer.

We invest in programs that support young and vulnerable veterans who leave the Defence Force. The government has invested a record \$11 billion to support 280,000 veterans and their families each year, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs reforms have resulted in shorter waiting times for claims. The Morrison government has also launched the Australian veterans card and lapel pin so that veterans can be appropriately recognised by businesses and the community for their service to our community.

To summarise, I would like to outline to those opposite that the Morrison government is delivering for Australians—day in, day out; week in, week out; sitting week in, sitting week out—and I think they need to have a good look at themselves, stop playing politics and look at what we're doing for Australians around the country.

**Mr STEPHEN JONES** (Whitlam) (18:59): It's my great pleasure to speak on the Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2019-2020 and the Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2019-2020. I want to respond to some of the things that occurred immediately prior to me coming to the despatch box. I think it's incumbent upon all right-thinking people in this place to call out some of the behaviour that we've seen in this debate here today.

I think most people in this parliament find it absolutely abhorrent that one of us can come into this place and use it as a place to amplify absolute ignorance, and yet time and time again we see the member for Hughes doing exactly that. I don't find it extraordinary that, from time to time, democracy provides to us in this place a representative who sometimes has views that are outside those within the mainstream. What I do find extraordinary is that he finds comfort within those who form the government parties.

If we are to accept the central argument of the member for Hughes and those who provide him comfort and who suck up, we are somehow required to believe that there is some grand conspiracy that is held by every single mainstream scientist in this country and in every other country around the world. Somehow there is some grand conspiracy that is hoodwinking centrist politicians, educators and policymakers. Somehow this thing that we all know to be true—that our climate is changing around us as a result of human activity—is a massive conspiracy, which people like the member for Hughes are the only people who are willing to

stand up and rail against. If it is such a massive conspiracy, if we are all wrong, why is it that every mainstream conservative government around the world has accepted the fact that climate change is real and that we have to do something about it? Every mainstream conservative government around the world, except perhaps for this one!

I'm not surprised, given the fact that the Prime Minister thought it was appropriate to bring a lump of coal into parliament as somehow agitating a political point. And I'm not surprised, given everything that has been in the tenor of Australian political debate around this most divisive issue, that the member for Hughes finds some comfort within the Liberal Party and within the coalition parties around these wacky ideas. But I am surprised that there haven't been more members in his own party—in fact, the majority of members of his own party—who stand up against it.

I know that there are good people on the other side who accept the science and are willing to stand up. I see in the chamber the member for Bennelong, who gave an excellent speech a week or so ago in this place. I hope I do not quote him incorrectly. He made the observation that the bushfires were not the result of climate change but 'they were climate change'—a comment that I had to agree with. I remember the member for North Sydney making the observation that it is our responsibility as a country to reach the objective of zero net emissions by 2050. It is not an extraordinary observation, I have to say, given that every premier—whether they be Liberal, whether they be Labor, whether they be LNP—have made the not-so-extraordinary commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

We haven't pulled this figure out of the air. We have said that if we are going to sign an international agreement called the Paris Agreement, which has the objective of ensuring that as a globe we do not exceed temperature rises of two per cent on preindustrial levels, then we have to change the way we are living and we have to make some changes to the way we are organising our economy. If we are to meet that objective by 2050, then we have to meet the objective of zero net emissions by 2050.

This is a simple proposition which was recognised by every single government, including our own, that signed up to the Paris treaty. It was a fact that was recognised by every single one of those state premiers—Liberal, Labor, LNP, conservative, not so conservative—who signed up to that target. It was on the basis that if we are going to reach the objective of seeing our global temperatures not exceed two degrees of warming by 2050 then we've got a job of work to do.

A sensible person who signs an agreement says, 'We could do all the work in the last five years, or we could make some gradual changes between now and then.' But, in the absurd madness that this place has become, where simple propositions become the stuff of a political football—where a simple scientific fact, a simple economic fact, cannot stand at face value but becomes weaponised in the absurd political debate that has occupied this place since 2010—somehow we cannot accept that basic fact. It's alright if you stand in Macquarie Street, Liberal or Labor, and say, 'We will reach zero net emissions by 2050.' It's alright if you stand in Spring Street and say, 'Zero net emissions by 2050,' but somehow if you stand here in Canberra and say the same thing then that is a grand heresy; that is something that is absolutely reckless.

I beg you: is that where we've come to? Is that where this place has come to, that we cannot accept a basic scientific fact, a basic economic fact and say, 'What have we got to do to put

our shoulder to the wheel and reach that objective?' Frankly, whenever I leave this place, whether it's the end of this term or in several more terms—that's in the hands of my electors—I will not be able to look those people in the face and I will not be able to look my own kids in the face and say, 'I did not do everything within my power as a legislator to ensure that we put our country on the right path.' The most reckless thing that we can do, the worst thing we can do, using this place as a platform to amplify utter ignorance, is to send the message: 'No change; nothing is necessary.' That's not leadership. That's not what we're sent to this place to do. That is an absolute abrogation of our responsibility as politicians, as legislators and as members of this august institution.

We have an obligation to shine the light, to give an example to the people we represent and to guide them to the future. Imagine if we were to take ourselves back 30 years, prior to the invention of the personal computer, and we were to enter a class where a group of young women were learning to type. I use this example because I sat in such a class as the only bloke in a class full of young women learning how to type. Knowing what we know today, if we were to say to that group of young women, 'The path to a great future, to a secure future, for you is that you move your typing speed from 20 words a minute to 120 words a minute,' would that be leadership to that group of women—to that group of students? If we knew for a fact that in a few years time these things called personal computers were going to be invented and the whole idea of stenography and typing pools would be abolished, and we stood in front of that class and said, 'Class, the way to a bright future for you is to up your typing speed,' that would be absolute recklessness. That would be an abrogation of our responsibility to that group. We'd say to them, 'The way to a bright future is not learning how to type a letter but learning how to write one.' It is exactly the same thing that we as legislators are doing. If we are saying to the people that we represent: 'You need do nothing more than we are doing today. Change nothing, because the world is going to be the same,' then we are abrogating our responsibility to the future; we are abrogating our responsibility to our children.

When I see people like the member for Hughes coming into this place time and time again and using this important institution, our great parliament, as a forum to magnify and amplify his ignorance and his bizarre conspiracy theories that somehow the fine public servants who serve all sides of parliament, the people who work for the Bureau of Meteorology, the people who work throughout the rest of our Public Service and every other scientist who advises government, are somehow involved in some bizarre conspiracy, it is an absolute insult, and it is incumbent upon each and every one of us to call it out as lunacy. He is not one of us. I call him out today. I know there are plenty of good people on that side of the House who know for a fact that what I am saying is true. If we are going to take this debate forward, if we are going to take this country forward, we have got to be able to overcome that sort of madness. I call on every member of this place to do their part to ensure that we give absolutely no comfort to people who peddle that sort of ignorance.

**Ms HAMMOND** (Curtin) (19:11): Before I start, I want to pick up on a couple of points the member for Whitlam made—not that I'm entirely sure what they had to do with the appropriation bill. The first was the statement that he or she is not one of us. A person who is sitting in this place has been elected by their electorate. Whether we agree with their views or not, they are a part of us. They are a part of this august institution.

The second point I want to pick up on is that he made some excellent comments about doing the right thing, about being a guide, about being a light. But this afternoon the opposition has called quorums and shut down speakers—more than just the speaker he was referring to in his speech. I don't necessarily see that as shining a light for democracy or living up to the trust that's been put in us. The member for Whitlam might not have been involved in that, but, as a way of responding to the comments he made I think we can all reflect on the behaviours we undertake in this place.

I want to comment on three important areas of this government's support and investment which are particularly assisting my electorate: the support and investment in small business, in health research and in vocational education and training—all of which have a profoundly positive impact on the people living in Curtin. Small business is the backbone of our economy, and this is particularly true in WA. There are 3.4 million small and medium businesses in Australia with an annual turnover of less than \$50 million. Some 7.7 million Australians are employed by small business. Around 99 per cent of all businesses in WA are small businesses. In WA there are 354,000 small businesses with a turnover of less than \$10 million. These WA businesses employ 647,000 people. In my electorate of Curtin, there are over 26,000 small- and medium-sized businesses across a vast range of industries and professions. When I have been out and about in my electorate, meeting with some of the small businesses, I have been astounded by the variety that we have. In Curtin, they range from financial and insurance services, scientific and technical services, health care and social assistance through to retail, hospitality, construction and education and training.

Our government understands the importance of small businesses to our communities, and that's why it has been lowering taxes for small and medium businesses and increasing and expanding access to the instant asset write-off to help businesses reinvest in their businesses as they grow. The government has legislated lower tax rates for small- and medium-sized companies. The government has also legislated to bring forward increases to the unincorporated small business tax discount rate. Small businesses with a turnover of less than \$10 million have access to a range of valuable concessions, helping them get ahead. This government has also continued its strong record of backing businesses and helping them invest, grow and employ more workers by increasing the instant asset write-off to \$30,000 and expanding access to medium-sized businesses. Of course this is of enormous benefit to the three million small- and medium-sized businesses across Australia and, more importantly to me, the 26,000 small businesses in my electorate.

As I mentioned, I've been out and about meeting a number of the small- and medium-sized businesses in Curtin, and all of them tell me that while there are, and have been, business challenges over the last year or so, they have expressed their relief at the tax relief that is being legislated and the instant asset write-off. They have also expressed their delight at some of the other steps, particularly in red tape, that the government is taking. Some of those businesses include a florist in Wembley called Manic Botanic, who have utilised the instant asset write-off to purchase a new fridge to help grow and expand their operation—and they do do magnificent bunches of flowers. Likewise, my local cafe, Deli Chicchi, who, I have to say, make some of the best coffee in Western Australia, recently purchased a new enclosed window display cabinet, using the instant asset write-off scheme, and this will continue to grow their operation.

These business owners in my electorate, and in Australia more broadly, are independent and resilient. They work extremely hard, and in fact they never switch off. These business owners want the appropriate level of support from government but, above all, what they want is an environment in which red tape is minimised and they have the flexibility and opportunity to get on and do what they do best. This is exactly what our government is focused on: providing these small and medium businesses with the environment they need to succeed and the means for them to invest and grow their businesses.

The second point I want to make that is vitally important in my electorate of Curtin relates to health, particularly to medical and health research. In my electorate we have 11 hospitals, a mix of private and public, which service not only the people in Curtin but across Perth and Western Australia. Of significant interest to me within this mix is the fact that Curtin is home to a great hub of vital medical research facilities. We have over 10 world-class research institutes such as the Lions Eye Institute, the Australian Alzheimer's Research Foundation, the Harry Perkins institute, the Telethon Kids Institute and the Perron Institute for Neurological Research. We are also home to the University of Western Australia, which of course undertakes an enormous amount of medical and health research.

Last year I visited CliniKids in Curtin, which is the Telethon Kids Institute's first clinical service and the first of its kind in Australia. CliniKids focus is putting research into practice by providing therapy support and individualised programs, including speech therapy, psychology, occupational therapy and diagnostic assessments of children aged zero to 12 with development delay and/or autism spectrum disorder. This bespoke clinic has been designed in collaboration with families to meet the specific needs of children. The Morrison government supported the development of this project with an investment of \$600,000. This funding, together with generous donations from private donors and the Telethon Kids Institute, has ensured a purpose-built and unique design and fit-out which benefits the kids and their families.

I also recently visited the Telethon Kids Institute after attending the opening of the discovery centre last year. I met with the director, Professor Jonathan Carapetis, for a tour. This facility has now been collocated with the new Perth Children's Hospital, and this collocation enhances the institute's collaboration with clinicians, nursing staff and other applied health professionals, leading to better care, better treatments and better health and development outcomes for our kids and young people. They are undertaking a broad array of vital research, and it was absolutely fascinating to take a tour and meet some of those researchers. I confess: I didn't actually understand what some of them were talking about, but it was absolutely fascinating nonetheless.

The government understands that health and medical research, like health reform more broadly, is a long-term investment. This is why we have the \$20 billion long-term Medical Research Future Fund which is investing in and supporting Australian health and medical research. The fund aims to transform health and medical research to improve lives, build the economy and contribute to the health system's sustainability. In this year's budget, we committed \$6 billion over the forward estimates for medical research. This comprises \$3.5 billion for the National Health and Medical Research Council, \$500 million for the Biomedical Translation Fund and \$2.3 billion for the Medical Research Future Fund.

In my electorate of Curtin, 13 Medical Research Future Fund grants have been awarded since the fund began—\$35 million to the Telethon Kids Institute for a vaccine to combat rheumatic heart disease; \$4.91 million to UWA for generating Indigenous, patient centred and clinically and culturally-capable models of mental health care; and another \$2 million again to UWA for the evaluation of clinical pathways and patient outcomes for breast MRI in assessing and staging breast cancer. I would also add that from 2018 to this present time the NHMRC has awarded \$57 million to research projects at UWA, covering issues such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, cancer, genomics, infectious diseases and mental health. In essence, the hub that is Curtin in education, in medical health and in medical health research is vitally important: this government gets it and this government invests in it.

I did say I was going to speak about VET. I've actually spoken about the importance of VET a number of times in this chamber over the past week. It is vitally important to our country that we have an extremely strong, stable VET system sitting hand in hand with the higher education system. In Curtin, 16,000 people are studying VET qualifications. Across Australia, that number is clearly a lot more. VET is vitally important to the future of this country, making sure that people have the required skills for a future which is undergoing quite dramatic transformation. I refer to the member for Whitlam. Yes, we don't want to actually be training people right now for skills that aren't going to be needed tomorrow. We should be training people and giving them the skills and the capacity to upskill for the future through the provision of excellent vocational education and training.

We have a number of VET providers in my electorate, and I recently met with them with the assistant minister and, at another time, with the minister. The providers are really excellent providers—dedicated and committed to ensuring that their students have the capacity to succeed, that they are taught and trained extremely well and that they can get through and actually have a great career pathway. To all of the VET providers in my electorate, I say thank you—thank you for reaching out to us and for sharing with us your concerns about red tape and your desire for us to implement some of the reforms that we've actually been talking about with you. We really appreciate that feedback, and you'll see that we are actually implementing that feedback this year.

By way of concluding, one thing I know when I'm out and about in my electorate of Curtin is that the people of Curtin are hardworking and independent people, and they want to succeed in their endeavours. The Morrison government understands this completely and is providing the right environment, investment and support for the people in my electorate to get ahead.

**Mr HUSIC** (Chifley) (19:23): The debate on the appropriation bills gives us an opportunity to reflect, in particular, through one of these principal arms of government on government expenditure, the raising of revenue and also broader considerations about how that's occurring within the economy. At this point in time we are seeing an economy that has not been performing the way it should be for quite some time, especially for ordinary Australians who have expected that government would be able to do something to make life easier for people.

In particular, I'm very conscious of the fact that the government talks a big game on issues around unemployment. They say, for instance, that when they came into office nearly seven years ago unemployment stood at 5.7 per cent at the end of the GFC. They make a big deal

that unemployment has gone down from 5.7 per cent to 5.1 per cent. I have to say: while any reduction in unemployment is welcomed, are they seriously cheering about an unemployment rate that has gone down just over half a per cent? At the same time we have seen the rate of underemployment reach record levels—underemployment where—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks):** Order!

*Mr Pasin interjecting—*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Sorry. I thought he was seeking the call. Please continue.

**Mr HUSIC:** I come back to the point that we as a nation are experiencing record underemployment. This is where people feel that the wages they're being offered, the hours that they're being offered and the type of work that they are being offered is not meeting their needs. They have bills to pay, families to raise and mortgages that they want to meet, and they don't believe that the way they're working or the hours that they're getting are meeting what they require.

We have a government that, in the budget documents that underpin these bills, constantly makes predictions about where wages are going that don't eventuate, or there is absolutely no wages policy in evidence whatsoever as to where they want to lift wages in this country. Earlier in the year the Reserve Bank argued that the government should be encouraging a lift in wages and doing so by changing what we've experienced at the moment, where they expected that wages will go no higher than a certain amount. The Reserve Bank argued that the reins around that should be eased up. The expectation was that, in effect, that would flow through to the rest of the economy. And what was the government's response? They refused to. This, as I said a few moments ago, in a climate where people are expecting that wages should improve and that they should be getting better than what's on offer. The government refused the urging of the Reserve Bank to do so, which is ludicrous.

What we are seeing, to try to help people out, are tax cuts that were promised, that the government said would lead to a major uplift in consumer confidence and a major uplift in, for example, measures like retail spend. It has hardly had the impact that the government desired or expected whatsoever. We should be seeing, for example, a government that takes on board what the Reserve Bank is saying in terms of public sector wages. We should also be seeing an argument carried out in the public domain around employers. When quizzed by Treasury, 40 per cent of CEOs said they would not pay a pay increase this year, which leads me to make the observation that I genuinely believe that enterprise bargaining in this country is approaching a point where it's going to break. If you're going into negotiations where 40 per cent of CEOs refuse to countenance, to consider or to contemplate an increase in wages, you're going nowhere in enterprise bargaining whatsoever.

It's not like the climate with respect to profitability is tough. It's not like, for example, dividend growth or the payout of dividends is tight or difficult. It's not like we're seeing senior executives reining in their own salary and remuneration expectations. Yet ordinary wage earners are being told that they should just cop a situation where 40 per cent of CEOs are saying they won't increase wages, where the government's refusing to lift public sector wages and are also refusing to back up their claims in budgets that they'll see wages increase but not have a policy to see that occur. Ordinary people are being made to pay for that incompetence, that inability of the government to see wages policy move in this country.



What else are we seeing as a result? We are seeing an economy that's not working in the way that people expect. Growth is still chugging along. It's not expected that it will increase anytime soon. If anything, the impact of recent events is adding on top of that sluggish growth, where the expectation will be that coronavirus or the bushfires themselves, as has been flagged during the course of this week by the government, are going to cause another hit. An economy that wasn't really firing to begin with, that wasn't sparked up and operating very well, is going to have even further challenges presented as a result of some of these other instances. But the government's big game plan was that, no matter what, it was going to pursue a surplus. It was going to get to that surplus regardless of the economic conditions. Why? Because this was a political ambition, not an economic necessity.

### ADJOURNMENT

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** (19:30): I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

### Domestic and Family Violence Australian Parliament

**Dr ALY** (Cowan) (19:30): I've just rushed to the House after attending the vigil in Parliament House for Hannah Clark and her three children. And yesterday I attended a presentation by the UN Youth Ambassador, Kareem El-Ansary, at which he presented the UN *World Youth Report*. I was quite surprised to hear that domestic violence is among the top five concerns for young people between the ages of 16 and 25. It is No. 3 on the list of concerns for the youngest cohort of that group that was surveyed by Kareem El-Ansary as the UN Youth Ambassador.

That report also talked about people being disengaged with all of us here and the political process. Sometimes I think that when we say Australians—in particular, young people—are disengaged, what we're really saying is that we don't know how to engage with them. What we're really saying is that we don't know how to engage them in ways that are meaningful to them, in ways that recognise their own agency or in ways that allow them to reclaim their active citizenship.

I have a lot of faith in this political institution; I wouldn't be here if I didn't. Before I entered this place, I was probably one of the most cynical people ever. But I do have a lot of faith in our political institutions. I have a lot of faith in the insurmountable good that our political institutions are capable of, but I also recognise that we are at our best when we turn our words into actions. We've seen some really good things happen in this place this week. We've seen the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition stand up and speak about the scourge of domestic violence. We've seen the vigil for Hannah Clarke and her three children. We've seen passion and expression, and we've seen people stand up and speak out against domestic violence in the place where leadership happens.

But none of that is any good if it's not changed into action. I don't have an economic argument for how we act on this, because we can't ignore the powers of the human heart in everything we do, in all the policies that we make. If we design policy without consideration of the heart and without consideration of human behaviour, that is a deeply, deeply flawed approach. If we don't govern from the heart and use that to turn our words into actions to address the things that matter most to our young people, if we don't today pledge to turn the

words that have been said in this House this week into some form of action to stop domestic violence, to put at ease the hearts of those young people out there who have said domestic violence is one of the top five issues that concern them, then, sorry, but I'm in the wrong place—if we can't do that, if all the words that we have spoken this week, all the emotions that we have shown, all the tears that were shed in this place, really mean nothing to all the women and children out there who are counting on us now, who have put their faith in us now. I know that we can do this when we put our hearts on the line and put our hands together and work together as one parliament. I implore everybody in this parliament today and for the next 10 years, the next 20 years, the next 30 years—however long it takes—to never stop thinking of Hannah and her children and never stop thinking of the great platform that we have in this political institution to make a difference to somebody's life today.

### **Barker Electorate: Timberlink**

#### **Barker Electorate: Herd of Hope**

**Mr PASIN** (Barker) (19:35): I rise to inform the House of an exciting project being undertaken by an outstanding timber processing business: Timberlink. Timberlink employs 567 staff operating across three mills—Bell Bay in Tasmania, Blenheim in New Zealand and Tarpeena in my electorate of Barker. Like much of the forestry and forest products sector, the business has an exciting future. Since Timberlink was established in 2013, the business has invested \$157 million in the facilities, which is a great thing for the local regions in which it operates and a great sign of confidence. In fact, Timberlink recently announced a \$90 million expansion to the mill at Tarpeena. Now Timberlink has announced its intention to build a state-of-the-art cross-laminated timber, CLT, and glue-laminated timber, GLT, plant in Australia, either at Tarpeena, near the existing mill, or west of Melbourne.

CLT and GLT are really exciting products providing a commercially viable, carbon-friendly alternative to steel and concrete in the construction of mid-rise buildings. We speak often in this place about the need to operate in an increasingly carbon constrained world and this product is an example of how innovative products will help us get there. CLT and GLT have the unique ability to reduce emissions by using less steel and concrete and by storing carbon. A timber framed house stores approximately 7.5 tonnes of carbon while a steel framed house emits 2.9 tonnes of carbon. With CLT and GLT providing an excellent strength-to-weight ratio and being increasingly cost-competitive, it's no wonder it's a building material in demand.

The proposed Timberlink plant will be the first CLT-GLT facility in Australia. It will create 150 jobs during construction and 50 ongoing jobs. The Green Triangle has the workforce and I want to see this facility built in Tarpeena, securing those jobs for South Australia. Timberlink has approached the state governments of South Australia and Victoria, seeking financial support to help make the project a reality. The South Australian government has established a regional growth fund to unlock new economic activity in our regions, delivering critical economic infrastructure to create direct benefits across regional industries and strengthen regional communities. This project would do just that. Ten million dollars has been allocated to this fund for the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development to commit to strategic regional growth projects. This is a great project and I hope it's being given the consideration it deserves by the minister to support our forestry and forest products sector and jobs in our regions.

The Herd of Hope is an Australian charity which focuses on supporting organ recipients and donor families in regional and rural Australia. The organisation was founded in 2017 by organ recipient Megan McLoughlin, who I'm very proud to say is a resident of the Barossa, in my electorate of Barker. Since its establishment, the charity has spread the message of hope for organ donation through events all around Australia, including the Bondi Beach Cattle Drive, where a herd of Australian Poll Hereford cattle was mustered onto the sands of Bondi Beach to raise national awareness about organ and tissue donation and to support regional transplant services. As a child, Megan was diagnosed with juvenile diabetes. Later she became legally blind and was diagnosed with acute renal failure, being given three weeks to live in 2010, until a transplant saved her life.

Megan is an inspirational woman. No adversity seems too big or too hard to overcome. Despite her own battles, Megan is making a difference for others and continues to focus her energy on improving the lives of others. As well as being a mother of two—and I should note that she's only one of 64 women in the world to deliver two children post double transplant—Megan has dedicated her life to supporting donor families and guiding organ recipients through the difficult process. It's no wonder that, in November 2018, Megan McLoughlin received the SA Local Hero award in the Australian of the Year awards.

I caught up with Megan this week in parliament at the launch of Parliamentary Friends of Organ Donation. Megan is a truly inspirational member of our local community in Barker who is making a big difference nationally. Megan continues to inspire me, and she continues to inspire the community with a positive message of hope. For this, I commend Megan and everyone involved with Herd of Hope, and I remind people to have the conversation about organ and tissue donation. Do it for Megan.

### **National Disability Insurance Scheme**

**Ms BIRD** (Cunningham) (19:40): There has been much commentary today around the government's promised surplus. In fact, one would increasingly have to call it the surplus that dare not speak its name anymore. After handing down six budgets, all deficits, the government have now resorted to desperate measures to try and continue the fairytale that they are good economic managers. One of the measures that this government has resorted to in desperation—in order to try to hide that economic mismanagement—is to withhold funding from some of the most vulnerable people in our community: people with disabilities.

'Money that is unspent at present is offsetting the Commonwealth budget's position and the NDIS should never be used as a budget measure—whilst we aren't sure this is the intention, it is a fact.' Those are not my words. They are the words of the Hon. Gareth Ward MP, state member for Kiama and New South Wales Liberal disability minister, in conjunction with his Victorian ministerial counterpart in a letter in which they accuse the federal government of 'prioritising a budget surplus over people with a disability by refusing to release \$1.6 billion in critical unspent NDIS funding'. In *The Sydney Morning Herald* last Friday we saw both ministers, a Liberal state minister and a Labor state minister, demanding that this \$1.16 billion in critical funding be released 'immediately'.

Gareth Ward, a state member in my regional area, is a minister in a Liberal government. But he became so frustrated and distraught by the way this government operates—like so many of my other constituents—that, as written in the letter, he has been trying to engage

with his Liberal federal colleague, the Minister for the NDIS, and the minister's officials since before October last year, and he says there is still 'no formal proposal for agreement'.

This government should not be relying on ripping off vulnerable people to try and cover up its economic incompetency. Over the past few years I have heard story after story of families and carers of people with a disability having to fight for months and, sadly, sometimes years to access the services and equipment they need and—more than need—that they are entitled to. They've struggled to obtain the equipment they need in order to live full and productive lives. These families have enough on their plate and should not have to fight for years to obtain the services they need to remain in the workforce or to care for their family members with disabilities. I have watched my staff, all of them, lobbying hard on so many cases—despite the many obstacles they face—on behalf of these constituents.

One recent case was where a constituent applied for early intervention access to the NDIS for her son. NDIA rejected the application, saying that he did not meet the disability requirements. They asked for a review, and it turned out he did meet access requirements. While this review was quicker than had normally been the case, it was still a tremendous stress and hassle for this family to go through. The process involved getting new doctors' letters and all that sort of documentation, and it caused a great deal of stress. In another case, a constituent applied for access in October 2019, did not hear anything and asked us to make inquiries in December. We were advised that access requirements were not met. The constituent was never notified directly. They said they sent out a letter, from the NDIA, but he did not receive it, so he did not know about his appeal rights or the reasons why access requirements were not met. After lots of phone calls he was finally told that the reason was insufficient detail in some of the reports—which was fine, but, if he'd known earlier, he would have had time to resolve it.

The government say the reason they are using the underspend to prop up their budget surplus is that there is a lack of demand. How anybody who has an electorate office that would deal day in, day out with people seeking to get access to services, assistive technology or house modifications could say there is an underdemand is beyond me.

### **Hewlett, Councillor Lance**

**Mr LAMING** (Bowman) (19:45): I wish to outline a range of my concerns regarding the alleged conduct of Redland City Council Deputy Mayor, Lance Hewlett. In particular it regards the handling of cash donations, the damage of nonprofit property, destruction of financial records, engaging in what is now prohibited election collusion between candidates and, finally, the declaration of his political interests, gifts and fundraising.

Councillor Hewlett and his wife were chair and treasurer of the Redlands LNP branch in 2013-14 but resigned overnight after a failed preselection attempt. They subsequently failed to hand over office-bearer materials and party property in a timely manner. From that point onwards, they began a campaign of revenge against their former party—but this is not my reason for raising these matters.

The Hewletts had financial control in those two years of the Redlands LNP branch, when between \$6,000 and \$10,000 in raffle takings were minuted and even mentioned at the AGM but never banked. Attempts to resolve these matters were unsuccessful. Since that time, the Hewletts supported the campaigns of independent candidates—first Hewlett's wife and then

his brother-in-law. Despite fairly low levels of support in those elections, their preferences led to support for the ALP MP in that area. Nor is this, though, the reason for me raising these concerns—although it hurt many people who trusted them.

My concern relates to the Hewlett method of fundraising, which over the years has allowed sponsors to buy tables legitimately by EFT, but then guests who attend on a complimentary basis are lent on prior to and during the event to purchase raffle tickets in cash. Proceeds of around \$50 a seat, or per person, are neither reported nor banked. Profits from these events were publicised in the 6 June 2013 LNP AGM and minuted clearly as \$9,900, and the second as \$6,490. This was written by the Hewletts themselves prior to their resignations.

Sadly, financial records from that period are no longer available. When the receipt books were returned, they'd been sliced out by what appeared to be a Stanley knife and then recovered by a third party. The Hewletts claim that they were all intact when they handed them over, but, sadly, the damage is restricted to the period when they were running the books, making it hard to establish a motive for any other party to act in such a way. When these accounts were finally inspected by the new executive, the receipt raffles for that period amounted to \$40.

These substantial amounts of cash may never be recovered, but it's possible that this retained cash found its way into other locations, like election accounts that are run by the councillor himself. That has never been revealed nor declared, and no detail has ever been provided. The register of interests makes no indication of these amounts. But, under recent legislation, this must now occur, and for this reason I'm calling on the Hewletts to release their official council bank accounts dating back to those periods to identify unexplained cash donations. Councillor Hewlett may not have accurately completed his register of interests. That's in contravention to legislation with regard to removing his wife's LNP membership and failing to add the bank account or even declare it, let alone his receipt of gifts. The committee deserves to know how this endemic practice of producing hampers for non-profits was funded. These were being sold to other councillors and receipts were not being provided. If they have a face value of over \$500, that needs to occur.

The conclusions from 2013 and 2014 are that the organisational records for this period are both unrecoverable and irreconcilable. A \$1,000 iPad was retained until after the election so it couldn't be used. Eventually it was left on a bin for recovery, and it turned out to be a 16G factory-wiped device with the serial number scratched off the back with a sharp implement and all information deleted. After opposing every subdivision, this councillor eventually approved his own subdivision of 318 square metres in his wife's name.

These matters come to light for one simple reason, and that is that Councillor Hewlett has refused to answer any of these questions for four years. He has remained unchallenged in his division, but last week, and contrary to new legislation and to an unwritten understanding, he started supporting candidates who are his friends from his own suburb to run against his enemies in other divisions. And Hewlett even sought guidance from council on how much he could interfere with other divisions without triggering the new state laws.

In conclusion, the community now sees him moving around with Labor-Party-supported councillors. There has been no transparency, dating back to 2012, and he is refusing to release these records. And he should. He will meet my allegations tonight with obfuscation and with indignation. But it's not about the charities that he has supported. It's about the financial

probity around those activities. I raise these matters tonight simply to allow Redlanders to hear the full story and ask their own questions.

### **Iraq: Protests**

**Mr BOWEN** (McMahon) (19:50): Last October I updated the House on the situation of protests in Iraq, and I mentioned to the House then that these protests were very serious and that the protesters were demanding both economic and political reforms. These protests are no longer in the headlines, but they are still happening, and that doesn't reduce the need to keep the House informed; it increases the need to keep the House informed of the brave protesters in Iraq who are protesting for more democracy and for economic reform.

These protests are now in their sixth month. The protesters are venting their frustration at the failure of successive governments to provide better living standards and economic opportunities. Since the protests began, the Prime Minister, Prime Minister Adil Abd Al-Mahdi, has announced he is stepping down. But he has been caretaker Prime Minister, and his replacement, Prime Minister Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi, is viewed by protesters as being very much in the same vein as his predecessor.

The key point here is the role of the young people of Iraq, who are very much leading these protests. For that, frankly, their courage should be recognised. These are young people who are going to the streets to protest against their government, and, regardless of what you think about any particular matter, the courage of those protesters is to be acknowledged and recognised in this House, a house of democracy. We should celebrate those who are arguing for more democracy and putting their lives on the line to do so, and this is very much what they are doing.

It's estimated that 60 per cent of Iraq's population is under the age of 25. These people don't remember life under the dictator Saddam. And the population is expected to grow to 50 million. I make the point that these people are taking great risks, because people are being punished very severely for protesting and have been punished severely for protesting in Iraq.

One protester, Fadlallah, who is only 11 years old, has been attending the protests in his home city since they began in October. He's 11, and he's been going to the protests since October. He said: 'I am joining the protests for the sake of the homeland.'

Last time I updated the House, 100 people had been killed. I'm sad to report that this number is now over 600. Again, this is not in the headlines in Australia and elsewhere in the world, but it should be acknowledged: 600 people have given their lives for exercising their right to protest in Iraq. Anti-government protests have continued to be held. Just this last Sunday, over a thousand students marched through the centre of Baghdad.

Of course, these numbers are less than they were last October. There has been a whole range of reasons for that, including the crackdown by the government and the fear that people have for their lives. They get charged with terrorism offences for protesting—offences which carry the most severe penalties, including, obviously, the death penalty. Also there have been concerns about the coronavirus. Obviously, that is an issue in the Middle East, particularly in Iran, and people in Iraq would be concerned about that.

But the protests are continuing. A thousand students marched through the centre of Baghdad just last Sunday. It has been evident in Baghdad's Tahir Square, or Liberation Square, which remains a focal point of the protests. I've been there; I've stood on it. It's the

appropriate focal point of the protests. In October and November, many swarmed to the square as a meeting place to voice their opposition to the government. There has been a reduction in the number of protesters for a number of reasons, including some threats that have been made by various groups. But those young people who continue to protest do deserve to be acknowledged. A 17-year-old protester said: 'I know coronavirus is dangerous, but I could not go back home. Returning home means that we lose the revolution that we spent days and nights fighting for.'

Democracy and economic reform are necessary in Iraq. We were part of the Coalition of the Willing. We went into Iraq to bring democracy. We were told it would improve the situation in Iraq. Saddam Hussein was an evil dictator. But, having been to Iraq and spent time there, and from representing many Iraqi Australians, I can tell you: many Iraqis say the situation has not improved for them since his fall. This is particularly the case for those minorities in Iraq of Christian heritage, Assyrians and Chaldeans, and others, including Mandeyans and Yazidis and other minorities. There was a group here in Parliament House last night representing Assyrians, Armenians and Pontic Greeks talking about the tragedies of the past. But Assyrians and Mandeyans and Chaldeans and other minorities continue to face tragedies today in Iraq, and they're not the only ones. This has been a coalition of protesters calling for democratic and economic reform. As I said, having updated the House last October on their bravery, I wasn't going to let that be forgotten just because it has left the headlines today.

### **Nuclear Energy**

**Mr LEESER** (Berowra) (19:55): One of the worst things about modern politics is the gesture politics of the Left. It's the victory of style over substance. Look like you're doing something, but actually do nothing. Worse still, say you're going to do something, and have no clear way of getting there. The latest instance of gesture politics is the Labor Party's zero net emissions target by 2050 without any plan to get us there. Worse, Labor are blocking progress on steps we could actually take to make a serious impact on emissions of the future. If Labor were serious about their 2050 target, they wouldn't have dissented from the sensible recommendations of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy when they issued their report into nuclear energy last year. I want to commend my colleague the member for Fairfax for the level-headed, careful work he did in chairing the inquiry.

The committee made three recommendations. First was that the Australian government consider the prospect of nuclear energy technology as part of our future energy mix. This means developing our capability, looking into what the technology would offer and putting the community at the centre of these efforts by working with local and state jurisdictions to explore options. Second, it recommended that the government undertake a body of work to progress the understanding of nuclear energy technology. This would involve ANSTO itself assessing nuclear reactors; the Productivity Commission examining the economic viability of nuclear energy generation in Australia; the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency assessing the major requirements, like waste management, security and safety, that would need to be in place for Australia to adopt nuclear energy; and commissioning an expert body to educate and inform Australians and hear their views on nuclear. Third, the committee recommended that the government allow a partial and conditional consideration of nuclear energy technology by lifting its moratorium on nuclear energy only for the newest and

safest technology that's been developed in recent years. The committee also recommended that a condition for the approval of any waste disposal should be the informed consent of local impacted communities, following extensive consultation. All of this was rejected by Labor for thoroughly absurd reasons.

Instead of being willing to see the government investigate the possibility of nuclear, Labor insisted the government should settle a national energy policy:

...so as to ensure that Australia can make a rapid, efficient, effective transition to a decarbonised electricity system that delivers reliable and affordable power to households and businesses alike while making a substantial contribution guided by the science in the global effort to address climate change.

This is meaningless waffle. They refused to support the exploration of one of the mechanisms that would work to see Australia reduce emissions while providing reliable energy, and they offer nothing of substance in return. Labor is doing nothing more than quoting slogans that are contradictory. They are saying yes to a target, but no to any mechanism that would get us there.

I want to make it clear tonight that I support nuclear energy as part of Australia's future energy mix. Nuclear energy is both clean and reliable. In a submission to last year's nuclear energy inquiry, Bright New World, a South Australian environmental organisation, showed that, based on life cycle emissions, nuclear is comparable to renewable energy sources like wind and solar. But nuclear provides what solar and wind cannot, and that is reliability.

I am pleased Australia's per capita rate of investment in clean energy is world leading, but solar and wind alone do not provide a sufficient pathway to emissions reductions when they can't reduce base load power. I'm in favour of exploring nuclear because Australia is uniquely positioned to harness this technology. We have one of the world's largest reserves of uranium, we are the world's third-largest uranium exporter and we sell to countries that use uranium for energy.

Australia was once a powerhouse of nuclear technology, but all of this changed in 1972 when the Whitlam government came to power and dispensed with the Australian nuclear reactor program. It was further impacted by the 1998 moratorium. As a representative of the Grattan Institute said to the inquiry, 'The moratorium is significant as a barrier to having the conversations we need to have about nuclear energy.' Despite this handicap, Australian research in nuclear technology is globally recognised. We are participants in the Generation IV International Forum, which is using cutting-edge technology to collaborate on the next generation of nuclear reactor technology. We have the potential to be world leaders again. The major arguments against nuclear are slipping away as the technology develops.

Despite the embrace of targets, Labor continue to oppose the opportunity for substantial carbon reduction with nuclear power. Labor can say no to coal, they can say no the nuclear, they can say no to industry and they can say no to the communities that keep our country operating, but their noes won't keep the lights on at home, they won't keep the hospital theatres powered and they won't keep our businesses working. If Labor were serious about addressing emissions, they would talk seriously about the options to make that possible. Nuclear should be part of Australia's future energy mix. I commend the report to the House, and I urge the government to adopt the recommendations of the joint standing committee.

**House adjourned at 20:00**



## NOTICES

The following notice was given:

**Mr Hunt:** to present a bill for an act to amend the *Health Insurance Act 1973*, and for other purposes. (*Health Insurance Amendment (General Practitioners and Quality Assurance) Bill 2020*)

*Wednesday, 26 February 2020*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien)** took the chair at 10:00.

## **CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

### **People with Disability**

**Ms KEARNEY** (Cooper) (10:00): I have a beautiful older sister. Her name is Honora and she has an intellectual disability. Recently, just before Christmas, we noticed that she was having trouble walking; her left leg was lagging behind her. Communication is difficult; it's never straightforward with someone with an intellectual disability. Her GP struggled to find a diagnosis, and we were going through a whole lot of tests and things to see what was wrong. But, ultimately, one day she collapsed; she simply couldn't walk at all and ended up in hospital. There were myriad tests that went on for weeks and weeks to try to find out why she couldn't walk. Finally, we did notice that she had some fine-motor-skill problems—she was having difficulty picking things up—and somebody said to her, 'Hon, do you have pins and needles in your fingers?' and she said yes. But she hadn't, because of her intellectual disability, told us this. This gave us a whole new area of investigation, and after six weeks in hospital they discovered that she had spinal cord compression and she underwent a laminectomy. She then had to go through serious rehabilitation, and I'm very pleased to say that now she is working on both legs with a frame. And I want to give a big call-out to the people at St Vincent's public hospital and our wonderful Medicare system who helped Hon.

It just brought to mind the difficulties that people with intellectual disabilities have when they are entering the health system. Honora, my sister, was lucky. She has a big, wonderful family; she has five sisters and lots of adult grandchildren. We were all able to rally around and help her communicate with medical staff. But, unfortunately, for many people that's not the case. Researchers at the University of New South Wales found that people with an intellectual disability are twice as likely to suffer a potentially avoidable death, compared to the general population. One in three deaths in people with an intellectual disability was from a potentially avoidable cause—that is, a death that could have been prevented through individualised health care or through our normal healthcare systems or hospitals. People with intellectual disability experience a large range of risk factors for early death: heart problems, high blood pressure and obesity. They have an average life expectancy of just 54 years. That's 26 years shorter than the general population. Why?

In part it's due to problems accessing health care. Health services are rarely equipped to meet the needs of people with intellectual disabilities, and health professionals are rarely trained in the area. Some health professionals are still not seeing people with disabilities as people with equal rights. Some of it is about training and skills, and about health professionals not knowing how to accurately treat and diagnose people with an intellectual disability. It can be hard, because a lot of people with intellectual disabilities have limited communication. We need to focus on this as a serious health issue. We need to do this better, and treatment shouldn't be a matter of pot luck.

### **Tasmania: Health Care**

**Mrs ARCHER** (Bass) (10:03): Undoubtedly, one of the best parts of being elected to represent the amazing northern Tasmanian community is the opportunity to meet with those

who are boldly trying to change the status quo when it comes to some challenges for our community. Such are the passionate advocates behind a long list of projects like Active Launceston, Healthy George Town and Healthy Hobart, the brainchild of local powerhouses and sisters Lucy Byrne and Penny Terry. Active Launceston was established over a decade ago. The project is a community driven partnership with the vision of improving the health and wellbeing of the Launceston community, reducing barriers and targeting those with the highest need. Though there is much to be proud of when it comes to northern Tasmania, our community does face challenges in the areas of healthy lifestyle and education.

After seeing the success of Active Launceston, Lucy and Penny identified a deeper need for collaboration within the state to achieve long-term sustainable healthy outcomes, and their for-purpose company, Healthy Tasmania, was born. I was thrilled to launch the latest initiative, Healthy George Town, recently, which was a decade in the making. I first encountered the idea as a new councillor on the George Town Council in 2009 and worked with Lucy to achieve funding. I was determined to see this idea come to fruition, and, thanks to a joint funding agreement between the Morrison and state Liberal governments, it was finally made possible. As I said on the day, the launch of the program was one of the proudest moments in my career so far, despite the fact that I had to take on the new mayor in a planking competition! Recreational services are key to a liveable community, and the launch of Healthy George Town offers a great opportunity to this community. The program takes an evidence based approach to create healthy behaviours and is specifically adapted to the needs of our community and to all ages and abilities.

The Active Launceston program is now in its 12th year and its success is unique and unparalleled. The program is the last remaining project in the country funded through the 2008 activity and healthy communities grants program, and Active Launceston has provided a strong evidence based model that has been replicated in other rural and regional communities across Australia—with success. Lucy and Penny's work demonstrates how health promotion and preventative health care can be done differently in this country and with better outcomes. Their model supports private and public organisations to work successfully in partnership to ensure the right people with the right skills do the right job and at the right time, ensuring an efficient, effective and sustainable use of public funds with real results. Well done, healthy Tasmania. I can't wait to see what you do next.

### **Hamere Noah Kidane Mehret Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church**

**Mr GEORGANAS** (Adelaide) (10:06): I rise today to speak about a wonderful event I attended this last Saturday in my electorate. The event was at the Ethiopian Orthodox church. They celebrated one of their feast days. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church is one of the oldest religions in terms of Christianity, and has been operating for thousands of years. It's one of the very first forms of Christianity, and they proclaim to follow the exact teachings of Christ. They're a wonderful community in my electorate. Last Saturday, the Ethiopian Orthodox church venerated St Mary. They celebrate 33 feasts of St Mary per year.

It was wonderful also to welcome the archbishop of Western Australia and South Australia, His Grace Abune Musie. We were hosted by Father Yohannes, who is also the administrator of the community; and Goitom Tekle, who is on the committee there. It was a wonderful day. They started the service at two in the morning, and it went right through until about three or four in the afternoon the following day. Many of the people there were there from 2 am. I

attended the church service earlier in the morning and then the feast in the afternoon, which was followed by lots of traditional Ethiopian food, music and wonderful, wonderful culture.

It was really pleasing to see the young children that were there—very young kids who were obviously born here and are going to school here—and to know that this wonderful tradition, one of the oldest forms of religion in Christianity, is being passed down to these kids who will be the next generation of this particular church. The church is very important to the Ethiopian people. It is their centre of community; it's where they all gravitate to, where they meet, where they practise their Christian orthodoxy and where they get to assist and help one another. They do lots of good welfare work. We've been dealing with many in the Ethiopian community in my electorate. They've all gravitated to the western suburbs and are now moving further north. We've worked very closely with them. They are a wonderful people, and I look forward to attending many more of their services. As I said, there are 33 feast days per year for St Mary. I'll make sure I get to a few of them and enjoy their wonderful culture.

I congratulate them for their wonderful event. I congratulate them for putting on such a big event that day, with 300 to 400 people, and for being part of the community, especially in my electorate of Adelaide. They form part of that vibrant, wonderful tapestry that we call multiculturalism in Australia.

### **Women in Sport**

**Ms BELL** (Moncrieff) (10:09): We live in a momentous time in women's sport across our country. Women's sport on the Gold Coast continues to go from strength to strength. Wherever you go, Australian women are making headway and, in doing so, they inspire the next generation of sports superstars. I'm thrilled that this year saw the Gold Coast officially launch its first women's national team, the Gold Coast Suns. They are one of four new teams who launched into the AFL Women's competition in 2020. It's been a strong start to the season, including a home ground win against the Richmond Tigers and a draw in the first AFL Women's QClash, against the Brisbane Lions. I was pleased to attend the roundtable discussion ahead of the season launch. There I met some of the team to discuss how local business and women leaders can get behind this promising group of young women.

The Gold Coast has a thriving sports culture. It's been two years since we hosted the Commonwealth Games and we support the 2032 South-East Queensland Olympics bid that will take our sports culture to the next level and bring economic benefits to our wonderful city. It's important that we celebrate women's sport, particularly given some of the hurdles they face, including access to facilities, funding and social and cultural barriers.

The Gold Coast has some remarkable sports stars, and I'd like to acknowledge a few of them. Daphne Pirie was a nationally ranked track and field athlete who captained the Queensland women's athletics and hockey teams and represented Australia in hockey. She's now a world ranked masters athlete, having won eight gold medals in international competitions. In 1989 Daph was awarded an Order of the British Empire, and in 2012 she was awarded an Order of Australia for her service to hockey. Daphne Pirie is a Gold Coast treasure. She has dedicated the majority of her life to supporting women and girls in sport. She's done a tremendous job to raise the profile of women in sport at both grassroots and elite levels.

Glynis Nunn-Cearns OAM, a household name, is known for her success as an athletics all-rounder. She won dual golds in the heptathlon at the 1982 Brisbane Commonwealth Games and the 1984 LA Olympics. She continues to contribute to sport in our city as the executive director of the Gold Coast Academy of Sport and remains an icon.

The recently retired Sally Pearson left an incredible legacy over her 16-year representative career as a hurdler. Ms Pearson is one of Australia's most awarded athletes, having won eight major championship medals. In 2014 she was also awarded an Order of Australia Medal for her contribution to sport. Sally has marked her place in history and is an example for a generation of young women to follow in her footsteps.

Sport promotes social inclusion and a sense of connection, improves physical health and helps build relationships through shared experiences and achievement. Sport is also a social leveller. It provides opportunities regardless of postcode. *(Time expired)*

### Water

**Mr KATTER** (Kennedy) (10:12): Today the Productivity Commission issued their report on water resources and advised that we should do desalination. I think these people are spending too much time in front of a mirror without any clothes on, because there can be no logic or sanity in that. The desalination plant in Melbourne cost \$5,700 million. In Sydney it was \$1,800 million. In Perth it was \$955 million for one and \$389 million for the other. In Brisbane it was \$372 million. In the Gold Coast it was \$1,200 million. According to newspaper reports, hardly any of those desalination plants have ever worked, so we spent \$10,000 million on plants that have hardly ever been used at all.

*A division having been called in the House of Representatives—*

### Sitting suspended from 10:13 to 10:24

**Mr KATTER:** Infrastructure Australia is proposing desalination. There's been \$10,420,000,000 expended on desalination plants in Australia, and hardly any of them have ever worked at all. Some of them have closed down completely; they have never turned. That's what they propose as a solution to Australia's water problems, not dams.

Dr JC Bradfield built the Sydney Harbour Bridge; most of the water supply for Sydney; the underground railway system which won the engineering prize for the world, the Story Bridge in Brisbane; and the University of Queensland. He is the greatest builder in the nation's history. A bunch of pygmies here are saying: 'Oh no, we shouldn't build dams. We shouldn't build Bradfield. We should have desalination.' Well, there's your record. What's wrong with you people? That's Infrastructure Australia. Their brothers, the Productivity Commission, in the ORANI model, said if we remove all support levels for motor vehicles, there'll only a 25 per cent intrusion from overseas—we'll only lose 25 per cent of our car manufacturing in Australia—and the price of a motor car will halve. As we know, the price of a motor car has nearly trebled since their ORANI model came out, and, of course, it was 100 per cent intrusion. There is now no motor vehicle industry. That we would keep listening to these people is absolutely extraordinary.

Let us have a look at the other model, which is the dam model in Hughenden. It'll cost about \$500 million. It is projected to produce \$100 million at its lowest level of usage; I think it's reasonable to say \$150 million. So the government will get \$50 million a year out of it. The overall cost will be about \$400 million. They're going to get a return of 10 per cent.

When the government is getting a one per cent return at the present moment, I think a 10 per cent return is extraordinarily good; that's from the tax revenue coming from this project.

Now, we live in an empty land. In fact, if you take the golden Nulla Nulla out— (*Time expired*)

### **Australian Bushfires: Rural and Regional Australia**

**Mr BROADBENT** (Monash) (10:27): Bushfire recovery is a most difficult area for people who have been affected by bushfires. It takes a long time, and it costs a lot of money. There's a report this morning that the bushfire recovery will cost in excess of \$100 billion. When you equate that out to the farms, the communities, the homes and the businesses that have been affected, you can understand how that amount of money is needed to rebuild those destroyed by fire. You can be very strong in your rebuilding, but a lot of people will take a long time to rebuild.

This time last year I was standing on top of the hill behind my property. I was watching where two lightning strikes had started two fires in two valleys, which the member for Kennedy would understand, and those fires eventually converged into one fire, ripping right through the north of Nar Nar Goon and Bunyip forests. It destroyed everything in its path—all the homes, farms, businesses, people's retirement living, tree huggers—the whole lot. Everybody was devastated. You didn't hear as much about that fire, which was equally as damaging to that area, as you heard about the recent fires in New South Wales and Queensland, all the way through to eastern Victoria and southern New South Wales. But, for that community, it was exactly the same devastation.

These days on farm, we don't have the same steel fittings we once had. They're all plastic. It takes years to get out there, dig another hole and put new plastic fittings into all your troughs. This is ongoing now. That was 12 months ago. What we've done is made some changes to the way services are delivered, with the federal government and the state government working closely together, to the victims that have gone through this bushfire period. Some, though, that have gone through bushfires prior to that are not getting the same benefit. I'm now working with the government, step by step. The member for Hunter will know very well how hard it is in rural communities to work through these issues and how important they are.

There is the building up of stock—especially the loss of breeding stock. In one fell swoop, you have lost your dogs that help run the farm. So we're working through it. It costs a lot of money, but I've just been told also that the virus that's now crisscrossing across the world is going to cost a lot more. Australia is in a very, very difficult position. We've got to be with our community and lead our community as we work through this difficult time.

### **Macarthur Electorate: Australia Day Awards**

**Dr FREELANDER** (Macarthur) (10:30): Today I would like to acknowledge the hard work, determination and selflessness of those in my communities. The title Citizen of the Year is bestowed on those who have left an impressive mark on a community and who have displayed compassion and resolve. Ms Emma McFarlane, a local lawyer, who is a board member of Youth Solutions and co-founder of professional development group Victress Connection, and Mr Brett Atkins, who is the Camden Art Prize director and a volunteer

firefighter, were recognised as the Campbelltown City Council and Camden Council recipients of the Citizen of the Year award respectively.

Camden's Young Citizen of the Year went to Ms Rebecca Halcomb for her leadership efforts as the First Unit Leader with her local Scouts, whilst Mr Riley Tonna was Campbelltown's recipient, owing to his dedicated advocacy and research on our local koala population.

It wouldn't be an Australia Day Award ceremony without our Sportspersons of the Year, with Mr Kurtis Becker being recognised by Campbelltown City Council for his efforts representing Australia at the Special Olympics World Summer Games. Lily Hreszczuk was acknowledged by Camden Council for her efforts with the Combined Independent Schools Cricket Team and the New South Wales PSSA 12 and under cricket squad.

Camden Council recognised Turning Point Camden, a wonderful organisation that provides welfare based services for the disadvantaged, and Macarthur Lions Club for their nearly four decades worth of service to the community, as their Community Groups of the Year, whilst Zonta Club of Macarthur was acknowledged as the recipient by Campbelltown City Council for their invaluable contribution to our community. Macarthur Hoarding Disorder Resource Network received the Disability Community Contribution of the Year award from Campbelltown City Council.

Ms Gaylene Feld received the Arts and Culture award from Camden Council for her volunteering efforts since the 1970s with the Camden Art Prize, noting her efforts in expanding its knowledge and participation. She was also the principal of the primary school that all six of my children attended. This year, 2020, saw the first recipient of the newly established Environmental Citizen of the Year award by Campbelltown City Council, with the well-deserving recipient, Ms Flora Vidamour, being recognised for her efforts with Bushcare.

We too are fortunate as a community to have two Order of Australia recipients for 2020 living and working amongst us, with Mrs Pauline James OAM receiving the medal for her service to veterans, their families and to the community and Mrs Tanya Maree Whitehouse OAM receiving the medal for her service to the community through social welfare initiatives, particularly in the area of domestic violence. Mr Mark Grant received the Public Service Medal for his outstanding work in New South Wales Department of Education with the public service in New South Wales.

I would like to once again congratulate all award recipients and those who were nominated for their tireless, remarkable efforts to better the lives of those around them. It is my belief that Macarthur is a very fortunate electorate made up of wonderful people and organisations that endeavour to make the world a better place.

### **Page Electorate: Australia Day Awards**

**Mr HOGAN** (Page—Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister) (10:33): I would like to acknowledge Robbie Graham. Robbie is a member of the Goolmangar RFS and was recently recognised with an Australian Fire Service Medal for his dedication to our community for the past 50 years. He has had great support from his family. I know that his wife, Shirley; his children Peter and Sharon; their respective partners, Suzanne and David; and Robbie's grandchildren Brady, Ella, Emma and Ryan are exceptionally proud of his efforts. Congratulations Robbie on this well-deserved award.

I would like to acknowledge and congratulate all the members of my community who in the latest Australia Day Awards in the Lismore City Council area won their respective divisions. Stephen Garbutt, Captain of Wyrallah Rural Fire Brigade since 2007, was awarded an OAM—congratulations, Stephen, very well deserved.

Annette Moehead from Wollongbar was awarded a Public Service Medal for her wonderful contribution to our health system. Norm Robinson was awarded the Community Individual Australia Day Award—congratulations, Norm. The Services in the Community Australia Day Award was awarded to the Muslim Students' Society, Southern Cross.

The Sports Team Australia Day Award was awarded to the St Carthage's Primary School and Lismore Rugby 10s team who claimed victory as the state champions at the Catholic schools rugby 10s championships—well done. Valerie Axtens was awarded the Australia Day award for art and culture. Congratulations, Valerie. Macy Butler was named Young Citizen of the Year, and the Citizen of the Year award was awarded to Dave Henderson. Dave, thank you for everything you've done recently—especially with the bushfires. My congratulations to all the winners.

I would like to acknowledge and congratulate all the members of my community who received Australia Day Awards in the Richmond Valley Council area. Mick Stain from Casino was awarded the Citizen of the Year for his outstanding voluntary service of more than 16 years in the RFS fire brigades. The Young Citizen of the Year award went to Ben Wheeler for his strong community service. Ben is a volunteer firefighter and has been on the fireground 34 times. Karen Rea and Donna Lamont were both named Volunteers of the Year for their outstanding commitment during the major bushfires we had. Lucy Ellis was named Young Volunteer of the Year for contributing a significant amount of time as a very active volunteer at the Evans Head Surf Lifesaving Club. Congratulations, Lucy. The Young Sportsperson of the Year award went to Kali Ainsworth, who has gone from strength to strength in her chosen sport of rugby union, representing her club, zone and school and touring overseas. Well done to Kali.

I'd like to acknowledge the Sportsperson of the Year in the Ballina council area, which was awarded to Hayley Oakes of Pearces Creek. Hayley is an outstanding young woman who is a multiple Australian mountain bike champion across several disciplines. Well done, Hayley.

### **Hunter Electorate: Health Care**

**Mr FITZGIBBON** (Hunter) (10:36): Facilitating access to affordable health care should be amongst the highest priorities of any government. A government which fails to provide access to affordable health care risks having blood on its hands. Too many people in parts of my electorate are struggling to gain that access now. In a short period of time, more than a thousand people have signed my online petition calling upon the Morrison-McCormack government to revisit changes it has made to general practice and Medicare services. Large areas in the Hunter electorate will suffer under the new system for determining where bulk-billing incentives apply and where overseas trained doctors can work. Towns in both the Cessnock and Lake Macquarie LGAs have been adversely affected: Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Morisset, Wangi Wangi, Cooranbong, Dora Creek and Bonnells Bay, just to name a few.

Community Healthcare and Waratah Medical Services are two great practices which extensively offer bulk-billing services. They are now of course under pressure. Their



economic model has changed because of the government's decision. It is true that some people will now decide not to visit a GP when they genuinely need to visit a GP because they simply can't afford to do so because the bulk-billing services they've become accustomed to will no longer be available.

Some of these practices have ageing GPs as well—Waratah Medical Services GP clinic in Morisset is a typical example. They had been unable to find new doctors anyway, and that has been compounded by the changes in this modified Monash model, which rates towns in my electorate on the same scale as Mosman on Sydney's north shore. This is crazy. Waratah Medical Services and those providing similar services in the Cessnock LGA can't afford to provide those quality health services at cheap rates without the support of this government. So I again call upon the government to revisit this issue to ensure that the boundaries for determining these things reflect the reality on the ground and therefore ensure that the people in my electorate, particularly in working-class and ageing communities, have access to medical services they need and deserve.

### **Mining**

**Mr CHRISTENSEN** (Dawson) (10:39): The mining industry continues to provide thousands of jobs throughout Central and North Queensland. More specifically, coal supplies Australia with reliable energy and tens of billions of dollars in export revenue. Since June 2019 Adani Australia has awarded over \$700 million worth of contracts for the construction of its Carmichael mine and rail project. That is a massive boost for North Queensland, and long may that level of investment continue.

Unfortunately not everyone shares these sentiments, though—particularly a select few activist groups who have decided to threaten and terrorise any business or company affiliated with the Carmichael mine project. These extreme green activists aren't just anticoal; they're antijobs, they're antiprogress and they're anti-Queensland. For a long time, they've been targeting and disrupting lawful, law-abiding businesses, but recently they've stooped to a new low in harassing and intimidating honest, hardworking employees of those businesses.

In January this year the transport company Greyhound decided not to renew its contract with BMD to bus their workers to and from Adani's rail project due to concerns for its own employees. A number of other lawful companies have caved under pressure from these extreme green anti-employment activists over the last year, and yet it's business as usual for Adani's Carmichael mine project. Why is that? It's because there are a long line of businesses who are waiting for their opportunity to supply the goods and services needed for the Carmichael mine project to go ahead. It's because the majority of people who actually live in Central and North Queensland want this project to go ahead. It's because this project provides coal; coal provides power; coal provides revenue for the nation and the state; and coal provides jobs for locals.

These anti-job activists have wasted their time, their efforts and even some of their own fossil fuels by protesting, because coalmining will continue. The reason it will continue is that there are companies out there that won't buckle under pressure. They won't allow themselves to be terrorised into submission by these touring protesters. They are businesses that are standing up for themselves, for local jobs and for North Queensland. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate those businesses for not folding in the face of intimidation, threats and disruptive protests. Thank you to those businesses for standing up to these extreme green

hypocrites who ride in cars and fly in planes up to North Queensland to tell us to stop mining coal because it's damaging to the environment. Speaking of that, I understand Bob Brown is putting out a documentary about how his convoy came up north to stop Adani—which actually helped us to build the mine! In North Queensland we are grateful to any business or company that reinforces the most important Australian value, a fair go for everyone, and that includes North Queenslanders.

### **Ovarian Cancer**

**Ms TEMPLEMAN** (Macquarie) (10:42): Today I'm appealing to women across the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains to know the symptoms of one of the country's most deadly cancers for women, ovarian cancer. As Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month draws to a close, here in parliament we've honoured the women who were warriors in their last months and days with this disease. Last year MPs and senators heard from two women dying from ovarian cancer, ABC journalist Jill Emberson and Kristen Larsen, who was only 26 years old. They died within days of each other last December. I knew Jill nearly 40 years ago, when we were young journalists at community radio 2SER in Sydney. Reconnecting with her in recent years was bittersweet. It was her illness that brought this powerful, focused, warm and adventurous woman back into my sphere, and I'm very grateful for that.

We learned this week that, only two days before she died, Jill dictated a letter to the Minister for Health, continuing to lobby for additional funding for research into the causes, treatment, prevention and cure of ovarian cancer. That she and Kristen were able to influence the government in allocating \$20 million for research was a triumph. But having that money spread over several years was a disappointment. Kristen, Jill and this year's speaker, a survivor of ovarian cancer, Meghan Speers, who spoke of her lonely journey through this terrible disease, are absolutely right: there needs to be more support, and that means more money.

Ovarian Cancer Australia has asked the federal government for \$9 million to help fund 21 ovarian cancer nurses. I think this is such a reasonable request. Every year, more than 1,500 Australian women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and more than 1,000 die from the disease. Today four women will be diagnosed and three will die. The five-year survival rate for women diagnosed with ovarian cancer is 46 per cent, and this compares to 91 per cent for those diagnosed with breast cancer. We have done great work with breast cancer, and we need to see that happen with ovarian cancer.

There is no effective screening program for ovarian cancer, so the best way to detect it is to know the signs and symptoms. Unfortunately, these can often be vague and similar to other medical conditions, but it's really important for women to see their GP if they experience any of them, particularly if it's unusual or persistent. Symptoms can include unexplained fatigue, unexplained weight loss or gain, changes in bowel habits—Jill says all she had was constipation—increased abdominal size or persistent bloating, abdominal or pelvic pain, urinary changes and appetite loss or feeling full quickly. It is okay to overreact. Go and see your doctor. (*Time expired*)

### **Mitchell Electorate: Australia Day Awards**

**Mr HAWKE** (Mitchell—Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Assistant Defence Minister) (10:45): It's a pleasure to draw attention to some remarkable

people in the electorate of Mitchell who were recognised in the recent Australia Day honours list, including Justin Dowd AM, for his significant service to family law and to professional associations; Paul Field AM, for his service to the arts, particularly children's entertainment, and as a supporter of charitable endeavours; Ray Palmer OAM, for his community service; and Ron Ray OAM, also for his service to the community through a range of roles, including as a founding member of the Friends of Bella Vista Farm and his current role as vice-president of operations. Volunteers are the stalwarts of every local community and they permeate every aspect of Australian society. My electorate of Mitchell hosts a strong, committed volunteer workforce.

The Hills Shire Council's 2020 Australia Day Awards also recognised individuals, community groups and organisations. Many were recognised this year by the Hills Shire Council. I would like to commend the following people for their ongoing commitment and service to the Mitchell community. I commend Mrs Ruth Didsbury, the Citizen of the Year, for her tireless work as a member of the Hills Relay for Life committee for over 15 years. The Hills Relay for Life is one of the most successful, well-run events in our electorate and in the state of New South Wales, and one of the largest events run by that organisation. Ruth also volunteers with the Cancer Council and joined the Hills Light the Night organising committee, raising aware and funds for the Leukaemia Foundation. I want to thank Ruth for her tireless dedication.

I commend Mrs Carol Harding, the Senior Citizen of the Year, who has worked for the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy at St Michael's Family Centre in the family support and accommodation program at Baulkham Hills for over 25 years, the last nine years as a coordinator. Carol has also been a tireless member of the Hills Domestic Violence Prevention Network since 1995. Carol is a passionate advocate on issues around domestic violence and homelessness, and speaks at many events and to students on these issues affecting women and children. I thank her for it.

I commend Mr Austin Rosier, the Young Citizen of the Year, for his role as an Anzac secondary school ambassador for the Centenary of Anzac committee for the Hills in 2015, and what a fantastic committee it was. The service had 5,000 people—the second-biggest service in Sydney. Austin served with success, demonstrating commitment to teamwork, interpersonal skills and dedication to the service of war veterans. Austin has continued to serve in the program as a mentor. In 2019 he joined the selection panel for the program as well. He is also a carer of two young men with autism as well as mentoring and leading a youth group at St Paul's Anglican Church at Castle Hill.

I commend Budokan Judo Club for being the Community Group of the Year and I commend Rob Katz for his long-term dedication to the sport of judo. They cater for a diverse demographic of toddlers, recreational players, members with spectrum disorders, veteran competitors and indeed a number of Olympians. The Olympian record at that club is outstanding and amazing, and I commend them for their ongoing dedication.

The Hills Shire mayor awarded a lifetime honorary award for outstanding service to the late Allan Drew OAM, who I've spoken about before in this place. I want to again commend him for his service and legacy to our community and for a life well lived.

I congratulate all of the volunteers.

**Lalor Electorate: Chemical Contamination**

**Ms RYAN** (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (10:48): I rise today in this place, the people's House, to speak for the people I represent in this place. While there are many issues of importance in the federal sphere at the moment, all politics is local. So I rise to support my community's concerns about Transurban's toxic-soil plan for Wyndham. My community have expressed their dismay, their anger and their disbelief that Transurban and their construction partners, John Holland and CPB, plan to store contaminated soil at a site in Wyndham Vale.

Let me state this clearly: I do not support Transurban's toxic-soil plan for Wyndham. Reassurances that it is only a backup plan or that the contaminants of PFAS and asbestos are low level are no comfort in the face of the facts. The site selected by Transurban is not a waste facility. It has no liners, as are required at any landfill, let alone a landfill licensed to take prescribed waste. Nor is it a treatment facility. It is 70 metres from existing homes in a new housing development, with more imminent. It is too close to the Werribee River and a tributary that runs through the site after a deluge.

I cut my political teeth in the nineties fighting CSR's plans to build a toxic dump in Werribee. It got me involved in local campaigning, grassroots activism and the labour movement, and I believe that led me here to stand as a federal representative for the place and community I have called home my entire life. I am baffled that we are hearing talk of plans for extenuating circumstances when there is no talk of a plan detailing a final disposal or treatment facility. I am not confident the backup plan being discussed will have the safety measures in place to protect people and to protect the environment.

The Victorian Premier said last week that no decision has yet been made. So my message from the people's house to the people of my community is let Transurban know. Let them know it's not welcome in Wyndham. As welcome as the West Gate Tunnel will be on completion for Wyndham residents, who already pay Transurban tolls on existing roads to do their jobs and to enjoy their free time, this plan to store contaminated soil in Wyndham is ill-considered and my community will fight it. Transurban and their construction partners need to listen to our community and ensure that contaminated soil is taken from source to a disposal or treatment facility.

In 1998 I led my communities fight against CSR's planned toxic dump in Werribee. In 2019 I stand here as my community's federal representative and I will fight Transurban's toxic soil plan with my community.

**Calare Electorate: Parkinson's Disease**

**Mr GEE** (Calare—Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment and Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education) (10:51): I rise today to speak about two wonderful constituents of mine, David and Cheryl Veness of Bathurst in central western New South Wales. David and Cheryl have lived in Bathurst for 18 years, although David's family have roots in the area going back to the 1800s. They even live in a street named after David and his forebears. David and Cheryl will celebrate their 50th anniversary next year in 2021, an incredible milestone in anyone's books. They had three children; their youngest son, Peter, who was a popular member of the Canberra press gallery, tragically passed away in January 2012 from brain cancer.

David was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease 11 years ago and, rather than hide from any stigma related to that disease, he immediately joined the Bathurst Parkinson's Support Group. He's always encouraged anyone else with the disease not to live in denial but to seek support. Despite there still being no cure for Parkinson's, David still refuses to be brought down by the negatives and promotes an active lifestyle to help stave off the progression of the disease. Coming from a career in the Commonwealth Bank, David's work took him from Canberra to New Guinea and across country New South Wales. He brought his skills to Parkinson's New South Wales, where he became the president of the board in 2017. The role took him to Japan last year for the World Parkinson's Congress in Kyoto.

Dr Emma Blackwood of Central West Neurology & Neurosurgery has stated that Parkinson's is more prevalent in the regions. The health system is still struggling to keep up with the disease. Parkinson's affects more people in central western New South Wales than prostate and breast cancer combined. David has been passionately fighting for more full-time dedicated Parkinson's nurses for rural and regional New South Wales, as well as promoting support groups across the country. Nearly two-thirds of support groups are in regional areas. David lobbied for a Charles Sturt University study involving embedding Parkinson's nurses in local health districts. The study showed the very positive savings that can be made by adding specialist nurses to local health services.

Never one to slow down, David's next target is making Parkinson's treatment and the drug Sinemet more widely available to sufferers. Sinemet relieves many of the symptoms associated with Parkinson's, including rigidity and instability. The drug is available on the PBS. However, manufacturing levels have dropped and chemists across the country are often running out of the drug.

David and Cheryl have always remained active in the community, being involved in Legacy, Rotary and other community groups over the years. David also ran in the local government elections in 2017, and Cheryl has been active in Anglicare and also Court Support.

David remains envious that Michael J Fox, another Parkinson's sufferer, is somehow still more famous than he is. And, in what is perhaps a true show of personal fortitude, David is eagerly awaiting another Collingwood premiership. As he was born on 29 February, a leap year, this Saturday David will celebrate his 18th birthday. His frame may bear the signs of 72 trips around the sun, but his strength of humour, strong will and zest for life are more reminiscent of an 18-year-old. Happy birthday, David, and thank you for all of the work that you are doing on behalf of all of those people living with Parkinson's. Our community really appreciates it.

### **Gilmore Electorate: Bomaderry High School**

**Mrs PHILLIPS** (Gilmore) (10:54): We all know about the devastating fires we have endured, but after the fires came the floods. Last week I visited Bomaderry High School to check on the damage the floods have caused. The school was closed for three days, and every block has sustained some form of damage. To put it simply, I was shocked and appalled at the state of the school. Being a mother myself, I felt for every parent, every child and every teacher at that school for the horrible conditions they are enduring every day. I saw how the ceilings were crumbling and falling to the floor, luckily with no children or teachers underneath. There is clear water damage in so many classrooms, old and new. I saw

waterlogged asbestos tile underlay, some still with water that hadn't dried up a week later. The school's E block is completely out of operation—16 classrooms. Students have been forced to take classes in the council's indoor sports centre across the road, an extremely disruptive and difficult task for students and teachers alike.

Flooding is no new event at this school. That was clear from the extensively patched ceilings, walls and floors. The cause of the problems is clear: the buildings have just reached their use-by date. The roofs and gutters are old and simply not fit for purpose. But the solution so far has been to patch and then patch again. You'll have to excuse this next part, Deputy Speaker, but the worst part about my visit, my biggest concern at the school, was the smell—of damp, of possums and of their excrement, which was even dripping down the walls. It was horrendous—a health risk, no doubt—and simply distressing to think that this is how our kids spend their days and this is what our teachers have to work in. Many parents at the school are rightly distressed at the impact the school's condition is having on their children's education, health and wellbeing. The P&C are at the end of their tether and sick of the patches and the worry about what is lurking under the carpets and in the ceiling.

Two weeks ago I visited a fire-impacted school in Broulee with the education minister. It was absolutely wonderful to reach out across the aisle on something as important as that. So I offered a similar bipartisan visit to Bomaderry high to the member for Wannon and his New South Wales counterpart so they can see what our kids are learning in. I want to work with the government on a long-lasting solution to this problem, because our kids deserve better than a patch job.

### **Ryan Electorate: Roads**

**Mr SIMMONDS** (Ryan) (10:57): The people of Brisbane's western suburbs are sick of being stuck in traffic, sick of bottlenecks and sick of spending more time in congestion than with their families. The Morrison government has committed to several projects for residents in the Ryan electorate to get them home sooner and safer, but these can only be fixed when all levels of government work together. Unfortunately locals are still being roadblocked by the state Labor government. We, the Morrison government, have committed \$12.5 million to fix the Kenmore roundabout. This pinch point is not only adding to congestion on Moggill Road but it is not currently a safe access to Kenmore Village, a busy shopping precinct.

Despite the state Labor government being dragged kicking and screaming to the table to finally match the commitment, for months we have had radio silence from the Labor state Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Mark Bailey. That was until last week when, after much poking and prodding on my behalf, he finally sent me a letter to say that, at this time, they could not provide further project details. Well done, Labor minister! You've literally sent me an update to say that there is no update, that you have done no work to progress this project, despite the Morrison government's commitment to fund it. My response to Labor is: this is not good enough. Residents expect Labor to act better when it comes to helping reduce congestion in our suburbs.

In stark contrast, the other major commitment, just down the road at Indooroopilly, is where the Morrison government is working with Adrian Schrinner, our lord mayor, and the council to fix the Indooroopilly roundabout. Brisbane City Council, unlike the Labor state government, have got straight on with the job. They presented two options, asked locals for feedback, listened to that feedback and amended the design, announced that the popular

overpass option would proceed and they are getting on with the job of construction. This is what happens when you have two levels of government working together to help reduce congestion in our suburbs.

But we can't take the support of council for granted, because it is only Adrian Schrinner and the LNP team who are committed to working with the Morrison government to bust congestion. Despite this roundabout, this important bottleneck in our community, having 32 serious traffic incidents recorded between 2013 and 2018, with 10 requiring hospitalisation and a further 17 requiring medical treatment; despite this bottleneck keeping people from their families and from their homes; despite all of this, the lord mayoral Labor candidate doesn't support this project, calling it a 'wicked, wicked waste'. It just goes to show that only the LNP are dedicated to making sure we reduce congestion in our suburbs. *(Time expired)*

### **Newcastle Electorate: Centrelink**

**Ms CLAYDON** (Newcastle) (11:00): I want to talk about the Morrison government's diabolical plan to shut down Centrelink offices in Newcastle and Mayfield, squashing the two into a single yet-to-be-determined location. It isn't just about jobseekers, although goodness knows they've had a tough time surviving on the pitiful rate of Newstart from this government. This is about older Australians who access pensions, it's about carers and people with a disability and it's about tens of thousands of Newcastle families who access family tax benefits. Indeed, there are very few people who don't have a reason to interact with Centrelink.

I'm not going to sit back and let the Morrison government axe vital public services in Newcastle without a fight. Recently I put a call out to Novocastrians to join me in saying, 'Hands off our Centrelink, Mr Morrison,' and the response has been fierce. Daily I receive dozens of petitions signed by Novocastrians who are fed up with this government's attack on public services. Daily I'm hearing the personal stories of the detrimental impact these closures will have on my constituents, their families and loved ones.

The Morrison government did absolutely zero consultation with my community before deciding to shut down our Centrelink offices, so I've done some consultation for them. These people are the human face of the Morrison government's callous cuts. I want to take this opportunity in parliament to tell the Prime Minister exactly what this means for people in my community. They are people like Robyn, who told me how important Centrelink offices are for her. She wrote:

I truly have benefited from the face to face service over 7 years when I was made Redundant as a 59 year old widow. I have had times of great anxiety and being able to physically attend the office and be helped by another human being has been such a gift. In times of stress, the personal touch really matters and helps relieve some of the struggle and pain.

And then there's Graeme, who is in his 80s. He told me that, because his right leg is amputated above the knee, his ability to travel is limited to where he can get to on a mobility scooter. That's why he so worried about the fate of the Centrelink Mayfield office. Then there's Lisa, who told me she has a degenerative disability and is very concerned about how she's going to access Centrelink as her needs change. She worried about what she's going to do when she needs to go in and do her business with the ATO and Medicare, all of which she currently does from her Centrelink office.

These are just a few of the thousands of people in my electorate of Newcastle who will be hurt by these appalling Centrelink closures. I call on the government to ditch this diabolical plan.

### **Forrest Electorate: Emergency Services**

**Mrs MARINO** (Forrest—Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories) (11:03): I want to thank all the emergency services—volunteers and career members—who have done such a great job over the summer and ongoing. We can't do without them, as we see right around Australia, from the volunteer bushfire brigade—I have almost 70 of those in my part of the world—to career firefighters and others. I have at least six surf lifesaving clubs. They do so much on our beaches all over summer. I have seven SES groups involved in search and rescue, evacuations, securing damaged homes and road rescues. They do an amazing job. And of course one of my favourites is the wonderful volunteer St John Ambulance services, who do an extraordinary job. There are at least 13 of them in Forrest. They are the life savers and so important in our regional communities. These are part of the wonderful volunteer and career services, emergency services and first responders.

I want also to thank the WA police who operate in the South West and to commend the South West police. We've seen a significant decrease in the number of sexual offences, in stealing offences, in property damage, in drug offences and in fraud related offences in Bunbury and a similar drop in crime statistics in Busselton and even in Donnybrook. I would like to acknowledge the former South West superintendent, Mick Sutherland. He's had more than one stint of service in the South West. He's gone on to another role now, in Perth, but he has been a really key part of the great results that we've seen in the South West. He is very committed; it was not his first time there. Our current superintendent is Geoff Stewart. He is continuing the work of Mick Sutherland and those who have gone before, and is doing a great job.

One thing we often forget about with police officers is the horrific scenes that they have to deal with day in, day out. I thank them for the work they do in that space, right around Australia. We see them and we are immensely comforted by their presence at any location they're at. We get a great sense of security. Their sheer presence in a region makes a massive amount of difference. They are absolutely dedicated to that swift response to accidents and emergencies. They're there and they walk into the challenges—a bit like we see with our fire and emergency services people, who walk into the teeth of the problem.

I've acknowledged previously specific officers like Constable Brodie Wallis, who received the highest honour in the WA police commissioner's bravery awards, when he was one of four officers to receive the Commissioner's Cross for Bravery in 2018. We see police officers at so many events. We take their presence for granted, but not for one moment should we take for granted the wonderful support and security they offer our local communities. I thank each and every one of them for the work they do day in, day out.

### **Ballarat Electorate: Bushfires**

**Ms CATHERINE KING** (Ballarat) (11:06): This has been a long, brutal summer across Australia. In fact, the bushfire crisis started well before the summer; it started back in spring. Throughout the bushfire crisis we have seen people from all walks of life, from all parts of the community, put themselves in harm's way to keep others safe. In my community of Ballarat,



as in so many other regional communities across Victoria, we have been very lucky to have international firefighters based at our airport. Each year, they come to Ballarat and for three months station themselves in our community. They've been doing so for several years now. They give up their time with their families. They are often coming off the back of fire seasons in other countries, so they've been away from their families for a long period of time.

Earlier in the summer I headed out to Ballarat airport to welcome the Canadian crew stationed there. It was very early in the fire season and it was pretty hot, pretty dry and pretty windy—the kind of weather that puts our firefighters on alert. We didn't get far into our morning tea before the alarms went off and the crew ran to their helicopters, responding quickly to a fire in our region. Since the awful news of the plane crash in New South Wales I think we have all developed a new appreciation of the dangerous work that aerial firefighters carry out each day during the fire season. They are keeping us safe, putting their own lives in danger to protect us on the ground. We can never thank them enough and we can never forget the sacrifice that they make.

Our Canadian crews have been up in the air too many times this summer, dousing flames as quickly as possible. Just to name a few, we've seen fires near Creswick, Smeaton, Lexton, Smythesdale, Clunes, Myrniong and Blackwood just this summer. These blazes have threatened homes and lives. They have damaged fences, burnt sheds and burnt fields, but, thanks to the tireless work of these firefighters, paid and volunteer, on the ground and in the air, the cost to our community has not been too great. Across the state and the country of course the story has been very different—the fires have been disastrous, unprecedented and deadly. Throughout these fires, I know the entire Ballarat community has been proud to see volunteers from our region on the front lines, helping out in fire zones across the state and across the country. We saw trucks and crews from right across district 15—from Bacchus Marsh, Sebastopol, Trentham, Ballan, Clunes, Wallace, Lucas, Wendouree and so many others—driving great distances to fight fires to help their fellow Victorians and their fellow Australians. These crews were in East Gippsland on New Year's Eve and were there right the way through when the fire peaked. They've also been in the north-east of the state.

These men and women have given up their time of rest over summer, their time lying on the beach or spending long days relaxing in the sun with their families, to help others. We cannot thank these men and women from the CFA—volunteer and paid—for the work that they've done this summer.

### **Clontarf Foundation**

**Mr IRONS** (Swan—Assistant Minister for Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships) (11:09): I rise to update the House on the important work of the Clontarf Foundation, a community organisation based in the electorate of Swan, which exists to improve the education, discipline, self-esteem, life skills and employment prospects of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through a sports based program. Last week, 14 young men from the original 18 of the Clontarf Academy's 2002 year 12 graduating group gathered in Perth to help the foundation celebrate 20 full years of operation. I had the honour of attending the dinner to learn about the success of the program. These men make up the very first group of alumni who went through three full years of the program, which commenced in 2000 when they were year 10 students. It was fantastic to see that, 20 years on, they've entered successful careers, purchased properties—some of them own several—started

families, started their own businesses and travelled overseas. Most significantly, the group have nearly 40 children between them. The children all attend school and are happy and healthy, a clear indicator of the success of this program and the understanding that education plays such a vital role in the lives of all Australians.

The MC for the evening, also part of this group, was Jeff Farrell, a proud Yamatji man from the regional town of Geraldton, Western Australia, who commenced his journey with Clontarf in that first year, 2000. Jeff went on to work for a number of Clontarf's private sector partners, including Wesfarmers and Iluka Resources, and has been with FMG as a qualified tradesman for almost five years now. I'm sure it was Jeff who said that when he was a young boy and was told about this program he didn't hear anything about education; the hook that got him was the sport, the fact that he could play football every day. So he was more than happy to join that program.

Jeffrey's brother Kelvin was also part of the graduating group. He has been a long-term employee of Rio Tinto, along with another four members of the group. Each of the young men spoke about their journey, including the positive impact the Clontarf program has had on their lives and how they remain in contact and are involved with the program and its staff today.

This group of Clontarf alumni can be credited for not only making a commitment to their schooling and achieving great things in their lives but also paving the way for thousands of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men around the country to attend school and complete year 12 via the Clontarf program. Since 2000, more than 4,000 Clontarf Foundation students have completed year 12 and transitioned into employment. The Clontarf Foundation is a genuine example of a successful, sustainable and holistic program that has had the full support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, schools, communities, corporate Australia and all levels of government. Well done to the alumni and the Clontarf Foundation, and to its supporters Gerard Neesham, Wesfarmers, Rio Tinto and Chevron. I also acknowledge Michael Johnson, who played for the Fremantle Dockers. He was one of the graduates of 2000 as well.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace):** In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has concluded.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Closing the Gap

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That the House take note of the document.

**Dr HAINES (Indi) (11:13):** I acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands across my large electorate of Indi, the Waywurru, Dhudhuroa, Bangerang and Taungurung peoples. I honour the resilience, wisdom, scientific knowledge, stories and art of the world's longest-surviving culture.

It's always an honour to speak in this place as the representative of my communities. But today it's a particular honour to speak on this very important *Closing the gap* report. It's the 12th such report and it highlights that from here the focus will shift to a much stronger partnership between government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is important and it is right. The report tells us that the gap in life expectancy has not narrowed

and the target of achieving this by 2031 is not on track, so a new approach is needed. But we must be cognisant always that life expectancy is determined not simply by the presence or absence of disease but by the social determinants of health, such as education, housing, employment and racism, which are estimated to be responsible for at least 34 per cent of the health gap.

My aim today is to bring to the House some voices of the Aboriginal people from Indi who spoke to me of closing the gap and what it means for them, and who told me what is working in their communities where they are determining programs and listening carefully to what their families are asking for. I want to be clear that there's no single Indigenous voice I can claim to represent in Indi. I speak from a position of humility, as someone who is here to listen and to learn. I do so too as a person of optimism and hope because I know the strong proud culture of Aboriginal people holds the keys to closing the gap, provided our system, laws, and attitudes are enabling rather than disabling of self-determination.

Today I will speak about the work done on the ground in Indi to close the gap. I will share what I heard about the health targets and touch on aspects which local people tell me can bring better outcomes. Firstly, I want to thank the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups in Indi, who have been so generous with their time and reached out to me as their representative since I was elected last May. I have benefited from sharing meals together; attending flag-raising ceremonies; touring health services, kindergartens and returned soldier events; and having a yarn with individuals. This is generous, because I recognise that many Indigenous people have great distrust and cynicism about government. As their representative in this place, a place that has historically contributed to many problems they deal with daily, I acknowledge how difficult it is to trust government, any government, including representatives such as myself. Trust, rightly, is hard earned when the history of dispossession, tragedy and pain is so recent and recurring. I thank those who have worked with me and my office so far. I look forward to deepening my engagement with Indi's Indigenous communities throughout my term.

There are community groups and services doing powerful work all across the electorate of Indi, including the Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service, Mungabareena Aboriginal Co-op in Wodonga, Gadhaba Local Indigenous Network in Mansfield, the Dirrawarra Indigenous Network in Wangaratta, the Wodonga Aboriginal Network and the First Nations Senior Advisory Group. They do diverse work, from delivering health services to supporting youth networks, organising NAIDOC Week celebrations, establishing gathering places in community and consulting with the Victorian government on implementing their 10-year Aboriginal education strategy known as Marrung.

In October 2019, I was a guest of the Wodonga Aboriginal Network and received a tour of Burrinja, an Indigenous cultural and environmental discovery centre located on Gateway Island in Wodonga. I had a walk through the new native garden. Burrinja is an important site for the local Aboriginal community and I was honoured to attend. The generosity in sharing culture and stories was appreciated and I learnt so much of the strong people who lived along the river that we now call the Murray. I leaned so much of the strong communities of Aboriginal people who still live there.

As part of preparing this speech I spoke with many of these organisations and they have told me of three key concerns. First, for many, Closing the Gap is distant and symbolic from

their everyday activities. The targets are seen by service delivery organisations as a responsibility imposed on them but for which they receive inadequate support in meeting. As one local woman told me: they are doing it to us, not with us.

Second, there's concern the aggregate statistics of Closing the Gap are not showing the full picture. Victoria doesn't track two of the seven targets. Furthermore, as one outreach organisation told me, many Indigenous people remain reluctant to identify as Indigenous in the census or to local services and this holds back the outreachability of many services, as well as limiting the representative accuracy of the data for the five remaining categories. Finally, many recognise the current approach is not working and we do—and they do—very much support a refresh. There's also a wariness that governments have promised collaboration in the past and rarely, if ever, delivered on true partnership.

My consultation with local Indigenous groups revealed how important it is to ground national statistics with local experience. The Closing the Gap report shows that Victoria is on track for early childhood education, with Victoria achieving full enrolment for Indigenous children in 2018. When I asked local Indigenous service organisations about this achievement, they said the reality is a little more complicated than the statistics suggest. They say that Indigenous childcare providers simply do not exist at the density required to ensure Indigenous people can access culturally safe care in their communities. Costs are still prohibitive for many families. While state-run programs, such as Koorie Kids Shine, are doing good work, it remains the case that services on the ground are simply spread too thin.

In relation to other Closing the Gap targets, neither life expectancy nor childhood mortality are tracked or measured in Victoria. Because of this, the aggregate figures provide no quantifiable insight into the progress that's being made locally. As one exasperated local Indigenous woman told my office, 'How can you track it if you don't have it?'

At a local level, Indigenous health organisations tell me that improvements are being made in infant mortality, thanks to locally led Aboriginal antenatal care programs and an increased rollout of father-inclusive models of pregnancy care. This is fantastic news and a real testament to these organisations. The 2016-17 Victorian *Maternal and child health service annual report* shows that north-eastern Victoria has the highest attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for their 12-month, 18-month, two-year and three-and-a-half-year health checks. The work of many local Indigenous organisations has contributed to these positive outcomes.

The programs of AWAHS have been so successful in Wodonga that the City of Wangaratta approached them to bring a maternal child health program to their town. Sadly, though, AWAHS have neither the capacity nor the funding to carry that out.

The chair of AWAHS, Craig Taylor, tells me this is just one manifestation of sector-wide issues with funding uncertainty:

The issue we face is ongoing secure funding to keep these programs going. If we want to continue to close the gap and create generational health change then we need a secure stream of recurrent funding above and beyond what is currently in place. Being funded on the whim of a political cycle is not supporting the health and wellbeing of our next generation of Aboriginal people.

This is just one local story, but our local organisations and policymakers both need secure funding to generate reliable hard data. Without it, we can't know what's working on a granular level and why.

What we do know, however, is that closing the gap is bigger than the targets set out in this report. At its core it's about a broader inclusion which seeks to remedy the effects of past injustices. The gap exists because long-term injustice has created social, economic and health disparities for Indigenous peoples.

The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, or VACCHO, states that closing the gap must aspire to creating a future:

... where families and communities thrive and live long lives and where systems advance their inherent right to self-determination.

Self-determination needs to be the foundation on which stable and steady progress can be made towards closing the gap.

Genuine recognition of Aboriginal peoples and their history and culture will underpin true self-determination. In Victoria the treaty process to recognise Indigenous Victorians is an important first step. The Prime Minister himself recognised at the opening of the 46th Parliament the intrinsic need for recognition of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and committed to recognising Indigenous Australians in the Constitution.

In conclusion, I am honoured to represent diverse and proud Indigenous communities in my electorate and I commit to doing all I can to listen and learn from them as they determine a future that brings equality and equity in health outcomes.

**Ms STEGGALL** (Warringah) (11:23): Last Sunday evening I sat down with my three teenage children and watched the Adam Goodes documentary, *The Australian Dream*. The documentary deconstructs racism, racial politics and discriminatory treatment of Adam Goodes throughout his AFL career and that of many other Aboriginal players. It's not easy to watch, but I think it needs to be seen by everyone. As it ended, my family and I sat there in disbelief. How could one of our greatest Australian sportsmen be treated so abhorrently by football fans, media commentators, anonymous trolls online and many in the public? As a former athlete I know it's hard enough maintaining your fitness and preparation for competition, let alone dealing with disgusting racist taunts and vilification for so long. To every person out there: imagine being booed every time you go to work or play sport for your local team, all because of what you look like. Sadly, the Adam Goodes story is not unusual for Aboriginal people living in Australia, and we should be ashamed of that.

Only last week, social media was flooded with support for a young nine-year-old Aboriginal boy, Quaden Bayles. He has a dwarfism and was being relentlessly bullied. His mother, Yarraka Bayles, posted a video on Facebook of Quaden crying and threatening to harm himself after yet another bullying attack by children at his school in Brisbane. In the video, Yarraka said that many people didn't understand how Quaden's treatment was a double-edged sword, by being both Aboriginal and living with a disability. The heartbreaking video has now gone viral and on Saturday young Quaden led out the NRL All Stars onto the field for the All Stars match, receiving support from celebrities around Australia and internationally. These included Hugh Jackman, Piers Morgan and American comedian Brad Williams. But how did we get to this? How, as a society, do we need such a tearful video and such extremes for us all to stop in our tracks and actually take notice?

Racial vilification is not okay, and neither is the conscious or unconscious discrimination against Aboriginal people in our country. This treatment infiltrates and erodes every aspect of

life, which is demonstrated through the annual Closing the Gap scorecard. That was delivered in the last sitting week and it paints a dire picture. Aboriginal children are still far behind non-Indigenous children in literacy, numeracy and writing skills. In its key findings, the report shows that only two out of seven outcomes are on track: the early education and year 12 attainments. The outcomes that weren't on track included child mortality, literacy, numeracy, employment, school attendance and life expectancy, and that is just the most shocking one of all.

It's hard to believe that this is the 12th year that the report has been tabled in parliament, and yet the outcomes are not improving. Prime Minister Scott Morrison conceded that the outcomes for closing the gap should come from someone within the Indigenous community rather than from a top-down, government-knows-best approach. I completely agree.

The outcomes are disappointing, but I do believe there is hope. Last week I ran around Lake Burley Griffin here in Canberra with the Indigenous Marathon Foundation. It sponsors Indigenous runners and it's a health promotion charity that uses running to celebrate Indigenous resilience and achievements to create inspirational Indigenous leaders. I'd like to thank Rob de Castella, who established the Indigenous Marathon Project many years ago. This first led to four Indigenous Australians making history by running in the world's biggest marathon, the New York City Marathon.

Since its creation, the project has had 86 graduates finish a major international marathon, including the New York, Boston, London, Paris and Berlin marathons. It's programs like this, which celebrate Indigenous achievement and positive outcomes, that we should be promoting and supporting. Ironically, it uses sport to encourage positive messages—the very same arena where it was not afforded to Adam Goodes during his AFL career. 2020 is the year to stand up against racism and for knowing that we need to do better. It falls on everyone of us to take responsibility and to do more. Thank you.

**Mr BURNS** (Macnamara) (11:28): I begin my remarks by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which our parliament sits, the Ngunawal and Ngambri people. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which my electorate of Macnamara is based, the Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin nation. I pay my respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, and indeed I pay my respects to all Indigenous Australians.

It is a profound honour to be an elected member of the Australian parliament, which meets on land which has always been and always will be Aboriginal land. This parliament has spoken a lot about Indigenous affairs but has not listened enough to Indigenous Australians. I particularly want to acknowledge the contributions that have been made since the Closing the Gap statements were made and the responses by the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the member for Hasluck, and by the member for Barton.

For the first time in our nation's history we have an Indigenous Minister for Indigenous Australians, and an Indigenous shadow minister for Indigenous Australians. It should not have taken until 2019 for that to become the case, but it is nevertheless a good thing. I won't praise the current Prime Minister much in my time in this parliament, but I commend him for appointing the member for Hasluck to be the Minister for Indigenous Australians. I hope he listens to the member for Hasluck more often when it comes to Indigenous policy. I also want to acknowledge the contributions in the other place that Senator Dodson and Senator McCarthy on our side and Senator Lambie on the crossbench have made to this parliament.

One of the most meaningful events I attended during the past election campaign as a candidate was not held in my electorate. It was 6 December 2018 and I joined hundreds at Flagstaff Gardens to go on a very special march. It had been organised by Jewish and Indigenous communities in Melbourne to honour a man called William Cooper, whom the electorate of Cooper has been named after. Eighty years earlier to the day, just weeks after the Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass in which over 90 Jewish people were murdered in a brutal pogrom in Nazi Germany, William Cooper went on a march on his own. An Indigenous man led the world's first and possibly only private protest against Hitler's and the Nazi treatment of Jews. He marched on the German consulate in Melbourne and attempted to deliver them a letter on behalf of the Australian Aborigines League condemning the atrocities that they were committing. I marched proudly that day, 80 years later, with William Cooper's grandson Alfred Turner, better known as Uncle Boydy. At a time when Australian Aboriginals didn't even have the right to vote in their own country, an Aboriginal man stood up for the Jewish people—including my grandmother who had left Germany only a week earlier in the darkest hour.

I am proud to be a Jewish member of parliament and I stand here to restate that it is not only my desire to advance meaningful reconciliations as a Jewish Australian; it is my duty. In the years since William Cooper marched, Jewish and Indigenous Australians have continued to share a powerful and compelling connection throughout our nation's history, from Eddie Mabo's senior counsel, the late, great, human rights lawyer Ron Castan, to a man who has been co-chair of many of government's councils on Indigenous reforms, Mark Leibler AC. I also acknowledge the member for Berowra, who together with Senator Dodson, co-chaired this parliament's Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

A number of fine Jewish Australians have tried to fulfil this duty to repay William Cooper's courage and bravery in the pursuit of justice. A year before William Cooper marched on the German consulate for the Jewish people he wrote a letter about the plight of his own people to then Prime Minister Joe Lyons. He had a very simple request: 'Give us a voice in our own affairs.' Eighty years after that letter that William Cooper wrote, the Uluru Statement from the Heart was delivered to then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, with much the same request. Their request was also very simple, but it was practical and meaningful. It was a practical and meaningful proposal to break out of the seemingly endless cycle of our failures to achieve real reconciliation, constitutional recognition and improvements in the living standards of Australia's Indigenous people. They asked the government to advance a referendum to create a First Nations Voice to the parliament, enshrined in the constitution to give them a real say in their own affairs. Their scope and function would be within the control of the parliament. It was nothing like a third chamber, yet that was the dishonest reason that then Prime Minister Turnbull give for rejecting it out of hand. It isn't good enough and it will be a stain on our history.

We have heard in these responses to the *Closing the gap* report that we have failed as a nation in almost every target that we have set. We need to break that cycle. We need to be prepared to talk about the things we have failed and the things that we need to address. The answer doesn't lie in changing our targets; it lies in changing what we have done—things like treaty and things like truth-telling about what was done to our First Australians, the world's

oldest civilisation, who were colonised and against whom great atrocities were committed. Maybe we even need to be prepared to talk about how and when we celebrate our national day and who we are as Australians, but, first and foremost, we need to advance this nation through the difficult and meaningful process of a referendum to create the First Nations Voice. We need to be prepared to make the case that Indigenous Australians should have a real say in their own matters and the policies that affect them. We need to be brave and we need to be bold. We need to stand tall for Indigenous Australians and fight for their justice, just as William Cooper stood for Jewish people and stood for my grandmother 80 years ago.

I am ready and the Australian Labor Party is ready. It is time to recognise the 65,000 years of history of our great nation. It is time to build a more inclusive future. It is time to be ambitious for the idea of what it is to be Australian. It is time that we undertook a process of including our First Nations people in the very fabric of our nation. It is time that we did better in closing the gap.

**Mr GILES** (Scullin) (11:35): I'm pleased to be able to make a brief contribution taking note of this important document. I'm particularly pleased to have been in the chamber for the contribution of my friend the member for Macnamara—a beautiful and important contribution to such an important debate. Before beginning my remarks on the report, I want to acknowledge that I am making them on the land of the Ngunawal and Ngambri people and make clear my view that this land and all of the land that is Australia always will be Aboriginal land.

This is an important debate. As we deal with it every year in the parliament—as we have done since that wonderful occasion, that promise that was the apology—we are required to confront some hard truths. This report does again put before us some hard truths. It is a prompt for greater truth-telling and a prompt to look beyond the numbers in the report and the language of its foreword—the language of the Prime Minister, which I will turn to in a moment—to think about our substantive obligations and how much we have failed them.

In thinking about closing the gap, we think about the targets and we think about the data but we also must think about what it means for us as a nation. The concluding remarks of the member for Macnamara encouraged us—hopefully, those on the government side as well as on our side of this House—to think about completing our work in responding to the Uluru statement, in enshrining an Indigenous voice to the parliament and in completing our Constitution.

In making this contribution on taking note and making some remarks on the detail of the report, let's not forget about that. This report and this debate are drivers towards truth-telling in this place and accountability to the Australians who send us to this place. They demand that we do better, and First Nations people in particular are entitled to demand that we do better on the metrics that are before us and on the broader commitments that we have failed to realise, to our enduring shame.

I am concerned by the tone of some of the remarks of the Prime Minister. I note that this is a report that has been broadly characterised by bipartisan engagement. That's something we would like to continue, but we will never stand for bipartisanship at any price. We will never ignore the half-billion dollars cut from Indigenous programs at the start of this government. So it's fine for him to speak of a new era and of true partnership, but this can't be spin, because we're not going to have true partnership without a constitutionally enshrined voice



and without listening to the views of First Nations people on how a fundamental democratic arrangement should be framed. That's just more marketing, and falls so far short of the aspirations of, I believe, all Australians as to be risible.

So I turn to the report itself. We note that across the journey since 2008 progress against the targets has been mixed at best. We have seen some progress and we should acknowledge that. We can see signs of improvement now in key areas, but we can also see, more particularly and more concerning, areas of great concern that require more work and more action, particularly from those of us in this place and particularly on the government's side, which has the capacity to deliver real change.

I do note some important notes in the report that go beyond the targets—particularly the challenge of better defining our goals through better data-sharing arrangements with the states and territories. This is important, but it can't be a distraction. It can't be a distraction from recognising that we are missing halving the gap in child mortality rates by 2018. We have seen some progress in maternal and child health, but improvements in mortality rates have not been strong enough to meet the target. The target to halve the gap for Indigenous children in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade passed two years ago. It has driven some improvements in these foundational skills, but considerably more progress is required if we are to meet our aspirations if we are to secure equality—recognising, as I think all of us in this place do, how fundamental this is not just to success in learning but to success in life. There has not been improvement in school attendance rates, despite this being a particular feature of the approach driven by former Prime Minister Abbott. We have failed to close the gap there.

The national Indigenous employment rate has remained stable against the target to halve the gap in employment outcomes. That's just not good enough. As the member for Maribyrnong highlighted very effectively in the previous parliament and the parliament before that, there isn't a justice target. I'll touch briefly on that. That is another failing of Australian public policy, because it is a huge challenge.

It is encouraging that two of the continuing targets are on track. One is the target to have 95 per cent of Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025. That is heartening and is important as a foundation on which we can and we must build. I note in this place today, as I have done on so many occasions, the wonderful contribution of Lisa Thorpe and the Bubup Wilam Aboriginal early childhood centre, in Thomastown in my electorate. I'm inspired by the work they do every day and by the confident, strong Indigenous young people I meet so regularly. I look forward to getting back there soon and to hearing more about what they are doing and how we can work harder to support their work, not just as an early childhood centre but as a thriving hub for Indigenous Australians in Melbourne's northern suburbs. I note also that the target to halve the gap for Indigenous Australians aged 20 to 24 in year 12 attainment or equivalent by 2020 is on track. That's two. We recognise those achievements, those collective efforts that are bearing fruit, but they stand in stark contrast to how far we have to come across the board. This progress does show us what is possible if we have the political will and the preparedness to listen and to match that listening with investment.

I am very sad to say that the target to close the gap in life expectancy by 2031 is not on track. It's insufficient to say that isn't good enough, because there is really no more

fundamental marker of how we are and who we are as a society than that we are failing so fundamentally on this marker.

In so many areas we can, should and must do better. I mentioned earlier the absence of a justice target. The rates of First Nations people in custody are way too high. First Nation adults make up just two per cent of the population but they make up more than a quarter of Australia's prison population. It often has been said of Indigenous young men that they are more likely to end up in jail than studying in a university, and that is a terrible indictment of our society. Suicide of course, particularly among young Indigenous people, is shockingly high. That, I think, is recognised by all of us as a national tragedy, as something we need to redouble and refocus our efforts on. The number of First Nations children in out-of-home care is also a national shame. We have to acknowledge that that is a consequence of policy failure of governments from both sides of politics. It's another area where we must do so much better, or we will be condemning too many of our children to a life without real choice, to a life without real agency.

It's on that note that I conclude my remarks, because what we want for all of our First Nations people, and particularly First Nations young people, is real agency and equality in every aspect of their lives. That won't happen without recognising them as they should be recognised, as they have asked to be recognised, with a voice in this place and in our Constitution. Thank you.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace):** I thank the member for Scullin for his excellent contribution.

**Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (11:43):** Each successive *Closing the gap* report has shown that we are falling short of closing the gap. For those that are not aware, I am the longest-serving minister for First Australians in the history of the Queensland parliament, and I wasn't there for all that long. They don't last very long.

I have often wondered why our administration of the First Australians has been so absolutely appallingly bad. There is a recent book by Professor Sarah Maddison—Deputy Dean of Political Science and History at Melbourne University, one of the four sandstone universities, and a highly distinguished academic—*The Colonial Fantasy: Why White Australia Can't Solve Black Problems*. I have an enviable reputation for enormous success in that portfolio in Queensland. Everyone watched *60 Minutes* in those days; its watching audience was unbelievable. We had five *60 Minutes* in that period of time. In those last three years, we were effectively hitting our straps. I was a super hero.

Before everyone starts thinking I'm getting carried away with myself, I should say that I deserve none of that credit—none whatsoever. When I read this book, I thought, 'Well, why were we so successful?' It was because every single decision I made, it wasn't actually me that made it. I said, 'Let's go to the blackfellas and ask them.' There is a problem, because really you have to be one of those people to be able to get them to communicate with you. I see it again and again. People say, 'Oh, they didn't say anything. They didn't get back to us.' 'But you're not our race. You are foreign'—I use the word 'invader' with quotation marks—in every way to these people. I'm not. When I got the ministry and I was asked, 'What are your qualifications for this job?' I said, 'Quite frankly, it's because I've played rugby league all of my life.' It's pretty hard to feel superior to someone after he's buried your face down nine times on a football oval. I think it was a good call.

So let me be very specific. I asked Greg Wallace, who had two of those *60 Minutes* programs. It was the first time *60 Minutes* had ever done a repeat program, because of the enormous positive sentiment that swept out of his first interview. Greg is an extremely quiet person. He is one of the Rosendales in North Queensland. The vast bulk of Australia's population of First Australians is in North Queensland. The Rosendales are the most prominent family. Lester Rosendale is a very close friend of mine. He was on the Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council. He was elected as one of the two from Queensland every year—for nearly 20 years, I think. So they're the dominant family. Most of you will know Noel Pearson's name. He is a Rosendale. And the first Aboriginal person in Australian history elected to parliament—Eric Deeral—was a Rosendale.

This Greg Wallace I'm talking about is a Rosendale. I could go on. But let me just say that Greg Wallace was No. 2 on our Senate list. When Greg did the interview, being announced as a Senate candidate, he said: 'When I was CEO at Napranum, all CEOs in Cape York were black. Now all the CEOs are white. You've gone backwards. When I was CEO at Napranum, we had 36,000 head of cattle in Cape York. Now we have none. When I was CEO at Napranum, we had the rights to timber, to water and to quarrying. Now we have no rights to timber, no rights to water and no rights to quarrying. When I was CEO at Napranum, we had 2,000 jobs in Work for the Dole in Cape York. Now we have none. When I was CEO at Napranum, 700 of those Work for the Dole jobs were in house building. Now the jobs don't exist and the house building program doesn't exist. When I was CEO at Napranum, We had market gardens in every community. Now there are no market gardens. When I was CEO at Napranum, whitefellas were allowed to drink and blackfellas were allowed to drink. Now we have racial laws and only whitefellas are allowed to drink.

He said that the net result of that, of course, was that they couldn't get jobs. What he meant by that was that if they got a conviction they couldn't get a blue card, and if they couldn't get a blue card in Queensland they couldn't get a government job. My son, who is a state member of parliament, rants and rails about the blue cards all the time. In one community—one of the biggest First Australians communities in Australia—every single adult woman cannot get a blue card except for two. About 2,000 or 3,000 people live in that community and all of them have criminal charges. Did anyone stop drinking in the United States when they banned alcohol? No! All the politicians who voted against it were down at the speakeasies, and that's a matter of public record.

The government has imposed a prohibition, but the net result of that is that it's happening in all community areas in Queensland—and about 25,000 people live in community areas—so that's for all of our 'proper' black population. I claim to be a blackfella, but I'm not a proper blackfella. There are leading Australian spokesmen who I would not consider to be blackfellas in the sense that I mean it.

Now, he did not mention that you could get a title deed, that you could actually own your own piece of land. In North Queensland, where most of the First Australian population of Australia are concentrated, we have 3½ million hectares of land. Or, more accurately, we had—past tense—3½ million hectares of land. By the simple device of walking in, getting a form at the council chambers, filling it out accurately with a description of the land that you wanted, handing it in and putting in \$20, if the community council did not object over a two-month period, then the title deed was sort of automatically issued. So at Yarrabah, you went

in and filled out a form. There were two council meetings and you now owned two acres of land, which is now worth \$300,000. So you've gone from being a poor old pauper-stricken blackfella who isn't worth two bob to being worth \$300,000.

Well, who was poorer? Was anyone in Australia poorer because of that two acres—which was of their own land which has never, ever been taken off them? That was thanks to the missionaries, I might add. The much maligned Christians are the only reason that any of us still exist; we'd have all been murdered or raped out of existence. That is a matter of public record, and it's not very pretty to say that but the fact is that it's true. But we were Christians who came to this country, and we believed in Christianity. We said, 'No one is going to do this to these people.' We protected them in the community areas and we provided market gardens for them so that they would have the nutritional requirements that they need for good health. The market gardens are gone and the nutritional requirements have gone. And I'll just mention three extremely ugly facts.

If First Australians proper—not people like me, but real fair dinkum blackfellas; and I'm not confining that to community areas, I'm saying real fair dinkum blackfellas—if we are an identifiable group, then we have the highest incarceration rates on earth. That's of any identifiable group on earth. If we are a separate and identifiable group, we have the highest stolen children rate on the earth, and the least life expectancy— *(Time expired)*

Debate adjourned.

**Federation Chamber adjourned at 11:55**