**INTERNET**


**SITTING DAYS—2019**

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FORTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FIRST 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 Kevin John Hogan 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—Senator Hon. Bridget McKenzie
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

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<td>Goldstein, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</td>
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<td>Wyatt, Hon. Kenneth George, AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young, Mr Terry James</td>
<td>Longman, QLD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zimmerman, Mr Trent Moir</td>
<td>North Sydney, NSW</td>
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**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;

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- Clerk of the House of Representatives—C Surtees
- Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic
- Parliamentary Budget Officer—J Wilkinson
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Mr Matt Keogh MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 12:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

COMMITTEES

Human Rights Committee

Report

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (12:01): On behalf of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, I present the committee's report, incorporating a dissenting report, on the Quality of Care Amendment (Minimising the Use of Restraints) Principles 2019.

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

Mr PERRETT: by leave—I rise, as deputy chair, to present the report of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights into the Quality of Care Amendment (Minimising the Use of Restraints) Principles 2019.

As members no doubt know, the mandate of this important committee is to examine all bills and legislative instruments that come before either house of the parliament for compatibility with Australia's human rights obligations under the seven international human rights treaties ratified by Australia, and to report to both houses of the parliament on that issue.

The committee's work is focused on prevention and education with regard to human rights compatibility. As such, the committee seeks to determine the risk that legislation may be applied in ways that could breach human rights and to suggest avenues and safeguards for addressing areas of concern.

As part of this mandate, on 29 July 2019, the committee resolved to conduct an inquiry into the Quality of Care Amendment (Minimising the Use of Restraints) Principles 2019. This legislative instrument seeks to minimise the use of physical and chemical restraints in residential aged-care facilities.

The use of physical and chemical restraints, without consent, raises significant human rights concerns, including in relation to the absolute prohibition on cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the rights to health, privacy and liberty; the right to equality and nondiscrimination; and the rights of persons with disabilities.

The committee has examined this instrument in detail, including holding a public hearing, in Sydney, and receiving a number of submissions from experts, advocates, the aged-care sector and the Department of Health.

The committee strongly supports the instrument's intention to seek to minimise the use of physical and chemical restraint by approved providers in the aged-care setting, noting that under international human rights law Australia is under an obligation to take steps to reduce and eliminate such practices.

After reviewing all the evidence, the majority committee report concludes that while, on the face of it, the instrument appears to engage and limit a number of human rights, existing state and territory laws continue to apply to regulate the use of restraints.
As these other laws continue to apply, the majority committee report has concluded that this instrument, by further regulating approved providers, does not directly limit human rights.

Nonetheless, the instrument appears to have created widespread confusion around the legal obligations of approved providers. In particular, there appears to be confusion around the issue of consent, which is particularly concerning given the evidence recently noted in the interim report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety regarding the overprescription of psychotropic medication and poor practice regarding consent.

Considering the evidence presented to our inquiry, the committee is concerned that this confusion may have also led to confusion about the permissibility of the administration of both physical and chemical restraints being used in residential aged-care facilities without informed consent, and without first exhausting all alternatives. As such, in practice this may limit a number of human rights.

All of the Liberal Party members of the committee, making up the majority of the committee, have therefore recommended that the instrument and explanatory materials be amended to clarify that other laws continue to prohibit the use of restraint without informed consent and that the minister should undertake extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders to work towards further strengthening the regulation of restraints.

However, all committee members from the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Greens political party have issued a dissenting report, as we consider that the majority recommendations do not adequately rectify the human rights concerns raised in evidence to the committee.

It is unusual for a dissenting report to be tabled by the human rights committee. In fact, it is only the fourth time that a dissenting report has been tabled by this committee.

This committee has been operating since 2012, over the course of the 43rd, 44th, 45th and, now, 46th parliaments. The committee has tabled 114 reports during that time, and 110 of those reports have been bipartisan.

The Labor Party and Greens political party members of this committee did not dissent to the majority report lightly. We take very seriously our responsibility to this committee and our decision to dissent to the majority report was made with earnest consideration.

But the evidence presented to this inquiry, outlined in both the majority report and the dissenting report, was compelling.

The serious issues raised by witnesses impressed on members that this instrument was not only ineffective, it will, as the interim report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety noted, 'add to, rather than overcome, concerns regarding regulation of physical and chemical restraint, including on issues of consent'.

As such, the dissenting report recommends that:

- the instrument be disallowed
- a new instrument be urgently reintroduced that ensures:
  - there is informed consent for the use of chemical restraints;
  - reduction in the use of restraints; and
The dissenting report also recommends that a widespread consultation process be urgently implemented to determine the best regulatory framework to protect residents of aged-care facilities in the use of restraints.

I encourage my fellow members, the government and others to examine the committee's full report (including the dissenting report), and, with these comments, I commend the committee's report into the Quality of Care Amendment (Minimising the Use of Restraints) Principles 2019 to the House.

Ms HAMMOND (Curtin) (12:07): by leave—I thank the member for Moreton for tabling the report in this House. As noted by the member for Moreton, this legislative instrument seeks to minimise the use of physical and chemical restraint in residential aged-care facilities. Importantly—and this is significant to note—prior to its introduction there was no regulation at the Commonwealth level over the usage of restraints. The usage of physical and chemical restraints without consent raises huge, significant human rights concerns. All members of the committee strongly support the instrument's intention to seek to minimise the use of physical and chemical restraints by approved providers in aged-care settings.

As noted by the member for Moreton, after reviewing all of the evidence the majority of the committee concluded that while, on the face of it, the instrument appears to engage and limit a number of human rights, existing state and territory laws continue to apply to regulate the use of restraints. As these other laws continue to apply, the committee report concluded that this instrument, by further regulating approved providers, does not directly limit human rights. Nonetheless, the majority also held that there are parts of this instrument which do appear to have created confusion about the legal obligations of approved providers, particularly around the issue of consent and poor practice regarding consent.

Considering the evidence presented to the inquiry, the majority of the committee was concerned that this confusion may also lead to confusion about the permissibility of the administration of both physical and chemical restraints being used in residential aged-care facilities. For the record, it should be noted that the majority of the committee determined that if this instrument were disallowed we would return to the situation where there is an absence of any federal regulation on the use of physical and chemical restraints. In light of the royal commission, the majority determined that an absence of any federal regulation would be a major backward step and would not send an appropriate message to the aged-care sector. It would be irresponsible and could lead to unintended consequences. For this reason, the majority of the committee has recommended that this instrument be allowed but that it—the instrument itself and the explanatory memorandum—be amended so as to clarify, firstly, that other laws at the state level continue to prohibit the use of restraint without informed consent and, secondly, that the minister should undertake extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders to work towards further strengthening the regulation of restraints. To this end, I note the government has already made a quick response to the interim report of the royal commission. I particularly note that it was announced yesterday that further amendments to these regulations are planned following consultation so as to ensure that it is very clear that the restraint must only be used as a last resort.
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 the Government has cut research funding, interfered in independent, peer-reviewed grant processes and abandoned nation-building investment in education and research infrastructure"

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (12:11): Centre Alliance supports the Australian Research Council Amendment Bill 2019. However, I'd like to take this opportunity to express our increasing concern at what appears to be the politicisation of the awarding of academic grants.

In 2018, the then Minister for Education and Training, Minister Birmingham, intervened to block 11 humanities grants recommended by the Australian Research Council, often known as the ARC. Whilst I shared the minister's view at the time that some of the recommendations appeared to be somewhat interesting, we all know how important it is to take the politics out of the academic process and to safeguard the integrity of an independent academic process. It should not be up to politicians to judge the merits of the ARC's individual recommendations, especially when the government already sets the priority areas for nationally funded research.

This year, there has been a clear break from previous practice on how the grants are announced. It used to be that announcements were made all at once, whereas this year, for the first time, there has been a drip-feed to the media over a number of months. One can only assume that the purpose is to enhance the political benefit to the government by maximising the media coverage the grants receive. Quoting a piece in The Conversation by Professor Jodie Bradby on these embargoed announcements:

… a leaked internal email from the University of Queensland stated that it understands "the embargo is lifted by local MPs in conjunction with the minister of education", and that it is "waiting for its local MP" to make the awards public.

This is highly concerning, not only because it is politicising what should fundamentally be an academic process but because the embargoes are creating real-world consequences for our universities in attracting and retaining talent. For example, I'm aware of several universities that have successfully received grants but are unable to advertise for positions—positions they'll need to fill next year—because they are under embargo for political reasons. Those who understand academic recruitment understand that it works to a tight timetable with tight deadlines, and if you miss the deadlines you lose the talent you have or you miss the cycle on attracting the talent you need to deliver on a federally funded grant.

Academic recruitment is an international affair and does not turn on a dime to suit the newfound political proclivities of the current government. Again, I quote the professor at length:

Politics aside, the delay and uncertainty is bad news for researchers.
Applications for next year’s funding round have already opened, and researchers who were unsuccessful this year still don’t have any feedback on their applications. This feedback is often a crucial tool for improving an application to make it more likely to succeed.

Successful applicants will already know they are successful—but they can’t sign funding agreements with the ARC and actually get on with the research until all the grants have been announced. No one knows when that announcement will happen, and it could mean some researchers are left without income early next year.

It could also mean Australia loses out as the top talent takes positions overseas rather than waiting. So, even if it does not wish to abandon the limited political benefit of several local media releases, the government must urgently return to a timely schedule for announcing the awarding of ARC grants, because it is undermining the efficacy of our national research program—a program that we so desperately need to operate efficiently and effectively in order to maintain our country’s competitive edge and create the technological innovation that will underpin the prosperity of current and future Australians.

For these reasons, I’m supportive of clause 51A(1) of the member for Melbourne’s proposed consideration in detail amendment, although I would seek tabling of the determinations in parliament rather than require public announcements and website publication. However, whilst I recognise its importance, Centre Alliance does not want to frustrate a minister’s ability to make announcements that they see fit to make regarding what is ultimately public expenditure for which the minister is responsible. For this reason, Centre Alliance will not be supporting the amendment proposed by the member for Melbourne in this place, although we reserve our final position in the Senate. However, we would be minded to support amendments that address the issue of timeliness in making ARC determinations publicly known. I won’t take any more of the House’s time, and I commend this bill to the House.

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (12:16): The Australian Research Council plays a crucial role in allocating research funding in Australia. As a professor at the Australian National University, I was the successful recipient of two Linkage Program grants and two Discovery Project grants, and I put many hours into reviewing proposals put forward for Australian Research Council funding. I can attest to the House that this is a common practice for academics. Contestable research funding is an important part of our system, and Australian researchers rely on the independent scrutiny of the Australian Research Council. Researchers recognise that the peer review process is extraordinarily rigorous and give it greater respect than other methods of handing out research funding, such as the more ad hoc approach employed by the Medical Research Future Fund as well as other funding systems which have more ministerial meddling in them.

Australian Research Council funding is seen as being above politics—at least that has been its history until the last few years. We have seen, under this government, an extraordinary politicisation of the allocation of Australian Research Council grants. Barbara Keys, a historian at the University of Melbourne who trained at Harvard, tweeted recently: Yup. Disgust with months-long purely political delays that exact high psychological cost and actively hurt ongoing research is one reason I’m heading overseas.
She is but one of many academics who are extraordinarily frustrated at the partisan meddling that the current minister for education and the former minister for education, Senator Birmingham, have engaged in over recent years.

Professor Jodie Bradby, a professor of physics at the Australian National University, wrote on 15 November for The Conversation that there is always going to be uncertainty in a research career. Professor Bradby wrote:

Recently, however, the situation has been made even worse by delays in announcements of government funding—delays that appear to be caused by government using announcements for political advantage.

She points out that nearly $800 million in grants allocated annually by the Australian Research Council have been delayed in order to give the coalition a purely partisan advantage. Professor Bradby draws on work that has been compiled by the anonymous Twitter account @ARC_Tracker, which noted on 12 November that an ARC training centre at Monash University had been announced by the minister with the member for Menzies. As the account noted, Monash is not in fact in Menzies. The main campus is in Hotham, but, because the member for Hotham is a Labor member, the decision was made to make the announcement with a coalition member instead. A leaked internal email from the University of Queensland stated that it understands that the embargo for the grants for early career researchers 'is lifted by local MPs in conjunction with the Minister for Education'. These DECRA grants are a vital way for young-career researchers to get their early start, yet their knowledge of how their career is going to be affected by the announcement of grants is being held up for purely partisan gains.

The @ARC_Tracker account went back to 1999 to look at the announcement of Discovery Projects grants and found that, in order to find a date when the government announced the successful Discovery Projects grants so late in the year, you have to go back 20 years. Not since 1999 have the Discovery Projects grants been announced so late. Typically they've been announced some time mid to late October, but this year they were announced at the very end of November, which has created further uncertainty for academics, further instability, further risks that academics will give up on promising careers and move overseas.

Last year Minister Birmingham decided to block 11 humanities grants recommended by the Australian Research Council. Minister Birmingham decided that he is a better judge of how humanities grants will be allocated than the experts who, between them, have spent hundreds of hours assessing these grants. The minister very proudly flaunts his philistinism on Twitter, saying that he is quite happy to knock off an application dealing with post-orientalist arts. Apparently that's something he can dismiss, probably just by reading the headline. As then Minister Carr has noted, this is unprecedented. There is no public disclosure and no explanation given to the Australian public as to why the minister has traduced the system of peer review in this way.

The heavy politicisation of Australian Research Council grants is only of political benefit. There is no national benefit to Australia of this kind of partisan meddling. The minister must cease it immediately. The minister must give an undertaking that, in future, announcements will be made on the website to all candidates simultaneously. To allocate grants in conjunction with local MPs gives the false impression to the Australian public that this is pork being handed out by the Morrison government rather than grants carefully assessed by expert scrutiny in the field and allocated purely on merit. The politicisation of the Australian
Research Council is hurting our productive capacity, it is sending researchers offshore and it must stop at once.

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland—Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel and Deputy Leader of the House) (12:23): In summing up, I thank all members and senators who have spoken in relation to the Australian Research Council Amendment Bill 2019, which amends funding gaps within the Australian Research Council Act 2001. This bill will ensure the ARC can continue to support Australia's best researchers to undertake the highest quality fundamental and applied research and research training.

In recent weeks, the Morrison government has announced over $24 million in research funding for new ARC training centres and approximately $242 million for ARC centres of excellence around the country. We've also announced the 2019 Australian Laureate Fellows, who will share $54 million to lead their world-class research teams for five years. This funding underpins the research careers of hundreds of researchers which, in turn, underpins Australia's position as a leading power among the world's scientific and knowledge economies. The state of Australian university research 2018–19: ERA national report, released by the ARC in March, found that Australia is increasingly performing above world standards in terms of research quality. The report also found Australia exceeds international standards in 11 broad disciplines, including technology, mathematics, medicine, engineering and in sciences relating to our earth and environment. More than half the units assessed in broad discipline areas were rated above or well above world standard.

In maintaining this lead, we are determined to leave no researcher behind. Two of the Australian Laureate Fellowships just awarded include additional funding for the recipients to undertake an ambassadorial role to promote women in research. They are named after two pioneering women in Australian research. The Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate Fellowship is awarded to a highly ranked female candidate from the humanities, arts and social sciences disciplines, and the Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellowship is awarded to a highly ranked female candidate from the science and technology disciplines. This year the recipients are Professor Belinda Medlyn from Western Sydney University, who is the 2019 ARC Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellow, and Professor Lynette Russell from Monash University, who is the 2019 ARC Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate Fellow. I extend to them my congratulations and the congratulations of the minister himself.

On 10 October 2019, Senator the Hon. Marise Payne released the ARC's Gender and the research workforce report, which uses data from the Excellence in Research for Australia assessment to give new insight into Australia's research workforce. The key statistic out of this report is that the ratio of men to women in the research workforce in 2018 was 56 to 44. This is a small improvement on the 57-to-43 ratio in 2015. The report also shows that the proportion of male and female researchers varies greatly between research disciplines. Female researchers outnumber men in just five of the 22 disciplines measured by the report. It is through the work of the ARC that we know about this gender disparity, and it is through the ARC that we can address it, through initiatives such as the Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate Fellowship and the Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellowship.

Initiatives such as these show the significant role of the ARC in Australia's research landscape, which gives us both the insight and the power to create real change in our research sector. Thanks to the ARC the impact of this research is also known, since the release of
Australia's first national assessment of how universities engage outside academia and translate research into benefits for society. The *Engagement and impact assessment 2018-19 national report*, released by the ARC in March this year, makes transparent the value to ordinary Australian taxpayers of the government's $12 billion in research funding. It is now possible to explore the data presented in this report, as well as the 240 highly ranked impact studies, through the ARC website. These studies paint a rich picture of how Australian research is saving lives, strengthening the economy and improving our quality of living.

Funding the ARC is part of this government's investment in the future of Australia over the next four years. With the passage of this bill, the ARC will deliver over $3 billion in funding for thousands of research projects. This will underpin Australia's research strengths as well as ensure that many benefits are reached by Australian industry, Australian jobs and the Australian community. I commend this 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 Moreton 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 Moreton be agreed to. There being more than one voice calling for a division, in accordance with standing order 133 the division is deferred until after the discussion of the matter of public importance.

Debate adjourned.

**Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management to Cashless Debit Card Transition) Bill 2019**

*Second Reading*

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms BURNEY (Barton) (12:28): I rise to speak on the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management to Cashless Debit Card Transition) Bill 2019. I move:

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

"the House:

(1) declines to give the bill a second reading;

(2) notes that, 12 years after the Intervention in the Northern Territory, there is no evidence that compulsory broad-based income management has worked to improve outcomes for First Nations people; and

(3) calls on the Government not to expand the cashless debit card, and to instead invest in evidence-based policies, programs and services, including:

(a) job creation and economic development;

(b) education, training and TAFE;

(c) health and rehabilitation services; and

(d) services for women and young people".

Labor cannot support this bill in its current form. It won't create a single job, it is extraordinarily expensive and there are serious doubts as to whether it actually works. We know that this card is actually stopping people from purchasing the basics and essentials at affordable prices. It is discriminatory and disproportionately impacts First Nations
Australians. Eighty per cent of the people on income management in the Northern Territory are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Twelve years after the intervention, there is no clear empirical evidence that broad based mandatory income management has worked. Communities have not been consulted.

This bill also is a stalking horse for a national rollout of the cashless debit card, as several in the government have indicated they would like to see. It is incredibly concerning that the government is considering a national rollout, because there simply isn't evidence that broad based income management and the cashless debit card actually work. Labor is pleased to see that the government has extended the amendment Labor moved earlier this year to allow people to come off the cashless debit card if they are effectively managing their finances. However, that does not fix the fundamental problems with the cashless debit card. It should not be indiscriminately imposed on people without a reason relating to their individual circumstances unless a person volunteers to use the card or a community makes an informal local decision that they want the card in their area. I'm pleased to see the member for Lingiari has joined me in the chamber to speak on this bill, because it is communities in Lingiari that are going to be absolutely affected if this bill proves to go through both houses.

Labor will seek to amend this bill in the Senate to make the cashless debit card voluntary in the Northern Territory unless the community wants the card or a person is placed on income management for specific reasons—for example, for child protection or by the Family Responsibilities Commission in Cape York. Labor's amendments in the Senate will also require the minister to demonstrate the support of each individual community before rolling out the cashless debit card, including consultation with women's groups and community members.

In October we marked Anti-Poverty Week, which left us with some very sobering statistics which illustrate the gut-wrenching and unacceptable reality facing millions of Australians, and this affects us all as a nation and as an economy. Three million, or one in eight, Australians live in poverty and one in six, or three-quarters of a million, children live below the poverty line. Just this month we were reminded of the incredibly challenging economic conditions confronting our jobseekers, with the loss of 19,000 jobs from the economy. The Anglicare Jobs Availability Snapshot 2019 showed that there aren't enough jobs for the number of jobseekers, with employers receiving an average of 19 applications per vacancy advertised. Those that do have a job aren't receiving enough hours, with over 1.1 million Australians underemployed. And last month, the International Monetary Fund downgraded Australia's projected economic growth.

So the question all Australians are asking is: what is the government's plan to turn the economy around? It seems this government has no plan, no idea—nothing more than old reheated ideas like this one. The fact is this card will not create a single job. Even the minister admitted that. This card is not a substitute for an actual plan. Meanwhile, Australians continue to wait for action from this government. The number of Australians over the age of 55 on Newstart represents a quarter of all Newstart recipients, and the number of over-55s on Newstart has surged to 45 per cent under the Liberals and Nationals. We also know that under this government underemployment remains unacceptably high. In fact almost one in five, or 130,000, Newstart recipients do not earn enough money to receive enough hours to get off the payment.
Even having a job in this economy is no safety net for being in need of income support. Wages are stagnant and jobs are less secure than ever before. Recently the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released a report which showed that new apprenticeships are at their lowest in two decades and youth unemployment is double the national average. This card is going to be of little comfort to those desperately trying to re-enter the workforce. Australians who are trying to re-enter the workforce are right to be perplexed. How will this card get them a job? How will this card create a single job?

There are also serious questions about whether this card actually works. The Auditor-General has been scathing of the government's assessment of the effectiveness of the card. Even the Minister for Families and Social Services herself says she's uncertain about the effectiveness of the card. On Sunday 1 September 2019, the minister appeared on David Speers's program on Sky News and said, 'Until we get all the statistics, we can't say definitively how many people have come off Newstart as a result of the card.' It's extraordinary. On that Sunday, because of lack of evidence, the minister refused to commit to a national rollout, and then, one week later, the Prime Minister drastically changed the government's tune and began championing a national rollout.

There was further equivocation from the government when Senator Anthony Chisholm in the other place asked the minister to provide further details about the number of recipients who had come off the card. The government has refused. Last month the Senate concluded a series of hearings it held in relation to the cashless debit card. The overwhelming majority of the 108 submissions and the overwhelming majority of witnesses who testified to the inquiry opposed this bill. It is clear that the government does not care about the evidence. In fact, one of the serious concerns we have about this bill is the absence of any independent or rigorous evaluation of the cashless debit card in the trial sites with regard to its effectiveness in reducing social harms, particularly alcohol and substance abuse.

Cynically, this government doesn't really care whether this thing is effective or not. It is only interested in politics and nothing more. But here's what we do know and what we have heard from the communities and the people on the ground. We know that the evidence of the card's effectiveness to reduce social harm is not only inconclusive but in some instances shows that it has actually exacerbated the social harms it was designed to reduce or prevent. MoneyMob Talkabout told the Senate inquiry:

What our data suggests is that potentially welfare quarantining can cause the opposite to happen. While older people and people with disabilities won't be directly put on the CDC, it's unlikely to stop them from being targeted because they receive those higher payments, such as an aged pension or a disability pension. We're seeing them currently having their cards and income management allocations taken and used by other people who've already expended their income. So it's actually increasing their vulnerability and diminishing their ability to meet their basic needs.

The issue of increased elder abuse was touched on briefly by the University of Adelaide in their CDC baseline data collection research in the Goldfields region, but we're not aware of any systemic focus on measuring the incidence of elder or disability abuse in relation to income management or the CDC. This raises the possibility that one type of vulnerability could be just supplanting another one.

The inquiry also cited the study of the Menzies School of Health Research on the birth weight of Indigenous babies. This, to me, is the actual measure that I have leant on and taken on board as to the inappropriateness of this card. The Menzies School of Health Research found that the birth weight of Indigenous babies, a key indicator of disadvantage and one of the
seven Closing the Gap targets, actually declined under compulsory income management, and that is a shocking statistic. It is a shocking outcome. This is what Menzies said:

The study's key finding of relevance to this Senate Committee hearing regarding the draft Bill to extend the implementation of the Cashless Debit Card to NT communities, is that the Aboriginal birth cohort affected by the 13 month roll-out of Income Management resulted in an average reduction in birth weight of 100 grams and a 30% increase in the likelihood of being born with low birth weight (i.e. below 2,500 grams). The magnitude of this effect is comparable to what has been reported from other international studies of births to women exposed to famines or extreme weather events such as cyclones.

That is an absolutely outrageous indication of just how damaging this card can be. Just think about it: lower birth weights comparable with the magnitude of women giving birth who have been exposed to famine and extreme weather events. The government's ideological obsession with compulsory income management is actively working against its own Closing the Gap strategy. We also know that this card has stopped participants from being able to purchase basics and essential items at affordable prices. We've heard from small businesses, especially discount variety stores, who are deeply concerned about the impact this card will have on their business and clientele and the cost of non-cash transactions. We've also heard that people have left town just to avoid this card.

There are serious problems with the technology that makes it easy to get around. Last month at estimates, the Senate community affairs committee heard from departmental staff that the card could be used to pay off credit cards, meaning that participants could wash money and prohibited purchases through a credit card and simply use the cashless card to pay it off. At the very same committee hearing, departmental staff confirmed that the card could still be used to purchase pornography in the Northern Territory, where specific steps have been taken against pornography on the basis that it had been linked to child sex abuse.

We're also concerned about the fact that this bill gives the minister extraordinary power to determine the level of restricted payments. The minister's power to do this will be subject to few or ill-defined checks and balances, and we strongly urge the Department of Social Services to clarify the minister's power in this regard. We're also concerned about the lack of procedural fairness. This bill will remove an individual's right to seek a review of the decision to be issued with a cashless debit card notice, and I'm sure the member for Lingiari will expand on this. It must be noted that this is a card that predominantly targets First Nation Australians.

The card will be managed outside of Centrelink processes by post or by telephone or online. When you consider that many of the participants live in remote communities, many of whom do not have adequate access to telecommunication services, it will be particularly difficult for them to manage their participation in the cashless card scheme and therefore exacerbating poverty and exacerbating the completely unacceptable situation of people who live in remote Australia. The government has failed to properly address the serious concerns raised about the operation of this card. It's reprehensible. Labor believes that it is in the nature of Australians to want to make the most of their lives, work hard and contribute their very best. That is why we've always said that, if a community or an individual genuinely wants to use or be placed on the card, then they should be properly consulted with and provided with the necessary supports to do so. What is so outrageous about this proposal is the rollout across a whole Territory without consent. It is completely against everything that individual and
collective rights stand for. That is why we've always said that, if a community or individuals generally want to be placed on the card, they should be properly consulted with and provided with necessary supports to do so. What we're seeing is the Department of Social Services boldly rolling across the Territory telling people what's best for them.

We are not opposed to income management in all circumstances, but we are opposed to this broad based, compulsory program that catches and disempowers the wrong people. Income management can be justified when it is targeted, such as for child protection, but it should not be indiscriminate or broad sweeping, such as this across the Territory. For example, in Cape York, where the local community is applying income management based on individual circumstances, supporting families and monitoring outcomes, that is appropriate. Why it cannot happen in the Northern Territory is absolutely beyond me.

At a recent inquiry into another one of the government's cashless debit card bills, a number of witnesses told the hearing that one of the only credible pieces of evaluation of any form of income management is the evaluation that was completed about income management in the Northern Territory. That report found that compulsory income management usually does not bring about improvements but that voluntary income management might. It is not just the evaluation that says this. Late last year in a document presented to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Australian government wrote:

While there are more positive results associated with people who volunteer, as they have made a choice to change their behaviour and receive assistance, positive findings have been found for people who have been referred for Income Management by a social worker or a child protection officer.

You've got the Australian government telling the United Nations that voluntary income management is much better, but in reality what they're doing here is anything but a voluntary. I reiterate that the Australian government wrote that.

Dr Elisa Klein from the University of Melbourne told a Senate committee earlier this year:

If we … are serious about evidence based policymaking, we must stop the ongoing operations of the cashless debit card … or … make them entirely voluntary.

There is a very real difference between someone who generally wants to be on the card and believes it's appropriate for their circumstances and someone who is compelled to go on the card without any consultation, permission being sought or permission being given and whose circumstances are completely incompatible with the card. Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory, which includes the Central Land Council, the Northern Land Council and the Aboriginal Medical Service Alliance Northern Territory, said in their submission:

The continuation of compulsory income management through the transfer to the CDC is being rushed forward despite the lack of any strong or positive evidence drawn from either the 2014 Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) evaluation of New Income Management in the NT or the 2017 Orima Research evaluation of the Cashless Debit Card Trials in Ceduna, the Goldfields and East Kimberley (Western Australia).

Income management cannot provide a transition to employment in locations where few employment opportunities exist and those that exist are largely done by outsiders. Instead, for many Aboriginal residents of the Northern Territory, particularly those living remotely, compulsory income management is long term and, regardless of a person's lifestyle and financial management capacity, almost impossible to get off. The 2014 independent evaluation of the new income management conducted by the Social Policy Research Centre
found that 90.2 per cent of those on income management in the Northern Territory were Indigenous, and 76.8 per cent of those were on compulsory income management. More than 60 per cent of this group were on income management for more than six years. Of those Indigenous people on compulsory income management, a mere 4.9 per cent gained an exemption, compared to 36 per cent of the non-Indigenous people—a sobering thought.

The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation said in their submission to the bill:
The ALPA Board of Directors are disappointed that the Government is moving forward and expanding this oppressive policy when there is no evidence demonstrating that it creates positive change for the people who will be subjected to it. This erosion of people's choice and control over their own lives destroys any sense of self-agency, it is an attack on their basic rights, the burden of proof should lie with the Government to prove without doubt that this policy works before enforcing it upon our communities.

Alongside the lack of evidence there has been little to no consultation undertaken in the Northern Territory to date.

Anti-Poverty Network SA also told the very same Senate committee about a woman they had met in Ceduna who was on the cashless debit card. She volunteered at her local craft shop and donated what she could. She used to be able to purchase things online, but can no longer do this purchasing because of the cashless debit card. The network told the committee that this woman has never drunk and never done drugs or anything like that. It's such an inhibitive way of life for her now. Why should someone who has never engaged in binge drinking or taken illicit drugs be forced onto the cashless debit card that was introduced to address these behaviours? The answer is that they shouldn't be.

What has become so clear to all Australians is that this government has no plan to get Australians into jobs or to lift vulnerable Australians out of poverty. This is a government that is more obsessed with devising new ways to humiliate and harass Australians doing their absolute best to get back into the workforce, with urine tests and cashless cards. To add insult to injury, the government has more cuts planned for Newstart and the pension currently before the parliament.

There is no doubt that Australians are doing it tough at the moment. Many of them can't remember when they last received a pay rise. Many of them only see more of their pay cheque go to bills and to meeting the increasing costs of living, while there is less left over for them. Australians are having more difficulty finding a secure job with decent pay and adequate hours. Instead of lifting a finger to help turn around a weak economy that is getting weaker, instead of trying to get Australians back into work, the government actually has a plan for more cuts to Australians out of work and more cuts for pensioners. At a time when Australians are really doing it tough, we need more support for vulnerable Australians and for our pensioners, not more cruel cuts.

Currently, the government is short-changing pensioners by propping this budget up on the back of pensioners by refusing to adjust the aged pension deeming rates despite the fact that interest rates are at an all-time low. It currently has before the parliament a bill to increase the liquid assets test waiting period for Newstart. This will disproportionately impact middle-aged workers who have recently been made redundant. Think of men and women in their 50s and 60s who have recently been retrenched from the manufacturing sector and will need time and money to retrain and reskill. This will force them to eat into their savings before they can get
help. This will drive them into poverty before they can access income support. This is truly a low blow. The government also has before the parliament a plan to cut the pension through its Social Services Legislation Amendment (Payment Integrity) Bill 2019. The government's cruel payment integrity bill will rip $185 million from the pockets of Australian pensioners.

In conclusion, this card will not create jobs. It is discriminatory. There are serious doubts as to whether it is actually effective. It is stopping vulnerable Australians from accessing basics and essentials at affordable prices. Labor opposes this bill and, as I indicated, we will seek to amend it in the Senate. We have moved a second reading amendment here, which I have tabled in my name. I am absolutely appalled at this piece of legislation. There is no evidence to support the introduction of such a measure. The indiscriminate rollout across communities like the communities that the member for Lingiari represents is nothing short of social engineering, as far as I'm concerned.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell): Is the amendment seconded?

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

Mr Pitt (Hinkler) (12:55): I once again find myself on my feet speaking after the member for Barton, the shadow minister, on the cashless debit card. I once again publicly invite the member for Barton, the shadow minister, to my electorate of Hinkler to come up and talk to trial participants, talk to our individuals who are out there on the front line providing services for those in need, talk to our law enforcement agents, talk to real estate agents and talk to individuals who are actually in the community and have ties, not to those social activists who are on Facebook and those individuals who don't live there. Come and see the real people who are actually affected by the card, who are participating, and see what the real results are on the ground.

In terms of consultation, I say again to the member for Barton: what more do you want? I will speak in detail later about what we've already done, but if you want more consultation then please be specific. Tell us what it is that you want us to do. To my mind and to my view, we've done extensive levels of consultation throughout the electorate, and I'll outline those as the speech progresses.

The University of South Australia has been engaged to assess the outcomes and results of the cashless debit card trial in Hinkler. My understanding is they are out there and they've put together their baseline data. That is very near to being released. That will give us something to work on which is consistent, identifiable and verifiable. The University of South Australia is an organisation well-recognised for doing this type of work.

We find that those in the other place have magically discovered the benefits of my electorate. In Bundaberg and Hervey Bay we've had more visits by those opposite in recent weeks than I have seen in the past couple of terms. A senator in the other place, Senator Chisholm, has magically discovered the joys of Hervey Bay and Bundaberg. I hope that he spent plenty of money while he was there. I note that he had a meeting in Hervey Bay with regard to the cashless debit card. From what I've seen of the pictures, I don't know that there was a single participant at the meeting. I'm not sure that there was a single frontline service provider. There were a handful of individuals who looked like they don't even belong in the electorate; they're not affected. If you want to consult with those individuals, call my office and we will put it together. We will put you with people who are actually on the card, who are
participants who work there. Don't just roll up and think this is simply a media opportunity for you to move on with.

To the Facebook activists: once again, come up and talk to the participants. It's no good putting on social media things that frighten individuals, particularly if you're based out of Sydney.

The Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management to Cashless Debit Card Transition) Bill 2019 extends the date for existing CDC trial areas from 30 June 2020 to 30 June 2021. It gives an end date of 31 December 2021 for the CDC trial in Cape York. It removes the cap on the number of trial participants. It removes the exclusion to allow people in the Bundaberg and Hervey Bay trial area to be able to voluntarily participate in the CDC trial. I will say that again for those social media activists who are out there frightening individuals: they can volunteer. This is not forced upon those individuals. They can volunteer—for those outside of the trial participants in the Hinkler electorate. It establishes the Northern Territory and Cape York areas as CDC trial areas and transitions income management participants in those sites onto the CDC trial. It enables the secretary to advise a community body when a person has exited the trial and improves the workability of the evaluation process.

I want to focus on a couple of points in the bill, the main one being the ability to volunteer. We have people out there, particularly on Facebook and other social media platforms, who are trying to scare my local people. Whether they are pensioners, whether they are veterans or whether they are on a disability support pension they will not be forced onto the trial. Those individuals who are doing this should stop doing it in the Hinkler trial area. It is wrong and it is inappropriate. You are simply scaring those individuals who are vulnerable. This is a voluntary provision for those in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay. We will also see those 23,000 individuals in the Northern Territory and Cape York transition from income management to the card from April 2020.

This has been, without doubt, a long and difficult process in terms of the implementation of the trial and the rollout in the first instance. The electorate was announced as the fourth region for the CDC—the cashless debit card—trial. Here are some of the stats and some of the reasons. What we've discovered is that 90 per cent of individuals under 30 and on welfare had a parent who was also on welfare during the past 15 years. The majority of those were on welfare for at least nine of those 15 years, and, without intervention, the projection was that 57 per cent of those under 30 on welfare would still be on income support in 10 years time. So the real question is: do you want to do something? What happens is those opposite quite simply don't want to do anything. I can understand them being ideologically opposed. There is no doubt that that is usually the position for those on the other side. But my community actually wants action. They want change. They want our community to improve. They want opportunities for our youth. They don't want to see these types of statistics into the future.

The cashless debit card is a tough but necessary policy, and my community wants change. Doing nothing is not an option. It works like any other debit card. People can pay their rent, their bills, their groceries. The anecdotal feedback from local organisations has been very, very positive: improvements in the rent roll; shopkeepers who are seeing people buy groceries and other types of foodstuffs—people they've never seen do that before. All of these services are available through this new technology. I've said this before and I'll say it again: the
cashless debit card is by no means a silver bullet. It does not hold all of the answers for all communities. It is a complex situation, but we are actually taking action, as doing nothing will never be an option. We hope the card will provide more stability for families and/or those jobseekers with the restrictions on welfare payments for alcohol, gambling or illicit substances.

We had Minister Ruston in the Hinkler electorate in August, and this is some of the feedback that we received at the time. We had individuals actually ask to go on to the card. This amendment allows that to happen. That legislation is now before the House. People are able to budget better. They have money left over at the end of the fortnight. They have some savings. One of the emergency relief organisations in Hervey Bay reported a reduction in people coming in for their free food service. I will quote from the transcript from the 7.30 program on the CDC. It is anecdotal evidence, but we are doing the reviews and we do have the University of South Australia doing the work for us to identify how it works. Jan Carlson, from We Care 2, said on the program:

We have noticed since about July a significant decrease in the number of people coming in for free food through the emergency relief program and an increase, almost parallel in numbers, to the people coming through our low cost food centre and actually purchasing food.

The journalist, Peter McCutcheon, asked:

Do you think that can be attributed to the cashless debit card?

Ms Carlson replied:

Well, I can't say unequivocally but it's a trend that we have never seen before. We have never had that, we usually would get in three days we would get at least 30, maybe 36 people through emergency relief previously. Now we're probably seeing 12 a week.

The CDC started rolling out on 29 January 2019 across Bundaberg and Hervey Bay. It includes the townships of Aldershot, Bargara, Elliot Heads, Woodgate, Branyan, Booyal, Burrum Heads, Torbanlea, Toogoom, Howard, Childers, Burnett Heads, River Heads and Point Vernon. On 9 August 2019, we had 5,764 participants aged 35 years and under who are on Newstart, youth allowance jobseeker, parenting payment single or parenting payment partnered who have received the card. I will say that again: 5,764 individuals in the trial site for Hinkler.

This card looks and operates like any other regular EFTPOS card. It quite simply does. Obviously, 80 per cent is quarantined. It can't be used for the purchase of alcohol or gambling products, and, of course, the restriction on cash means a reduction in the purchase of illicit substances. The formal evaluation was undertaken by those researchers from the University of Adelaide's Future of Employment and Skills research centre, as I've said. Consultation gets raised regularly by those opposite, and I say again: what more do you want us to do? Between May 2017 and December 2017, the Department of Social Services conducted over 188 meetings in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay. This included five meetings with Commonwealth government agencies, 19 with community members, three meetings with community reference groups, two large community meetings with the public, 25 meetings with local government reps, four meetings with peak bodies, and 55 meetings with service providers. My office contacted 32,000 constituents to get an indication of their views before the trial was even put forward. That is a very large proportion of an electorate of about 107,000 voters. We sent 32,000 individuals direct mail. We phone polled about 500 people. We sent an additional
5½ thousand direct emails. We had calls in and out of the electorate. The feedback we got showed 75 per cent were not against the trial or the rollout. That was the feedback to my office from that type of polling and that type of work. In May of 2018, the local newspaper, the NewsMail and the Fraser Coast Chronicle engaged ReachTEL to do a poll. Everyone in this place understands polling and how it works, particularly through organisations like ReachTEL.

Mr Pitt: I note the interjection from those opposite, who think the polling from the last election might have been inaccurate but we have had a very large poll since—the election. The ReachTEL poll showed that the overwhelming majority of people in the Hinkler electorate are not against the card. Just 27.8 per cent of those polled were opposed. There were 637 residents across the electorate polled. It is a good sized sample, it is a good indication that it is strongly supported in the community. I say again to those opposite: this is about actually doing something. It is not a silver bullet, it will not fix all problems but it is a big improvement on doing nothing.

My community wants change. They want action. We are doing this. We are taking that action and we are looking forward to the results of the trial. Quite simply, this has been a tough but necessary policy. There are people who have been inconvenienced—there is no doubt about that. It is inconvenient in places but, once again, I say to those opposite: you are welcome to come up. We will help you coordinate and meet these individuals. We will put you into the community with those who actually do these services, who are working every single day with individuals in my community who find themselves in very difficult circumstances. So please take that opportunity and come up to the Hinkler trial site. It is the purpose of a trial—that is why we run a trial—to establish the baseline, to establish the results, to establish whether it works, and the anecdotal evidence to date has been very positive from the community.

To all those individuals in my electorate who are listening who are on the CDC trial: if you have an issue, if you have a challenge with the card, if you find a fundamental technical problem, there are shopfronts in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay that can help you. You can go online; you can use the website. There is any number of ways to get help. The way you don't get help is to go to a social media activist, post it on their Facebook page and tell them what you think may or may not have happened; that will not help you. I will say to all of those activists again: you are helping no-one by encouraging individuals to come to you so you can post something on social media. That doesn't help a single person. Those shopfronts are active and their services are available.

In conclusion, and in my support of the original social security bill, there are just under 6,000 participants. If all of the challenges that the social media activists put forward are actually happening, I would have a queue of 1,000 people around the corner from my office. I do not. Individuals in that bracket, under 35, quite simply do not use a lot of cash. They use a debit card just like the cashless debit card. I fully support the amendments and the trial, and we look forward to the results. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr Snowdon (Lingiari) (13:08): I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Barton and also the member for Hinkler. I have to say to the member for Hinkler: we are not addressing the issues you talked about, because what we are on about here is what's
happening in the Northern Territory and the absolute dissatisfaction we have about the proposals to expand the cashless debit card across the Northern Territory.

Let me make it very clear: I come at this differently from others, having had the experience of the Intervention now 12 years ago and the introduction of the BasicsCard by the then Howard government telling people that they were going to have their income managed, compulsorily, right across the Northern Territory. Over 80 per cent of those people who were impacted by that measure, the Intervention 12 years ago, were Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, mostly those living in isolated communities. There was never so much as a 'by your leave', no discussion, no consultation, no visitation, no sitting down with people and saying, 'We would like to talk to you about the possibility of introducing an income management scheme, this card, which will help you manage your income.' At that time, around 50 per cent of benefit recipients on the Barkly were actually using Centrepay themselves as a way of managing their incomes through the social security system. They didn't need a BasicsCard. But, of course, this was the intervention, and the rights of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory were trodden all over by the then Howard government; and, as far as Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory are concerned, this is a continuation of it.

I note the remarks made by the member for Barton. What we have said very clearly, just so people here understand, is that we do not believe that the CDC trial should be extended or expanded unless the card is made voluntary, it is only applied in specific circumstances with intensive case management and is time limited—for child protection or some other reason— or a community genuinely gives informed consent to the trial card consistent with what we would regard as self-determination. It needs free, prior and informed consent. There is no free, prior and informed consent with this proposal to extend the cashless debit card across the Northern Territory. There has been no consultation whatsoever.

Aboriginal people are scarred by the intervention. The whole of the Northern Territory community was scarred by the intervention. They had the living daylights kicked out of them by the Howard government, and despite their protestations not a word from them was taken seriously. Here we have an opportunity for the government to go back and sit down with people, and consult properly. If there are merits to the cashless debit card the government should explain what they are. Ask the people whether they would like to use such a card instead of the BasicsCard or, indeed, make sure you are telling them that this will not be compulsory—because that's what they're after. They are sick and tired of having their lives managed. There is no evidence that the BasicsCard has worked. There is no evidence that the income management system put in place by the Howard government has worked. Sadly, it was perpetuated by us in Labor—to our shame.

Be very, very clear: the 23,000 people who will be compulsorily transferred to this card in the Northern Territory do not want it. It is not because they don't understand it; they haven't been asked about it. There is a so-called consultation process going on across the Northern Territory at the moment. There are ads on TV about this card being rolled out. They have visits to communities. I know that they visited the community of Arlparra—or Utopia, as it might be referred to by others—about 300 kilometres north-west of Alice Springs up the Sandover Highway. I was speaking to people there about the consultation that apparently took place. Well, it so happened that the Commonwealth officials rocked up to the community and
set up a stand. No-one spoke to them, so they packed up and left. I had one of my staff sit in on the consultation in Darwin, only last week. They were asked by an Aboriginal person who was having his income managed why he hadn't heard about it. The public servants acknowledged that there's been no consultation about whether the BasicsCard should be transitioned to the CDC. There was no consultation and no discussion. Then they went on to affirm that there would not be: 'Listen, old son: don't expect us to come and ask you if you want it. You're going to get it, regardless of what you think and regardless of your experience with income management under the BasicsCard, because we simply don't care.'

Just as an aside, the member for Barton commended the government for extending the opt-out provisions on the BasicsCard in the Northern Territory. I spoke to an individual here yesterday who drove the 750-kilometre round trip to the Centrelink office in Alice Springs to convince them that he should go off the BasicsCard. They agreed. He went off the BasicsCard. Not long ago, he received a new BasicsCard in the mail. Now, really, that's just an aside, but it shows you the idiocy of what's happening here.

There are any number of people who can attest to the facts, and the evidence which was given to the Senate inquiry mounts up and mounts up, yet it's not listened to by the government. We've got people in this chamber and in the other place who sit on whether or not this should proceed, having never visited the Northern Territory and sat down with any people in these communities to discuss with them the merits or otherwise of this proposal and what their experience of the BasicsCard has been. Yet these people will be crucial as to whether or not this bill passes the parliament. It cannot be that people sit in this place, blind to the fact that they don't represent the community which this is going to be imposed upon but are nevertheless prepared to say, 'We'll do it anyway.' I just say to them: if it were to happen to the community you live in or that you represent, you would expect people to come sit down and talk with you before making a decision. So the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory who will be impacted by this simply want people to go and sit down and talk with them. That can't be too bloody difficult—but it is, because you refuse to do it.

We had Minister Wyatt, the member for Hasluck, in the Northern Territory a fortnight ago, after the very dreadful events at Yuendumu. He attended a meeting at Blatherskite Park in Alice Springs. He was asked by Valerie Martin, a senior woman from Yuendumu, why they should be getting the BasicsCard. You know what he said? He said, 'If you didn't ask for it, you shouldn't be getting it.' Cute. That is very cute, given that his government—the government he is a part of, the cabinet he is a part of—made a decision to impose this upon the Northern Territory Aboriginal community without their consent. I agree with him. If you didn't ask for it and you don't want it, you shouldn't get it. But that's not what's happening. As a continuation of the way in which the intervention started, we've got the same headspace happening here in this place.

I was with an Aboriginal woman here yesterday, walking around the halls of the parliament, looking at the wonderful, beautiful Aboriginal art. She said: 'Look, isn't this fantastic? This art, people appreciating our art. Why don't they appreciate us?' It's great to see the art, but what about the people who painted it? What are you saying to them and about them? The same people who paint this art have no rights. What you're intending to do through this legislation is ensure they will not have the right to say yes or no, because there's been no consultation. It is absolutely shameful.
We heard from the member for Barton about the evidence from the Menzies School of Health Research—that birth weights have actually fallen. If you combine this card with the deplorable CDP arrangement, where people are being breached, people are going hungry—you'd think the government would match the two. You'd think: why is it that less money is being spent in stores? Why is it that families are going hungry? You'd imagine that, if you understood it, you'd work through this system and say, 'Hang on, compulsory income management, CDP, breaching—it doesn't work.' But, no, the light just does not go on because you won't switch it on.

To add to the ludicrous nature of all this, it's intended that these cards will be posted out to people. Well, good luck with that! I don't know of any Aboriginal community where there is a postal service, where people have home delivery. There's none in the Northern Territory. So you'll post these cards to a central depository in the community, and people will say: 'Well, I think my mail's there. It may not be there. I don't collect my mail. I never see if I get mail.' And then you'll get a huge number of 'return to sender'. Then, of course, there's the phone system or the internet network. It's unreliable; it doesn't work. How are people going to manage this card, if they actually get it through the mail system? The government have not thought about it. Why would you not know, if you are going to impose this upon people, that there are no mail delivery services?

The government have no plan, as we understand it, to advise people what the cutover time is. I'm just amazed that, after so long in this place, we continue to treat people so bloody poorly. I am amazed that, as the member for Lingiari, the people I represent are being treated with such bloody disrespect.

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (13:23): As part of this government's commitment to communities, we are working with our local and regional partners to continue the successful rollout of the cashless debit card. To date, the program has delivered on its core objectives of creating stronger communities and improving the outcomes for individual beneficiaries. In places where this program has been implemented, the results have been more responsible financial management whilst reducing violence as well as drug and alcohol related issues. The body of evidence also points to significant improvements to child health and wellbeing in those communities. Australian communities have a history of resilience and tenacity in the face of hardship. The Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management to Cashless Debit Card Transition) Bill 2019 will only support stronger communities by being part of the solution.

Mr Snowdon interjecting—

Mr FALINSKI: You can say that. I'm very happy for you to come to my community as well, Warren. Oh, that's right: you only fly over our electorates, don't you?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell): Order! The member for Mackellar will address members by their proper titles.

Mr FALINSKI: Whilst issues relating to cycles of violence, drug and alcohol abuse are complex, it is through sustained attention and carefully thought through improvements to social security that, together, we can take steps to resolve problems that can often span generations.
This bill allows for the extension of the cashless debit card across all four current trial sites until June 2021. We will continue to carefully examine the results of this program by building a larger body of evidence and monitoring outcomes. The ultimate success of this bill can be measured in its proven capacity to put the futures of individual Australians back in their own hands.

The reduction in unemployment in all cashless debit card sites goes to the heart of what this bill is about. An exemplar case is the sharp decline in youth unemployment from 27.6 per cent in June 2018 to 18.4 per cent in June 2019. A drop of nearly 10 per cent over a single year is an outstanding accomplishment for the Wide Bay region and goes to show that this government puts the youth of this country, who are our future, front and centre. We owe it to them and to the continuing prosperity of Australia to see that this bill's demonstrable success continues.

An independent evaluation of the cashless debit card in 2017 found that, of those surveyed, 41 per cent had consumed alcohol less frequently, 48 per cent had reduced their use of illicit drugs and 48 per cent had gambled less. Working towards long-term solutions to systemic issues related to the misuse of drugs and alcohol is critical to the continuing vibrancy of Australian communities everywhere. There is no greater endorsement for this bill than when healthier lives lead to healthier communities. The critical first step in the endeavour is helping to combat drug and alcohol abuse. As long as one Australian lives trapped by addiction, cycles of violence and alcohol abuse, we are all affected. The significance of these results cannot be understated, nor can this government's commitment to partner with those communities most affected.

This bill fundamentally improves our welfare system by empowering individuals. Currently participants in many of this nation's most vulnerable communities are restricted by the BasicsCard, which only works in a select number of stores that have signed the merchant agreements with the Department of Human Services. Whilst this card has been effective to date, the cashless debit card goes the next step by increasing beneficiaries' access to different stores. By putting greater freedom and responsibility into the hands of users, we have seen a clear improvement in outcomes. This is the result of streamlining the process and reducing bureaucratic involvement, which dictates what stores beneficiaries can and cannot use.

This program improves user experience and increases outcomes for communities. The decision to expand this program is a practical measure based on support from communities and the exceptional results so far. The cashless debit card continues to maintain important safeguards related to the purchase of alcohol, gambling products, cash withdrawals and a number of gift cards. This ensures the funds are used in ways which go to the beneficiaries' needs and help make a positive contribution to the local economy.

The transition to a cashless debit card is as much about improving the outcomes of a strong welfare system as it is about empowering individuals to create their own future free of government-imposed red tape. We do not believe in a one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to helping people get back on their feet after tragedy or misfortune. If we can have a system that puts the power of choice back into the hands of people we are trying to assist, it will lead to better outcomes for all involved.

Doing nothing is not an option when a clearly viable alternative that improves outcomes for both individuals and local communities is readily available. That being said, despite the
success of the program to date, the government will continue to build a body of evidence related to the program, with any transitions being both gradual and well supported. This is critical to ensuring that the focus remains on those who need it most and that no-one is left behind. The success of this country is built on mateship. We will continue to work closely with participants to ensure their needs are met. The gradual transition is scheduled to occur over a nine-month period as of 1 April 2020. The rollout will precede community—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour and the member for Mackellar will have leave to continue speaking when the debate is resumed.

STATMENTS BY MEMBERS

Burns, Ms Thelma

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (13:30): I rise to talk about Thelma Burns, who was a wife and mother who was loved by her family. Earlier this year, Thelma was invoiced $25 for in-home assistance under a home care package. The invoice worried Thelma. She and her family had not been told beforehand of any charge and had understood the service to have been covered by the package. Now, $25 may not sound like too much to many in this chamber, but to Thelma, who was 79 of the time, frail and vulnerable and suffering from dementia, it weighed on her mind. She was adamant she should not have to pay. Thelma subsequently received a demand for payment from a debt collector organised by the Tasmanian health department. That compounded Thelma's distress, which is where I came in. My office wrote to the Tasmanian health minister, Sarah Courtney, on 30 July, asking her to waive the debt. We received a verbal reply that no further action would be taken, but, not unreasonably, Thelma wanted something in writing confirming the debt had been waived. My office wrote to Minister Courtney again on 18 September asking for this to occur, but we received no response. Today, 26 November, I wrote again to Minister Courtney to advise her that Thelma had died two weeks ago with the worry of the debt still hanging over her head and that Thelma's son Darren would still like confirmation that the debt no longer exists. I know correspondence can take time and that things can get missed, but it should not take five months to get a simple letter. We need to do better by the people that we represent.

O'Connor Electorate

Mr RICK WILSON (O'Connor) (13:31): As we approach the end of 2019, it's timely to reflect on the year that was. Prime Minister Scott Morrison performed a miracle by securing the coalition a third term in government. My constituents continue to be impressed with his enthusiasm, his commitment and his focus on outcomes. He has shown that our government is listening and will step up when help is required. I was honoured to be entrusted with a third term as the member for O'Connor. This year I continued to work hard for the good people of my electorate. Issues in the agricultural sector have been front and centre, including supporting the live export trade and dealing with the crippling drought. The $140 million Albany Ring Road, the $40 million Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme, the Esperance jetty and the Kambalda pool are just some of the projects which I have delivered. Our National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy aims to implement federal policies to ensure our regional youth get a fair go after they complete secondary education. We've successfully
legislated our tax plan that will deliver more than $300 billion of tax relief over the next 10 years.

Looking forward to 2020, I'm eager to hear new ideas as part of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources inquiry into growing Australian agriculture into a $100 billion industry by 2030. This presents an exciting opportunity for the sector, and I look forward to attending public hearings around the country and, in particular, to bringing the committee to my own electorate. There is always a lot more to do, and we will continue to govern to improve the lives of people living in O'Connor and Australia.

**Gilmore Electorate: Road Infrastructure**

**Mrs PHILLIPS** (Gilmore) (13:33): Our community campaign to fix the Princes Highway faster has made some incredible progress, with more money to be spent sooner to 'fix it faster'. Since being elected, I have been calling on the government to urgently bring forward the funding for the highway. I have offered to work with all levels of government, regardless of party, to get it done. I have used every available opportunity to bring this critical local issue to the government's attention and to get results for our local community, including in my first speech to parliament, my first question in question time and my first debate on a matter of public importance.

I am pleased that the government has finally listened to what we have all been saying for so long: that we need to fix it faster for the good of the economy and, most importantly, to save the lives of people on our roads. I will continue to work constructively with the government on this vitally important issue and will continue advocating for further improvements like the Jervis Bay Road intersection. Our campaign won't stop until the Princes Highway is made safer.

I want to take the time to acknowledge the work of the Ulladulla and Milton district community forums, who have now combined to form the Milton-Ulladulla bypass committee and have worked tirelessly on this issue. I also want to thank everyone in our community and local media who has helped spread the message that we needed to fix it faster. Thank you.

**Box Hill North Scout Group**

**Local Sporting Champions**

**Ms LIU** (Chisholm) (13:34): Recently I visited the Box Hill North Scout Group and spoke to the cubs about the parliament and the important work we do in this place. Scouts help cubs improve their self-confidence and teach them how to give back to our community in Chisholm. I would like to thank scout leader Vishal Majmudar and the cubs for having me and giving me the beautiful scarf. I hope their upcoming camping trip is a success. I would also like to thank the many volunteer leaders for giving up their nights and weekends so that the cubs have the opportunity to learn, laugh, make friends and build lifelong skills.

Supporting the next generation of Australians is something that is very close to my heart. The coalition government is committed to investing in and strengthening our communities. There are a number of grants that will make a real impact locally—grants like Local Sporting Champions, which provides up to $750 for sporting champions in Chisholm to attend events and chase their dreams. This local sporting grant is open to competitors, coaches and officials. If you have an upcoming state, national or international championship, I encourage you to apply.
Dunkley Electorate: Frankston High School
Petition: Climate Change

Ms MURPHY (Dunkley) (13:36): Students at schools across Dunkley are showing genuine leadership by taking steps to make their schools more sustainable, and they are calling on the government to take real action on climate change. One terrific example is the work of the Eco Team at Frankston High School. I was very pleased recently to accept the invitation from Frankston High School's Eco Team members Michaela Goggin and Allira Reid to support their campaign to make Frankston High School single-use-plastic free in 2020 by speaking at their recent school assembly, where they presented the evidence and the urgency for taking real action to their classmates.

Each time I've visited Frankston High School, the students have made it clear that they intend to play their part in ensuring we have a sustainable future, and they want their government to as well. They lobbied me very professionally and convincingly to hear their voices and to help them to have others hear their voices too. They have the backing of their fellow students. Very impressively, the Eco Team have collected 554 signatures from their school community on a petition calling on the House to declare that we're in a climate emergency, commit to reducing carbon emissions and commit to increasing action to reduce climate change impacts in Australia, particularly for those who are most vulnerable. It does them real credit that they are concerned for people who are most vulnerable. Frankston High School Eco Team presented me with their petition and asked me to table it in the parliament. I'm very proud to have the opportunity to seek leave to table their petition today on their behalf.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): The member doesn't need to seek leave. The document will be forwarded to the Petitions Committee for its consideration and will be accepted subject to confirmation by the committee that it conforms to standing orders.

Melbourne Electorate: Yarra Primary School

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (13:38): It's not often that you get to talk about 'the power of poo' in Parliament House, but thanks to the students at Yarra Primary School that's exactly what I'm going to do. In September this year I was delighted to visit Yarra Primary School to hear from the students about the Kids Teaching Kids program, a model that inspires young people to learn and care for their local environment by empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning. The students across years 3 to 6 showed me the presentations they were going to deliver to students from other schools. One notable project was about the power of poo, which discussed the sustainability benefits of human waste, while other students had studied the benefits of renewable energy. I think some of the students understood renewable energy better than some of the people in this parliament.

I was also lucky enough to tour their kitchen garden, which featured an impressive outdoor pizza oven, plenty of vegetables and a composting system. I was so impressed by their passion and understanding. These students are not only relishing the opportunity to learn about sustainability but also promoting those values in the school community. I congratulate the students who presented and participated in the Kids Teaching Kids Program. I'm sure that the audience were as impressed with their presentations as I was. I also want to congratulate the principal, teachers and staff of Yarra Primary School on the achievements of their
students. I thank them for inviting me to visit and for allowing me to brag about their achievements in this place.

**Spring into Armadale Festival**

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (13:39): Spring really is one of the best times of the year in the electorate of Burt, with the Spring into Armadale Festival underway. The wildflowers are blooming, and, back in the middle of October, we had the famous Kelmscott show. This year's show was not without drama with a gale-force wind destroying a number of stalls, including mine, early on Saturday morning. The rebuild efforts of the State Emergency Service and the Kelmscott Agricultural Society were amazing. They worked from the early hours of Saturday morning to make sure the gates were open and the show was safe for families to enjoy in a timely fashion.

Once the show was up and running, we had a fantastic couple of days celebrating everything that the Kelmscott area has to offer. I was proud to see the stronger communities grant I facilitated for the Kelmscott Agricultural Society last year paying dividends. The technology purchased with the grant made sure the promotion and running of the show was flawless.

The Kelmscott show is an institution; kicking off in 1897, it's even older than the Perth Royal Show. I've been to nearly every show every year of my life, so I'd like to think of myself as a bit of an expert, and this year's event really was fantastic. My three-year-old, Nicholas, was a huge fan—though not exactly of the loud fireworks, I have to confess. To all the volunteers, the community members and my dedicated 'Team Keogh' volunteers as well as our state MPs who helped out on my show at the stall and with cleaning up on Saturday morning: well done and thank you for all your hard work.

**Indigenous Advancement Strategy**

Mrs McINTOSH (Lindsay) (13:40): Getting local students into the jobs of the future means providing the best possible education today. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in my electorate of Lindsay, we are investing in their education so they are supported, prepared and equipped with the skills they need to take on their future. I was proud to announce with the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt, almost half a million dollars for two local organisations, the Nepean Community & Neighbourhood Services and Community Junction Inc., to help improve school attendance and keep local students engaged through their education journey. This is part of the Morrison government's Indigenous Advancement Strategy, which is investing $5.2 billion over four years to help Indigenous Australians get the best education and job opportunities, backing families and communities with practical, on-the-ground support.

There are over 6,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Lindsay. We are making sure young families in Lindsay are getting connected to local services so kids can get ready for school and stay engaged in school and get the best education. I welcomed Minister Wyatt to Lindsay to a grassroots community forum with local Aboriginal leaders and community organisations. As Minister Wyatt says, we can give Indigenous Australians a voice through conversation and understanding, not from loud voices in Canberra and in the media, but talking at a local level to make sure all voices are heard. I thank Minister Wyatt for
coming to Lindsay, and I look forward to working closely with our local Aboriginal community and with the minister on addressing priorities in my community. *(Time expired)*

**Little Bay Coast Centre for Seniors: 25th Anniversary**

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (13:42): I wish to congratulate all of the staff and volunteers of the Little Bay Coast Centre for Seniors, which celebrated its 25th anniversary last week. The centre is a meeting point for a strong and vibrant community of seniors and retirees in our area. The last quarter of a century has seen the Little Bay Coast Centre for Seniors have a big positive impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of older citizens in our community. Today, over 500 members take up most of the activities that are on offer at Little Bay, and this includes 60 classes each week, ranging from exercise activities, arts and crafts, new technologies, dancing and learning new languages. While it's located at the old Prince Henry Hospital site at Little Bay, the centre's catchment area spans over 16 local government areas with members travelling from Sydney to be part of this wonderful community. The broad appeal has seen the centre win multiple awards for services to the community since its formation in 1994. I was very pleased to join many of the founding members of this important institution at a lunch on Sunday. Particular congratulations go to the CEO, Linda Mearing, and the chairperson, Christine Kilcran, for the wonderful job that they do. Congratulations and happy 25th anniversary to the Little Bay Coast Centre for Seniors in my community.

**A Bloody Great Night Out!**

Dr MARTIN (Reid) (13:44): My electorate is home to a world-leading haematology clinical research unit located at Concord Hospital. Recently I attended and contributed to a significant fundraising initiative within Reid—A Bloody Great Night Out! The funds raised at the event target the centre's clinical trials for life-threatening blood cancers, such as leukaemia and lymphoma. Through the fantastic work of the Bloody Great Committee, the event raised over $215,000, which was well over the anticipated target. I must acknowledge the committee's board of directors for their hard work: committee chair Marie Piccin, Christina Efthymiades, Susan MacGregor, Mary Nassibian, Steven Nassibian, Professor Judith Trotman, Associate Professor Ilona Cunningham, Rosanna Campisi and Treasurer Paul Dovico.

Tragically, many Australians are diagnosed with rare blood cancers each year and around half of those diagnosed are children. For many, the treatments available through the centre's trial provide a better quality of life for patients with blood cancers. For some patients, the clinical trial is their only hope for a cure. At A Bloody Great Night Out! we heard stories from patients and survivors of blood cancer who have benefited from the centre's research. I am very proud of the initiative and the research that goes on at the Concord Cancer Centre and look forward to continuing efforts for the Bloody Great Committee.

**Solomon Electorate: Infrastructure**

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (13:45): We saw some signs of life from those opposite on the weekend in relation to some infrastructure funding that was dragged out of the never-never into the forward estimates. I guess something is better than nothing, but those commitments made by those opposite that weren't even in the forward estimates for the Northern Territory and for Darwin, which I represent, have now been brought into sometime in the next 18...
months. I’m sure that those opposite have heard all of the warnings from the RBA and a whole heap of reputable economists about the need for infrastructure spending now—not in 18 months, not in three or four years, which is where the majority of this funding still is out on the never-never, but actually brought forward to the here and now. We have funding for Kakadu National Park, that magnificent place in Australia that is world renowned. It has funding commitments over 10 years. We need to restore that park to its former glory and we need to do that now, not over 10 years from now. Those opposite in government have spent about six years—going into their seventh year—ignoring infrastructure needs in the Northern Territory, and they need to get on with it and bring forward that funding now.

Groom Electorate: 2020 Groom Electorate Calendar Photo Competition

Dr McVEIGH (Groom) (13:47): I announce the winners of the 2020 Groom electorate calendar photo competition. They were Annabelle Waugh, whose photo ‘Waiting for rain’ on a central Darling Downs property captured the essence of drought; Dalriada Green for ‘Lightning strikes over Glenvale’ and ‘Bowenville Reserve at Oakey Creek’; Navith Prashakthi for ‘Street art in the Walton Stores Lane Way’ and, of course, ‘City Hall Toowoomba’; Inge Gajczak for a barn at Aubigny, near Pittsworth; Iris Castle for her dogs, Lulu and Joey, on the bench in Laurel Bank Park; Michelle Crawford for ‘Windmills and sunset at Glencoe’ and ‘Hay bales and rolling hills on the Oakey Road at Silverleigh’; and Peter Granfield for ‘The White Horse Building in Ruthven Street’ and ‘Flowers in bloom during Carnival of Flowers week at Laurel Bank Park’. Mitch H also captured the carnival buzz with his ‘Ferris wheel surrounded by beautiful blooms at Queens Park’ at carnival time.

Cameron Baxter was the overall winner with his ‘Sunrise at Picnic Point,’ an iconic photograph and, just to the west of Toowoomba, given that the first photo points to the east, ‘Gowrie Mountain’. These are local artists showcasing the features of our region, the challenges that we face and, of course, what we celebrate as a community. I congratulate them all.

Chile: Human Rights

Mr KHALIL (Wills) (13:48): I rise in solidarity with Chilean Australians and their brothers and sisters in Chile over the decision over a month ago to call in the riot police and national army in a violent and repressive response to peaceful protests from Chileans standing up for something as basic as public transport fares. They were standing up for the right to fair wages, a pension, to make the basic cost of living and for a fundamentally fairer and more equal distribution and share of their nation’s economic wealth. We know that one per cent of Chileans have 33 per cent of the wealth. I know that, for many Chilean Australians, what is happening in Chile right now must be a horrible reminder of the violence they themselves or their parents or grandparents had to flee from when they fled the Pinochet regime decades ago. Just as prime ministers Gough Whitlam and Hawke supported Chilean Australians fleeing the Pinochet regime in the seventies and eighties, we are here also in solidarity with Chilean Australians.

Peaceful protest and freedom of association are fundamental principles of any democracy. We, as a democratic nation, must stand up and speak for these principles. We must stand up for those principles. If we don't, who will? We recognise the ongoing violence and political instability in Chile. We call and we hope that the Chilean government includes civil society,
unions, indigenous peoples in the work towards a new constitution to try and stabilise the country. We stand in solidarity with all Chilean Australians who are suffering right now.

**Indigenous Australians: Yuendumu**

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (13:50): Two weeks ago Constable Zachary Rolfe went to the Aboriginal community of Yuendumu to arrest 19-year-old Kumanjayi Walker. What followed was a shooting, which is a tragedy for Central Australia and for two families from two corners of our great nation. Walker had been in jail, charged with aggravated assault and assaulting police. Once freed, he breached his suspended sentence by returning to Yuendumu. Police had to act. As we know, at their first attempt police fled when he swung at them with a hatchet. Days later staff at the local medical clinic were evacuated for safety reasons. After a funeral, another date was negotiated. At that time, Rolfe was stabbed in the shoulder with scissors before then having the other police officer attacked but protected by his bulletproof vest. The shooting followed. It's all on video.

On Monday, the new police commissioner started work. With riots likely, the Northern Territory Chief Minister, Michael Gunner, announced an independent investigation. On the same day Rolfe's photo and name were leaked. The next day Rolfe was charged with murder and put in jail, allegedly before the DPP had even seen the body cam imagery.

The Chief Minister has offered, 'a healing process and going back to normal'—no mention of justice. What is normal, Chief Minister, in Yuendumu? Having been personally subjected to an incompetent, fumbling and ultimately abortive investigation myself in 2007, my simple question is: how extensive was this investigation and was the body cam footage seen by the DPP?

**Sikh Community**

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:51): The 12th of November marked the 550th birth anniversary of the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev ji. This has been much celebrated in my community. A revolutionary philosopher of his time, Guru Nanak championed values of equality, kindness and compassion in a period of South Asian history crippled by sectarian divides and inequality. The values advocated by Guru Nanak are consistently upheld by the Sikh community across Australia. We saw this captured amid the New South Wales bushfires with images of Sikh gurdwaras providing firefighters with warm meals.

In my electorate the work done by the Sikh community is an embodiment of Guru Nanak's teachings. Through the practice of Langar, our two Sikh gurdwaras provide free vegetarian meals to any individual who walks through their doors. An extension of this, local organisation Let's Feed supports school breakfast clubs and has recently partnered with United Sikhs in a community kitchen and food pantry to provide weekly meals to those in need.

To celebrate the teachings of Guru Nanak and the work of the Sikh community in Lalor I recently held a celebration. It was a wonderful morning spent reflecting on the philosophy of Guru Nanak, recognising the vibrancy of the Sikh community and what it brings to Lalor. I was also honoured to attend the first parkash ceremony of the Guru Granth Sahib here in the federal parliament. The teachings of quality, kindness and compassion are ones we should all take time to reflect on on this 550th earth anniversary of Guru Nanak.
**Generation Innovation**

**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (13:53): No generation has exclusive rights to good ideas. No particular age bracket owns entrepreneurship or innovation. Young Australians have great ideas but the challenge they have is commercialising those great ideas. Young Australians face three particular challenges if they do want to start up their own business and turn their idea into a reality. No 1: they don't have business experience. No. 2: they lack a business network. No 3: they lack the capital—the money to get going. That is why over five years ago, on the Sunshine Coast—Australia's most entrepreneurial region—we started a not-for-profit group called Generation Innovation that wraps those needs around young 15 to 25-year-olds—young people who want to have a go and who want to take an idea to market. We do that in a way that brings together business executives who are working on the Sunny Coast—marketing gurus. We wrap that support base around the young people. We let them thrive and we let their ideas move forward. We crowdfund locally for these groups. I'm delighted to announce to this parliament that the 2019 GI Challenge winner was Zariah Lamont with her fantastic new enterprise called X&O Media. Let the young people continue to thrive.

**Defence Facilities: Chemical Contamination**

**Ms SWANSON** (Paterson) (13:55): Last week I started a petition on behalf of the people of Williamtown—the residents in my community who, for the last five years, have been impacted by PFAS. In 2015, residents in Williamtown, Salt Ash, Fullerton Cove and other areas discovered that their lands, homes, produce and, in some cases, even their bodies were polluted with PFAS from RAAF Base Williamtown. There is no PFAS policy from this government. There are no answers for residents. Instead, there is a court case, which they initiated. Where is our Prime Minister? Time and time again, residents ask me, 'Why has the Prime Minister not been to talk to us, Meryl?' I can't give them an answer.

On the petition on my website people are saying: 'I live this nightmare every day—day and night. I am traumatised by not having a future.' That's Kim from Williamtown. 'I can't believe it's come to us signing a petition,' said Lisa from Fullerton Cove. 'This is absolutely disgraceful treatment of the residents,' says John from Salamander. The poisoning of the people of Australia while this government stands idly by is totally unacceptable. I will continue to endeavour to encourage people to sack you all at the next election. You are a disgrace to this country and the people you are supposed to represent,' said Cybele from Fern Bay. She has said it in the most effective language we can use. You can add your voice to this cry for help, because it's the only voice you've got at this point. Go to meryl.swanson.com.au.

*(Time expired)*

**Building Better Regions Fund**

**Mr PASIN** (Barker) (13:56): The Building Better Regions Fund focuses on creating jobs, driving economic growth and building stronger and more resilient regional communities into the future. Nationally, through the first three rounds the fund has supported a diverse range of important projects in regional areas, ranging from tourism and transport projects to cultural, sporting and healthcare facilities. My electorate of Barker is a truly community focused electorate, jam-packed with hardworking, dedicated volunteers and passionate constituents. That is one of the reasons why we have had so much success with the Building Better Regions Fund.
On Sunday, I attended the Naracoorte World Heritage Festival and Run, a project run with the Naracoorte Lucindale Council and supported by our government via a $20,000 grant from the fund. It was a brilliant event that celebrated 50 years since the discovery of fossils in the Naracoorte Caves and 25 years since the Naracoorte Caves precinct was listed as a World Heritage site. It's not just community events like this that are being supported. There are infrastructure projects too. From hydrotherapy pools in the Barossa, the Sturt Reserve recreation precinct in Murray Bridge and community halls in Mil-Lel and the Coonawarra, these projects are strengthening communities across Barker, with over $12 million invested through more than 40 projects.

Round 4 of the fund has opened and this round is focused on drought affected communities to help get local projects and infrastructure works underway to strengthen regional communities, keep tradies working and keep money flowing through local stores.

**Sikh Community**

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (13:58): Waheguru ji ka khalsa waheguru ji ki fateh. I am delighted to follow the member for Lalor in extending my heartfelt congratulations to the Sikh community on the occasion of the 550th anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. Guru Nanak was a leader, teacher and social reformer. Although he is long gone, his teachings have had an enduring impact on the world. He taught that a person is not determined by some social label or innate characteristic, but, rather, by the way in which one interacts with those around them and the goodness in their hearts. Guru Nanak rejected the caste system and the poor treatment of women as antiquated, often resulting in strong criticism from many of his contemporaries. He was a man ahead of his time. His emphasis on love and respect are everlasting teachings, and they are, too, Australian values.

As the member for Greenway, I have the privilege of representing a large and vibrant Sikh community in north-west Sydney. We've seen the service and community mindedness for which Sikhs are known during the recent support for exhausted firefighters protecting homes in Sydney. Many of my professional relationships with local Sikhs have blossomed into personal friendships. I'm so grateful for your passionate advocacy and belief that we can build a stronger society together. To all Sikhs, I wish you happiness and peace on the 550th anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak. May we all strive to learn from his example and make this country fairer and more equal.

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

**STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

Abel, Mr John

The SPEAKER (14:00): I inform the House of the death, on 19 November 2019, of John Arthur Abel, a member of this House for the division of Evans from 1975 until 1977. As a mark of respect to the memory of John Abel, I invite all present to rise in their places.

Honourable members stood in their places.
GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH
Address-in-Reply

The SPEAKER (14:01): For the information of honourable members, I have ascertained that His Excellency the Governor-General will be pleased to receive the address-in-reply at Government House at 5 pm on Wednesday 4 December—next week. The sitting will be suspended at the conclusion of discussion of the matter of public importance. I should be glad if the mover and the seconder, together with other honourable members, would accompany me to present the address.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE
Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is addressed to the Prime Minister. Moments ago it was revealed that the New South Wales Police have formed Strike Force Garrad to investigate possible criminal behaviour connected to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. What action will the Prime Minister take?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:02): I would simply note that any investigations that are undertaken are matters for authorities in places other than here. I would refer the member to those authorities in terms of what they are doing.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left!

Mr MORRISON: There seem to be presumptions made by those on the other side, which they have a habit of making. If they wish to make smears against members, there are standing orders that prevent them from doing that—and I assume that is what they are seeking to do on this occasion.

Economy

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (14:03): My question is for the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister outline to the House how the Morrison government's stable and certain economic management is enabling Australians to plan their economic future with certainty?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:03): Members of this place will know that this is not the first time Australians have faced economic challenges in our history. But I tell you what, our government has great confidence in the Australian people. We know that Australians have it fully within their capacity to confront whatever challenges they face. We have seen that most recently in their strength and resilience in relation to drought, in relation to bushfires and in relation to the many challenges that we face globally as there are pressures in the global economy that impact on our own. Despite that, our economy continues to grow. Despite that, jobs continued to be added over the course of the past year and over the course of our government. And Australians continue to go out there and back themselves and make decisions for themselves and for their future.
Our plan gives Australians the confidence that they need; it gives them the ability to plan for their future with confidence by putting the settings in place that enable Australians to back themselves. That plan involves ensuring lower taxes both now and into the future—

Dr Chalmers interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Rankin will cease interjecting!

Mr MORRISON: lower taxes that we have already legislated, opposed tooth and nail by the Labor Party at the last election—dragged kicking and screaming—and those tax reductions legislated for the future. So Australians know that the better they do in the years ahead, the better they invest, the more chances they take and the more they put themselves out there. They know they're being backed by a government which enables them to keep more of what they earn so they can plan to earn more. They're backed by a tax system under this government which means they can keep more of what they earn.

By building the infrastructure that our economy needs to grow, by ensuring that we have stable and certain financial management which keeps expenditure under control, which keeps taxes down, which ensures that we can pay down debt and we don't increase taxes and increase the burden on Australians, they can plan confidently for their future. We can guarantee the essentials that Australians rely on at the same time as managing our budget. That means $6 billion extra this year and next financial year for health and education, $2 billion extra and more for aged care, and a staggering $9 billion more this year and next year to support the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which will see another 170,000 people come into that scheme over this year and next year, and with a budget to support it. We are taking action now on climate change—without taking people's jobs with the reckless targets that those opposite would prescribe and without putting upward pressure on power prices—and ensuring that we keep Australians safe. That's the agenda which means Australians can plan for their future with confidence. The chaos panic merchants of the other side would blow it all away.

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:06): My question is again addressed to the Prime Minister. The ministerial code makes it the personal responsibility of the Prime Minister to decide whether to stand aside a minister in the exact circumstances that the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction now finds himself in. Prime Minister, the New South Wales Police have established Strike Force Garrad into the potential criminal behaviour of a minister sitting on your front bench right now. Prime Minister, why is he still sitting there? When will you stand him aside? (Time expired)

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:06): The information that you're referring to has not been presented to me—

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will pause for a second. Members on my left will cease interjecting. I will deal very harshly with those interjecting. I thank the member for Sydney for acknowledging that. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr MORRISON: The matters that the Opposition Leader refers to have not been provided to me or presented to me by the New South Wales Police. I have not been advised of those developments. I think that deals with the issues he has raised in relation to the code.
Can I say about the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction—I think I can understand why those opposite have taken such a keen interest in him, because he's responsible for policies that we are finally starting to see stabilise electricity prices in this country and take the pressure off Australian families—

Ms Burney interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Barton is warned.

Mr MORRISON: He's overseeing an emissions reduction program which is taking action on climate change without taking the jobs of Australians, which is the policy of those opposite.

Ms Burney interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Barton has been warned.

Mr MORRISON: I am enabling the minister to continue to get about his job, which is about getting power prices down and which is about meeting our important commitments to take action on climate change.

Those opposite may not like the progress he is making as a minister. They may feel uncomfortable about the progress that this minister is making. But, at the end of the day, the Australian people will know, when they see their power bills start to stabilise, and when they see the fact that we are taking the action that we need to on climate change without taking their jobs, that the Labor Party once again is on another frolic—and we know where these frolics always end.

Ms Burney interjecting—

Ms Kearney interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Cooper's warned. The member for Barton was warned twice and continued to interject. She will leave under 94(a).

The member for Barton then left the chamber.

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

Mr Albanese: I am, Mr Speaker. I seek leave to table The Daily Telegraph article, 'NSW Police to investigate 'fraudulent' document claim against Angus Taylor', and The Guardian article—

Mr Tim Wilson: Oh, it must be right!

Mr Albanese: You just detach yourself; that's fine. The article, 'NSW police investigating doctored document Angus Taylor used in Clover Moore attack'. I seek leave to table those documents.

The SPEAKER: I will just say that I've made it clear previously that documents that are readily available—

Mr Albanese: He doesn't have them.

Mr Husic interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley, whose voice I recognise—I can't see him behind the Manager of Opposition Business—will cease interjecting. The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order.
Mr Burke: The Prime Minister specifically, in his answer, said that he did not have this information; therefore, it is appropriate that we be able to seek leave to table.

The SPEAKER: Okay, you can seek leave. The Leader of the House?

Leave not granted.

Infrastructure

Mr DRUM (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (14:10): 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 is providing stability and certainty through the delivery of infrastructure projects, particularly in my electorate of Nicholls?

Mr MCCORMACK (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of the Nationals) (14:10): In good news for Australia, the trade bills have just passed in the Senate. Much of our infrastructure—indeed, all of our infrastructure—is predicated on the fact that we're getting these trade arrangements organised with trading partners. We need to get product to port and then port to overseas countries quicker. That's what we're doing, such as with the Echuca-Moama bridge. That particular piece of infrastructure, where we've now provided an additional $28.7 million in the electorate of the member for Nicholls, is going to ensure the safer passage of product to port and then on to some of those countries with which we've just arranged, in the Senate, more bilateral trading relationships. So well done to the Senate! Well done to the parliament! This is delivery in action. This is what the Liberals and Nationals do. This is what we promised on 18 May and this is what we are delivering to the people, particularly in regional communities. They're doing it tough at the moment with the drought. They need better infrastructure.

That's why, last week, we brought forward a considerable amount of infrastructure—billions of dollars. We've got a $100 billion infrastructure rollout across this nation. It includes such projects as the $14½ million commitment to the Mitiamo water supply scheme. I know how important that is for Nicholls, I know how important it is for rural Victoria and I know how important it is for the committee chair of the Mitiamo project, Neil Allen. He and so many other farmers in that region turned up to that windswept football oval when we announced it, and they were absolutely delighted. They knew that for many decades they'd fought for water security. They knew that for many decades they'd fought for better outcomes for infrastructure in their rural Victorian region. And the member for Nicholls delivered, as he always does. He's a good member. He, like all of us—over on that side too—are going to enjoy the benefits of the $100 billion infrastructure rollout that we are doing over the next decade.

We've brought a lot of it forward at the request of state governments, and they're not all Liberal and National state governments. Some of them are Labor governments. They've put their priority projects forward, and we've answered that call. We're getting shovels in the ground. We're getting excavators behind those projects. More broadly, there are 130 major government funded projects under construction across the country. The benefit of that is that it's supporting 85,000 jobs—85,000 people are in work because of the $100 billion infrastructure rollout.
We're prioritising projects in metropolitan cities—I appreciate that the urban infrastructure minister is doing a good job in that regard—and particularly in regional Australia. They're doing it tough with bushfires, doing it tough with drought, but they're still resilient enough to know that this infrastructure rollout is going to help them. It will rain again. The good times are ahead and, when they are, that infrastructure's going to be in place to benefit all of Australia. *(Time expired)*

*Mr Fitzgibbon interjecting—*

The **SPEAKER**: I'll just remind the member for Hunter that he's scheduled to do the MPI.

**Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction**

**Mr ALBANESE** *(Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition)* *(14:13)*: My question is again addressed to the Prime Minister. What actions is he taking, given the Strike Force Garrad investigation into the minister for emissions reduction and given his Statement of Ministerial Standards says, 'Ministers must accept that it is for the Prime Minister to decide whether and when a minister should stand aside if that minister becomes the subject of an official investigation of alleged illegal or improper conduct'? That's 7.1, Prime Minister. What are you going to do to implement it?

**Mr MORRISON** *(Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service)* *(14:14)*: This is a very recent matter, and I will be happy to take advice from the New South Wales police in relation to any matters that they're pursuing.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**Mr MORRISON**: I will be taking advice from the New South Wales police on any matter that they are currently looking at, and I will form a view, based on taking that advice, in considering these issues. I would only note this, Mr Speaker—

*Ms Butler interjecting—*

The **SPEAKER**: Member for Griffith!

**Mr MORRISON**: And the Leader of the Opposition may want to reflect on the standard that he is setting. I would simply note this: if there are any questions ever being raised in any such investigations by any member sitting on that bench—well, he has clearly set a standard.

*Ms Butler interjecting—*

The **SPEAKER**: The member for Griffith is warned. The Leader of the Opposition?

**Mr Albanese**: I seek leave to table the Australian government's Statement of Ministerial Standards.

Leave not granted.

**Mental Health**

**Dr HAINES** *(Indi)* *(14:15)*: This question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, before the election, you announced $14.5 million funding for Albury Wodonga Health, comprising $12 million for a 20-bed mental health rehabilitation unit and $2.5 million for specialist outpatient services. This funding was meant to significantly boost mental health services urgently needed in my rural community, yet the minister's department has now said the first payment won't come until 2022 and the remainder is not in sight until 2025. This is too long
to wait. Minister, will you follow through on your government's commitment to making mental health a key priority and immediately bring this funding forward?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (14:16): I want to thank the member for Indi. This new mental health rehabilitation unit at Albury Wodonga hospital was developed in conjunction with the Albury Wodonga hospital, with the then CEO, and, very significantly, it was done as a part of an overall package to assist the people of Indi. We worked with the member's predecessor, and we also worked with Steve Martin, who was the candidate for Indi in our time, and the member for Farrer, who has played a very important role in the development. Services that we have supported—of which this is part of a broader package—include bringing forward a new headspace for Wangaratta; that headspace for Wangaratta includes $1½ million for establishment and operation, and related to that is the Grit and Resilience program, developed by the community for the community, with $1.2 million. That is part of a broader $46 million primary health network investment in mental health.

On top of that, we also developed, with the community, the $14½ million plan for the Albury Wodonga hospital. The timing and nature of that was established as part of a master plan being developed, and I'm happy to table the statement about the master plan, which was presented by the Albury Wodonga hospital at the time. This was developed with the hospital and by the hospital, on the timing that was discussed with the CEO—and that was only confirmed yesterday.

Most significantly, what that means is that there will be new facilities that are available to assist people with mental health challenges as they transition from hospital care to the community. Very importantly, it is part of a broader master plan that is being developed. I am aware that part of the challenge here is that, whilst we are delivering on exactly the timeframe that was part of the master plan, the state may not be able to deliver, and therefore, as a consequence, their new CEO is under pressure to renegotiate that which was agreed. I will, accordingly, be writing to the Victorian Minister for Health to seek an assurance that the Victorian government will deliver their part of the master plan—which they have yet to complete—on time, in full, which will then allow us to deliver, on time, in full. If they are able to bring forward their plans, then we will be able to bring forward the plans. They are currently on track, however, to delay their plans. But we will continue, on exactly the time frame we agreed, to deliver better health services for the people of Albury Wodonga and the broader Indi region.

Economy

Ms HAMMOND (Curtin) (14:19): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer explain to the House how the Morrison government's stable and certain financial management, particularly paying down Labor's debt, is ensuring that we can provide the essential services Australia can rely on? Is the Treasurer aware of any alternative policies that will damage Australia's economy?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Treasurer) (14:19): I thank the member for Curtin for her question and acknowledge her extensive experience as a vice-chancellor and as a leading legal academic before she came into this place. While those opposite will recklessly talk down the Australian economy, the Australian people know how resilient the Australian economy is. In the face of significant domestic and global headwinds—we've had a punishing
drought, which has seen agricultural output down by around 14 per cent in the last two years, and we see continued trade tensions, particularly between the US and China, which the IMF estimate will see a fall in global GDP by around $700 billion by next year. But, despite all of that, the Australian economy continues to grow, in its 29th consecutive year of economic growth.

While other major economies like the United Kingdom, South Korea and Germany have experienced negative economic growth this year, the Australian economy continues to grow. We have a AAA credit rating. We've seen more than 1.4 million new jobs created. We have the first balanced budget in 11 years. The coalition and members on this side of the House will deliver the first surplus in 12 years. That will enable us to start paying down Labor's debt—debt that today sees an interest bill of around $19 billion a year. That's more than double what we spend on child care and nearly as much as we spend on schools. That is the cost of the debt that the Labor Party left the Australian people when they left office.

Mr Perrett interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton is warned.

Mr FRYDENBERG: Not only are we getting the budget back in the black; we're also spending record amounts on schools, hospitals, infrastructure, aged care and, importantly, drought support—as well as reducing taxes so that Australians can keep more of what they earn and earn more.

The election was some 200 days ago. Since that time the Labor Party have changed their leader; they've changed their deputy leader; they've changed the chirpy shadow Treasurer; they've changed the shadow finance minister; they've had these so-called 'listening tours' around the country; and they've had a review in which the member for Hindmarsh said nothing would be sacrosanct. He said it would be ruthless and that everything was on the table—except one big thing: $387 billion of higher taxes. Those are the taxes that the Leader of the Opposition owns—$387 billion of higher taxes. (Time expired)

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:23): My question is again to the Prime Minister. It goes to events under a different coalition Prime Minister, when Arthur Sinodinos had the integrity to stand aside from the ministry even though a police investigation was never commenced. Strike Force Garrad has now commenced. It's investigating the potential criminality of the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. Why is he still here on your front bench, Prime Minister?

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney is warned.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:23): I would refer the member to clauses 7.1 and 7.2 of the Statement of Ministerial Standards. That makes very clear the process. I don't take the Leader of the Opposition's word for these matters. What I will do is what I said in response to the last question: I will speak directly to the New South Wales Police Force and understand the nature of what these reports are, and then I will make the necessary assessments of that case at that time. I'm not going to take lectures from the Leader of the Opposition, who is a member of a New South Wales branch that had New South Wales government ministers in prison. Eddie's coming out in December,
but it doesn't make any difference to the fact that he is a member of a rotten branch of the Labor Party.

**National Security**

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (14:24): My question is to the Minister for Home Affairs. Will the minister outline to the House the stable and certain approach that the Morrison government is taking to protect Australia and its institutions from the threat of foreign interference?

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Home Affairs) (14:25): I thank the honourable member for his question. As all Australians know, the Morrison government are absolutely committed to making sure that we protect our nation and our people and, importantly, our sovereignty, and we do take foreign interference very, very seriously. As the Director-General of Security has consistently stated, the Australian public—our country—faces an unprecedented level of foreign interference, and we're going to deal with it. As the Prime Minister has stated, the government is of course not naive to the threats that we face. We've been actively strengthening our capacity to protect Australia from foreign interference.

I'm pleased to inform the House that no nation is better equipped to deal with this issue. In April of last year, the government appointed the first ever national Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator to coordinate whole-of-government efforts to respond to acts of foreign interference and administer Australia's counter foreign interference strategy.

One of the things we can derive as a benefit from managing the economy well is a further investment into our intelligence and security agencies. When Labor lost control of our borders, they spent billions of dollars trying to fix a problem of their own making. They took money out of the agencies, including ASIO, the Federal Police, the ACIC and others to pay for their broken borders. We on this side fixed the borders. The government have managed the economy well, the budget well, and we have invested some $35 million over four years in the most recent budget as follows: we've put $14.5 million into ASIO; we've put $6.7 million into the Australian Federal Police; $8½ million for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; a million dollars for the AG's Department; and $3.9 million for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. ASIO's budget for the current financial year is the highest it's ever been, as a result of us managing the budget well.

We have also introduced a number of legislative measures to tighten our laws to make it more difficult for foreign actors to interfere, and that includes the National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Act, the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act, the Security of Critical Infrastructure Act and the Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Funding and Disclosure Reform) Act.

As we know, when Labor is in opposition or in government, they seek to water down every national security bill. We on this side are not going to stand for that. I want to provide another reassurance today to the Australian public that the Morrison government will do everything possible to keep the Australian public safe. It's within our DNA and we will work day and night to make sure that we keep our country and our people safe.

**Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction**

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:28): My question is again addressed to the Prime Minister, and I refer to his previous answers, where he said that he will
contact the New South Wales Police about Strike Force Garrad, regarding the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. Will he assure the police and this House that the minister for emissions reduction will do what he hasn't done for this parliament and state exactly what the origins of this doctored document about the City of Sydney mayor were?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:28): The only reference I could make to the Leader of the Opposition's investigative capacity would be as Inspector Clouseau.

Mr Dreyfus: Answer the question.

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs has been warned.

Mr MORRISON: I'm going to leave the matter of pursuing these issues to the New South Wales Police. I will speak directly to the New South Wales Police, I will consider the information they provide me about this matter and I will exercise my responsibilities under the standards once I have had the opportunity to have those discussions. What I won't do is engage in the breathlessness of the Leader of the Opposition. I won't engage in that. I calmly consider my responsibilities. I soberly consider serious matters. I don't rush to the judgement of the Leader of the Opposition. And I know why this is happening today, because in the other place we are dealing with the ensuring integrity bill. That's the bill they're dealing with over there, and the militant unionism that this mob over here want to engage in a protection racket.

I was wondering what the collective noun was for a group of militant unionists. I think it's called a thuggery of unionists. It's that thuggery that this Leader of the Opposition wants to protect by not supporting the government's bill to ensure that union thugs—

The SPEAKER: I'd just say to the Prime Minister—

Mr MORRISON: are held to account.

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister—

Mr MORRISON: This is a smokescreen, and he's running a protection racket for union thugs.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition?

Mr Albanese: I would ask that the Prime Minister's last statement, where he made a very specific allegation against me, be withdrawn.

The SPEAKER: I might have heard it slightly differently. If I didn't hear it correctly, I apologise. I don't want to put the Leader of the Opposition in a position where he has to repeat the remark. What I heard was something that's outlined in Practice pretty clearly, which was something fairly general.

Mr Albanese: No, it was pointed at me.

The SPEAKER: I can only go on what's said. I can't get into hand gestures and all the rest. The Leader of the Opposition?

Mr Albanese: I'd invite you to ask the Prime Minister to do the right thing and show integrity and withdraw it.
The SPEAKER: All I can do in this circumstance is say to a minister or a Prime Minister if they made an unparliamentary remark to withdraw it. As I said, if I'd heard that I would have acted straightaway. I thought it was a general observation that's covered in Practice.

Employment

Mr THOMPSON (Herbert) (14:32): My question is to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business. Will the minister outline to the House how the stable and certain approach of the Morrison government is helping ensure that Australians have the skills they need and the skills employers need for them both to be successful?

Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson—Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) (14:32): I thank the member for his question. He, like everyone on this side of the House, understands how important it is that businesses have access to skilled and job-ready workers. We understand how important it is for workers to be able to access the skills that they need, because skills are the opportunity for them to proceed and to do well and the opportunity for all Australians to do well. We understand how important it is that we have a world-class vocational education and training sector here in Australia.

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The minister will pause. The member for Sydney has been warned. She now knows what happens.

The member for Sydney then left the chamber.

The SPEAKER: The minister can continue.

Mrs ANDREWS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. That has given me the opportunity to point out that when Labor were last in office, in their last year, they oversaw nine successive cuts to employer incentives in vocational education—$1.2 billion in cuts. Those opposite were responsible for bringing vocational education and training in this country to its knees, and we are the ones that have methodically gone about rebuilding vocational education and training in this sector, starting with the announcement of the Joyce review about 12 months ago and then announcing its recommendations just in April this year. That was on top of the investment of $585 million.

I'm about to do a Jacinda Ardern. I'm going to do a run through of our achievements, and I'm going to do it for the last seven months. Let's go. We have appointed and announced the Interim National Skills Commissioner, Adam Boynton. We've appointed and announced the National Careers Ambassador, Scott Cam. We have the review of the Australian Apprenticeships National Skills Needs List underway. We have commenced nationwide consultations with stakeholders to design the National Skills Commission, the National Careers Institute and Skills Organisation pilots. We've got agreement on and announced reforms to the Australian Skills Quality Authority. We've announced a Skills Organisation pilot in the mining sector. We've announced Industry Training Hubs—including in the member for Herbert's electorate in Townsville—so that we can build connections between local industries and schools. We've commenced the Productivity Commission's review of the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development. We hosted the inaugural COAG skills—

Opposition members interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Cooper and the member for Gorton are warned.

Mrs ANDREWS: on 20 September, where members agreed on three reform priorities for the VET system: relevance, quality and accessibility. We hosted the second council just last—

(Time expired)

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:35): My question is again addressed to the Prime Minister. I refer to his previous answers where he said he will contact New South Wales police about Strike Force Garrad into the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction and the doctored document about Clover Moore. Will the Prime Minister commit to fully cooperate with any request for information from the New South Wales police about this scandal?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:36): Like with all matters that are pursued by any law enforcement authorities, the Commonwealth always cooperates fully with all of those matters, which you would expect us to do—and of course we would! Just because the opposition has referred matters to the New South Wales police and just because the opposition have referred so many matters, on so many members—and they have all ended up going absolutely nowhere at the end of the day—forgive me for not leaping to the conclusions that the Leader of the Opposition has on this day; breathlessly coming to the dispatch box and making the allegations that he is making against the member and minister.

I understand why the Leader of the Opposition wants to distract attention today. It's not just because there are 65 representatives of the CFMMEU before the courts across 28 separate matters brought by the ABCC—

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

Mr Albanese: It goes to relevance. I don't have the capacity to demand that the New South Wales police launch a strike force into one of his ministers. That is what the Prime Minister is suggesting.

The SPEAKER: I just want to say to the Prime Minister before he resumes—and I was about to say this to the Prime Minister—he's entitled to compare and contrast briefly, which he's been doing, but not extensively. He's got to stick to the aspects of the question that he was asked. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr MORRISON: To go to the question again: of course we will cooperate with any and all matters. I would just hope that the Leader of the Opposition, once we've had the opportunity to review these matters fully, if it is indeed the case that he has jumped the shark here—

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition!

Mr MORRISON: You're getting a bit excited, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: No, I've asked the member for Isaacs to cease interjecting a couple of times. I've already warned him. Don't say a thing for the next hour, okay?

Government members interjecting—
The SPEAKER: Members on my right! If people want to start taking bets they can, but that's what I've asked. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr MORRISON: Once we have worked through this matter, I would just simply hope that the Leader of the Opposition will do the decent thing, if indeed this is just one of the many occasions upon which the opposition have made these references and they have ended up nowhere, that just once, maybe, they might want to walk back from the breathless accusations that they've made.

Building and Construction Industry

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (14:39): My question is to the Attorney-General and the Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the Attorney outline to the House the Morrison government's stable and certain approach to ensuring the integrity of registered organisations and the importance of providing cost-effective infrastructure? Is the Attorney aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (14:39): I thank the member for his question. Of course, as all the members on this side of the House understand, construction is a critical part of the Australian economy, and it is a massive part of the spend that this government is investing in the Australian economy—$100 billion in transport infrastructure construction, and that's $40 billion over the forward estimates.

To understand exactly how important construction is to the Australian economy, it needs to be realised that it's the third-largest employer in Australia. It employs one in 10 Australian workers. Ninety-nine per cent of the 383,000 businesses are small businesses in construction—that's the tradies and the businesses with under 20 people—and having strong laws to maintain the rule of law on construction sites is absolutely critical to the Australian economy. And it will interest, no doubt, every member on this side of the House to know that the total working days lost to industrial disputes in the construction industry was six times higher by the time Labor last left office to the time when they took office.

Prior to the introduction of the Australian Building and Construction Commission, which, of course, members opposite opposed in 2005, there were five times the average number of industrial disputes in the construction sector compared to every other industry sector. In fact, since the ABCC was re-established by this government, the total days lost in the construction industry has been cut in half. Sadly, the rate of industrial disputation, though, is still three times the average of all other industries. Why is that the case? That is the case because the CFMMEU business model is to bully, lie, coerce, trespass and obstruct. And what does that look like? That looks like a 30 per cent increase in the cost of vital infrastructure, like schools, roads and hospitals.

As the BCA and Infrastructure Australia have said, infrastructure projects are 40 per cent more expensive here than they are in the United States. How does that happen? What is the business model? Well, that's the CFMMEU unlawfully shutting down a crane company, who loses over six weeks of work. That's the CFMMEU in Victoria illegally using vehicles to blockade a worksite, stopping concrete pours. That's the CFMMEU in Queensland lying and intimidating a landscaper who's a contractor to force him to be a member of the union. In fact, it was said yesterday by the State Secretary of the New South Wales AMWU, 'We need
strong, democratic and militant unions'—not just strong unions or democratic unions, 'We need militant unions.' He went on to say, 'Well done Tony Burke for standing up proudly to defend our movement.' Well done for standing up for union militancy, because that's what you stand up for. We stand up for the rule of law on construction sites.

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

Mr BUTLER (Hindmarsh) (14:43): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. Why did the minister block access under freedom of information to more than 200 documents about his use of false figures in official ministerial correspondence? Is it because he knows that the documents reveal that he misled the House when he claimed he downloaded false figures from the City of Sydney website? Will he now assure the House that all 200 documents will be provided to the New South Wales Police Force's Strike Force Garrad?

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I'm just going to say to those interjecting: cease interjecting. I need to hear the point of order. I've said this many times: if they interject, they'll be out of the House. The Leader of the House on a point of order.

Mr Porter: The first point of order is with respect to standing order 100, about inferences and imputations. The use of the word 'blocking' carries a very strong and clear imputation and inference. I might note that if that word is to be included in the question, the question needs to be directed to me as the minister in charge of freedom of information, pursuant to standing order 98. I would be happy to take the question on notice to determine whether or not that inference and imputation is correct, but I very much doubt that it is.

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order?

Mr Burke: Yes, Mr Speaker. I simply refer to your earlier rulings about the opportunity for the minister, if he disagrees with some of the words of the question, to make that clear in his answer.

The SPEAKER: I thank both the Leader of the House and the Manager of Opposition Business. As I've made clear before, for a number of years now on this topic—as have previous speakers, particularly Speaker Andrew—whilst the standing orders were quoted accurately by the Leader of the House, the Practice has been lenient with respect to inferences and imputations. That's certainly been the case. Indeed, Speaker Andrew pointed out that, if they were strictly enforced, most questions would simply not be in order or would not be able to be asked. I've always said I'm happy to look at how we might change things in the future, but if we had a strict reading of questions I would have a very strict reading of the standing orders around answers, and that could obviously change the nature of things. The other point that Speaker Andrew made was that ruling questions out of order on that basis does prevent the minister from having any opportunity, as the Manager of Opposition Business said. So on this occasion I'm going to allow the question to proceed. It's up to the minister how he deals with that.

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (14:46): As I said yesterday, I made a statement on 25 October, which I tabled in the House yesterday. As I said in that statement, this is an outrageous accusation against me by the Labor Party. But to answer the question: of course I'll cooperate with any matter of this sort. As I said in my
statement, I reject absolutely the suggestion that I or any members of my staff altered the
documents in question. I won't be lectured to by the party of Aldi bags and wine boxes full of
cash. I am not going to be lectured to about integrity in the week that Labor is celebrating
Eddie Obeid coming out on parole.

Drought

Dr WEBSTER (Mallee) (14:47): My question is to the Minister for Water Resources,
Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management. Will the minister
outline to the House how the Morrison-McCormack government's stable and certain budget
management allows it to back our drought-stricken farmers and communities?

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa—Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance,
Natural Disaster and Emergency Management) (14:47): I thank the member for Mallee for
her question. The member for Mallee knows better than anyone the impacts this severe
drought is having on her own communities. In fact, a couple of months ago I was out with
farmers in Milawa, just outside Mildura. I was sitting and listening to them, hearing what's
working and what more needs to be done in our drought response. It reaffirmed to me that our
government's three-pillar response is having an impact.

The first of the three pillars is around the here and now. It's putting money in farmers'
pockets, keeping them going until it rains—and it will rain. The second pillar is supporting
those communities that support our farmers to get through this drought. They're also impacted
by this. The third pillar is the future. We're the first government to face up to the next drought.
What happens when it rains is that the next drought starts the day after it rains, and we have to
prepare for that now. So we're putting aside $100 million a year in dividends to be able to
build resilience and also putting aside over $3 billion in water infrastructure to harvest the
water, dig holes and make sure that we grow regional Australia.

Some of the feedback which came back from the Milawa farmers that is evident in our next
tranche of funding—over $709 million of the now over $8 billion in commitments to the
drought—is our centrepiece through the Regional Investment Corporation loans, our drought
loans. We've retweaked the loans and allowed them to change to allow farmers to refinance
up to $2 million from their bank to the Regional Investment Corporation and pay no interest
and make no repayment for two years. That will save a farmer on 6½ per cent over $150,000
in principal and interest. We are taking that out of big banks' hands and we are putting it back
into farmers' pockets, helping their cash flow.

We're also saying to those farmers that they can use it, as I heard from those Milawa
farmers, to pay for the fodder and freight. That's a state responsibility, but we are going to
help them. We understand the impact that it has on their cash flow. We're saying that, when it
rains, you will be able to replant and restock with these no-interest, no-repayment loans,
because it takes time for your crop to grow to harvest and it takes time for your produce to
grow and get to market. We understand the cash flows of these farmers. But we've extended
it. For the first time we're taking it to the small businesses that support the agriculture sector,
whose cash flow is directly linked to the agriculture sector through services and products.
We're giving them the same terms for loans up to $500,000. We haven't forgotten the second
pillar. We have put over $400 million in direct stimulus to keep tradies moving, to keep towns
going through this drought.
There is also some support we can get from the states. I've written to all the states to say, 'Come with us.' This is above just one level of government. We all have a responsibility. Pay the rates, the payroll tax, and give Crown leasehold holidays to our farmers and small businesses to support them through this drought. If we stand shoulder to shoulder with one another, then we stand to make sure that regional and rural Australia survives one of the worst droughts in our history.

MOTIONS

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:50): I seek leave to move the following motion:

That the House:

(1) notes that:
    (a) on the evening of 23 October 2019, The Guardian reported the Minister for Emissions Reduction had used incorrect figures from the City of Sydney Annual Report 2017-18 in a letter to the Lord Mayor of Sydney;
    (b) on 24 October 2019, the Minister told the House "The document was drawn directly from the City of Sydney's website";
    (c) despite the Minister's claim, all the evidence to date is that no such document ever existed on the website, the altered document has only ever been produced by the Minister's office and the doctored figures have only ever been used by the Minister in his official Ministerial correspondence;
    (d) today, the NSW Police confirmed that it had launched Strike Force Garrad to investigate the matter; and
    (e) paragraph 7.1 of the Ministerial Standards make clear that it is for the Prime Minister to stand aside a Minister if that Minister becomes the subject of an official investigation of alleged illegal conduct; and

(2) therefore, calls on the Prime Minister to do what only he can under the Ministerial Standards and immediately stand the Minister for Emissions Reduction down.

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 that:
    (a) on the evening of 23 October 2019, The Guardian reported the Minister for Emissions Reduction had used incorrect figures from the City of Sydney Annual Report 2017-18 in a letter to the Lord Mayor of Sydney;
    (b) on 24 October 2019, the Minister told the House "The document was drawn directly from the City of Sydney's website";
    (c) despite the Minister's claim, all the evidence to date is that no such document ever existed on the website, the altered document has only ever been produced by the Minister's office and the doctored figures have only ever been used by the Minister in his official Ministerial correspondence;
    (d) today, the NSW Police confirmed that it had launched Strike Force Garrad to investigate the matter; and

CHAMBER
(e) paragraph 7.1 of the Ministerial Standards make clear that it is for the Prime Minister to stand aside a Minister if that Minister becomes the subject of an official investigation of alleged illegal conduct; and

(2) therefore, calls on the Prime Minister to do what only he can under the Ministerial Standards and immediately stand the Minister for Emissions Reduction down.

The fact is: they don’t like scrutiny—

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (14:54): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

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

The House divided. [14:58]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

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

AYES

Alexander, JG  Allen, K
Andrews, KJ  Andrews, KL
Archer, BK  Bell, AM
Broadbent, RE  Buchholz, S
Chester, D  Christensen, GR
Conaghan, PJ  Connelly, V
Coulton, M  Drum, DK (teller)
Dutton, PC  Entsch, WG
Evans, TM  Falinski, JG
Fletcher, PW  Flint, NJ
Frydenberg, JA  Gee, AR
Gillespie, DA  Goodenough, IR
Hammond, CM  Hastie, AW
Hawke, AG  Hogan, KJ
Howarth, LR  Hunt, GA
Irons, SJ  Joyce, BT
Kelly, C  Laming, A
Landry, ML  Leeser, J
Ley, SP  Littleproud, D
Liu, G  Marino, NB
Martin, FB  McCormack, MF
McIntosh, MI  McVeigh, JJ
Morrison, SJ  Morton, B
O’Brien, LS  O’Brien, T
Pasin, A  Pearce, GB
Pitt, KJ  Porter, CC
Price, ML  Ramsey, RE (teller)
Robert, SR  Sharma, DN
Simmonds, J  Stevens, J
Sukkar, MS  Taylor, AJ
Tehan, DT  Thompson, P
Tudge, AE  van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB  Webster, AE
Wicks, LE  Wilson, RJ
Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (15:01): Is the motion seconded?

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (15:01): Speaker, it is seconded. They don't like scrutiny—not by the media, not even by the police and certainly not by the parliament—

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:01): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.
The Speaker: The question is that the Manager of Opposition Business be no further heard.

The House divided. [15:03]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

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

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
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
Pasin, A
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Simmonds, J
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Wallace, AB
Wicks, LE
Wilson, TR
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burns, J

Aly, A
Bird, SL
Burke, AS
Butler, MC
Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (15:03): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Mr BUTLER (Hindmarsh) (15:04): Ministerial standards mean nothing under this—

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:04): I move:

That the question be now put.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the question be put.

The House divided. [15:05]

The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

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

AYES
Alexander, JG
Andrews, KJ
Archer, BK

NOES
Byrne, AM
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Dick, MD
Elliot, MJ
Freelander, MR
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Hayes, CP
Husic, EN
Keaney, G
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
Vanvakinou, M
Wells, AS
Wilson, JH
Zappia, A
AYES

Broadbent, RE  Buchholz, S
Chester, D  Christensen, GR
Conaghan, PJ  Connelly, V
Coulton, M  Druns, DK (teller)
Dutton, PC  Entsch, WG
Evans, TM  Falinski, JG
Fletcher, PW  Flint, NJ
Frydenberg, JA  Gee, AR
Gillespie, DA  Goodenough, IR
Hammond, CM  Hastie, AW
Hawke, AG  Hogan, KJ
Howarth, LR  Hunt, GA
Irons, SJ  Joyce, BT
Kelly, C  Laming, A
Landry, ML  Leeser, J
Ley, SP  Littleproud, D
Liu, G  Marino, NB
Martin, FB  McCormack, MF
McIntosh, MI  McVeigh, JJ
Morrison, SJ  Morton, B
O’Brien, LS  O’Brien, T
Pasin, A  Pearce, GB
Pitt, KJ  Porter, CC
Price, ML  Ramsey, RE (teller)
Robert, SR  Sharma, DN
Simmonds, J  Stevens, J
Sukkar, MS  Taylor, AJ
Tehan, DT  Thompson, P
Tudge, AE  van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB  Webster, AE
Wicks, LE  Wilson, RJ
Wilson, TR  Wood, JP
Wyatt, KG  Young, T
Zimmerman, T

NOES

Albanese, AN  Aly, A
Bandt, AP  Bird, SL
Bowen, CE  Burke, AS
Burns, J  Butler, MC
Butler, TM  Byrne, AM
Chalmers, JE  Clare, JD
Coker, EA  Collins, JM
Conroy, PM  Dick, MD
Dreyfus, MA  Elliot, MJ
Fitzgibbon, JA  Freeland, MR
Georganas, S  Giles, AJ
Gorman, P  Gosling, LJ
Haines, H  Hayes, CP
Hill, JC  Husie, EN
Jones, SP  Kearney, G
Keogh, MJ  Khalil, P

CHAMBER
The question is that the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition be agreed to.

The House divided. [15:07]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

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

AYES

Albanese, AN  Aly, A
Bandt, AP  Bird, SL
Bowen, CE  Burke, AS
Burns, J  Butler, MC
Butler, TM  Byrne, AM
Chalmers, JE  Clare, JD
Coker, EA  Collins, JM
Conroy, PM  Dick, MD
Dreyfus, MA  Elliot, MJ
Fitzgibbon, JA  Freeland, MR
Georganas, S  Giles, AJ
Gorman, P  Gosling, LJ
Haines, H  Hayes, CP
Hill, JC  Husie, EN
Jones, SP  Kearney, G
Keogh, MJ  Khalil, P
King, CF  King, MMH
Leigh, AK  Marles, RD
McBride, EM  Mitchell, BK
Mitchell, RG  Mulino, D
Murphy, PJ  Neumann, SK

NOES

King, CF  King, MMH
Leigh, AK  Marles, RD
McBride, EM  Mitchell, BK
Mitchell, RG  Mulino, D
Murphy, PJ  Neumann, SK
O'Connor, BPJ  O'Neil, CE
Owens, JA  Payne, AE
Perrett, GD  Phillips, FE
Rishworth, AL  Rowland, MA
Ryan, JC (teller)  Sharkie, RCC
Shorten, WR  Smith, DPB
Snowdon, WE  Stanley, AM (teller)
Steggall, Z  Swanson, MJ
Templeman, SR  Thistlethwaite, MJ
Thwaites, KL  Vamvakinou, M
Watts, TG  Wells, AS
Wilkie, AD  Wilson, JH
Zappia, A
AYES

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
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
Pasin, A
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Simmonds, J
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Wallace, AB
Wicks, LE
Wilson, TR
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T

O'Neil, CE
Payne, AE
Phillips, FE
Rowland, MA
Sharkie, RCC
Smith, DBP
Stanley, AM (teller)
Swanson, MJ
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vamvakinou, M
Wells, AS
Wilson, JH
Allen, K
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
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharma, DN
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ
Webster, AE
Wilson, RJ
Wood, JP
Young, T

CHAMBER
Question negatived.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE
Waste Management and Recycling

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (15:12): My question is to the Minister for the Environment. Will the minister update the House on the Morrison government's stable and certain approach to dealing with Australia's waste?

Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for the Environment) (15:12): I thank—

The SPEAKER: The Minister for the Environment will resume her seat. The Manager of Opposition Business?

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (15:12): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the member be no longer heard.

The House divided. [15:17]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ..........................64
Noes ..........................76
Majority..................12

AYES
Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Dick, MD
Elliot, MJ
Freelander, MR
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Hill, JC
Jones, SP
Keogh, MJ
King, CF
Leigh, AK
McBride, EM
Mitchell, RG
Murphy, PJ
O'Connor, BPJ
Owens, JA
Perrett, GD
Rishworth, AL
Ryan, JC (teller)
Smith, DPB
Stanley, AM (teller)

CHAMBER
Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for the Environment) (15:20): It is a pleasure to take another question from the member for Robertson and I thank her for introducing me to so many of her recycling industry players, including Licella, a world-leading commercial operation using old recycled plastic and turning it into oil. I'm delighted the Labor Party, at least some of the
frontbench, are here to hear the good messages from the government about our recycling agenda because this government is the first to have put waste and recycling on the national agenda, backed up by our $167 million recycling investment fund. The government are committed to reducing waste, increasing recycling rates and building capacity within our domestic recycling industry. Better managing our waste and improving recycling will reduce impacts on the environment, promote opportunities for local industries and jobs because, importantly, for every 10,000 tonnes of waste recycled, there are approximately nine jobs.

Waste is an economic opportunity. It's also an environmental responsibility. As the Prime Minister has said, it's our waste; it's our responsibility and, withustralians generating 67 million tonnes a year and growing, this is a really important microeconomic reform for the government to take. With the dynamic member for Brisbane, the assistant minister, we have met with industry leaders, peak representative bodies, CEOs, and women and men on the front line of waste handling. The technology is there. The investment capacity is there. It's just about changing the way we think about managing waste and creating markets for recycled material.

I thank the Deputy Prime Minister and applaud him for his role at the 12th meeting of Transport and Infrastructure Council last week. He focused on practical steps to support our economy by better harnessing recyclables. Government procurement can lead the way. We've agreed to a national action plan. For example, a $50 million—$25 million Australian government contribution—upgrade on the Great Ocean Road will use the equivalent of 730,000 plastic bags through incorporation into a new asphalt mix to resurface 1½ kilometres of roadway. That's one example of government leading the way.

As I said, waste is not a problem to solve; it's an economic opportunity to seize, and this government is seizing it. Our policies will reduce waste, lift recycling rates in Australia, tackle the scourge of plastics in our oceans and waterways, and ensure that we build recycling resource recovery in a healthy sustainable way that focuses on all Australians.

**Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction**

**Mr BUTLER** (Hindmarsh) (15:23): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. The minister's department blocked access under freedom of information to two sets of emails sent to his office on the very day his conduct was referred to the New South Wales police. Those emails have also been withheld from the New South Wales police. will they now be provided to New South Wales police Strike Force Garrad?

**Mr TAYLOR** (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (15:23): After being in opposition for seven years, you'd think the member for Hindmarsh would know how FOIs work. Freedom-of-information requests are being, as they always are, processed in accordance with the act. I tabled my statement from 25 October in the House and I stand by that statement.

The poor understanding of FOI from the member for Hindmarsh isn't his only mistake. We know he was the architect of Labor's energy and climate policies in 2013, in 2016 and in 2019. He was the architect of all of those election-losing policies. He is an election-losing machine. Now the self-proclaimed master tactician who couldn't even hold the Labor Party presidency is at it again. The member for Hindmarsh is Labor's special weapon. He is an election-losing machine.
Mr ZIMMERMAN (North Sydney) (15:24): My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister outline to the house how a stable and certain economy enables the Morrison government to make life-changing medicines available on the PBS, including for people suffering from lung cancer and leukaemia? Is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (15:25): I want to thank the member for North Sydney, who is a deep and passionate advocate for new medicines. I was privileged to be joined by him only last week when we went to Royal North Shore Hospital. Whilst we were there, we were able to announce two new medicines to be listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme: one for advanced lymphoblastic leukaemia and another for stage IV non-small-cell lung cancer patients.

Whilst we were there, we were able to speak with Peter Suffolk. Peter is, we understand and believe, the first patient in Australia to have been given access to Keytruda. That medicine was provided to him through a trial program and subsequently on a compassionate basis. It's now something we're making available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. That medicine was given to Peter at a time eight years ago when he was given less than six months to live. He is now with us eight years later because of access to Keytruda and, as he said to us, he is feeling fit, he's feeling well and, along the way, he's been able to walk his daughter down the aisle.

Now we are able to list Keytruda on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. It's a medicine which would otherwise cost $120,000 a year for stage IV lung cancer patients, who will now be given access to first-line treatment. The importance of that is it gives them access at the earliest possible time to a treatment which can allow them to have their lives protected, to have their lives extended and, as you see in the case of Peter, to have their lives saved. And it's not just one or two; it's 2,200 patients.

As I say this, I also want to acknowledge the words of Bruno, whom the Prime Minister met with me earlier this year when we made Tagrisso available. I saw Bruno very recently. He's doing well, but he made the point that many lung cancer patients live with stigma. So on behalf of Bruno I want to say it doesn't matter what the condition is; we are here to fight for you and to make those medicines available to you. Bruno, on your behalf the Prime Minister and I are saying that there should be no condition which is subject to stigma.

Equally, acute lymphoblastic leukaemia is a condition that can strike over 2,000 patients in Australia a year. The particular form of acute lymphoblastic leukaemia which we're able to support now is able to be treated by Blinacyto. There are only 86 patients that at this stage we believe will benefit from this particular medicine, but, whether it's a large number or a small number, because of the strong economy we're able to help patients such as 32-year-old Kelly, whom we met on the day. Blinacyto has allowed her to go on and have a bone marrow transplant, and things are looking very positive for her.

For Kelly, for Peter, for every one of these patients: we are privileged to be able to support you with these new medicines. *(Time expired)*
Mr Morrison: I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper. It's great to see the Leader of the Opposition's backbench support here in full swing!

DOCUMENTS

Presentation

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:28): 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

Dairy Industry

The SPEAKER (15:29): I have received a letter from the honourable member for Hunter proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The government's failure to support Australian dairy farmers.

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

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

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (15:29): I can see that it might seem a bit of an overreach at first blush to say that in Australia we are at serious risk of losing our dairy industry but, sadly, that is true. For those who doubt it, I refer them to the most recent figures, which indicate that in the last decade we've lost around 35 per cent of our dairy farms. That rate of departure has accelerated in recent years as dairy farmers find themselves more and more in the middle of a price squeeze. Costs are rising, now exacerbated by drought, and, of course, prices at the farm gate are stubbornly staying very low, sometimes below cost. As hesitant as I am to say it, we are at real risk now of having to import most of our dairy products and, I fear, even some, if not all, of our drinking milk. That would be a disaster for this great Australian agricultural sector.

I just saw the Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management shaking his head. He does need to shake his head, not at what I'm saying but rather at what his government is not doing. I have some very genuine sympathy for the minister for drought. I thought that when he was the agriculture minister he didn't make a bad fist of it. He'd begun to tidy up the very significant mess left by the former minister, the member for New England. Just as importantly, he was creeping away from what I call National Party fundamentalism. You might call it National Party economics. He was trying, at least, to take his party away. He did respond, although not as extensively as we would have liked, to the live sheep trade, for example. I know that caused him a lot of grief internally, but at least he had a bit of a crack at it; he had a bit of a go. Sadly, as a result the rug was pulled out from under him, and the National Party made it very clear to the Prime Minister that they would not have the member for Maranoa as the agriculture minister. To his credit, the Prime Minister said: 'Well, I'm not cutting him loose entirely because he does understand the problem with National Party fundamentalism. I'll create a new role for him as the drought
minister so I can leave him in that space.' The minister should acknowledge that I'm trying to extend to him a compliment.

Now we've got Minister McKenzie, and I ask my colleagues to think about it for a moment and ask themselves to name one thing that Minister McKenzie has done for the agricultural sector in her six months in office. Of course, the silence is deafening because the answer is absolutely nil. This is the minister who told her party room that the dairy sector couldn't have a code of conduct until July of next year but told the National Party they could have one by Christmas this year, such is the incompetence she demonstrates both in her party room and in this parliament.

But the real problems in the dairy sector, as we know it today—notwithstanding the fact that there have been significant challenges since deregulation under former Prime Minister Howard back in 2000—began in April 2016 with the collapse of Murray Goulburn. That event reverberated through the dairy industry extensively. It began with Murray Goulburn farmers, it moved quickly to Fonterra farmers axiomatically and then it caused damage and chaos right across the dairy industry. What were the government's response to the collapse of Murray Goulburn? They could have intervened. When Murray Goulburn went to its farmers and retrospectively cut their farmgate prices without notice, the government could have acted. In fact, at the time, we appealed to the government to act, and there was an opportunity for the government to act and to call upon the Murray Goulburn board to use the powers available to it under the profit-sharing mechanism to deny the Collins Street investors their returns and to leave the dairy farmers alone.

If the government had joined us then in calling upon the Murray Goulburn board to do so, surely they would have had no choice. The pressure not only in the community but in this place—and I know we would have been supported by the member for Kennedy—would have been so overwhelming they would have had no choice. But no, the government failed to act. What was their response? They commissioned an ACCC inquiry. You know how it works on that side: when all else fails, have an inquiry. We don't have any problem with ACCC inquiries. In fact, I have a high regard for the ACCC. It doesn't always get it right, but it is a fair organisation and it does its best. It has some very good people. What did the ACCC recommend? Its only really substantive recommendation, after an 18-month-long inquiry, was a mandatory code of conduct for the dairy industry—something we on this side of the parliament have been committed to for at least three years.

So there wasn't any political interference. There is nothing stopping this government from introducing a mandatory code of conduct for the dairy industry. In fact, they did it for the sugar industry literally overnight, in 24 hours. When the now Prime Minister was Treasurer, he introduced a mandatory code of conduct for the sugar industry in 24 hours. But here we are, 20 months on from the recommendation from ACCC on the dairy industry, and we don't even have a final draft of a code because those who sit opposite can't even agree on what it should look like. It is time they acted. Our dairy farmers should not have to wait until July next year.

The last parliament is behind us. Those opposite made some terrible errors. They abandoned our dairy farmers. But it is a new parliament, and I call upon them to now work with us on a bipartisan basis to act, if belatedly. We are not off to a good start. The last week we were here we gave them an opportunity again in the Senate to back a minimum farmgate
milk price for our dairy farmers—a guaranteed price so farmers can rely upon at least cutting even when the processor comes shopping. Again, National Party aligned LNP senators sat on the other side and voted against dairy farmers—again, that is behind us.

It's not too late, Minister, and this is what we need to do: we need to get that mandatory code of conduct, the right code of conduct, in place immediately. We need to embrace a minimum farmgate milk price, set by an independent regulator, just above the average cost of producing a litre of milk in each dairy industry. This is not Hanson economics; this is common sense. I heard one of them say, 'What about our export industry?' I say again that, if we have to pay our dairy farmers below their cost of production to be in an export market, we probably shouldn't be in one. It's as simple as that. This makes sense. While the costs of production are rising, we cannot afford to have our farmers paid at or below the cost of production.

But there's a third thing the government can immediately do: get on with developing a truly strategic national drought policy for this country. The agricultural sector suffering most from drought is arguably the dairy industry. But no, the minister at the table laughs at this idea that we should be working on a bipartisan basis to develop a strategy for the drought in this country—a drought which has been going on for nine years for some farmers and for fewer years but more severely for others. Mr Deputy Speaker Hogan, you understand this because you know what is happening in your own electorate.

So I extend the offer again today to the minister and to his Prime Minister. It's not too late to reset. You'll be forgiven for all your mistakes. You'll be forgiven for all the pain you have inflicted on the dairy industry for the last six years or more if you just commit yourself to a code of conduct, to a minimum farmgate milk price and, finally—you are the drought minister—to putting in place a truly national strategic drought plan rather than just kicking the issue down the road hoping that tomorrow it will rain.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa—Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management) (15:39): What we just heard from the member for Hunter has demonstrated the deep seated impact the last federal election has had on him personally, because the people of Hunter turned on him. They turned on him, and one of those parties that nearly beat him was One Nation—not just the National Party. It seems now that the member for Hunter has been able to convince the Australian Labor Party to forget about Swan economics. They're now going to look to One Nation and Pauline Hanson to give them a direction on the economy and on agricultural industry. God save Australia, because if the member for Hunter has become so disturbed by the near-death political experience he had on 18 May, then the Australian Labor Party has got real problems.

The member for Hunter talks about the ACCC report and says, 'Yes, it was me who took that report and acted on it.' The member for Hunter talks about how he believes in the ACCC. In fact, he wasn't going to put in a price floor; he was going to ask the ACCC to do an investigation into a price floor. Let me tell the member for Hunter and the Australian Labor Party: we can save them a couple of million dollars, because the ACCC gave a clear direction for a mandatory code of conduct. We are putting that in place in a calm, methodical way to make sure it is right, because it is important. It's an important pillar in making sure that we reset the dairy industry and in making sure that there is equality in the marketplace. There are a number of factors within the marketplace that need to be addressed. The ACCC gave us a
pathway to do that, not to go back to the economics of One Nation and shut ourselves off from the world and forget about the fact that we are a nation of 25 million people that produces enough food for 75 million people.

We need to engage with the world. We need to trade with the world. The reckless, careless actions that the Australian Labor Party are talking about would put at risk the trade agreements that we have put in place. That would not just jeopardise the dairy industry but would jeopardise agriculture. If you're a beef producer in Kennedy, if you are a cotton producer in Maranoa, if you're a citrus producer down in Victoria, this would put at risk the trade agreements that are giving us real returns at the farm gate. That is what this would do. To say that it wouldn't shows no understanding of our place in the world and the dangerous nature of populism and politics that the Labor Party is now entering into with One Nation, a party they condemned here endlessly in the last parliament. They are now going hand-in-hand with Pauline Hanson and One Nation in deriving their economic policies. The economic policies that Swan economics brought us have now been taken over by Pauline Hanson and One Nation.

We understand that there's more reform in the marketplace, and that's why we're creating a market platform that allows our dairy farmers to create and to trade like other agricultural production systems, and that allows them to have more power in who they sell their products to and to create more market tension. That's how you address this. It's not just one silver bullet. That doesn't add up.

I recall the member for Hunter being in this chamber and talking about the last time there was a price floor in this country. It was for wool. He sat here and heralded the fact that it was John Kerin, the former Labor member, who broke and destroyed the wool price floor. He addressed that to the member for Kennedy, who is in the chamber now. Yet, now, the member for Hunter wants to put in place exactly what John Kerin got rid of. Pauline Hanson has really got hold of the member for Hunter. This last election has really upset him. He is running scared in his own electorate; he is running scared right across the country with the dairy industry. It's nothing more than a cruel hoax.

But there is another part of this whole dairy industry that needs fixing, and it's the supermarkets. When I stood up—

Mr Fitzgibbon: And you were going to fix it!

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I did. I got rid of $1 milk, my friend, because I had the courage to call out the supermarkets and say to Australians: 'Stop going in and supporting those supermarkets that don't support dairy farmers.' But, no, the member for Hunter crawled back under that rock he'd been hiding under for six years. He didn't want to show his face. He'd been hiding away. He did not show his face. He was tucked up, away underneath that rock, hiding. He wouldn't call out the supermarkets. In fact, he criticised me for actually calling for Australians to boycott those supermarkets until they passed money onto Australian farmers. You know what they did? They passed on the money. They found a mechanism to make sure that money got back to the farm gate. But nothing from the member for Hunter. In fact, he was supporting corporate Australia and the big supermarkets, and he knows he was, because he was tucked away down here for the last six years. The member for Hunter was tucked away, because then the opposition leader wouldn't allow him to put his head up. Now he's found some morals. Now that he's had a near-death political experience he's finally found his
front. He's finally found that he can come out and say the things he wants to say. Well, he's a bit too late and he's taking the wrong advice from One Nation.

You have to be calm and methodical if you're in government. You have to make sure you put in place the reforms that work and are long-lasting, not those that will have detrimental impacts like a floor price. That's nothing more than a cruel hoax. Why do that? As you've even articulated, those farmers are doing it tough. They are doing it so tough out there, yet you propose a cruel hoax that will not work. And, in fact—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): The minister will address the chair.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Sorry, Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. The member for Hunter knows full well that he is doing nothing more than providing a cruel hoax and playing on the misery of Australian dairy farmers. I thought he was bigger than that but unfortunately not. We will continue on. We will continue on the pathway to resetting the dairy industry. I say right here now to the supermarkets—

Mr Fitzgibbon interjecting—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I'll take the interjection from the member for Hunter, because I have a strong record of standing up to them. I say to them again, as I said when I was agriculture minister: you have a role to play. If these reforms come in, you need to work with an industry that will be there and be sustainable, so you have an opportunity to prove what you did last time and support dairy industries now and provide that mechanism that you did. I broke that $1-a-litre milk and made sure that that money went back to them. They created the mechanism. They can do it tomorrow.

We understand the drought. There is a drought on. Unfortunately, when we talk about a national strategic plan the member for Hunter, again, wants to play politics on the misery of Australian farmers, not just dairy farmers. We are the first government that is not only dealing with the here and now of the drought but looking at the next drought. For the first time, we've said, as a government, that we are going to tackle future droughts while we're in the middle of one. A three-pillar stimulus of putting money back in farmers' pockets now, keeping them there. There is the Regional Investment Corporation that dairy farmers can take up, refinancing up to $2 million of an existing debt from a bank. They can put it in the Regional Investment Corporation—no principal and no interest for two years. If you had a rate of 6½ per cent you would be saving over $150,000 a year. We're taking that out of the big banks' pockets and putting it back into the farmers' pockets. We're making sure they have the cash flow to survive.

There's the farm household allowance—over $120,000 that will be put in their pockets to give them the dignity and respect they need to put bread and butter on their tables. We're supporting the communities, because the drought extends past the farm gate to the communities that support them. There are hundreds of millions of dollars in stimulus to keep them going—to keep small towns moving as we go through this.

As I said, we're the first government to look to the future with a Future Fund giving a dividend of $100 million a year to provide programs that will build the resilience that we need to stave off future droughts. We have come a long way. I used to be a bank manager. I used to sit around farmers' kitchen tables. I remember the days when we used to take out cheques for $250,000 in interest rate subsidies. Those days have gone because the farming industry has
moved away from it, and so we should because we wouldn't have the trade agreements we have got in place now. Farmers have prepared themselves for these droughts, but we're going to give them the tools they need to go further.

Finally, we're going to put over $3 billion out there and hope that a state will take our hand and build some dams—some water infrastructure—to harvest the water to build the resilience to grow regional Australia. Unfortunately since 2003 only 20 dams have been built—16 of those have been in Tasmania—because we have state governments who are inept. Unfortunately, the states have the responsibility to build the water infrastructure. We're prepared to pay for it. Come and take our hand. When the member for Hunter sits here and feigns concern about the dairy industry, because of his near-death political experience on 18 May and the deep-seated impacts One Nation had on him at a local level—and now he takes the advice of One Nation in how he would run Australian agriculture and dairy—then I say to the Australian dairy industry: you are better off without the member for Hunter.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (15:49): We have just had 10 minutes from the CV of the modern National Party. We can actually see why there are problems with the National Party. 'We've got bankers, we've got journalists, we've got footballers and we've got police officers in the National Party. But we've got no farmers.' They're all noble professions, but there are no longer farmers in the National Party. And you can see why they are deserting the dairy farmers of Australia. It's a disgrace.

We've just had a banker standing up there talking for 10 minutes about the Labor Party. Just before I got up to speak today, I spoke to Joe Paronella, the mayor of the Tablelands Regional Council in the member for Kennedy's electorate—I will catch up with Joe at Christmas; all my in-laws live up in the tablelands—to get some insight into what's going on. They've actually had rain and they've got fodder. But fodder prices have gone up. He was saying the costs have gone up significantly, from $350 a bale up to $500 a bale. They have had a bit of rain, but they will still see 43 dairy farmers in that region that cannot produce milk at a profit because, as the member for Hunter has outlined, of some of the market forces.

We need a National Party, the fair dinkum National Party of my childhood, that believes in the bush, that actually has people who are focused on agricultural production. As we see in this letter from Joe Paronella, the mayor of the Tablelands Regional Council, these farmers are doing it incredibly tough. We've seen a Queensland senator say today that we're losing a dairy farmer a week from the industry in Queensland. We're down 311, and it has to stop today. And what's the suggestion from the Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management? Cheap capital. Well, capital is the cheapest it's been for 5,000 years, since the Sumerians first hung up a shingle. That's their solution. They're not prepared to actually step in. They're happy to spend $300 million on a stunt in Christmas Island to keep some poor Biloela family in prison; they're happy to throw money anywhere except at farmers. What happened to the National Party? Who put the muzzle on the mouth of the National Party? What has happened to the party of Black Jack? What has happened to that National Party of my childhood?

I know there has been rationalisation in the dairy industry; it started when I was a boy. When I grew up in St George, there were four dairy farms. That changed with refrigeration, and now there are no dairy farms in St George. We have a situation in the tablelands. Apart from Gallo, which has a chocolate business, the mayor says the dairy farms up there will be
flat out lasting six or 12 months. They're down here at the moment trying to talk to the government, trying to make sure they can get as much support as possible.

I would say to those opposite: if we get to the stage where we can no longer access fresh drinking milk in Australia, that would be reprehensible. We have seen this on the Liberal Party's watch and, more importantly, on the National Party's watch. We have seen a merger in Queensland where the Liberals and Nationals have come together, and what it has created is a coalescence of Liberal Party thinking rather than National Party thinking—that National Party of my youth. I'm happy to finish early so that the member for Kennedy can have some input into this debate, and I'm sure he'll have plenty to say as well.

Mr Katter interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): I will alternate the call. I call the member for Barker.

Mr PASIN (Barker) (15:53): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It's a bit rich for the member for Moreton—that great agriculture advocate from that great agricultural electorate—to seek to attack the National Party. Mate, I come from a farm. I grew up on a family farm; I know what farming is like. I hope very much to retire to the farm and get into farming in the second phase or maybe the third phase of my career.

It's true: dairy farmers are facing very difficult times at present, and it's important that this place acknowledges that. These are challenging times. Input costs in some places are at record highs. The effects of drought, the cost of temporary water in the basin, the cost of electricity: these are all making times quite difficult for dairy farmers.

Those of us on this side think that we should listen to industry when it comes to what industry wants for its sector, and industry doesn't want re-regulation. Industry came to government in 1999 and asked, collectively, that we deregulate the industry. The industry came to government in 1999 and we did exactly that.

Mr Katter: Oh you've got to be joking! That is an absolute lie and you know it to be a lie! Come with me to my dairy farms!

Mr PASIN: In fact, the member for Kennedy can bluff and bluster all he likes; the industry today is not asking for us to re-regulate the industry. The industry knows that is not the solution. And why is that not the solution? Why would, for example, a floor price on milk be a bad idea? Firstly, it's bad economics; secondly, it's bad for the future of the industry; and, thirdly, as I said, dairy farmers don't want it.

The member for Kennedy lived through this much more than I did, given that I was born in 1977. We only have to turn to the wool industry in the 1970s. In 1974 we established a floor price for wool. Anyone who knows anything about the history of agriculture in this country knows that it was an unmitigated disaster. We got to a point in 1991 where there were 4.7 million bales—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): The member for Kennedy, on a point of order?

Mr Katter: I really don't think people should be allowed to lie in this place. I really don't think—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Kennedy will withdraw.

Mr Katter: I withdraw.
Mr PASIN: We got to a point in 1991 where there were 4.7 million bales of wool in storage in this country. It failed catastrophically. The difference between wool and milk, if I have to point it out to the member for Kennedy and those opposite, is that you can effectively store wool in bales. What you can't do is store fresh milk. The future of this industry is outward looking. It's about the free trade agreements we've set with the rest of the world, let alone the fact that if we go down the road of a fixed-price model then we'll lose all the export markets we have.

Mr Katter interjecting—

Mr PASIN: And to the member for Kennedy, who thinks I might not have spoken to a dairy farmer, I can say that in my electorate 90 per cent of the milk produced is processed into products that go overseas. Are you asking them, member for Kennedy, to get that milk and flush it down the drain? No you're not. The secret here is to be more competitive, not less. More competitive, not less!

Mr Katter interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Kennedy is warned!

Mr PASIN: If we move to re-regulate this industry, the industry will become less competitive and not more. It will be less competitive internationally, not more. Member for Kennedy, the future, just like we've seen with livestock, is in export and being internationally competitive. The future is not in creating some sort of protected market, as we saw with wool in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s and which ultimately led to ruin.

We need to support our dairy farmers, who, as I've said, because of drought and because of historically high input prices, are experiencing particularly difficult times. But to give them false hope and to say to them that the future here lies in a fixed price is, quite frankly, a catastrophic misrepresentation of the situation. The future here lies with being more competitive, not less. And don't take my word for it; take the industry's word for it. The industry has said: 'We don't want re-regulation. We want to continue on the path we're on.'

Ms COKER (Corangamite) (15:58): Clearly, our dairy industry is in crisis. What a tragedy for a sector that has directly employed 42,000 people and which is worth about $730 million a year in exports. And yet this industry is now under further threat, with production volumes declining markedly by more than 10 per cent in a year in states like Queensland and WA and by around four per cent in Victoria, which produces over 60 per cent of all milk volumes. At a time when dairy should be growing, Dairy Australia anticipates a further drop in milk supply from nine billion litres to around 8.3 billion litres. For too long our dairy farmers have been caught in a cost price squeeze, and their plight has now been compounded by the shocking drought in some areas of the country.

Those on the other side would try and hide their inaction by blaming the drought—although I note that the government recently tried to give drought relief funding to a south-west region of Victoria that wasn't even in drought. It is clear that there has been a failure of leadership for the last six years, especially since the dramatic events of 2016, when the then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and the member for New England turned their backs on our dairy farmers when Murray Goulburn cut farmgate milk prices and backdated the clawback to July 2015. A week later, Fonterra did the same thing. It was estimated that these clawbacks
created average debts of $120,000 for each dairy farmer. Giving farm families access to the
farm household allowance and concessional loans is simply a bandaid and not a cure.

I remember having meetings with farmers and their families down near Lavers Hill during
the 2016 election. Family members were in tears at the way they had been treated. In May
2016, my colleague the member for Hunter wrote to the then minister asking him to put
pressure on Murray Goulburn in a bipartisan manner to deviate from its profit-sharing
mechanisms. The processors could have directed funds back to higher milk prices for farmers
to provide a significant cash flow boost. They didn't. The member for New England ignored
the request and essentially ignored our dairy farmers.

Three years on, the consequences are there for all to see. Nationals senator Susan
McDonald admitted on Radio National recently that she finally gets it that our dairy farmers
are in crisis and, in her own words, this is 'complete market failure'. When asked about the
causes of Queensland losing 311 dairy farmers, she admitted it is more systemic than just the
drought. Senator McDonald was nothing but honest when she said that, without the removal
of the exclusive contracts clause, they can't expand their production. It is so important that we
get dairy farmers not just surviving but receiving a premium.

The government's inadequate answer to this crisis appears to be twofold. Firstly, they
propose to have a mandatory code of conduct; the nine key points of the code of merit,
especially in prohibiting exclusive price arrangements; and retrospective and prospective
price step-downs. There will apparently be capacity for the ACCC to investigate breaches of
the code and issue penalties. Is this the best the government can come up with? How effective
do we believe it will be? After all, the banking industry has codes of conduct and we've had a
whole royal commission into banking and financial institutions, much of it focused on the
failings of the regulators to do anything but advise and mentor. Yet, in recent days, we've had
Westpac allegedly involved in further countless breaches of the law and another financial
institution still allegedly charging dead people for finance. At a certain point, you actually
have to do more than codes of conduct; you have to have a plan for the industry and you have
to regulate to protect the little people.

This crisis has been too long in the making. A Senate report into the industry in 2017
noted:

Australian milk production since deregulation over 15 years has decreased from approximately 11
billion litres per year to 9 billion litres per year—a 20 per cent decrease, while New Zealand milk
production has almost doubled.

According to Senator McDonald, the second solution is for consumers to demand that
supermarkets pay a premium to farmers. It is more a statement of hope; it certainly isn't a
plan. This government trades on hope. It trades on letting the market rip. It despises rational
industry plans and stable pricing mechanisms. It goaded the car industry into departing our
shores. It has let the financial sector do as it pleases—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): The member's time has expired. I note that you
are not in your correct position. You need to speak from your correct seat when you seek the
call. In future, you won't be given the call if you're not in your correct seat.

Mr DRUM (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (16:04): There are over 900 dairy farmers
in my immediate region. Some of those are slightly outside of my electorate, but over 900
farmers associate themselves with the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District. Many of them
have been in absolute crisis from the time of the clawbacks in 2016. They had barely got
themselves back on the table when we were hit with this drought.

It has been a very, very tough time for many of our dairy farmers, but to suggest that we
have not been working with them is absolutely absurd. The farm household allowance has
been put in place. We have kept making adjustments to the farm household allowance to
ensure that more and more people are able to access this money to effectively put food on the
table, to maintain their dignity and to be able to pay essential household bills. The allowance
is not meant to fix up a farming business. It is there simply so that we are able to offer them
the assistance that they want when they are going through a really tough time.

Right now we have no-interest loans to enable not just our farmers but also businesses
associated with primary industries to consolidate their debts to no-interest loans—

Mr Katter: More debt!

Mr DRUM: Zero interest, so it's not more debt. It's about consolidating existing debt. It's
two years of zero interest, three years of very low interest and then a five-year period of P&I.

That is what many of our people on the land want. None of them are asking for a floor
price. There's a very real, very straight-up-and-down reason why they are not calling for a
floor price: it's impossible to put a floor price in when the cost of production varies so much
from farm business to farm business. One farmer may own his own water; one farmer may
own thousands of hectares of property where they are able to grow their dry matter, their hay
and fodder; other farmers have incredible scale; other farmers are crippled by debt; and some
farmers have very little debt. The cost of production and the cost of labour varies greatly
depending on the scale of your operation. It's the cost of production that varies so dramatically
from farming business to farming business that makes it impossible to put a floor price in at a
level that is not going to enable some people to make trillions while other people barely cover
costs.

When the Labor Party put this hoax forward, they refused to allow any finances or funding
to go with their pledge of a floor price. They wanted a floor price that somehow or other
wasn't going to cost government any money at all but was going to be above the cost of
production, yet they failed to point out what that was. Not only that, in the last weeks before
the election in May this year the Labor Party put out their water policy. Their water policy
was all about making water more expensive. The biggest input cost right now is feed and/or
water to grow your own feed. The Labor Party's answer to this was: 'Let's make water more
expensive. If we win this election in May, we're going to go out and start buybacks. We're
going to start buying back water from farmers, forcing the water up'—the most destructive
and damaging water policy that you could ever design. This is what the Labor Party's answer
to the dairy industry was: get some mythical floor price that was somehow or other going to
re-regulate the industry

These 900 farmers in the Goulburn Valley region are predominantly producing milk for
products such as milk powder and cheese. Very little of what they produce, but a growing
percentage, is going to fresh milk. What happens with the supermarket is important to us, but
it's not as important as what our trade delegations can achieve by getting product into Asia
and getting our milk powder a higher price. Right now, the price of milk is very, very
reasonable. What's crippling people is the drought, water policy, the fact that our water—

(Time expired)

Dr MULINO (Fraser) (16:09): The debate today on this important MPI is emblematic of the government's failure in so many policy areas. Its response to this issue is the same as its response to other long-term, complex issues: it's piecemeal, it's reactive, it's short-term and it's ad hoc. Let's look at the way it responds to the economy. All we hear is, 'headwinds, headwind, headwinds.' It's like we're getting a weather report every question time rather than an economic update. Let's look at energy policy. All we get is hand-wringing about increasing prices and prices going through the roof when, in fact, the reason prices are going through the roof is their failure to have a plan. And that's exactly what we've heard today in relation to a lack of a plan on giving price stability to the dairy industry: 'It's all too hard. There'll be rivers of milk poured down the drain.' They wring their hands at increasing prices for farmers with no strategy other than, as speakers on our side have said, more and more debt piled on this industry. Let's look at this government's strategy—or lack of strategy—when it comes to the trials being faced by the dairy industry. When Murray Goulburn cut farmgate milk prices in 2016, as the member for Hunter indicated, this government stood by and watched with no long-term strategy. All we get now are piecemeal, short-term responses. All we get now is more and more debt for this industry and no long-term strategy.

The Victorian dairy industry produces $1.8 billion of raw milk, most of which is processed into powdered or fresh milk, cheese and other dairy products. It represents 65 per cent of national dairy production and generates $1.85 billion in exports. Global demand for dairy is increasing, yet, since peak production of 11.27 billion litres in 2002, Australia's total milk production has shrunk to 8.7 billion litres. Australia's share in the global dairy market fell from 16 per cent in the 1990s to six per cent last year. This is having a terrible effect in Victoria and around the nation. Since that time, New Zealand has doubled production. That shows what can happen when there is a long-term strategic, positive plan in place. What we have from this government in relation to the dairy industry, in relation to economic policy, in relation to energy policy, in relation to every area of long-term policy where there is a need for complex, long-term planning is reactive, short-term policies. What we've seen is a long-term decline in the dairy industry, as we've seen in so many other areas of our economy and as we've seen in so many other areas of our society.

People are getting wise to this government. It's all about rhetoric, all about hand-wringing, all about saying, 'We really care,' and all about saying, 'We really listen'—but there's no action. I have so much more to say on this but I will cut my time short so we can hear the great wisdom of the member for Kennedy. This is yet another example of this government's failure.

Mr Katter interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Sorry, the call alternates, as the member for Kennedy well knows. The member for Braddon has the call.

Mr PEARCE (Braddon) (16:12): I've listened fairly intently and I've held my tongue. I listened—

Opposition members interjecting—
Mr PEARCE: And I'd appreciate it if the same was applied to me! I listened to the member for Hunter, who made a number of outlandish claims and innuendos relating to our side. I listened to the member for Moreton, who said that there are no more farmers on our side. He rambled on for several seconds about that. Well, I can tell the members, through you, Mr Speaker, that I am one. My family has been farming in Tasmania since the mid-1800s. At 14 years of age I was a dairy farmer, and I continued to be a dairy farmer until the age of 18 when I joined the military. So I know a little bit about farming. At the moment I have millions of dollars invested in the agricultural business I have along the north-west coast of Tasmania, and I've had to lease that farm out so that I can come and fight for farmers in a similar vein in this place. So I know about farming and I know about our dairy industry. I understand the pressures and the hardships that our farmers face each and every day as they go about investing millions of dollars into something that they don't know will pay off in the end. I've been there and I've done that, so I understand.

In Tasmania, where I come from, my electorate is home to Australia's largest dairy. In fact, my Braddon electorate is full of dairy farmers. They're doing quite well, thanks very much, and they're doing quite well because of a strategy that's been put well in train by our strong Liberal Hodgman government. We've invested in tranche 3 irrigation in our state—in fact, along the north-west coast of my electorate—and that's enabled our farmers to grow, to expand and to have confidence. I think today is a classic example of why we should maintain a steady hand and a sure head. The last thing our farmers need is policy being kicked around this place like a political football, because at the end of all this ranting, raving and finger pointing are farmers that are hurting—real live human beings that have got a future to look forward to. A steady hand and a wise head is what this industry needs at the moment.

From the other side I've heard a heap of rubbish in relation to regulating an industry that plays in a deregulated market. That is like placing a round peg into a square hole. It won't work. We've seen it in the wool industry with the Australian Wool Corporation and it didn't work there. Our farmers don't want that. What they want is for us to apply, like I said earlier, a sure head and a steady hand. Instead of kicking this topic of regulating our industry around like a football, they want us to listen to them, to their industry providers and to their peak bodies, who say that they don't under any circumstances want that industry regulated. You may say that this minimum price, this floor price that you are willing to apply, is not regulation. Well, I'm saying that, if you are applying any fix to a particular price within an industry, that is, in fact, regulating an industry. It's not what our farmers need, it's not what our farmers want and it's not in the best interests of our industry—definitely not.

A sure head and a steady hand—that's what we're applying here. Our government has announced over $7 billion in measures to help drought-affected farmers across Australia, including our dairy farmers. Since 2013 our government has approved almost $915 million to 1,675 farm businesses under the concessional loans scheme. You say we don't do anything. As of 30 June 2019, $201 million to the dairy recovery concessional loans have been approved, benefitting 347 farmers. At 6 September 2019, approximately 1,200 farmers and their partners were on farm household allowance, and that has been extended through our strong support of our industry. Funding is continuing to roll out to help those hit by the aftermath of the Murray Goulburn crisis. That is just one crisis that one particular company
inflicted on our industry, but don't blame the industry. Don't regulate our market. Instead, what we need is a code of conduct, and we need it fast.

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (16:17): I wish these people had gone to the same university that I did, because I was taught when I went there that, if there are two buyers in a market and 10,000 sellers in the market, the sellers are going to get screwed. Every university that I know of in the world has said that. In Australia, 90 per cent of the food that is sold is sold by two people. You've got two people to sell that milk to. If you're stupid enough to stay on the free market and count on Woolworths and Coles being Father Christmas, you deserve, my friend, what you get—and you'll get it. You've got to be judged on your outcomes. You must be judged.

I was a free marketeer when I entered this place, and I just saw disaster after disaster after disaster. In the National Party room—and I'm being a little improper here—there were, I think, 16 members. Every one of them got up and tenaciously spoke and opposed dairy deregulation. All of them got up and opposed it. When they came back in here, they all held their hands up.

I'll tell you how successful you've been with your free markets: The wool industry deregulated under Keating—you blokes didn't have the glory of undermining the industry and then deregulating it. We had 172 million sheep in a regulated industry. We now have 66 million.

Mr Falinski: Do you want to go back to the wool price? Where are you getting these figures from?

Mr KATTER: My friend, I'll go into your electorate and debate it with you. In the meantime, shut up. In the cattle industry we had 32 million; now we've got 22 million. In the sugar industry we're down 15 per cent. In the grain industry, we're at a 16 per cent disadvantage against the Americans. So your sheep are down, like, 60 per cent, your cattle are down, like, 30 to 40 per cent, your sugar's down 15 per cent and your dairy production is down nearly 50 per cent—what a great success story!

But you've opened up all these markets. Well, in the state I come from, our biggest employer is, in fact, the sugarcane industry. 'Oh, the free market's got us into America.' No, it didn't. We don't send any sugar there at all. With the biggest economy in the world—Europe—no sugar is going there. With the third-biggest economy on earth, China, we have a little tiny bit going in. With India, there is no sugar going in there at all. With Brazil, the fifth-biggest economy, there is no sugar going in there at all. So where are your free markets? Here's the biggest industry in Queensland—where is your free market? Where did we get market access? Tell me.

Here's the outcome: we are now a net importer of pork, a net importer of seafood and, believe it or not, a net importer of fruit and vegetables. Our sheep numbers are down 60 per cent. Our cattle numbers are down 20 or 30 per cent. Our sugar's down 15 per cent. Where is this great benefit from the free market? There's no benefit there at all, and you are seriously standing up in this place and saying it's a good idea that we continue with a free market where the 10,000 dairy producers that are still left out there are going to sell to two buyers, and they expect the two buyers to be Father Christmas. Well, please excuse me for telling you that the directors of Woolworths and Coles have a duty to their owners to maximise profits. The
wonderful achievement of deregulating the dairy industry was to take New South Wales and Queensland, overnight, from 58c and 59c a litre down to 40c a litre. That's what happened.

With the wool industry—I was a free marketeer at the time; I thought Doug Anthony was dead wrong on the wool—the price of wool increased 300 per cent and stayed up there for 20 years until Keating undermined the scheme and then abolished it. Surprise, surprise, the price fell 300 per cent in the three years afterwards. Well, what an extraordinary coincidence that when the minimum price scheme was introduced the price trebled and then, three years after the scheme was abolished, the price dropped to one-third of what it was. What an incredible coincidence! So, with the propositions that you're putting up here, I openly invite any of you to have me in your electorate arguing with your dairy farmers at a forum. (Time expired)

Mrs PHILLIPS (Gilmore) (16:22): The Nationals and Liberals love to say how much they help farmers. They like to say they are standing up for farmers, that they have our farmers' backs and that they are the only ones working to protect farmers' rights. They come to regional and rural areas like mine at election time and they make all kinds of promises about how they will support farmers, but, once the election is over, it's a different story. It's a different story for our struggling dairy farmers on the New South Wales South Coast who have been abandoned by this government. It was a different story in the Senate only two weeks ago when the Nationals and the Liberals voted against desperately needed help for dairy farmers. The Liberal-National government are simply not serious about helping dairy farmers. They have had absolutely every opportunity to take real action, but they have wasted those opportunities. They have walked away from dairy farmers.

At the election, I worked hard to secure a Labor commitment to a minimum farmgate price for dairy. I know how dairy farmers are struggling. I speak to dairy farmers in my electorate and I hear their stories of struggle. I come from a long-time dairy farming family, and I know how hard it is for local farmers. I see they are in crisis. I see what this drought is doing to them, but the Prime Minister, when he came to my electorate during the election, wouldn't even speak with local farmers. Local farmer Rob Miller tried to talk to him. He tried to tell him, but the Prime Minister just drove on past. That is their attitude. That is how they treat farmers.

Perhaps that explains why the Liberal-National government chose to vote down a bill that could have finally helped the dairy industry. That bill would have seen a minimum farmgate price for milk investigated. The member for Hunter and I worked hard on Labor's policy at the last election. We met with farmers. We talked with them about what they wanted. But the government has voted the bill down. The bill also would have ensured that the long-promised dairy code of conduct could be quickly adopted. It was recommended by the ACCC in April 2018, and we are still waiting. We still don't know when it will come. Now Dairy Connect and other farmers fear that it will not protect family-run dairy farms like it promised—another broken promise from a government steeped in dysfunction and chaos.

I am going to keep saying this until it sinks in for those opposite: our dairy industry is in crisis. Our dairy farmers need help. The government has failed our dairy farmers. I am not going to stand by while the Liberal-National government allows dysfunction and chaos to delay the vital support that local farmers need. When the government announced its long-awaited drought package, local farmers in my electorate had hope. But that hope was soon squashed when not only were the council areas in my electorate left out of the package but it
appeared we were, in fact, now worse off—absolutely shocking! What a slap in the face to farmers on the South Coast doing it tough.

Local dairy farmers are dealing with a long-running cost-price squeeze, with a race to the bottom for milk prices. This is being compounded every day by this drought that the government keeps telling them they are not in. Rob Miller tried to tell the Prime Minister how hard it is. He tried to tell him, 'It's cheaper to wash your car with milk than it is with water,' but the Prime Minister didn't want to listen, and he is still not listening. I am appalled that this government would vote against real help and support for our dairy farmers. I will not let go. I will not turn my back on local farmers. I will keep fighting for them. I am one of them.

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister has indicated he wishes to receive the call.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: ADDITIONAL ANSWERS

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (16:27): I am coming back to the House. In question time today I undertook to make contact with the New South Wales police to inform myself on matters that were the subject of questions raised by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the Statement of Ministerial Standards, specifically clauses 7.1 and 7.2. I take matters of ministerial standards very seriously. I have since spoken with the New South Wales police commissioner, Mick Fuller, about the instigation, the nature and the substance of their inquiries, which he advised me were based only on the allegations referred by the shadow Attorney-General. Based on the information provided to me by the commissioner, I consider there is no action required by me under clauses 7.1 and 7.2. The New South Wales police should now be left to complete their inquiries, which will be considered upon their completion.

The SPEAKER: Is the Leader of the Opposition seeking indulgence?

Mr Albanese: Yes.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left will cease interjecting. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to resume his seat for a second. I appreciate the Leader of the Opposition is seeking indulgence. I have reflected on this matter. I would only normally grant that if the subject matter was something not of the nature we're dealing with—that is, a national emergency or something like that. I can't think of instances where essentially an updating of the House or adding to an answer has had the Speaker grant an indulgence. Whilst I'm always wanting to ensure that members have ample opportunity to express their views, there are other opportunities throughout the course of the day and other options open to the Leader of the Opposition, working backwards from the adjournment to now. Regrettably, I don't think I should change that practice, otherwise every time a minister or the Prime Minister adds to an answer we'd be reopening a debate. Regrettably, I won't grant him that indulgence, but I'm happy to call the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (16:29): Mr Speaker, I understand the context of that ruling, and that's why I will now seek to move a motion to suspend standing orders, which would be appropriate at this time. I move:
That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Member for Grayndler from moving the following motion immediately—That the House:

(1) notes that:

(a) on the evening of 23 October 2019, The Guardian reported the Minister for Emissions Reduction had used incorrect figures from the City of Sydney Annual Report 2017-18 in a letter to the Lord Mayor of Sydney;

(b) on 24 October 2019, the Minister told the House "The document was drawn directly from the City of Sydney's website";

(c) despite the Minister's claim, all the evidence to date is that no such document ever existed on the website, the altered document has only ever been produced by the Minister's office and the doctored figures have only ever been used by the Minister in his official Ministerial correspondence;

(d) today, the NSW Police confirmed that it had launched Strike Force Garrad to investigate the matter;

(e) paragraph 7.1 of the Ministerial Standards make clear that it is for the Prime Minister to stand aside a Minister if that Minister becomes the subject of an official investigation of alleged illegal conduct; and

(f) in Question Time today, the Prime Minister stonewalled, ridiculed Labor for demanding the Minister for Emissions Reduction be immediately stood aside and shut down debate on the Minister’s conduct; and

(2) therefore, condemns the Prime Minister for his contempt for this Parliament and the principles of ministerial integrity and accountability.

I am astounded that the Prime Minister has shown such contempt as to come into this parliament and stonewall again for this minister. This minister must go.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough): I call the minister.

Mr Albanese: This minister must go.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the minister.

Mr Albanese: This minister is now being held accountable not just for this parliament—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will take his seat!

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing ) (16:31): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

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

The House divided. [16:36]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .......................... 74
Noes ............................69
Majority ....................5

AYES
Alexander, JG
Andrews, KJ
Archer, BK
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Connelly, V

CHAMBER
AYES

Coulton, M  
Dutton, PC  
Evans, TM  
Fletcher, PW  
Frydenberg, IA  
Gillespie, DA  
Hammond, CM  
Hawke, AG  
Howarth, LR  
Irons, SJ  
Katter, RC  
Laming, A  
Leeser, J  
Littleproud, D  
Marino, NB  
McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
Morton, B  
O’Brien, T  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC  
Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Sharma, DN  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Thompson, P  
van Manen, AJ  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Wood, JP  
Young, T

Drum, DK (teller)  
Entsch, WG  
Fallinski, JG  
Flint, NJ  
Gee, AR  
Goodenough, IR  
Hastie, AW  
Hogan, KJ  
Hunt, GA  
Joyce, BT  
Kelly, C  
Landry, ML  
Ley, SP  
Liu, G  
Martin, FB  
McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O’Brien, LS  
Pasin, A  
Pitt, KJ  
Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
Tudge, AE  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wilson, TR  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

NOES

Albanese, AN  
Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burns, LJ  
Butler, MC  
Byrne, AM  
Clare, JD  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD  
Elliot, MJ  
Freelander, MR  
Giles, AJ  
Gosling, LJ  
Hayes, CP  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, G  
Khalil, P  
King, MMH  
Marles, RD  

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Chalmers, JE  
Coker, EA  
Conroy, PM  
Dreyfus, MA  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S  
Gorman, P  
Haines, H  
Hill, JC  
Jones, SP  
Keogh, MJ  
King, CF  
Leigh, AK  
McBride, EM
Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (16:39): Is the motion seconded?

Mr Butler: I second the motion. A police strike force into three provisions of the Crimes Act, and this Prime Minister does nothing.

The SPEAKER: The member for Hindmarsh will resume his seat. The Leader of the House?

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (16:39): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the member for Hindmarsh be no longer heard.

The House divided. [16:40]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .................... 74
Noes .................... 69
Majority ................ 5

AYES

Alexander, JG  Allen, K
Andrews, KJ  Andrews, KL
Archer, BK  Bell, AM
Broadbent, RE  Buchholz, S
Chester, D  Christensen, GR
Conaghan, PJ  Connelly, V
Coultan, M  Drum, DK (teller)
Dutton, PC  Entsch, WG
Evans, TM  Falinski, JG
Fletcher, PW  Flint, NJ
Frydenberg, JA  Gee, AR
Gillespie, DA  Goodenough, IR
Hammond, CM  Hastie, AW
AYES
Hawke, AG
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Katter, RC
Laming, A
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
Marino, NB
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
Morton, B
O'Brien, T
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharma, DN
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ
Webster, AE
Wilson, RJ
Wood, JP
Young, T

Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Landry, ML
Ley, SP
Liu, G
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O'Brien, LS
Pasin, A
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Simmonds, J
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Wallace, AB
Wicks, LE
Wilson, TR
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T

NOES
Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Dick, MD
Elliot, MJ
Freelander, MR
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Hayes, CP
Husic, EN
Kearney, G
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
Chalmers, JE
Coker, EA
Conroy, PM
Dreyfus, MA
Fitzgibbon, JA
Georganas, S
Gorman, P
Haines, H
Hill, JC
Jones, SP
Keogh, MJ
King, CP
Leigh, AK
McBride, EM
Mitchell, RG
Murphy, PJ
O’Connor, BPJ
Owens, JA
Perrett, GD
Plibersek, TJ
Rowland, MA
Question agreed to.

**The SPEAKER** (16:41): The question is that the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition be agreed to.

**Mr MARLES** (Corio—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (16:41): The *Urban Dictionary* has a very interesting definition of ‘garrad’. You ought to go and have a look at it!

**The SPEAKER:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. I now call the Leader of the House.

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (16:41): I move:

That the question be put.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the question be put.

The House divided. [16:42]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ayes</th>
<th>74</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noes</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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
Hammond, CM
Hawke, AG
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Katter, RC
Laming, A
Leeser, J
Allen, K
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Connelly, V
Drum, DK (teller)
Entsch, WG
Falinski, JG
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Haste, AW
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Landry, ML
Ley, SP

**NOES**

Ryan, JC (teller)
Shorten, WR
Snowdon, WE
Steggall, Z
Templeman, SR
Thwaites, KL
Watts, TG
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A
Sharkie, RCC
Smith, DPB
Stanley, AM (teller)
Swanson, MJ
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vamvakinou, M
Wells, AS
Wilson, JH
AYES

Littleproud, D
Marino, NB
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
Morton, B
O’Brien, T
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharma, DN
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ
Webster, AE
Wilson, RJ
Wood, JP
Young, T

Liu, G
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O’Brien, LS
Pasin, A
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Simmonds, J
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Wallace, AB
Wicks, LE
Wilson, TR
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Dick, MD
Elliot, MJ
Freelander, MR
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Hayes, CP
Husien, EN
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)
Shorten, WR
Snowdon, WE
Steggall, Z
Templeman, SR
Thwaites, KL

Aly, A
Bird, SL
Burke, AS
Burns, J
Butler, TM
Chalmers, JE
Coker, EA
Conroy, PM
Dreyfus, MA
Fitzgibbon, JA
Georganas, S
Gorman, P
Haines, H
Hill, JC
Jones, SP
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
Swanson, MJ
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vamvakinou, M
NOES
Watts, TG
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (16:45): The question is that the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition be agreed to.

The House divided. [16:45]
(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)
Ayes .....................69
Noes .....................74
Majority .................5

AYES
Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Dick, MD
Elliot, MJ
Freelander, MR
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Hayes, CP
Husic, EN
Kearney, G
Khalil, P
King, MMH
Marles, RD
Mitchell, BK
Mulino, D
Neumann, SK
O’Neill, CE
Payne, AE
Phillips, FE
Rishworth, AL
Ryan, JC (teller)
Shorten, WR
Snowdon, WE
Stegall, Z
Templeman, SR
Thwaites, KL
Watts, TG
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

CHAMBER
Question negatived.

The SPEAKER (16:49): The time allotted for the matter of public importance has concluded.

**BILLS**

**Australian Research Council Amendment Bill 2019**

**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 notes that the Government has cut research funding, interfered in independent, peer-reviewed grant processes and abandoned nation-building investment in education and research infrastructure”

The SPEAKER (16:49): In accordance with standing order 133, I shall now proceed to put the question on the motion moved earlier today by the honourable member for Moreton on which a division was called for and deferred in accordance with the standing order. No further debate is allowed. The question is that the motion moved by the member for Moreton be agreed to.

The House divided. [16:51]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .................66
Noes ...................77
Majority...............11

AYES
Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Dick, MD
Elliot, MJ
Freelander, MR
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Hill, JC
Jones, SP
Kingingh, MJ
King, CF
Leigh, AK
McBride, EM
Mitchell, RG
Murphy, PJ
O'Connor, BPJ
Owens, JA
Perrett, GD
Pibersek, TJ
Rowland, MA
Shorten, WR
Snowdon, WE
Swanson, MJ
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vamvakines, MJ
Wells, AS
Wilson, JH

NOES
Alexander, JG
Allen, K
Question negatived.
Original question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.
Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Consideration in Detail

Bill—by leave—taken as a whole.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (16:57): I move the Australian Greens amendment:

(1) Schedule 1, page 3 (after line 11), at the end of the Schedule, add:

4 After section 51

CHAMBER
Insert:

**51A Announcements about approval of expenditure on research programs**

(1) The Minister must, within 21 days after making a determination under paragraph 51(2)(b):
   (a) make a public announcement of the determination; and
   (b) cause a copy of the announcement to be published on the internet.

(2) The Minister must not make an announcement under subsection (1) together with any of the following:
   (a) another member of parliament;
   (b) a candidate in an election for the Senate or the House of Representatives.

(3) An announcement made under subsection (1) is not a legislative instrument.

(4) To avoid doubt, subsection (1) applies in addition to subsection 51(3).

(5) In this section, **member of parliament** means:
   (a) a senator; or
   (b) a member of the House of Representatives; or
   (c) a Minister of State who is not a senator or member of the House of Representatives; or
   (d) a person who is taken to be the President of the Senate under the **Parliamentary Presiding Officers Act 1965** and who is not a senator or member of the House of Representatives; or
   (e) a person who is taken to be the Speaker of the House of Representatives under the **Parliamentary Presiding Officers Act 1965** and who is not a senator or member of the House of Representatives.

This government has not been a great friend of research. We've seen research and science spending decline to the lowest share of GDP since they started keeping records. That is not something that anyone should be proud of, but this government bears it as a badge of honour that it has cut science and research funding. It boasts about getting to a surplus. Well, getting to a surplus off the back of having the lowest percentage of spending on science and research since they started keeping records is a stupid set of priorities. It's an absolutely stupid set of priorities.

What is also worrying to many researchers and intending-to-be researchers who are doing amazing work across Australia is not only that the government is cutting funding to research but that it is also starting to politicise research. We've seen this happen in a number of ways over a number of years starting with the traditional, where someone from the conservative backbench gets up in parliament and reads out a list of ARC grant titles that they don't like—and it had been left there for a while. But then, recently, the Minister for Education said that he was going to refuse funding for some ARC grants that had been approved by the independently peer assessed process within the ARC. They've justified it by saying: 'Well, one of them is about post orientalist arts. Do people want their money going on post orientalist arts?' A number of other titles were listed, presuming that people wouldn't want money spent on that. My answer to the minister on that front is: I don't know. Maybe we've got a world expert in post orientalist arts here. Maybe we have got someone who can lead the field and create an international reputation for Australia. I trust the Australian Research Council to be making those assessments, that's why we have the Australian Research Council. Once politicians start getting in the way and saying, 'We're going to start knocking back
grants on the basis that we don't like the title—even when the ARC has assessed them—we are in increasingly dangerous territory.

Then we get to the point of this amendment. It hasn't stopped there, because what the government has done is something no other government has ever done, as far as I'm aware. They have issued new guidelines that say, 'Even once the Australian Research Council has approved a grant and it's been through the process, you can't announce it publicly unless you're a coalition MP,' even if it's not in your electorate and even if it's got nothing to do with you. You have to wait until you've got the public announcement of your grant. You have to wait until a coalition MP, a backbencher in a marginal seat, is ready to front up and do a press conference with you. That is an appalling abuse of the independence of the ARC. People should not have to wait to have grants publicly announced to suit the political convenience of a backbencher from the Liberal or National parties.

The fact that it is a nakedly political act is apparent from the terms of the guidelines itself. The government doesn't say, 'Grants will be announced with whoever the MP is for the relevant area.' The guidelines say, 'The announcement can only be made by a coalition MP together with the minister.' It is nakedly political. I've seen it happen in my electorate—someone came into the University of Melbourne to announce a grant that had nothing to do with them. Other members have seen it in their electorates. But this isn't about us as members of parliament; this is about researchers. This is about researchers having the confidence and the integrity in the ARC process and the way that the government goes about these decisions.

To give you an idea of how this is being interpreted by the universities and by the researchers, we had a leaked email from the University of Queensland that said, 'We are just reminding everyone: Don't announce your successful ARC grant, even though it's been independently assessed by the Australian Research Council.' They said, 'It's under embargo. We understand that the embargo is lifted by local MPs in conjunction with the Minister for Education.'

To date, two universities nationwide have been able to announce their DECRA outcomes due to the embargoes being lifted by their local MPs. UQ is waiting for its local MP, Julian Simmonds, to lift its embargo. That is how universities and researchers are feeling right now. They can't talk publicly about it until the local MP decides it is to their political convenience. That is posing enormous difficulties for the researchers, because it may mean that until there is a public announcement it may get in the way—according to what some of researchers have said—of some of them receiving funding and funding arrangements being signed. They are put in a position of uncertainty that they don't need to be put in. But it's worse than that. It sends a chilling effect into future research, because what does it do in the mind of someone who wants to apply for a research grant? They will ask themselves, 'Is this a project, that, if I put it in, a backbench Liberal Party or National Party MP might want to come and sit next to me and announce it?,' or, 'Am I going to be looked upon badly and not have my grant announced publicly simply because a Liberal MP doesn't agree with it?' That is not how we should be assessing research in this country. We should leave it to the independent Australian Research Council to make their proper assessments.

Yes, there may be a role for the minister in checking off that the grants have dotted all the i's and crossed all the t's and that the money is being spent appropriately. But in terms of getting into the detail and saying, 'I'm going to refuse this grant because I don't like the title,'
or, 'I'm sorry, even though that other grant is worthy and has been assessed as being independent you can't go and announce it publicly and sign your funding agreement because we've got to wait to find a Liberal or National Party MP from a completely different electorate because you just happen to be in a Labor, Greens or independent electorate,' that is not how research grants should be assessed and announced in this country.

I'm moving an amendment that puts in place a very clear process that can't be accused of being politicised. It makes it crystal clear that when a minister makes the decision to approve the grant funding—so it's not changing the processes under the act—they just publish it within 21 days so that everyone knows. It also says that the announcement is not to be made together with another MP or a candidate from the minister's own political party; they just put it up on the website so that people know.

There should be absolutely no objection to this amendment. It doesn't change the process of the ARC and it doesn't change the minister's existing powers to intervene—whatever one might say about whether those are good powers or not—but it takes the politics out of it. Researchers around the country have been crying out for the politics to be taken out of the process of announcing ARC grants. This should not be a political plaything. This is the public's money, it is not Liberal Party or National Party money that's being awarded. This is public money that is being awarded according to an independently assessed process, and the procedure that follows that should be independent, transparent and not subject to the political whims of Liberal or National Party MPs or candidates.

I would just ask the minister to respond to one simple question: if they're not going to support this amendment when it comes to announcing an independent grant that's been assessed by the ARC, then give a defence of why only Liberal and National MPs can be involved in that announcement. It's not their money; it's public money. Why can it only be announced by them? Why is it that grants have to wait until someone from a neighbouring seat or from a seat that may have nothing to do with it is available to come to the announcement? If you don't want to support this amendment, give us a simple answer as to why only Liberal or National MPs or candidates get to be involved in these announcements and why researchers should have to wait until the political needs of someone sitting in a marginal seat that may not even be the seat associated with the grant dictates it?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough): The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided. [17:12]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr Ian Goodenough)

| Ayes | 5 |
| Noes | 78 |
| Majority | 73 |

AYES

Bandt, AP (teller)
Katter, RC
Wilkie, AD (teller)

Haines, H
Steggall, Z

CHAMBER
Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Buchholz, S
Conaghan, PJ
Conroy, PM
Drum, DK
Entsch, WG
Fletcher, PW
Freelander, MR
Giles, AJ
Hammond, CM
Hill, JC
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Kelly, C
Khalil, P
Landry, ML
Littleproud, D
Marino, NB
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
Morton, B
Neumann, SK
O'Brien, T
Pasin, A
Perrett, GD
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharma, DN
Smith, DPB
Stevens, J
Swanson, MJ
Thompson, P
Vamvakinou, M
Wallace, AB
Wilson, RJ
Wood, JP
Young, T
Allen, K
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Christensen, GR
Connelly, V
Dreyfus, MA
Elliot, MJ
Evans, TM
Flint, NJ
Gee, AR
Gillespie, DA
Hastie, AW
Husie, EN (teller)
Joyce, BT
Keogh, MJ
Laming, A
Leeser, J
Liu, G
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
Murphy, PJ
O'Brien, LS
O'Neil, CE
Pearce, GB
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Simmonds, J
Snowdon, WE
Sukkar, MS
Taylor, AJ
Tudge, AE
van Manen, AJ
Wicks, LE
Wilson, TR
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T

Question negatived.
Bill agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr WOOD (La Trobe—Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs) (17:20): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.
Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management to Cashless Debit Card Transition) Bill 2019

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:
"the House:
(1) declines to give the bill a second reading;
(2) notes that, 12 years after the Intervention in the Northern Territory, there is no evidence that compulsory broad-based income management has worked to improve outcomes for First Nations people; and
(3) calls on the Government not to expand the cashless debit card, and to instead invest in evidence-based policies, programs and services, including:
(a) job creation and economic development;
(b) education, training and TAFE;
(c) health and rehabilitation services; and
(d) services for women and young people”.

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (17:20): As I was saying, the gradual transition is scheduled to occur over a nine-month period as of 1 April 2020. The rollout will proceed community by community so we can give our full attention to those areas where the program is being implemented. No two communities are the same. The government recognises this and will seek to work through the implications of these changes with all affected stakeholders. This will not simply be a consultative process, which is all talk and no action. As this government has committed $18 million to support the participants in this transition, we have no higher priority than looking after this country's most vulnerable and helping empower individual Australians chart their own future—

(Quorum formed) We also recognise that the member for Chifley, who called the quorum, is going to be painful the whole afternoon—and to think I let him use my pen when he sits in my chair! It's absolutely appalling.

This will affect a large number of the Indigenous Australians across the Northern Territory and the Cape York region. In addition to working closely with these Indigenous communities, we are providing resources in a range of local Indigenous languages, with access to interpreters as and when required.

This bill is a community driven, bottom-up initiative which helps to provide a strong welfare safety net whilst reducing social harm or welfare dependency. A fair go for all Australians is a pillar of this country's prosperity and, more importantly, since federation, has formed an important part of what makes this the greatest country on earth. This is a bill that goes to the heart of this Australian ideal by providing a hand up and creating better outcomes for communities and users of the cashless debit card. Australia has always been proud of our regional communities as important contributors to national life. Working together, we look
forward to helping support the future of regional communities continuing to represent the best of Australian values and culture.

The baseline report into the Goldfields trial site found the program produced very positive results. In addition to the decline in drug and alcohol related issues, there was also a decrease in overall crime. It was also encouraging to see that there was there was improved —

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (17:26): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the member be no further heard.

The House divided. [17:31]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

AYES

Aly, A
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Dick, MD
Fitzgibbon, JA
Georganas, S
Gorman, P
Hayes, CP
Husic, EN
Kearney, G
Khalil, P
King, MMH
Marles, RD
Mitchell, BK
Mulino, D
Neumann, SK
O’Neill, CE
Payne, AE
Phillips, FE
Rishworth, AL
Ryan, JC (teller)
Smith, DPB
Stanley, AM (teller)
Templeman, SR
Thwaites, KL
Wells, AS
Zappia, A

Noes

Ales

Majority
Question negatived.

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (17:35): Australia has always been proud of our regional communities as important contributors to national life. Working together, we look forward to helping support the future of regional communities and continuing to represent the best of Australian values and culture. The baseline report into the Goldfields trial found the program produced very positive results. In addition to the declining drug and alcohol related issues, there was also a decrease in overall crime. It was also encouraging to see that there was improved financial management on the part of participants. This program is not only about breaking detrimental habits that are devastating communities but about creating a pathway of hope to a better future for people who can be fully engaged and contributing to local life and economy. A critical component of this bill is embracing the—

Mr Burke: I move:
That the debate be adjourned.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough): The question is that the debate be adjourned. A division is required. Ring the bells for four minutes.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Manager of Opposition Business has moved that the debate be adjourned, but that can only happen between speakers. The member for Mackellar was still speaking, as I understand it, so I'm going to call the division off. I know it's a small point. I don't know what's going to happen, but it might be easier if people hang around. I call the member for Mackellar.

Mr FALINSKI: I will not be silenced on this debate! The people of Australia, the welfare recipients who want to live better lives, know what the Labor Party is up to. They know that it's afraid of us making their lives better. This is what this is about. We on this side of the House will not be silenced by the member for Watson, by the Labor Party. People just simply want to see their lives get better. That's what this government's about, making better the lives of all Australians, not just donors to the Labor Party. We have truth on our side. We have truth, and it's the truth that matters. Oh, yes, and they know it. The louder they scream, the more noise they make, the more we know that we're right and we're on the right path.

Anyway, the next step of the cashless debit card's rollout is to triple the number of beneficiaries to approximately 34,000. This will enable the government to monitor the improvements and continue to engage with communities. By gradually implementing the program, we will be able to more effectively deploy the pledged $18 million in support of individuals and communities going through the change. We anticipate that the continued implementation of the program will build up a body of evidence that clearly indicates the merits of the cashless debit card, with the bill's core objectives met in communities throughout Australia.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough): I call the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr FALINSKI: No, Tony; I'm only six minutes—

Mr Burke: Mr Deputy Speaker, I'd ask you to call the House to order. There are a large number of people interjecting who are out of their places. A large number of people are just conducting conversations in the room. The member for Mackellar is very passionate about this speech. The House has resolved that he should give it. I'm sitting here listening but his own colleagues are just wandering around, and I don't think that's right!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, would all members please take their seats or leave the chamber.

Mr FALINSKI: On this rare occasion, the Manager of Opposition Business and I are fully in agreement. What he says is not right. It is not right, and you should all pay attention because there are more facts to come. We believe—(Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (17:40): I move: That the debate be adjourned.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the debate be adjourned.

The House divided. [17:45]
Ayes .................60
Noes .................73
Majority.............13

AYES

Aly, A
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Dick, MD
Elliot, MJ
Freelander, MR
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Husic, EN (teller)
Kearney, G
Khalil, P
King, MMH
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


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


_Ayes_
Tuesday, 26 November 2019 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Question negatived.

Ms PAYNE (Canberra) (17:49): The cashless debit card is the next step in a long Liberal-National tradition of demonising Australians accessing the social security system. We see another proposal of which the main purpose is simply to demonise and stigmatise people. There is no problem that it is trying to address and there is no evidence that it will address any problems.

Our social security system should support people to live decent lives, but under this government it is keeping people poor. It is locking in inequality, and the cashless debit card typifies this government's approach to social policy. It doesn't trust people to make decisions for themselves. The Liberals say they are for the individual, for freedom. Clearly that doesn't apply to everyone. It certainly doesn't apply to the poorest and most disadvantaged Australians. Labor cannot support the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management to Cashless Debit Card Transaction) Bill 2019 in its current form.

There is no evidence to support a broad-based mandatory income management system for social security recipients. Eighty per cent of people subjected to income management in the Northern Territory, where it is being trialled, are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. This bill and the plans laid out within it are discriminatory. Our First Nations peoples deserve better than this. Our First Nations peoples should not be used as a trial case for a national roll out of the cashless debit card.

Labor supports income management being available when an individual or community feels it would be helpful to them. Income management should be available in communities only if and when those communities have determined it will be helpful for them, but forcing
people onto the cashless debit card is not the answer. It is punitive, and there is no evidence to demonstrate that it achieves the benefits the government is seeking.

Our social security system has been fundamental to our egalitarian society, and I dare say I agree with member for Mackellar when he says it's one of the things that has made our country such a great country. But this government is destroying that. Our social security system has worked hand in hand with decent wages and conditions to ensure that people do not live in poverty and that we support people when they are unable to work, but, under this government, Newstart is currently so low that everyone except the Prime Minister agrees it is actually preventing people from finding work. We know people experiencing dire poverty are going to find it very difficult to find a job, go to an interview and engage in work.

A decent social safety net is an investment in a healthy and thriving workforce. Instead, the realities for our workers are tough. In October we lost 19,000 jobs from the economy. As the shadow minister said, the number of Australians over the age of 55 on Newstart represents a quarter of all Newstart recipients and the number of over-55s on Newstart has surged to 45 per cent under this Liberal-National government. It seems that, instead of developing a legitimate plan for the Australian economy and a legitimate plan to increase the number of jobs for Australians as well as the number of hours for the one million-plus workers currently underemployed, the government is resorting to bashing social security recipients like it always does, with plans like expanding the cashless debit card. They should be building an economy that employs people, but instead they resort to making the social security system more punitive with measures like the cashless debit card.

The negative reviews of this policy from peak bodies, academics and other advocates provided to the Senate inquiry into the cashless debit card are overwhelming. I was struck by this comment from Professor Matthew Gray and Dr Rob Bray from the ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods here in Canberra. They said of their paper, in their submission to the inquiry into this bill:

It presents a review of data relating to child health and wellbeing, school participation and outcomes, alcohol consumption and impact, and crime and justice. The paper clearly shows that there has been a total absence of any improvement in the outcomes for Indigenous people in the Northern Territory which can be attributed to income management, despite the fact that the most vulnerable third of this population has been subject to the measure for over a decade.

Our view is that the evidence strongly shows that the simplistic conceptualisation of income management and the Cashless Debit Card, and the purported benefits of these policies, are false.

... ... ...

... the evidence is clear that when they are applied to broad populations based on some generic criteria they are an ineffective and costly policy with negative consequences.

Researchers from Griffith University and the University of Queensland provided a submission to the inquiry that included evidence they had been able to get from people who were on the cashless debit card in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay, including the following anecdotes which outline problems with the card's functionality. I will quote some of the people interviewed as part of this study. Interviewee 22 from Bundaberg said:

I took my son to soccer and I went to use the canteen to get him a bottle of water and it declined at the canteen. ... even declining at kids' soccer games, just to get water, it's pretty stressful and embarrassing.
Interviewee 1 from Hervey Bay said:

… I had to buy glasses, reading glasses, because I'm working … I have difficulty with my eyesight, so I had to buy glasses … and I couldn't use my Indue card.

Interviewee 4 from Hervey Bay said:

I went to pay my RACQ roadside assist on BPAY through Indue and it just wouldn't work.

Interviewee 7 from Hervey Bay said:

I can't even go to the markets because they don't have frigging EFTPOS machines at the markets. … I used to go to the markets on a Sunday, or Saturday markets. I don't go anywhere now.

Interviewee 4 from Hervey Bay said:

It was last week or maybe the week before I had to go to the chemist and get medicine. I went to use my cashless card and it didn't work. It wouldn't register. It wouldn't work. It wouldn't accept it at the EFTPOS machine.

Interviewee 5 from Hervey Bay said:

I needed to get the script done and the chemist wasn't accepting any cards.

These are frustrations and humiliations that people should not be facing in this country because of the government imposing the cashless debit card on them. Parents have also indicated that they were unable to pay for necessary items for children that required cash, such as tuckshop money, school uniforms, school photos, school holiday activities and tutoring. Interviewee 17 in Bundaberg explained:

Being able to pay for excursions, you know all those different things like sporting things. I'd love to get my son into little athletics, but I don't think I can pay for it, using the cashless debit card. Because a lot of these places want cash. I had $100 one week and $150 the next, so tell me how that's not making my children suffer, by not being able to give them a sporting thing. He loves to run, he loves to jump, he likes doing all that, he loves being outside. But to me, I don't know how I'm going to afford to put him in to football or whatever he wants to do, because they all want cash up front.

We should want all Australian children to be included, not excluded because their families are relying on social security. This completely undermines the objectives of the system.

Hervey Bay and Bundaberg are in the electorate of Hinkler, and shame on the Member for Hinkler, the Hon. Keith Pitt, for failing to protect his constituents from this punitive cashless debit card. In fact, earlier he was speaking about Senator Anthony Chisholm's consultations, saying that no-one was there and inviting us to talk to his office. Well, I'm sure he'd provide an honest assessment, because his constituents are affected. One such is Jodie McNally, who the Fraser Coast Chronicle has chosen as worthy to report about. First of all, she found that her card was sent to the wrong address, and then later found that if she accidentally used funds listed for rent, the next week she would find herself unable to pay rent because Indue had recorded her as already using the money allotted to that spending. She tried to opt out of the trial in July and has not yet heard back. These stories are not shocking for anyone who has dealt with Centrelink under this government.

What the government doesn't understand is how resourceful people need to be to get by on Newstart. Living on less than $40 a day will require you to be—

Mr Howarth: I wonder if the member will enable me to make an intervention.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): The honourable member for Petrie has sought to make an intervention. Does the honourable member for Canberra wish to cede to that request?

Ms PAYNE: No. Labor will seek to amend this bill in the Senate. First, we want to make the cashless debit card voluntary unless a community wants the card or a person is placed on income management for a specific reason, including for child protection or by the Family Responsibilities Commission in Cape York.

Labor wants to require the minister to demonstrate the support of each individual community before rolling out the cashless debit card, including consultation with women's groups and community members. Has the government learnt nothing about the importance of engaging with First Nations communities? The lack of consultation here is astounding. Labor, led in this area by our First Nations caucus committee, is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are involved in decision-making that impacts their lives. If only the government had this approach too.

Labor will seek to require further independent evaluation of the cashless debit card. We need to know the real impact of this policy, and it has not been shown yet. We need to know if it achieves the government's objectives; otherwise it is simply an ideological move yet again from the Liberal Party at the expense of First Nations peoples and anyone receiving social security.

Labor will seek to remove the minister's powers to quarantine up to 100 per cent of a person's payment. Technology has taken us a long way from the cash-reliant economy we had a decade or so ago. Card payments are prevalent, but we aren't a 100 per cent cash-free society. This is especially so in regional areas, where the cashless debit card trials have been held and where the government is proposing to roll out the card. For people living on payments below the poverty line, using cash is sometimes vital. Second-hand goods are often bought in cash. Things are sometimes cheaper when you use cash. Food shopping is often cheapest when conducted in cash. Instead the government focuses on its obsession with social security recipients being drug users, as we saw with their ridiculous attempts to drug tests all social security recipients.

Labor will seek to amend this bill to require ongoing wraparound services in cashless debit cards, as we have done previously. Our shadow minister, Linda Burney, has spoken about issues such as birth weights falling. She's talked about visiting communities where people don't have access to clean water and don't have food security. And there is a housing crisis in remote communities. Why not focus on these problems and actually address these issues? If the government wants to improve lives, why don't they focus on that rather than this policy with no evidence to prevent people from exercising their own choice and independence?

Why doesn't the government spend this money on a program that truly helps people to get work? The fact is that the cashless debit card will not create one job. How does it help people re-enter the workforce? How does it help the increasing number of people over the age of 55 on Newstart who want to work and can't find a job? How will it help people work until they are 70, like the Morrison government wants them to, and how will it help young people trying to get a foot in the door?
Why should someone who has never engaged in binge drinking or taken illicit drugs be forced onto the cashless debit card, which was introduced to address these behaviours? The answer is that they shouldn't. Today 23,000 people are on the BasicsCard and will transition to the cashless debit card and 83 per cent of these people are Indigenous. The cost has been substantial—approximately $2,500 per person per year. Imagine if the government had invested this money, over $50 million, into these communities and into services that are proven to assist people—into homelessness services or clean water? Instead the money has gone to a credit card company and imposed significant administrative burdens on businesses in these communities.

This bill is a precursor to government trying to introduce a national scheme. Senior members of the government have suggested all social security recipients under 35 should be placed on the cashless debit card. Some Nationals have argued that a national rollout should be a condition of any increase in the rate of Newstart. Labor has been calling for existing cashless debit card locations to be wound up by January 2020 unless the minister can demonstrate informed local community support. But there is no indication the minister has obtained this support. We also want a comprehensive, independent evaluation of the cashless debit card. We are rolling this program out blind, with only incompetent, incomplete or dubious analysis of the impact of the program available. And experts are saying it just isn't working. The Auditor-General has been scathing.

Once again, Labor is calling for wraparound services for people who are having their income managed. In Cape York, for example, where the cashless debit card has community support, individuals who are on income management are being supported more comprehensively than merely restricting their income. In Ceduna, $2.1 million has been invested in community safety, drug and alcohol services, mental health services, financial management support, extra funding for family violence support and free wi-fi connectivity. In the East Kimberley region, $2.9 million has been invested for a similar range of services, including youth activities. But, as the rollout has continued, the commitment to these services has waned. This is unsurprising given the comments of the government on this issue.

We should be building a social security system that helps people to build good lives. We should be using the system to reduce inequality. Instead, all the government is able to come up with is more punitive measures that make people's lives more difficult. I call on the government to work with Labor to make this bill better. I call on the government to rethink their approach to social security to support all Australians to achieve their full potential, not lock them into poverty.

(Quorum formed)

Dr FREELANDER (Macarthur) (18:07): I rise today to speak on the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management to Cashless Debit Card Transition) Bill 2019—it doesn't really roll off the tongue! In doing so, I wish to state that I cannot support the bill in the form in which it has been presented by the government—or really any other form. I find this legislation highly discriminatory and insulting. Like much of this government's legislation, it's nasty, it demonises people and it doesn't support people. We've heard for a long time about the robodebt tragedy, and I do call it a tragedy in that it demonised and punished people for being poor. We've heard about the government's refusal to increase
Newstart. Indeed, today I went to a presentation demonstrating that there's no area of Sydney that's affordable for those on Newstart benefits to house themselves.

This legislation, if it were to pass this parliament, would apply predominantly to First Nations Australians, with 80 per cent of the people on income management in the Northern Territory being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. Of course, many other people around Australia are worried about the government's intention to roll out this cashless debit card throughout Australia to the populations dependent on welfare. They're worried about the way it will demonise and damage people. Here we have a discriminatory piece of legislation, and the government have not even tried to mask what they're doing. Instead they're content with looking as though they're controlling the lives of some of the most disadvantaged individuals in our country without providing them with support.

The government has failed altogether to consult with communities, and we should be disgusted by this. We should also be disgusted by the lack of any form of evidence in support of the cashless debit card. Indeed, 12 years after the intervention we still cannot say that there is evidence to support mandatory and broad based income management. Because of the lack of evidence, one has to wonder why this is still being debated in this place. Indeed, there's evidence to the contrary. The Menzies School of Health Research has published data showing that in those populations in the Northern Territory affected by the income management the birth weights have fallen by approximately 100 grams per child, which is a really significant negative effect.

Let's call this legislation out for what it is and what it really seeks to do. It lays the foundations for a national rollout of the cashless debit card to some of the poorest people in our country. We know there are several members opposite who would seek to have such a scheme implemented, and some of them come from some of the wealthiest electorates in the country. I wonder what the people in Point Piper, North Sydney, Chatswood or Toorak would feel about management of their incomes. I, for one, will not support a scheme being forced onto communities without their approval and without consultation.

Labor, of course, will be moving amendments to this bill in the other place, which will emphasise the government's failures in the House of Representatives. When the legislation comes before the Senate we will be seeking to make the cashless debit card voluntary, as it rightfully should be. To be quite clear: a national rollout of the cashless debit card should not be considered. There is simply no evidence to suggest that broad based income management and cashless debit cards actually work to improve the situation of the very disadvantaged.

We always see the government being morally righteous—acting as though the state knows what is best for the individual and how they should live their lives—with the poorest but not with the richest, particularly when they're talking about some of the most vulnerable in our society. I put it to the government members opposite that their pay cheques come from the same place that Newstart recipients receive their payments from: the Australian taxpayer. Perhaps those opposite should reconsider their approach. If we were to apply cashless debit cards universally, to all government payments, would those opposite be keen to see a cashless debit card implemented to manage their electorate allowances, or even their salaries? Goodness knows, some of those opposite do not know how to handle a budget. Look at the blowout in the national deficit over the past six years. Maybe those opposite would reconsider their moral authority on these matters if they were unable to freely access their travel...
allowances during sitting fortights, instead having to account for every single dollar and cent that they spend—much like the government is trying to force entire communities to accept. Again, the arguments of the government fall apart here. Members and senators and those who receive social welfare are paid by the same people, and I know plenty of jobseekers and welfare recipients who work harder, or would worker harder if they were given the chance, than some of the members opposite.

I am pleased that the government has taken on board the amendment, moved by Labor earlier in the year, which would allow people to come off the cashless debit card scheme if they were effectively managing their finances. However, this does little to address the poor attitudes adopted by those opposite. Nor does it address the fundamental problems of the debit card being imposed upon people indiscriminately, without any consideration of their personal circumstances. Nobody should be forced onto such a scheme. Either they should choose to use the card or the community should make an informed and locally based decision that they want to opt in to having the card. To force people onto this scheme is totalitarian in nature and typical of the government's paternalistic and uncaring attitude to the poorest in our community.

Further to our amendment, which will make the scheme applicable on a voluntary basis, Labor will be seeking to ensure that the scheme cannot be rolled out without the express support of the community that it will affect. If our amendments are successful, the minister will rightfully have to demonstrate that the rollout has the support of the community and that there has been extensive consultation with women's groups, community members and health groups. It is evident that there needs to be further independent evaluation of the cashless debit card, and Labor will be seeking to ensure that this evaluation takes place.

Furthermore, the minister should not have the power to quarantine up to 100 per cent of an individual's payment. I don't see how this would benefit anyone. In particular, how is a person in need of help supposed to seek help if the government is starving them of the limited support they have available?

The government's logic here is very flawed. Labor would seek to ensure there are ongoing wraparound services made available in areas where the cashless debit card would apply.

I want to be quite clear here: Labor is fundamentally opposed to a national rollout or extension of the cashless debit card scheme. We have serious doubts as to the scheme's effectiveness. There is absolutely no evidence to suggest this scheme would help people and not further ostracise individuals. It's quite demeaning and it is stigmatising to make people have a cashless debit card for their income. This scheme would prevent people from purchasing the basic essentials at affordable prices, and it is very expensive.

Under the stewardship of the coalition, the number of people over 55 years of age who are on Newstart has surged by a whopping 45 per cent. This scheme would not create a single job. It will attack some of the most vulnerable in our society and provide very little comfort and assurance to those desperately trying to enter the workforce or improve themselves.

Instead of attacking people who are in need of support from the government, the coalition should be refocusing its efforts on creating a plan for jobs, a plan for our floundering economy and a plan to support those who are most disadvantaged in our society throughout Australia. That is the kind of effort people who are seeking work deserve from their government. They deserve positive support in retraining, in finding jobs and in managing
their own finances themselves, as opposed to the insulting attitudes that are espoused by the government in its persistent efforts to control individuals' finances and individuals' lives.

Even the Auditor-General has been scathing of the government in its assessment of the cashless debit card scheme. The government's support of such a program is completely unfounded. It's anti-science, anti-evidence and demonstrates how truly out of touch they are with the needs of everyday Australians. However, what we can be certain of is the fact that the cashless debit card has actually prevented individuals from accessing some of the most essential items at affordable prices. It's not only welfare recipients who stand to lose out under the scheme and the warped agenda of those opposite. Small businesses are also concerned about the impacts of the cashless debit card. Small businesses, such as discount variety stores, are concerned this scheme would affect their clientele and, further, would have a negative impact upon their businesses in terms of the cost of non-cash transactions.

As a former small business owner, I can attest to the cost of non-cash transactions and can fully understand why local businesses would be concerned about the rollout of such a scheme. We've even heard that people have left town altogether to avoid the scheme. I'm sure this will happen in most of the electorates where it is possible for people to move. They will move away. That is how insulting it is to individuals whose lives the government would seek to control. People would rather uproot their entire lives and leave town than have the government dictate their day-to-day lives and expenses. Furthermore, there are issues and flaws with the technology surrounding this scheme that make it easy to get around. It would seem the government isn't actually interested in follow-through here but is happy to maintain the perception that it acts tough and readily attacks those on social welfare.

If a community genuinely decide they wish to use the card, the government must make a serious effort to consult with them and provide them with the necessary supports. Those supports include access to education, jobs, drug rehabilitation, health care and, in particular, the social supports that many families require but are not being provided. They don't require more robodebt, more negative implications from the government in managing their lives, and more attacks. Anything less is insulting and highly patronising.

While not opposed to income management in all circumstances, Labor is opposed to such a broad based approach and compulsory programs. All that these types of initiatives succeed in doing is to ostracise entire communities, stigmatise communities, and catch and disempower the entirely wrong people. This is a style of government that we've come to expect from those opposite in the past six years. The recent retractions of robodebt are a further example of that. The government won't admit it was wrong, won't admit that it stigmatised people, won't admit that it punished the poorest and won't admit that it damaged people's lives, but it has snuck in and said that it is 'going to amend the debt collection from Centrelink'. This is the government really trying to hide what it is doing. They are not interested in leading from the front, setting higher standards for our society and providing the stability, humility and functionality that Australians could be proud of in a government and in a social support scheme. They instead seek to maintain the grip of government on the poorest, by perpetuating fear, causing division and creating enemies where none exist, to undertake cheap publicity stunts—and that's all they are.

Income management should not be indiscriminate. A recent report found that compulsory income management usually does not bring about any improvements, whereas a voluntary
approach with appropriate social supports may. This report arose out of an evaluation into income management in the Northern Territory. The government's entire approach in this field is flawed and indicative of a government that has not learnt from the lessons of the past 200 years. The government should be approaching this notion of cashless welfare with a concept of self-determination at the forefront of their minds. People need support to learn ways of managing their own lives. They do not need punishment from a government desperate to stigmatise them. If a community wishes to try the card then the government should respect their wishes and support their goals by providing wraparound support services. On the contrary, we have a government that believes that they have the right to dictate to others how they should live their lives, particularly those on the lowest incomes and with the most difficult circumstances.

I have severe concerns about the government's attitude towards all welfare recipients. As I've said before, the complete refusal of the government to consider an increase in Newstart is really a tragedy unfolding. Their ideas around the cashless welfare card are in a similar vein. The government appears to me to be determined to initiate this totalitarian scheme without any consideration into the potential consequences and any evidence for or against, and with very little consultation. One would think that the government would have looked closely at the BasicsCard that was implemented at the time of the Northern Territory Intervention had they seriously wanted to improve the lives of welfare recipients and those who need support. The reality is that this scheme has had very little scrutiny and has never really thoroughly been evaluated—don't ask me; ask the Auditor-General. Instead, the government carry on with their sanctimonious nonsense, believing that they know what is best for entire communities. Twelve years after the Intervention, we still cannot say that there is evidence to support mandatory and broad based income management.

Let us call this legislation out for what it really seeks to do: lay the foundations for a national rollout of the cashless debit card. To be quite clear, a national rollout of the cashless debit card should not be considered. There is simply no evidence to suggest that broad based income management and cashless debit cards actually work at all. Thank you very much.

(Quorum formed)

Dr ALY (Cowan) (18:25): I rise to speak on this bill, and in doing so I'd like to start by reiterating something that I've said in this House before, and that is that this bill is just another example of this government's ideological pursuit of people on welfare. It's an unrelenting ideological pursuit of some of the most vulnerable people in Australia.

This bill changes the card technology used for income management in the Northern Territory and Cape York without changing who is placed on income management or the quarantined portion of payments. It replaces the BasicsCard with the cashless debit card across the Northern Territory and Cape York, with rollouts scheduled to be completed by 2020. It maintains the current 50 per cent quarantine rate for most people subject to income management in the Northern Territory. It extends the existing cashless debit card trial areas—Ceduna, East Kimberley, the Goldfields, Hervey Bay, Bundaberg—by one year to 30 June 2021. It removes the current cap on the number of the trial participants. It sets an end date of 31 December 2021 for the Cape York cashless debit card trial. It allows people in the Northern Territory to come off the cashless debit card if they can demonstrate that they are effectively managing their finances. And, importantly, it allows the minister to make a non-
disallowable rule and increase the proportion of a person's payment quarantined on the cashless debit card to 100 per cent. The minister currently has this power in relation to the BasicsCard. But it is significant in the context of the 80 per cent quarantine rates in the existing cashless debit card locations.

Labor has said that it does not support this bill. We simply cannot support this bill in its current form, for a number of reasons. First of all—and in my mind one of the most important reasons why we cannot support this bill—is that it is simply discriminatory. It is a discriminatory bill that applies predominantly, 80 per cent of the time, to First Nations people. Eighty per cent of those on income management in the Northern Territory are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. That's a really important reason not to support this bill. But an equally important reason is that there is actually no clear evidence. Twelve years after the intervention there is absolutely no clear empirical evidence that broad based mandatory income management has worked.

I'd like to take a few minutes to go through some of the results of evaluations on the income management system that the government has been using that demonstrate that this has not worked. An evaluation of the income management in the Northern Territory, that was completed by the University of New South Wales in 2014, found little evidence that broad based compulsory income management is resulting in widespread behavioural change. That's with respect to either building an ability to effectively manage money or building socially responsible behaviour beyond the direct impact of limiting the amount that an individual can spend on certain items. That evaluation suggested that there was some evidence to support targeted income management, but certainly not the kind of income management that this government is seeking to put in place with this bill, which is, effectively, a deliberate attempt to precursor a national rollout of the cashless debit card.

It's not hard to understand why it is that such broad-based compulsory income management does not result in behavioural change or in building capacity. If this government were indeed serious about behavioural change or building capacity, they would certainly employ some of those proven techniques in social behavioural change that have been developed over many years and that have resulted in things like, for example, a reduction in smoking rates among teens and young people or a reduction in alcoholic consumption for young people and teens. These are proven and effective means of changing behaviour, using theories of behavioural change that have stood the test of time and that have a very strong empirical and research base over many years. But that's not what this government are doing. Instead, they are insisting on using an income management scheme: a compulsory, broad-based income management scheme that we know—from this evidence, from this review that was undertaken, and from these evaluations—does not result in behavioural change. So the argument that I've been hearing from the government that the introduction of the cashless debit card and their income management program has resulted in behavioural change holds very little weight when you hold it up against the actual research and actual evaluation by people who know about behavioural change models.

Last year, in a document presented to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights the Australian government itself wrote that there are more positive results associated with people who volunteer, as they have made a choice to change their behaviour and receive assistance. Positive findings have been found for people who have been referred
for income management by a social worker or a child protection officer. Again, by the
government's own admission, mandatory, broad-based compulsory income management, such as that being proposed by this bill, does not work, because it does not change behaviours. It does not take an expert in this field to tell you that; social change and behavioural change models exist across many fields, as I've mentioned before.

The government's own most recent review of the cashless debit card indicated some reduction in certain behaviours, such as drinking and drug use. Again, these changes were based on a self-reported survey of participants. As a researcher myself, I would hardly call self-reporting on behaviours a valid and scientifically reliable way of collecting data. It's certainly not replicable, and I think that it would not hold up to a test of reliability and scientific vigour. The Auditor-General has also found that there is no evidence that the cashless debit card is working and recommended better baseline data collection and monitoring. So we have flawed data collection, flawed monitoring from the government itself, an admission by the government that those who volunteer for income management are much more likely to change their behaviours than those who are forced onto it, and we have an evaluation undertaken by experts in the field who say it is very ineffective in building the kind of socially responsible behaviour that this government is trying to argue the cashless debit card builds.

Alongside all of that evidence, we also have the fact that there are significant weaknesses in the cashless debit card technology, including being able to wash money through a credit card because the cashless debit card can be used to pay off a credit card. I recall in the Senate inquiry Senator Jacqui Lambie stating that you could still buy alcohol using the card, if you used your credit card and then used your cashless debit card to pay off your credit card. So there are ways around it. Particularly given the fact that the cashless debit card and this program do not change behaviour, it would seem quite logical to come to the conclusion that people will find ways of continuing their behaviours using these weaknesses in the cashless debit card technology.

It also has inaccurate automatic classification of retailers using merchant codes and it cannot be used to purchase goods in the cash economy, such as second-hand items, or at roadside stalls and markets, like the local growers' markets. That means that people with limited income lose access to some of the cheaper alternatives, not to mention the possible contributions that can be made to a circular economy if people use recycled goods and purchase things second hand.

So we've got no clear evidence that mandatory income and management works, and we've got evaluations that have been taken and we know that it doesn't really change behaviour. We know that there are significant weaknesses in the cashless debit card technology and, importantly, we also know that this bill presents very much as a deliberate precursor to the national rollout of the cashless debit card, which is what several members of the government have indicated they would like to see.

Labor is pleased to see that the government has extended some of the amendments that Labor moved earlier this year. Those amendments allow people to come off the cashless debit card if they are effectively managing their finances. But even those amendments do not fix the fundamental problems with the cashless debit card and, indeed, with the entire approach of mandatory income management. It should not be discriminatorily imposed on people without a
reason relating to their individual circumstances. And unless a person volunteers to use the
card, or a community makes an informed local decision that they want the card in their area,
the forced, mandatory use of the card will continue to prove ineffective because it simply will
not change any behaviours and will not achieve that which the government says it will
achieve.

The Senate inquiry into this bill had 108 submissions, and the overwhelming majority of
those submissions opposed this bill. We know that evidence of the card's effectiveness in
reducing social harm is not only showing that it's been ineffective but, in some cases, that it's
actually exacerbated the social harms it was designed to reduce or prevent. As an example,
the inquiry heard evidence from MoneyMob Talkabout of people in cashless card
communities on the disability support pension and the aged pension, who get higher
payments, how those people—those on disability support and aged pensions—are being
targeted and pressured by people on the cashless debit card who have already expended their
income. Of course, if this program is not changing behaviours, as I mentioned earlier, one
would expect that people will then adopt other behaviours to circumvent and take advantage
of the vulnerabilities and weaknesses in the system. These are weaknesses to do with the
technical capabilities of the cashless debit card itself, but there are also other kinds of
vulnerabilities, such as vulnerable people on disability support and aged pensions being put
under pressure.

The Menzies School of Health Research found that the birth weight of Indigenous babies
actually declined after compulsory income management. We've also seen that there are
impacts on the government's own Closing the Gap strategy. The card is also being managed
outside the Centrelink process—these are all things that came out in the Senate inquiry into
this bill—which means it will be managed by post, or via telephone or online. When you
consider that many of the participants in this program live in remote communities and that
there's a digital divide between those in the city and those in remote communities, many of
them don't have adequate access to telecommunications services, making it particularly
difficult for them to manage their participation in this scheme. Professor Matthew Gray and
Dr Rob Bray from the ANU said:

Our view is that the evidence strongly shows that the simplistic conceptualisation of income
management and the Cashless Debit Card, and the purported benefits of these policies, are false.

... the evidence is clear that when they are applied to broad populations based on some generic criteria
they are an ineffective and costly policy ...

Labor will continue to advocate for measures to address inequality and the substantive issues
for our First Nations peoples that are based on evidence and that do not perpetuate this
government's ideological pursuit of some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

(Quorum formed)

Ms THWAITES (Jagajaga) (18:44): It is important that this bill, the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management to Cashless Debit Card Transition) Bill 2019, be debated in the House, because it certainly shouldn't be supported. This card, the
cashless debit card, takes away the rights of vulnerable people and this bill is discriminatory,
disproportionately impacting on First Nations Australians. The people already on income
management, on the BasicsCard, are going to be the people affected by this bill. More than 80
per cent of the 23,000 people currently on income management in the Northern Territory are Indigenous. These are the people who, as a result of the actions of this government, will be forced onto the cashless debit card. This government's taking a one-size-fits-all approach to policy that's predominantly targeting our First Nations Australians, regardless of their individual or community circumstances and needs. What we've got here is another trial of a program which doesn't work, with no community consultation and with no plan to support communities, to support jobs or to support the vulnerable people most affected.

There are so many problems with this bill. The bill removes the right of an individual to seek a review of the decision to be issued with the cashless debit card notice. We all know this government's appalling record of managing the paperwork of welfare recipients, most evident recently through the robodebt debacle. Now they're looking to remove procedural fairness for those who may have been placed on the cashless debit card in error, instead leaving them to apply for an exemption or exit from the scheme. It's also known that Indigenous Australians are well documented to often have greater difficulty accessing exemptions than non-Indigenous people, adding to the disproportionate effect this bill will have on Indigenous Australians. For the people living in remote communities whose lives will be affected by this, without adequate access to telecommunication services, it will be especially difficult for them to manage their participation in the cashless debit scheme and apply to get out of this unfair and discriminatory regime.

This government is imposing all of this on communities with little to no consultation. Communities and stakeholders have either not been involved or have simply been told how cashless debit cards will take effect, instead of being asked whether they want them, whether they will be useful to their community and what set-up will make sense for their community—none of that. This government just rolls in and tells people how it will be.

More than 20,000 people will go onto the cashless debit card with no consultation or understanding of how it will affect their lives—for example, the Yolgnu people of the community of Milingimbi, who created a submission regarding their experiences for the recent Senate inquiry. I want to quote from that submission. This is what the Yolgnu had to say:

We want to tell you from our heart about our concerns about this decision, which was made by members of the Australian Government and the Parliament in Canberra, a long way away from Milingimbi. We are telling our stories and are hoping that the government will listen and balance the scales of justice.

We were not told about these plans: the Government did not come to talk to us in Milingimbi. They did not sit down with us and talk about it. The decision was unexpected, and the decision is happening very quickly. When we heard about it we started talking about it, in our community and in the Yolgnu communities in Arnhem Land.

The BasicsCard and the Cashless Debit Card take away freedom from the people who are told that they have to use it. It enslaves people's choices and stops them making decisions about their own lives. This payment quarantining has been going on for a long time. Some people have been quarantined their whole lives. When the Government takes choices away from people, they lose their self-esteem. We respect the Government, but this decision takes too much freedom away.

What is the point of us in this place if we are not going to listen to the voices of these people, if we are going to impose these radical measures on them without listening to what they have to say about what's going on in their lives, if we're going to restrict their rights without
hearing what that means? What they want, what they're calling for, is a government that engages with them, listens to them and treats them equally and fairly. That seems to be something that this government is completely unwilling to do, instead imposing cashless debit cards on communities like Milingimbi and communities across the Northern Territory and other remote parts of Australia without evidence or consultation.

Twelve years after the start of the Intervention and the introduction of income management, there is no evidence that compulsory income management works—12 years, and yet they still call it a trial. It's not a trial. We know it doesn't work—admit it! The Auditor-General has found no evidence that cashless debit cards are effective. In fact, one of the only credible pieces of evaluation on income management in the Northern Territory, which was completed back in 2014, found:

Despite the magnitude of the program the evaluation does not find any consistent evidence of income management having a significant systematic positive impact.

In fact, there's growing evidence that income management actually harms communities. The Menzies School of Health Research has found that birthweight, a strong predictor of outcome of disadvantage declined under compulsory income management. The Danila Dilba Health Service in Darwin provided a submission to the Senate inquiry, sharing their experiences since income management was introduced in 2007. They said that there was an absolutely astonishing lack of credible evidence that income management has made any significant improvement to any of the key indicators of wellbeing: child health, birthweight, failure to thrive and child protection notifications and substantiations. There were no improvements in school attendance, and certainly nothing we can see would suggest that there has been a reduction in family or community violence.

So multiple sources, including the Auditor-General, tell us that there is no evidence it works. A local health service, the people most concerned with the lives of vulnerable people in remote communities, said they are seeing no evidence. The very people who we should want to protect most—vulnerable children at risk of being taken away by child protection or of being born vulnerable through low birthweight—none of these are having any benefit. Instead, these communities are being subjected to a punitive regime because of some ideological bent that this government is convinced is better for them than what they think is better for them in their own lives.

When is this government going to stop experimenting with people's lives in this way? They're pretending that this is still a trial, when we're years down the track and we lack any credible evidence for it. It seems almost as though this government doesn't care about the evidence because, again, we're so many years down the track and yet we've had no rigorous evaluation of cashless debit cards in any of the existing trial sites, about their effectiveness in reducing social harm, and yet they're going to be rolled out more broadly. We all know that is the intention of this government; this is just a furphy to roll out the cashless debit card more widely.

There are also some very strange anomalies in the system the government is proposing. We learned during Senate estimates last month that participants would be able to use their cashless debit cards to pay off credit cards. In fact, there is actually no barrier then on what they can buy on the credit card. So if the point of this card is to limit the types of items that people can buy with it, it makes absolutely no sense that they can then use their credit card to
buy alcohol and use the cashless debit card to pay it off. Money can be transferred between cards for any reason. Cards can be used to purchase lottery tickets and scratchies. These are loopholes that are easy for people to use. As the member for Cowan said before, if we're looking for behaviour change this is not the way to go about it. People will be looking for loopholes; they're not looking for the behaviour change if this is a punitive and draconian measure, as is being introduced by this government.

We've also seen examples of this card preventing people from being able to make purchases that really make sense and which they should be able to make. The limits on the card make it difficult for people to purchase goods in the cash economy—second-hand goods that they might need for their home or to support their children and things that might be cheaper to buy in that way. They're forced out of that market and into the more expensive way of buying things because of this card.

I'm not going to say that there may not be some occasions where income management is helpful in supporting people to manage their finances. One of the only credible pieces of evaluation of income management, the evaluation of the system in the NT, did find that, while compulsory income management does not bring about improvements in people's lives, voluntary income management may. So there may be a case for a voluntary system where communities are well informed, understand and are properly consulted. But that's certainly not what has been happening here.

There may be a case for communities who, after consultation, have made decisions about how a system could work for them and with their input. In Cape York, the Family Responsibilities Commission makes decisions about who is going to be placed on income management. That's a very different situation to what's happening with this government's rollout of the cashless debit card. In Cape York, there is a local commission made up of local people who are making decisions about who is being placed on income management and how that's operating in their lives. It's been consented to by the community. That's very, very different to what I was just talking about and how the Yolngu people feel about how this may work in their community.

In Cape York, the rate at which payments are quarantined is variable, with some people having as much as 90 per cent of their payment quarantined and others less. There are currently 150 people there who are subject to income management. It's a very different system from that in the Territory, because the decisions are made locally by community leaders and based on an individual's circumstances. This is a community making a decision for themselves, having their voices heard, and not being singled out and punished from Canberra.

But what else should we expect from this government—a government that seeks to stigmatise and punish the most vulnerable. This is the same government that has refused to raise Newstart despite business, welfare and ordinary Australians telling them it's impossible to live on. They'd rather demonise and punish people who need that support. This is the same government that's proposed drug and alcohol testing for people who receive welfare. Again, there is no evidence that it works. In fact, we've heard from numerous health professionals that that system doesn't work. You see the trend here, don't you? If you're vulnerable, if you need support, this government says: 'You're not worthy of having that support. We need to impose on you conditions that we don't impose on any other Australians. We're not going to talk to you about it. We're not going to make sure you understand it. We're not going to make
sure it helps you and your community. We're looking to stigmatise and punish you.' This is the same government that introduced robodebt. We've seen how well that's worked out.

Mr Burns: They didn't apologise for it.

Ms THWAITES: The government hasn't apologised for robodebt; it hasn't apologised for the situation it's put families in. Families have been put under immense stress. In many cases they're getting debt notices for debts they should never have had to pay. This is the same government that is using the NDIS underspend to prop up its budget bottom line. Again, it doesn't get much more targeted at vulnerable people if that's where you are. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that this government has an agenda to target vulnerable Australians in this way; it is planning to roll out the cashless debit card across the country and perhaps this is the first move. But I really would urge this government to consider it before it moves further. Listen to the people who are affected. Look at their communities. They are telling you there is no evidence that this works. Birth weights have not gone up. There is no evidence that child protection notifications are decreasing. This system has been in place in various forms for a number of years now. If you are going to impose it on people, you need to base it on evidence.

But that's not what we're seeing at the moment from this government. We are seeing from this government a system where they are also refusing to allow people to make decisions that the rest of us can make. People who may have lived upstanding lives all their lives are being told they can't buy that second-hand fridge to look after their family this summer. I heard of one woman who, while in difficult circumstances and receiving some welfare, supported her community as much as she could. She bought things not just for herself but for the rest of her community. But the way this card is changing her spending habits means she is no longer able to give back to her community. She is forced to buy more expensive things in the marketplace than she would have been able to before she got this card.

Of course, as I outlined, there are loopholes. If you are not putting the support services around it, if you are not helping people to know how they might be able to make changes in their life and plan for the future so that they can budget better and have enough money when bills come in and look after their family and make sure the kids have clothes when they go to school—if you're not putting any of that in place, you can't expect change; and, let's be honest, none of that has been put in place by this government. You can expect people to be using loopholes that are in the system. You can expect people to feel aggrieved, upset that their voices aren't being heard—stigmatised and punished by a government that has very little idea about the reality of what will bring about change in their lives and that certainly has no care for some of the most vulnerable people in our country. These are people who, let's be honest, we have not done a very good job of supporting for decade after decade after decade. It is shameful that this government is once again stigmatising these people and punishing them in this way.

(Quorum formed)

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (19:02): I rise to speak on the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management to Cashless Debit Card Transition) Bill 2019. As has been firmly established by the member for Barton and other speakers from this side this afternoon and this evening, the opposition are seeking to amend this bill and are unable to support it in its current form. The government's proposal in its current form is
nothing but a short-term solution for issues that have arisen over a long period of time. It is a planned short-term solution that we now have evidence will not actually fix anything.

While we should always be scrupulous with the administration of taxpayers' money, the government's selection of locations can be described as questionable at the least, and we must seriously address the origin of the problems the government is claiming it is trying to solve in these communities.

There are many failings with the cashless debit card. We know this is a stalking horse for a national rollout of the cashless debit card. Labor has said and I repeat today that we will have no part in any national rollout or extension of the cashless debit card. One of the issues I have with it is that it's discriminatory and applies predominantly to our First Nations Australians. They have rolled it out into the Northern Territory, where 80 per cent of Northern Territory citizens on income management are Indigenous Australians; 23,000 Territorians are on social security payments. We've learnt from the past, via the Intervention, that there's no clear evidence to suggest that broad based income management works, and the consequence of this is that it will diminish the work of the Closing the Gap strategy. Research, as we've heard from the member for Jagajaga and the Menzies School of Health Research, has even found that birth weight of Indigenous babies—a key indicator of disadvantage and one of the seven Closing the Gap targets—actually declined under compulsory income management. There is no better indicator that this is a failed idea.

The government's arrogance in this space has been on display with the fact there has been next to no consultation with communities about the expansion. Shockingly, what we have seen from other instances is that the card has actually exacerbated the social harms it was designed to reduce or prevent. Those opposite argue they're trying to tackle drug use. They see a complex issue and apply a simplistic solution that does not work. If they're trying to stop the purchasing of alcohol, they need to find a solution to alcohol abuse in these communities. In an evaluation conducted by the University of New South Wales, it was concluded there was no empirical evidence to suggest that income management leads to behavioural change. The missing element in the government's approach is the wraparound support required to change lives.

In short, the things that will work are not there. Instead, there's blind belligerence about imposing something that we have no evidence will work. What will work is community education and the empowerment of individuals through employment. Tackling historical disadvantage in these communities is how we solve this issue, not a piece of plastic that demeanes the bearer. Labor cannot support this bill in its current form, because not one job will come of it. It's costly and we know it will not work. We want to see the cashless debit card become voluntary, as it was originally—where a community genuinely wants the card introduced, or for an individual case where we know that willingly joining income management will assist. Where a community genuinely wants to use the card, it is up to the government to properly consult with and provide the necessary support for that community, because willingly signing up for income management may have benefits and may lead to financial literacy.

I think about my own life and approaching a credit union when I was a single parent of three children, working part-time, managing a budget and paying a mortgage. I approached my credit union, I asked for support and advice and I was given that support and advice. Did
it work for me? Did income management, when I willingly engaged in it, work? Yes, it did. If it had been imposed on me, I would have rebelled. If it had been imposed on me, I would have resented it. If it had been imposed on me, it would not have worked. Human nature is not that difficult to understand. We need things that are consistent with the principle of self-determination. In the situation where a community genuinely wants to try the card, I do not believe it is the government's role to be a blockade to that process. To reiterate: the opposition is not opposed to income management per se or in all circumstances, but we are opposed to broad-based, compulsory programs that disempower people without appropriate consultation and support.

To impose this in a broad-based way across an entire territory is Dickensian. As the member for Lingiari so eloquently put it today, when you match it with the CDP, with the mutual obligation to work 30 hours a week to get your social security, and then match it with the CDC, what we're looking at is an empathy-free zone, a Dickensian regime, incarceration without walls and incarceration by card. To be clear: Work for the Dole in our communities is 20 hours for mutual obligation, but in remote communities the CDP demands 30 hours of work—30 hours of work for your social security payment, and now we'll impose income management on top of that. It is incarceration by card—incarceration by payment.

We've heard lots of evidence. We've had evidence from the Senate inquiry. We've come to this position because we've actually listened to the experts. We've heard much evidence that the card is not working in the way it was designed to in previous rollouts. That's because there are loopholes. This bill seeks to grossly expand a program, even though, in its current form, there are blatant loopholes that mean it is a failed program, and even when the intent is supported. Australians who the government claims need the cashless debit card the most find ways around it. The technology and the processes of the cashless welfare card simply do not meet the objectives it sets out to meet.

We have heard that people on these cards are still able to gamble. They still manage to buy alcohol and drugs. If the intent of the card, as the government claims, is to fix these entrenched, complex social issues with a simplistic solution, it's failing. People are still accessing and buying cigarettes. They're still buying pornography. They're still gambling. The ease at which they are doing so is jaw dropping. They buy a credit card, purchase what the government wants to be prohibited items and use their cashless welfare card to pay the debt. It's a really simple loophole.

We've also heard, at the recent Senate inquiry into the matter, from a range of submissions about how it puts a burden and stigma on vulnerable Australians who need a helping hand from their government. After hearing the evidence and reading submissions, one conclusion can be made: this card does not solve the problems it is meant to. Professor Matthew Grey and Dr Rob Bray said in their submission that:

… a review of data relating to child health and wellbeing, school participation and outcomes, alcohol consumption and impact, and crime and justice … clearly shows that there has been a total absence of any improvement in the outcomes for Indigenous people in the Northern Territory which can be attributed to income management …

They went on:

… the evidence strongly shows that the simplistic conceptualisation of income management and the Cashless Debit Card, and the purported benefits of these policies, are false.
Other submissions suggested that there is no evidence that the cashless debit card translates into employment, which we know is the real step to dignity. More than 60 per cent of Indigenous Australians on compulsory income management were on income management for over six years. The government should put its efforts into solving the social problems besetting communities rather than demonising whole communities.

The Senate inquiry also told us something we already knew: it is stopping vulnerable Australians from being able to purchase the essentials—perhaps not the intended consequence, but a consequence nevertheless. A submission from researchers from both Griffith University and The University of Queensland used real-life examples of this. One story told was the experience of a parent who had had their card declined at their child's soccer game when trying to purchase them a bottle of water. The damage caused by this one moment is something we need to take into account when thinking about this bill. We need to think about the stress placed on the parent. We need to think about the judgement cast by other parents. Unfortunately, we need to think about the earth-shattering embarrassment the child and the parent would have felt. What good does this do the community? How do government MPs feel about that scenario? How would anyone in this chamber feel if that was them trying to buy their child a bottle of water at their soccer match? What benefit is there to have a vulnerable parent feel like this? The submission included many tales, each heartbreaking in their own way.

I implore government members to ask themselves: how would you feel being the parent unable to pay for their child's excursions and their sporting fees simply because that would require cash? Put yourself in the shoes of the parent trying to cope with the fact they are unable to buy their child a bottle of water after they've competed in their sporting passion and ask: how would you feel? These are real, simple examples of where this card fails. It fails in what we would consider ordinary daily events. It therefore requires families to plan more than other families are asked to plan for their weekly events. How would you feel being the Australian unable to buy fresh produce at the market because they don't have an EFTPOS machine? What feeling would you be left with after being unable to buy reading glasses to help with your work because they're not available at your local supermarket? How would you feel when your way of life is diminished, when you're unable to do the things you used to do, stuck at home?

Imagine if this was you:

I was at the shops and one of the machines, it was bit of an older machine and I was trying to get the chip to read and it wouldn't read. I'm putting it in and out and in and out and it just would not read. Usually after the third attempt, it asks you to swipe. With this card, it doesn't.

So after the third attempt, the self-serve light on the top started flashing and I had to wait for the lady to come over and then I had two tradies just behind me and they were like, 'Oh, that's one of them junkie cards'.

I was already a bit panicky because the card wasn't working and I burst just into tears and I was like, 'Oh my goodness, like I've never touched drugs in my life'. I burst into tears trying to get it to work… I think that story—that real-life story, that real voice of that real Australian—encapsulates for those opposite the stigma that is attached to this precious piece of plastic that they want to impose on tens of thousands of Australians.
Taking all of this into consideration—the stories we have heard and submissions we have read; the many loopholes to access the goods that the government want to make inaccessible—we can see there is a common theme when it comes to this government, the programs they administer and the policies they implement: they are unable to empathise with those people that their policies will affect the most. It's no wonder this Prime Minister needs an empathy consultant. This legislation speaks volumes about the empathy-free zone opposite.

In conclusion, before we vote on Labor's amendment and on this bill, we must ask ourselves this: we've heard about people's previous experiences, so, when comparing those with the government's objectives, will this actually solve the problem? The answer is simple. The answer is no. Changing behaviours requires complex processes, requires wraparound supports. Managing someone's income will not fix an addiction. We know how complex these social issues are, and they require complex solutions. Most importantly, they require commitment, and that commitment has to come with actual resources.

When all is said and done, the failure of this government is that it wants to implement simple ideas, but it doesn't want to do the hard work, it doesn't want to put in place the real resources, the wraparound community supports that it takes to assist addicts to change their lives. This government doesn't want to help deal with the complex needs of those addicted to gambling. It certainly doesn't want to deal with the deep social issues that it claims it sees, which it then suggests simple solutions for. This leaves us absolutely convinced that this is a stalking horse to put the rest of Australia on a mandated system like this. Why won't we support it? It fails to get to the root of problems. It fails to stop the loopholes people are already using. It fails to lift employment. It fails to—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr McVeigh): The member will resume her seat. I call the member for Petrie.

Mr Howarth: On a point of order: the member reflected on the Prime Minister before, and I'd ask her to withdraw that reflection.

Ms Ryan: Mr Deputy Speaker, I suggested it's not a surprise that the Prime Minister needed to hire an empathy consultant, which I believe is information that is in the public arena.

Mr Howarth: You said he did need one. Your time's up!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member's time has expired.

(Quorum formed)

Mr Gosling (Solomon) (19:21): I invite all honourable members to hang around and have a listen. We're going to talk about leadership—just quickly. It won't be too painful. We've had a massive example today, I suppose, of a lack of leadership, and, as the member for Lalor just said, empathy is seriously lacking in those opposite. You'd do well to hang around and hear a couple of examples from the ground in the Northern Territory before you go ahead and vote on this legislation.

I thank the member for Lalor for sharing. Empathy is a big part of leadership. It is a lot easier to bring in sweeping legislation that takes away the rights of tens of thousands of people. It's a bit harder, as she quite rightly mentioned, to do the harder work—the
developmental work and the preventive work—that's required to work with people and in doing the consultation. It takes effort and it takes resources, and it's what's required.

Obviously in its current form, Labor is not able to support this bill, particularly because of the establishment of the entirety of the Northern Territory as a trial site with all income management participants being transitioned onto this card on a compulsory basis. We cannot support that. This bill is discriminatory and obviously applies—taking in the whole of the Northern Territory—predominantly to First Australians. Eighty per cent of the people on income management in the Northern Territory are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Twelve years after the intervention, started by former coalition Prime Minister, John Howard, there is still no clear empirical evidence that broad based mandatory income management has worked. It is an absolutely farcical to believe, as the government genuinely believes, that First Australians have been properly consulted. I can't believe that that would be the case, but it's a mistake that the coalition government, over the last six plus years, has made time and time again. It displays a particular type of arrogance to proceed with this policymaking framework that has a proven track record of failure. Let me be clear: there is no independent, verified evidence to support the efficacy of broad based income management in reducing social harm. A recent inquiry into another one of the government's cashless debit card bills has said this, and numerous experts have said it.

Late last year, in a document presented to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Australian government wrote—it is, in fact, as the member for Lalor has just said:

... there are more positive results associated with people who volunteer, as they have made a choice to change their behaviour and receive assistance, positive findings have been found for people who have been referred for Income Management by a social worker or a child protection officer—

That's as opposed to bringing something in on a compulsory basis and blanket across the board.

The Anti Poverty Network South Australia also told that Senate committee about a woman they met in Ceduna who was on the cashless debit card. She volunteered in her local craft shop and donated what she could. She used to be able to purchase things online, but, because of the cashless debit card, she's no longer able to. The network told the committee that this woman is never drunk and never had drugs or anything like that. It's just such an innovative way of life for her now.

A question for those opposite is: why should someone who has never engaged in binge drinking or taken illicit drugs be forced on to a cashless debit card that we hear from those opposite is being introduced to address those behaviours? The answer is quite simply that they shouldn't. Experts say it and even the government's own analysis says it. Groups on the ground providing support in the Northern Territory are also opposed to this bill. John Paterson—'Patto'—Chief Executive Officer of Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory, has been on the record and made it clear to the government that he is sceptical of the government's income management strategy:

If anything it has put an enormous unnecessary stress on [and] trauma on families and individuals.

John is another expert who has told the government:
There is no evidence, no evidence, whatsoever, that this top-down, punitive, model of income management, is doing any good to Aboriginal communities, or families and individuals.

John Paterson is a leader. He's a proper leader, because he is on the ground in the Northern Territory, doing the hard work. He has empathy with those that he seeks to help, to lift up, that he represents—empathy that we don't see from those opposite, leadership that we don't see from the Prime Minister. We saw that here today. He was unable to make a hard call, unable to point out that integrity is a higher value than simply trying to brush things off so that somehow we get through the media cycle of the next 24 hours until the next issue of integrity is brought up. But Patto is someone of integrity. When you are pretending to consult and people of calibre—leaders—say things like that, you should listen to them.

Evidence in my electorate has also been presented to a government led committee by the Danila Dilba Health Service, which stated:

… there is an astonishing lack of credible evidence that IM has made any improvement in any of the key indicators – child health, birthweight, failure to thrive, child protection notifications and substantiations. There are no improvements in school attendance and there is certainly nothing we can see that would suggest that there has been a reduction in family or community violence.

These are health professionals in the Danila Dilba Health Service in Darwin in my electorate in the Northern Territory, who are saying that there is no evidence whatsoever that this card is going to lead to any improvement at all in what those opposite purport to say is the reason for this card. There is a significant body of evidence which shows that this bill won't work and will act as a punishment for the recipients.

We know that it is the wish of several in the government that this bill be rolled out nationally. It's clear to see—and I would say to those opposite that they should do a bit of consultation in their own electorates—that this bill is a stalking horse for that purpose. A national rollout should absolutely not be contemplated. As I've said a number of times, there simply is no evidence that broad based income management and the cashless debit card will work. No evidence!

Debate interrupted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The SPEAKER (19:30): It being 7.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

**People with Disability**

Ms COKER (Corangamite) (19:30): Today I add my voice to those calling for urgent action to prevent younger people with disability from living in aged care, and, certainly, for much stronger action than that announced by the government yesterday.

The interim report of the aged-care royal commission concluded:

Now that the National Disability Insurance Scheme exists, the Royal Commission does not accept that the problem is intractable, only that there has been a lack of will and effort to address the issues that have left younger people to be accommodated in aged care.

In response to the royal commission's findings of neglect and failure in our aged-care system, the government has announced an additional $4.7 million to meet new targets to stop young people with disabilities being placed in aged-care facilities. The federal government says that
no-one under the age of 45 should be living in aged care by 2022 and no-one under the age of 65 by 2025. The revised targets are welcomed, but my fear is that the government's insipid response won't deliver on that promise.

Nationally, there are around 6,000 people under the age of 65 living in permanent residential aged care. In Geelong and south-west Victoria the number is 155. This is despite the fact that the NDIS has operated in the Geelong region for six years already. Article 19 of the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability says that it's a human right that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement.

Last weekend I had the privilege of meeting Kirby Littley and her parents, Carol and Kevin. Kirby is in her mid-30s, but when she was 28 she was working as a teacher. She had just bought her first home, but then she was diagnosed with brain cancer. Following emergency surgery, Kirby suffered two strokes, leaving her with significant mobility and communication issues. After being in hospital for nearly a year, Kirby was admitted to aged care. She was given no other choice. Kirby spent a year in the nursing home, where she missed vital rehabilitation and often had her communication aids removed, and her life was scheduled to the nursing home timetable.

Of course, Kirby didn't want to be in aged care. She wanted to live her own life and not have that life dictated by an institution, especially one focused on the latter years of life. She is not alone; Kirby's parents became her fiercest advocates, and worked hard to get NDIS funding to modify their house so they could bring their daughter home. Kirby now lives independently in an SDA funded home. But I ask: what about those who don't have powerful advocates and supports like Kirby does? Kirby and her parents gave evidence at the aged-care royal commission. I acknowledge their courage in speaking out about this crisis for younger people stuck within aged care.

The government's response of $4.7 million is totally inadequate. By my calculation, even if only 3,000 people chose to move to independent living across Australia, that would amount to a pitiful $1,570 each. I contrast that with this year's federal budget. The government took an alleged $4.6 billion underspend by the NDIS back into general revenue so they could announce a budget surplus. They defended that action by claiming that the NDIA could have spent that money if there had been a demand for more services. They continue to argue that there was no demand and therefore there was no cutting of the NDIS budget. On this side, we completely disagree. Here is a very well-documented need, to get as many of these 6,000 younger people as possible out of aged care. There is clearly a need, and there should be a demand as well.

There is clearly a market failure in providing properties. Neither the government nor the NDIA are willing to act to get the hundreds of houses built or modified, and yesterday's press release didn't change that. It promises yet another housing audit and yet another task force but no actual building. At a time when our national economy is stalling, stuff such as infrastructure spend would seem to be a no-brainer. The $4.7 million interim response smacks of tokenism. It smacks of a government knowing it needs to be seen to address an issue but not really wanting to tackle it head on. The government needs to provide sufficient resources to ensure that the new targets are met, otherwise Kirby Littley's journey to independence will be an isolated success story.
Drought

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (19:35): On Monday last week I had the honour of attending the opening of the Myall River Pastoral Company in Bulahdelah on the banks of the Myall River, the opening of the first North Coast robotic dairy. This is an amazing and sizeable investment in cutting-edge technology whereby the cows are fed through a totally automated system. They are identified, they are milked, their food rations are calculated and the whole process—(Quorum formed) This robotic dairy operating on the Myall River is an amazing investment in technology. Hundreds of thousands of dollars of cutting-edge milking machinery is now transforming the cost structures of that dairy.

The other cutting-edge development that the Smiths have invested in is taking it off grid. As we know, the electricity costs in this nation are now some of the most expensive, and there are huge power demands on running any dairy for cooling and for working all of the machinery. Going totally off grid with battery power fed by solar and with generator backup delivers full three-phase power and allows them to cut their labour costs. It means this very experienced multigenerational farming family company is set to transform the economics of their industry. It means the second and third generations that were going to leave have come back and been involved in the dairy, and it is really transformational.

The other issue that is facing the dairy industry on the North Coast is the drought. People have got to understand that the drought is not just west of the Great Dividing Range. Up the mid North Coast, all the coastal rivers across the Lyne electorate, the major dairy bowls on the Stewarts River, the Manning River, and the Hastings River have had—(Time expired)

Richmond Electorate: Centrelink

Tweed Valley Hospital

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (19:40): I rise tonight to update the House on the latest instalment of lies, cuts and chaos by the Liberal and National parties on the New South Wales North Coast in my electorate of Richmond. First, let's deal with those lies. The latest one is about free parking at the new Tweed Valley Hospital. This one issue has caused huge anger, because our community has been betrayed by this broken promise by the Nationals. In a desperate act to hold his seat, Tweed Nationals MP Geoff Provest promised locals free parking at the new hospital for patients, visitors and staff. In fact, during the election campaign, Geoff Provest was interviewed and quoted in the Tweed Daily News on 9 February 2019, stating:

'It's not going to be paid parking there, I have not heard of any adjacent land being offered or sold, we are going to have free parking here and we're not closing the old hospital down.

This was also later confirmed in writing to a local constituent who was seeking specific clarification regarding the promise of free parking. Geoff Provest's office replied in an email on 27 February 2019: 'Further to your inquiry, there is no specific media release stating that parking will be free at the new hospital, but this commitment was given in media interviews by both the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Health during visits to the Tweed. Geoff has also been quoted confirming that parking will be free.' That was in an email from his office.

But now, after the election, what happens? The truth comes out. According to recent reports in the Tweed Daily News on 19 October 2019, Geoff Provest now says, 'All options
are on the table.' So we've gone from that commitment to free parking for everyone to now saying, 'All options are on the table'. This constitutes a blatant lie. Since these reports have appeared, I've been contacted by many locals who are furious at yet another Nationals broken election promise, this time on free parking. This is a complete betrayal of locals.

What makes this betrayal even worse is that it continues even at a local government level. Most recently, Tweed Shire councilors had the opportunity to vote for free parking at the new hospital. In light of the community concerns, our Labor councillor Reece Byrnes moved an amendment requesting that the Premier, the Deputy Premier and Geoff Provest keep their promise to locals and ensure that there's free parking at the new hospital. You'd think all the councillors would support this and vote for it, but the following three councillors didn't vote to support the motion for free parking: we have the Liberal councillor James Owen, we have the Nationals councillor Warren Polglase and we have the Liberal-National aligned councillor Pryce Allsop. These three all abandoned the people of our region. They don't support free parking at the new hospital. They don't support the community. They only support their National Party mate Geoff Provest. In light of this betrayal and on behalf of the community's urging, I've launched a petition to stop paid parking at the new Tweed Valley Hospital, and locals are sending a strong message to Geoff Provest and the Nationals about this important issue.

We've had a look at their latest lies. Now let's examine their latest cuts. Recently we heard about the Morrison Liberal-National government's plan to close three local Centrelink service centres in the Tweed area. They are set to relocate into one premise at a yet-to-be-determined location. Again, I've been inundated with concerns from locals about these changes, because this government just can't be trusted. I have written to the Minister for Human Services to seek his urgent commitment that there will be no redundancies or cuts to current staff numbers at any centre and no further decline in the delivery of frontline services for our community. The Centrelink service centre located at Blundell Boulevard in Tweed Heads South provides essential services that our community relies on. It is imperative it stays in that location so that it remains easily accessible. Seniors, veterans, people with disability, family, carers, locals seeking work and students all rely on these essential frontline services that our very important local Centrelink provides to the community.

It's clear to see the choices by the Liberal and National parties continue to hurt our region on the New South Wales North Coast. Through their cuts to frontline services in our community people are rightly feeling very betrayed. Whether it is at a federal government level, a state government level or, indeed, a council level as well, wherever you look across the region you see the disastrous impacts of the choices they've made and how much they are hurting our community. There is widespread anger out there about these issues. The fact is the choices that the Liberal and National parties make at all levels of government continue to hurt our community time and time again. It's time for the lies, cuts and chaos to stop.

Page Electorate

Mr HOGAN (Page—Deputy Speaker) (19:45): I would like to use my final adjournment speech—

The SPEAKER: The member for Page will resume his seat.

Mr Keogh: I would like to draw your attention to the state of the House.
The SPEAKER: I'm just going to say right now to the to the member for Burt that there are extensive citations in the Practice about repetitive quorum calls, and the House has determined this matter not very long ago. I am placing the member for Burt on notice that there are serious consequences that Speakers have ruled on in the past.

The bells being rung—

The SPEAKER: Quorum present. Member for Page, do you wish to continue? No. No one's seeking the call. The House stands adjourned until 9.30 am tomorrow.

House adjourned at 19:50

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Mr McCormack: to present a Bill for an Act to allow special recreational vessels to apply for temporary licences under the Coastal Trading (Revitalising Australian Shipping) Act 2012, and for related purposes. (Special Recreational Vessels Bill 2019)

Mr Porter: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Family Law Act 1975 and the Bankruptcy Act 1966 in relation to Western Australian de facto superannuation splitting and concurrent bankruptcy proceedings, and for related purposes. (Family Law Amendment (Western Australia De Facto Superannuation Splitting and Bankruptcy) Bill 2019)

Mr Fletcher: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Interactive Gambling Act 2001, and for other purposes. (Interactive Gambling Amendment (National Self-exclusion Register) Bill 2019)

Mr Littleproud: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Farm Household Support Act 2014, and for related purposes. (Farm Household Support Amendment (Relief Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2019)

Mr Wood: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Migration Act 1958, and for related purposes. (Migration Amendment (Regulation of Migration Agents) Bill 2019)

Mr Sukkar: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992, and for related purposes. (Treasury Laws Amendment (Your Superannuation, Your Choice) Bill 2019)

Dr Freelander: to move: That this House:

(1) acknowledges the life work of Professor Colin Tatz AO, who sadly passed away on 19 November 2019;

(2) notes Professor Colin Tatz’s contributions to society in:

(a) promoting health and welfare in Indigenous communities;

(b) promoting sporting prowess in Indigenous communities, including through publications such as his book, Obstacle Race: Aborigines in Sport; and

(c) his activism against racism, specifically through his work as a director of the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies; and

(3) expresses its sympathy and condolences to the family and loved ones of Professor Tatz, who will be sorely missed.

Ms Sharkie: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, and for related purposes. (Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Lowering the Donation Disclosure Threshold) Bill 2019)

Mr Khalil: to move:

That this House:
(1) notes with concern the ongoing violence and political instability in Chile, driven by rising economic inequality;
(2) condemns the use of lethal force against peaceful protesters and calls on all parties to refrain from violence;
(3) recognises the importance and right to peaceful protest in any democracy and condemns the use of violence to repress the democratic right of Chilean citizens to protest;
(4) calls on the Chilean Government to include all parties, namely, civil society, unions and indigenous peoples in addition to business leaders in the process for drafting a new constitution;
(5) encourages the work of the Chilean National Human Rights Institute and authorities to investigate human rights abuses and hold those responsible to account; and
(6) calls on Australian companies that do business in Chile to play a constructive role in the solution to end the political instability.

Mr Bandt: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Climate Change Authority Act 2011, and for related purposes. (Climate Change Authority Amendment (Impact of 3 Degrees of Global Warming on Australia) Bill 2019)

Dr McVeigh: to move:
That this House:
(1) notes the outstanding success of the 2019 Australian Defence Force (ADF) Parliamentary Program;
(2) recognises:
   (a) the opportunity provided to both Senators and Members to participate in the ADF Parliamentary Program to experience the professionalism, skill and dedication of our world-class defence force; and
   (b) the exchange element of the ADF Parliamentary Program, where senators and members host an ADF member during a sitting week in parliament; and
(3) acknowledges the 49 members and senators who participated, including those who hosted one of the 27 ADF members during the October 2019 sitting week.

Mr Wallace: to move:
That this House:
(1) recognises that 10 December 2019 is United Nations Human Rights Day;
(2) acknowledges that the:
   (a) United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948 was a milestone moment which formalised mankind's shared aspiration for the equal dignity and worth of every person;
   (b) declaration was drafted by representatives of diverse legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world; and
   (c) declaration's values and principles of equality, justice and freedom remain as relevant today as they were in 1948;
(3) notes that the promise of the universal declaration is yet to be fully realised and that many people worldwide continue to have their rights threatened, denied or impinged; and
(4) encourages people of all nations to acknowledge Human Rights Day on 10 December 2019 and in their daily lives to stand up for their own rights and the rights of others.

Mr Wilkie: to present a Bill for an Act to restrict the export of live animals for slaughter pending its prohibition, and for related purposes. (Live Animal Export Prohibition (Ending Cruelty) Bill 2019)

Mr Wilkie: to move:
That this House:

(1) notes that:
  (a) the Tasmanian public health system is fundamentally broken;
  (b) Tasmanian hospitals are the worst-performing in the country, despite heroic efforts of staff;
  (c) the Richardson Report (2004), Tasmania's Health Plan (2007), Report of the Commission on Delivery of Health Services in Tasmania (2013) and the One State, One Health System, Better Outcomes reform package (2015) all found that, compared to the rest of Australia, Tasmania has the most rapidly ageing, geographically-dispersed population with the highest rates of chronic disease, rising costs and the worst performing public health system;
  (d) in April 2019, emergency doctors highlighted that bed-block and ambulance ramping at the Royal Hobart Hospital is injuring and killing patients;
  (e) in 2018-19 more than 1,800 patients waited longer than 24 hours in the emergency department at the Royal Hobart Hospital;
  (f) the 2018 Report on Government Services by the Productivity Commission found that in 2016-17 the percentage of people on waiting lists for elective surgery in Tasmania was 11.12 per cent higher than the national average;
  (g) Tasmania has the lowest percentage of acute mental health beds in the country;
  (h) in 2016 the Tasmanian Government reduced the number of mental health beds from 42 to 32, despite calls from health professionals for an increase;
  (i) on 15 November 2019, 17 people in mental health crises were waiting in the emergency department at the Royal Hobart Hospital, some whom had been waiting more than three days;
  (j) in July 2018 a suicidal man chopped off his own finger so that he would be admitted to the Royal Hobart Hospital because the hospital had refused to admit him as a mental health patient on two previous occasions;
  (k) independent Tasmanian public policy analyst Martyn Goddard estimates that, since the Tasmanian Government came to power in 2014, health and hospitals have been short-changed by approximately $2 billion, including diverting $1.6 billion of GST money from Tasmania's health system;
  (l) the Tasmanian health system has received more funding from the federal government than the national average, but still underperforms;
  (m) the Australian College for Emergency Medicine has said that throwing more money at hospitals in Tasmania is not necessarily the solution because there are deep systemic cultural and management issues that must be addressed;
  (n) there is precedence for the federal government to intervene in the Tasmanian health system, for instance the take-over and hand-back of the Mersey Hospital; and
  (o) people are dying because of the failings of the Tasmanian public health system;

(2) calls on the Government to refer Tasmania's failing health system to the Productivity Commission; and

(3) calls on the Productivity Commission to:
  (a) conduct a Tasmanian-specific public inquiry to identify the root causes of Tasmania's failing health system; and
  (b) formulate a solution to fix the systemic and cultural problems within the Tasmanian health system.

Mr R. J. Wilson: to move:
That this House:
(1) notes:
   (a) that from 2013-14 to 2023-24, the Government will provide a record $6.2 billion under the Roads to Recovery Program, with an ongoing commitment of $500 million each year following; and
   (b) the significant benefits to the 128 Local Government Areas which will receive an additional $138.9 million in Roads to Recovery drought support funding; and
(2) recognises the real and meaningful difference Roads to Recovery is making to communities right across the country.
Tuesday, 26 November 2019

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Kevin Andrews) took the chair at 16:01.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Baptcare Sanctuary

Ms KEARNEY (Cooper) (16:01): I was recently very pleased to be invited to have lunch with residents at an organisation called Baptcare Sanctuary. The sanctuary do incredible work in assisting people seeking asylum to access the essentials. They put a roof over their heads, they work with Foodbank to provide them with food and they assist them in accessing medical and mental health treatment when they need it. The work they do is quite unique.

As we know all too well, asylum seekers have seen their rights stripped away after six long years of coalition government, six years in which punitive, cruel policy has filled the agendas of those opposite. Their policies have left people seeking asylum without support to find housing. They've left many people without working rights, without access to Medicare. In many cases, this government's punitive policies are leading to worsening mental health and further trauma. The sector has seen quite clearly that this government are seeking to abandon these people, to cause them further harm and to repudiate their obligations to assist people in need.

This is where organisations such as Baptcare Sanctuary come in. They see the government is failing to fulfil its obligations and they step up to the mark. The sanctuary is home to many people who are yet to have their claims for humanitarian protection visas finalised. The sanctuary is there for them when the government is not. When the government refuses to give them access to housing, the sanctuary serves as their home. When the government refuses to give them access to working rights, whilst also refusing to give them social security payments, the sanctuary and Foodbank provide them with a warm meal. When the government refuses to give them access to Medicare, to adequate and accessible health care, the sanctuary steps in to connect them with doctors who generously provide pro bono health services.

The work that Baptcare Sanctuary does is vital, but it shouldn't be. It shouldn't be the case that these people could be homeless without this service. There shouldn't be discrepancies in the system that mean one person in the sanctuary is given access to health care, while someone else who arrived a month later has to rely on the generosity of pro bono services. These people shouldn't have to languish without work rights, without a way to support themselves or their families. They should be shown the respect they deserve and they should have access to the essential services that they need.

The government is causing these people trauma. It is leaving people for years in a system that tells them nothing and that gives them no certainty and no hope of a timely status resolution. Instead they are left to wonder whether they'll be sent back to danger or whether the funding will run out and they'll be left without food, without shelter. I am so grateful that services like the sanctuary exist, but they shouldn't have to exist. This government has a responsibility to provide these people with the care and the respect that they are entitled to and that they deserve. The history books are being written as we watch, and I can assure those who remain complicit that their actions will not be forgotten.
Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (16:04): I want to give a report back on my recent visit to Armenia as a guest of the Armenian National Committee of Australia. Along with the members for North Sydney and Bennelong, I visited Yerevan over a number of days to experience everything at Yerevan—Armenian heritage, culture and history, and particularly a taste of their politics and the potential and strength of the bonds between the two countries. Despite many periods of occupation and oppression, the Armenian people have existed and thrived for thousands of years. While visiting, the delegation had the opportunity to embrace Armenia's independence day, a celebration to mark the end of Soviet rule as the people of Armenia voted in a referendum to proclaim their independence. It was wonderful to toast the occasion with the Armenian President himself, Mr Armen Sarkissian, and the Prime Minister, Mr Nikol Pashinyan.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): Order! Unfortunately we don't have a quorum, so I have to suspend proceedings. The chair will be resumed when a quorum is present.

Proceedings suspended from 16:05 to 16:20

(Quorum formed)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The standing orders provide that a quorum for the Federation Chamber is the Deputy Speaker, one government member and one non-government member. However, there are no provisions in the standing orders, so far as we can ascertain, as to what happens necessarily when a quorum is not present, apart from suspending. Whereas, in the House, the Speaker has the choice of adjourning the House until the next sitting or, if satisfied there's likely to be a quorum within a reasonable time, resuming the chair after a reasonable time. This is an unprecedented situation in this chamber. This is a chamber which is generally dealing with uncontroversial matters and legislation. To my knowledge, and on the advice I have, this has never happened before. I want to place on the record that I intend to bring this to the attention of the Speaker, in particular to ask the Speaker to look into whether some change to the standing orders is required to deal with this subject.

Mr PASIN: As former chair of the Procedure Committee, could I also ask you to drop a note to the Procedure Committee, because I think these kinds of anomalies are very useful in terms of investigations—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think rather than me doing it, member for Barker, the appropriate course of action would be for me to report this matter to the Speaker and allow the Speaker to then determine if there is a lacuna, so far as the standing orders are concerned, and to address that matter in the way in which he finds appropriate. I just wanted to say that to the chamber. I thank the member for Mayo for coming in to enable a quorum be present. On that note, I call the member for Goldstein in continuation.

Mr TIM WILSON: It's a pity that my speech around my visit to Armenia with the Armenian National Committee was interrupted, but I also want to extend my thanks to the member for Mayo for her cooperation.

The Armenian people were among the first to rise up and demand independence, sparking the downfall of the Soviet Union. Throughout the visit, we had a number of meetings with various government officials and senior leaders, including of course the President and the
Prime Minister, as I outlined already. It was also an opportunity to recognise and honour the victims of the first genocide in modern history—the Armenian genocide from 1915 to 1923, where 1.5 million Armenians, of a total population of two million, were forcibly marched into the Syrian Desert to face their death—and their chilling stories. We also had the opportunity to sign the visitors book and plant a tree at Tsitsernakaberd, the genocide memorial outside of Yerevan. It wasn't just a human genocide; it was also a cultural one. Many churches and cultural institutions and traditions were destroyed. And many of them—particularly the Armenian orthodox church—did not recover from that era and the legacy of the Soviet Union that actively dissuaded people from practising their faith or made it difficult for them to do so. In addition to the horrific death count, many Armenian families lives were irreversibly altered through forced labour, food depravation, rape and robbery, and it should never be forgotten.

Today's Armenian government is busy undertaking robust reform as part of a new era for the country. Their focus is on providing a tax framework that encourages growth, including a flat income tax, exempting enterprises with a yearly turnover of less than $50,000 from company tax. That's right—in Armenia, they get it. Cutting taxes grows jobs, as does meeting with various other ministers in the government to talk about issues ranging from tackling domestic violence, social inclusion, the promotion of STEM for young people and opportunities for bilateral engagement.

Dementia

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie—Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services) (16:24): I rise today to speak about two locals in my electorate, Mark and Anne-Louise Underwood from Redcliffe. This couple deserve huge congratulations for their innovative idea and creation of an app that is revolutionising the lives of people living with dementia and easing the burden of stress on their families.

Their invention of the app MemBo Noticeboard was recently recognised as one of the top four inspirational tech ideas. It's helping to break down barriers for people living with dementia, their families and carers. The Australian government's Department of Health Decoding Dementia 2019 program recognises that the MemBo Noticeboard app is a useful tool in enabling people living with dementia to maintain social inclusion and independence, and it keeps them connected with the people and places in their community that they rely upon.

I recently spoke with Mark and Anne-Louise and congratulated them on their great work, the app, and what they're doing for people with dementia. During our catch-up, they told me about the app and what inspired them to come up with the great idea. The app was started when Anne-Louise's 90-year-old mum was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and dementia and, all of a sudden, was unable to cope with day-to-day changes. With a background in medical admin software, Anne-Louise and Mark came up with a system to help make every day simpler for people living with dementia and their support teams.

The app is basically a live noticeboard that is able to be displayed on a mobile and tablet and is updated and amended remotely by family and support services. MemBo Noticeboard acts as a living calendar for people living with dementia. For Anne-Louise's mum, the app has now replaced her wall calendar, whiteboard and diary, and Anne-Louise said it has made everyday life much simpler for her mother and, more importantly, has reduced stress for her and their entire family.
'What about older people using tablets?' people may ask. Anne-Louise said that, with the tablet being set to 'live' 24/7, all that's required for her mum to use it is a moment's walk to where it is on the wall and her reading glasses. She doesn't have to touch anything and, because it's live all day and night, she can look at it as much as she wants, and it acts as a constant reminder whenever it's required.

Hearing about the dramatic impact it has made on their lives, it's great to see that this has been recognised as an important tool that will help others in the future. I want to again give both Mark and Anne-Louise massive congratulations on the development of this great tool and, if anyone would like further information, visit the website: www.membonoticeboard.com.

Drought

Mr PASIN (Barker) (16:28): Aussie farmers are amongst the best in the world. A strong agricultural sector means strong rural communities and a stronger national economy. The federal government's drought relief package is designed to support both farmers and regional communities. We're helping farmers and graziers who are doing it tough with a number of measures. Principal in those is the farm household allowance. It's an income support payment available to farmers and their partners experiencing financial hardship. There are also interest-free concessional loans available to help farmers and agriculture-reliant small businesses. There is $50 million available in rebates for on-farm efficiency water infrastructure. We're providing relief for farmers with $75 million in tax measures, including accelerated asset depreciation for fodder storages and, of course, we've increased thresholds to farm management deposits.

We've increased funding for rural financial counselling to help with financial planning, mentoring and coaching. The Rural Financial Counselling Service provides free financial counselling, nationally, for farmers, fishing enterprises, forestry growers and harvesters, and small agriculture related businesses in or at risk of financial hardship. These services help navigate the range of tools, information and services available to help farmers plan, make decisions and take action, both now and in the future.

I can't recommend it enough—how valuable this service can be. For local councils, an additional $1 million is available for economic stimulus in drought affected areas as well as $138 million for the Roads to Recovery program, which will also help councils build safer, better roads. We're also committing $70 million in funding for local charities, like St Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army and the Country Women's Association, to provide support, including counselling. Also, $15 million is being made available to the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal Tackling Tough Times Together program to fund community and non-profit groups in drought affected regions.

We're building a more drought-resilient Australia, establishing the $5 billion Future Fund and putting the infrastructure in place to help us deal with future droughts. A new National Water Grid Authority is being established to develop, in partnership with states and territories, a national water infrastructure plan. The government is also making up to 100 gigalitres of water available at $100 a megalitre in the southern connected Murray-Darling Basin to increase the production of fodder, silage and pasture. This measure will help farmers' breeding stock, which is vital to drought recovery.
There is help out there, and I encourage anyone wanting more information about the support available to go to farmhub.org.au. It's not a set-and-forget response. We'll continue to listen to farmers and communities affected, and we'll continue to respond.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There are no further constituency statements, and it's my understanding that there will be a division in the House shortly, in which case I propose to suspend the proceedings of the Federation Chamber.

Proceedings suspended from 16:31 to 17:03

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rick Wilson): The time for members' constituency statements has concluded.

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH

Consideration resumed of the motion:

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

May it please Your Excellency:

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

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (17:03): When I'm out talking to people in my community on an ordinary day—not a day when they come to my office, when they're filled with passion or it's the worst day of their life, but an ordinary day when they're just going about their normal life—they say to me quite commonly now that they feel a lack of power. They see decisions being made about their cities—about new buildings going up, traffic issues and a whole stack of things happening around them—and they don't feel they have any control over that anymore. It's like a loss of power. They also talk about how the city itself doesn't work the way it used to. They can walk through the city, from home to the train station, and not see a single person they know. They feel a lack of connection, and they seek that connection again. It's almost as if the city itself has passed its use-by date. They're looking for something else, and they're not getting leadership from government—either federal, state or local—and they don't really know what to do about it.

We are at a time of rapid change at the moment. We really are in the middle of an age change, where the way we did things as societies is profoundly changing, and in many ways we've thrown the baby out with the bathwater. We were, for a time, a place where people lived and worked in the same suburbs. Economies of scale was essentially the way that business prospered. And the economies of scale meant that we built big factories and big organisations in our communities, so we lived and worked in the same suburb as our parents and the kids we went to school with, and that created a sort of social cohesion. So we knew each other. Then the economies of scale grew far too big and made communities their customers and not their workers, and we started to lose that connection that kept us together. We lost full-time work. The baby that we threw out with the bathwater is actually the cohesion—the cohesion that came because we lived and worked in the same suburb, and we lived and worked for the same company for most of our lives. That created that cohesion that made our communities far more effective and supportive than they are now. It also created a
flow of information and common understandings and views. So we were better decision-makers back then.

Now we find our communities talking about a lack of power and a lack of cohesion, walking through cities where they know nobody, spending an hour and a half to two hours in traffic every day—so, again, they're not spending that time with family or friends. We really have a lot of work to do to start satisfying our communities and to re-create that cohesion that makes cities worth living in, because it is the human interaction that makes a place worth living in. We see our government, particularly our state government, investing a lot of money in Parramatta at the moment on laneways and alleyways so that people can physically move through their cities. But there's very little attention at all from any level of government on re-establishing the flows of information and the relationship infrastructure that makes our cities worth living in.

But there are answers that our community can work on. When I'm out there, people are talking to me about the things that they want changed. They want their city to work on biodiversity. They want to be better at renewables. They want to be better at transport. They want to work on biodiversity. They want more affordable, secure housing. They want to build the local economy. All of these are the sorts of things that people talk to me about. There are things that we can do as a community right now, because many of the answers that we're looking for are actually out there right now. So if you care about those things—people in my community, I'm talking to you directly now: if you care about biodiversity, local food, housing, jobs for young people, or any of the things that you talk to me about, I'm asking you to email me so that we can start putting together people who share the same concerns.

There are answers out there, and there are answers around the world. We are not the only community in a city that's trying to work out how to be good at being a city now that the structures that cities were based on originally—which are those economies of scale—have disappeared. There are cities all over the world that are trying to work out what you do about public transport, how to re-create a five-minute city so you don't spend an hour and a half travelling to work, how you reconnect to people, how you support young families, and how you bring young people into the city economy. People all over the world are working on those things. It's time, really, for us to get together and share our—

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 17:08 to 17:53

Ms OWENS: I want to talk directly to my community now about what we can do to solve some of the challenges that face us as a city. When I'm out talking to my community I find that they're ahead, sometimes a decade ahead, of government in terms of what they want. They want action on recycling, waste reduction, biodiversity, heat sink remediation, transport solutions, housing—all the sorts of things they're not getting leadership on from the government. Business isn't stepping up to solve those issues either, essentially because business and customers can't see each other. I want to run through a few things that I think we can do something about. For people out there in my community who want to participate in this, who want to get stuck into seeing what we can do over the next couple of years, please send me an email, and we'll see if we can get together in the new year.
I want to start with waste reduction and recycling. If I'm in a room and I talk about community composting, usually two or three people will say they want to do it, and yet we don't do it in Parramatta. While we have a 10c recycling scheme, bottles are not being collected in the CBD. Most businesses are telling me that they're putting their PE2 bottles and glass bottles into general waste, and they're going into landfill. We know there's much more we can do. We've tended to privatise our waste collection, so the money goes into big trucks and tip fees when it actually should be going into jobs and smaller-scale locally based recycling.

So we've got a lot to do there. We also have the issue of biodiversity. Again, I know many people in my community who would love to see us play our role in the preservation of Australia's biodiversity. Strangely enough, our cities were built in some of the most fertile places in the world. They were built around good water sources, and in their day they were probably some of our most biodiverse communities. Yet we've let them degrade. You can't have the sugar glider colony up in North Parramatta unless you have insects that fly through, and they come from our gardens. We used to have native cherries in the Cumberland Plain, and no-one's been able to figure out how to propagate one recently, because they grow parasitically between two different kinds of eucalypts. If someone out there can figure out how to do it, we would love to see those come back. From what I can see, Parramatta City Council doesn't have a footpath plantings policy. So we've got a lot of work to do as a community if we really want to start building our biodiversity again and re-establishing the wonderful plant and animal life of the Cumberland Plain.

And heat sink remediation is something we know we have to do. In Western Sydney we suffer incredibly hot days, much hotter than the rest of Sydney, and we really must do something about it. There are two Western Sydney streets that are one kilometre apart, but last summer Galloway Street in North Parramatta experienced five days of temperatures above 40 degrees while Daking Street, which is a short walk further north, had 13 days above 40 degrees. In fact, Daking is the hottest street in the City of Parramatta, and the difference is trees. About 30 per cent of Galloway Street is covered by trees, while Daking Street has only 10 per cent cover. So trees can make a difference, as can the colour of surfaces and a whole range of other things that we know we can do because the science is out there on this.

So, if anyone wants to be involved in any of those things—waste reduction, recycling, biodiversity, heat sink remediation or even greater sharing in the sharing economy of second-hand, reused and fighting for the right to repair, as our Bower is in Parramatta—please send us an email and we'll see if we can get together in the early year and see what we can do.

I also want to talk to my community about transport. We're in the geographic centre of Sydney, but many of us spend one to two hours a day travelling to and from work. At Wentworthville station, when I'm standing there, people tell me they leave home to get to the station before seven o'clock, because if you arrive at the station after seven you can't get a parking space. So they drive two or three kilometres to the station and park, leave their kids and go to the city at least an hour earlier than they otherwise would. We also have people now leaving home an hour earlier than they used to. I know a person who was telling me that they used to be able to leave home at 7.15 to get into the city in time for work and now they have to leave home at 6.15. And we already have traffic jams on and off the freeway at 6.30 in the morning because people are starting to travel earlier in order to avoid the traffic because peak
The hour is now lasting several hours instead of the short time it used to, decades ago. This means people aren't spending time with their families. It means they're going into the city and going to the gym there, rather than using the local gym where they know local people, and they're not getting home in time to have dinner with their families.

So not only are individuals losing precious time and spending it doing something that is useless to anybody but also people are losing that capacity to mix, associate and form connections before and after work with their friends and their neighbours or with their family. It's a very serious matter. But, again, you can already see the answers starting to emerge. If you really start looking around you can see the beginnings of the answers. So how about—just as an idea—we see if we can find groups of people who have common problems. Let's see if we can find even 20 people who live in that medium-density area on Parramatta Road who go to Wentworthville station before 7 am and have a second car only because they drive to the station. That's the only reason they have one; otherwise, they wouldn't. There'd be somewhere between $5,000 and $7,000 in savings if they didn't have that car in order to go to the station. Let's see if we can get groups of people to sit down and see if we can work out other answers. You can already see Uber beginning to start work on booking group cars. You can actually see those solutions beginning to emerge. Anybody from my Sri Lankan and Indian community who comes from a remote village will tell you they've been doing it with school taxis for years. They've had groups of parents who get together and book taxis or 12-seater buses between them. You can see groups of people further west who have hired buses between them, and the bus comes and picks them up in the morning and takes them into the city in the bus lane. We have bus on demand in some of the new areas of Rouse Hill. There are also electric bikes. There are answers to this—a whole range of answers, if you start looking at small groups of people to find answers. So let's see what we can come up with. I spoke to someone in the transport industry about this, recently, and they said, 'But you can't scale it.' I'm going to make this point: not everything scales up. A lot of the solutions that communities have actually scale out. Hairdressers didn't scale up; they scaled out.

There are a lot of things that we do in our communities—services that are provided within our communities by small business and microbusinesses, in some cases—that did not scale into big companies, because they're based on human relationships and human relationships have a natural size. So let's see what we can do here. Let's see if we can create some little jobs for people. Let's see if we can create a bit of work for people who would welcome the opportunity to do a couple of hours every morning, five days a week, and take away cost and inconvenience for a range of people. Let's see if we can come up with. On that matter, let's see if we can find ways to work from home. Let's see if we can get some gigabit speeds. I know a couple of businesses that have paid a lot of money to get it. Let's see if we can create some spaces where people can do their work, two days a week or one day a week, without going into town. Let’s reduce the number of people who need to do it. Let's just get on with it and see what we can work out.

Similarly, I'd like to talk about affordable and secure housing. The median property price over the last year ran at about $1 million for a house in Parramatta and $600,000 for units. It's out of range for the vast majority of people in Parramatta. And it's certainly beyond the capacity of anyone graduating from university now with a debt. It's completely out of range.
But, again, around the world, there are a lot of different models—land trusts, cooperative housing, movable housing, all sorts of options—out there. We have at the University of Western Sydney a woman called Louise—Dr Louise—who's one of the world's experts in this. So we have the knowledge about how to do it in our community. It's not necessarily looking for something that will work for everyone, that will solve a housing crisis or an issue for a million people, but seeing if we can solve it for some. Let's see how many ways we can look at this. How many ways are there to put housing together so that it is affordable?

I'll point out that there was a cooperative housing project in Annandale recently. It was about 65 units. They sold 10 on the commercial market for about $600,000 each, but the co-op owners got them for $110,000 a unit. It's a one-bedroom funky unit in Annandale, the city fringe, for $110,000. It is actually doable. There are countries in the world where co-op housing is up to 60 per cent of housing. Let's see what we can work out. Again, if any of the people in my community are interested in that, send me an email. Let's get a group of us together and see what we can come up with.

There's also a lot of work to be done in developing industries in Western Sydney. I'm quite fascinated myself with the whole idea of 'agribis'. We know that the big agricultural companies now are seriously looking at vertical farms in our cities. We have, by the way, in most cities, about 13 parking spaces for each car. We know that as we start moving towards shared cars and driverless cars we won't be using those car parks, nor will we necessarily be using those high-rise office buildings, because the nature of work will change. So we know that big agribis is looking seriously at how they move into cities to avoid some of their freight costs.

I live in a place with the most diverse community in the country. My Kenyan community thinks we're nutty because we've just discovered kale whereas they've grown it for millennia. They can't believe what we do with it, but they've been eating it for millennia. We have African heirloom vegetables that are grown in our backyards. We have a market for methi, baby fenugreek, which you can buy in shops everywhere. We have an incredible range of Asian vegetables as well.

We shouldn't be waiting for big agribis to come in and decide they're going to move their large farms into Parramatta. We should start developing our own. Already, some of the big hydroponics companies that manufacture hydroponic equipment are starting to understand that smaller units in cities, close to where the market is, are better for fresh greens, for example. Anyone who knows what fresh greens are like if you grow them yourself will know that they last two or three weeks in the fridge, but if you buy them at a big supermarket you are lucky to get a day. So there are real advantages. If you are interested in this, I urge you to get in touch and we will get stuck into it in the new year.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rick Wilson): We will suspend for a short period as a quorum has been called for in the House of Representatives.

Sitting suspended from 18:06 to 18:09

Ms OWENS: I want to talk directly to my community again about things we can do in our local community that will help us be better at being a city. I know there are a lot of people in my city who are unhappy with some of the changes that they're seeing. I know there are a whole stack of people—like me, for example—who see the kids riding their bicycles with the
food delivery on their back. While we like getting food delivered, we're not really prepared to have food delivered in a system that rips off the drivers, so I've spoken to a few people and said, 'Why can't we, as a community, get together and try and work out whether we can develop a cooperative food delivery service that actually works with local restaurants?' Those things are locally based; it's not one of those services where you have to zip off to, say, Penrith. Delivery is based within the Parramatta region, so it's actually possible for us to do what other countries are calling 'online to offline' and change our online systems back to a local focus. That's just one example of the things we can do.

We can also start talking to each other about the shortage of NDIS services in Parramatta and whether we, as a community, can start working together to build the skill base and the businesses that operate locally and serve the local community, and then either scale up or scale out, as so many businesses do. For people who want to work with our community on developing local projects, we have a great need to improve our capacity to do it. I've been talking to a number of people recently about impact investing and the opportunity to tap into a completely new source of funds to achieve things in the community which provide a benefit to third parties. They either reduce cost to someone or improve revenue for someone else, so the system in which you're working isn't closed, but there is an overall benefit. The system is called impact investing. It was originally created by a guy called Les Hemm who worked for Tony Blair several years ago. The G8 had a task force for a number of years. There's an impact investing task force within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Most Western countries are doing it. The G20 has a task force. There's literally about $500 billion in funds around the world looking for projects.

It's an incredibly interesting source of new funds. The government tried it with the Try, Test and Learn Fund— their $120 million fund that was aimed at reducing long-term welfare costs. My understanding is that the government hasn't spent that yet, even though it should have been well and truly spent by now. This is essentially money chasing really good ideas that help communities function better—again, quite often for the benefit of other taxpayers. So, if you're one of those people who would like to get involved in how that works and become an expert, call my office, because we can do some forums on it. There are very good organisations in Australia, including a peak body that knows this system very well. It's not hard to get your head around the concept; it is quite hard to get your head around how it works. So, if you're interested, get in touch. I'd love to do some forums on it next year, and you could even help me do it. There's lots of stuff we can do as a community, and we really can't wait for government because, quite frankly, they're 10 years behind. So let's just get on with it and get done what we can, and hopefully the government will catch up eventually.

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (18:12): It's been a very strange day here in the Australian parliament, of course. We've seen the really unedifying spectacle of a Prime Minister coming into the chamber to say that he will not be taking any action in relation to a minister with a criminal investigation hanging over his head. I think that most Australians would be quite gobsmacked that the Prime Minister—who is responsible for ministerial standards—is taking this quite remarkable step of saying: 'Nothing to see here. There might be a New South Wales police strike force—Strike Force Garrad—investigating this minister, but I'm just going to take no action whatsoever.' I think that's weak, and I think it's a real indictment of this government. There are a couple of things I think you need to have in order to be Prime
Minister: you've got to have guts and you've got to have principles. And this Prime Minister has just demonstrated that he has neither. So it's an odd day to be standing up to give a speech in the address-in-reply debate, because, traditionally, the address-in-reply debate is an opportunity to reflect on the election and the term ahead. Here we are, six months or so into the term, and Australians are rightly looking at this government and saying: 'Well, what do you stand for? If you don't stand for integrity, if you don't stand for upholding standards, what actually does this government stand for?'

It's fair to say, particularly at the moment, given some of the very concerning and serious weather we've been facing and some of the stresses in our communities that we've been facing, that Australians are worried and they're looking for leadership. The droughts and the bushfires we've recently experienced have left communities reeling. Australians from the bush to the city are anxious about what those conditions mean for the future, especially given the widespread acknowledgement that climate change will mean the severity and frequency of wild weather will increase. And that's not just my view. If you read the drought coordinator's report that the government recently released quite belatedly—the drought coordinator's report was provided to them several months ago, but they released it only a couple of weeks ago—the drought coordinator talks squarely about the importance of climate change in the changing patterns of weather and in the increased severity and frequency of drought in Australia. And that's one of the reasons why he says that we need to have a national drought strategy. It's not just ad hoc announcements from the Commonwealth. He lays out a very clear road map for putting together a drought strategy. Our side of politics has been reaching out to the government to say, 'Let's get together, let's work across the parliament—bipartisan, non-partisan, get together people from the crossbench as well—to work on how we can come up with a national drought strategy based on the very solid grounding that the drought coordinator has provided.'

After years of neglect under the Liberals and Nationals, it's very clear that serious environmental damage is now threatening our unique, Australian way of life. Environmental destruction, from the bush to the beach and beyond, is putting hundreds of thousands of jobs at risk—in tourism, in agriculture and in natural resources. And Australians will not stand by and watch while the koala, the platypus and other species are put at risk. We won't let the reef be devastated. We won't let our rivers dry up or our oceans fill with plastic pollution without a fight.

I'm sure, Deputy Speaker Gillespie, like so many Australians, you've been watching with concern the plight of the koalas in the bushfire season we've just had. Today, of course, we've had the very sad news that Lewis—the koala that became famous because he was saved by a woman who took off her shirt, ran into a fire and wrapped him up to get him out safely—has died from the injuries that he suffered in that bushfire. Of course that's one animal of one species in one location, but Australians are seeing this as emblematic of concerns that we have about animal life, biodiversity and the environment.

Labor will stand shoulder to shoulder with our fellow Australians to save our precious natural environment and our Australian way of life, just like we did when facing the great environmental challenges of the past. Labor will always put science and on-the-ground local knowledge at the heart of decision-making. I will return to some of the issues in my portfolio shortly, but first I'd like to make some remarks about my electorate and my constituents.
Representing the south side is a very great honour, and it's also a very great pleasure. It's a wonderful electorate that I have in Griffith. It's a beautiful place along the river in Brisbane. It has some of the country's best icons like the Gabba, the Story Bridge and the South Bank. It has amazing restaurants, amazing culture and, most importantly, amazing people. And I'm so grateful that my community re-elected me in May this year. Working hard for my community is a privilege, and I feel the weight of that privilege every single day. I will continue to be a strong voice for the south side.

Locally, the community faces a range of issues: overdevelopment, traffic congestion, the pressures on public transport, the pressures on bicycle infrastructure—the need for all of those things that can make our city work better. They're all related. Also related is the increasing pressure on schools, on local parks and on local health services by the increasing population density in my electorate of Griffith. I want to call on the government right now, in developing the South East Queensland City Deal, to make sure that these issues—which really are posing serious challenges to the lifestyles of people living in the inner south—are taken into account.

In a similar vein, I want to talk about the Bulimba Barracks. In a way it's an overdevelopment question, because there's been a fight about what should happen with the land, but it's also a question about whether the government is paying enough attention to our area. There've been some deeply concerning issues that have emerged at the Bulimba Barracks. The barracks has a proud history in our community. It represents service, it represents honour and it stands as a living memory of the sacrifice that Australians from far and wide have made for our great country, but, instead of treating this site with the reverence it deserves, the government has been very slow to respond to findings of contamination—including PFAS. As people would know, the federal government has been working on the sale of the barracks for its entire time in office. The site has now been sold to overseas developers, and the sale will be settled in five or six months time. Our local southside Labor team—me, state MP Di Farmer, local councillor Kara Cook and former councillor Shayne Sutton—fought the federal government's approach to this site from the start, demanding a fair go and also a real say for our community. From the moment it went on the chopping block, we fought tooth and nail, side by side with our community, to get a master plan for the site, because without one this sale would have led to terrible outcomes for the community. It's a peninsula area. The roads in and out are already congested. It's really important that there isn't rampant overdevelopment on the site. We got the master plan, which will mean less of a development footprint and less of a traffic burden, but we've had an ongoing struggle to get the government to face up to the contamination issues at the site. Those issues were reported to the government more than a year ago, in August 2018, but it seems to have taken no remedial action since that time—one of the ministers confirmed as much in a letter to me recently—and nor is there any real indication that the government will take any action between now and when the sale is settled in five or six months time.

As I said, PFAS is present on the barracks site. It's a chemical capable of causing cancer, according to many jurisdictions around the world. It's been found to be present on a lot of Defence sites around Australia. The former Prime Minister announced a package of measures to, allegedly, investigate it and clean it up. There's no evidence that that's been done in our community at the barracks site. It's a disgrace. It's been reported that up to 40,000 people are joining a class action in Australia against PFAS contamination, spearheaded by Erin
Brockovich—I'm sure you remember the movie, Deputy Speaker. In relation to the contamination that's been found on this particular site, about 200 of the site's neighbours in Bulimba have signed my online petition, calling on the government to rectify the contaminants on the site. The government has sat on its hands, despite my calls for some action in relation to PFAS. It's outrageous to think that the federal government can abrogate its responsibility to ensure a proper and thorough clean-up of a site that has been contaminated over generations, particularly when there is potential for run-off from the site, from the contaminants on the land. Also, the government's own documents are telling it that there are contaminants sitting in sediment in stormwater drains that run to the Brisbane River. It's just not good enough.

Speaking of things not being good enough, I want to mention the government's neglect of another Defence related property: the former Red Cross Hall, a property owned by the Commonwealth, which is right across the road from a veterans' hospital, Greenslopes Private Hospital—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Gillespie): A quorum has been called in the House, for those of you on quorum duty. I think we will have to suspend, if you have to leave.

Sitting suspended from 18:23 to 18:31

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Gillespie): It being 6.31 pm, the debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 192B. The debate is adjourned and resumption of the debate will be made an order of day for the next sitting.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That grievances be noted.

Economy

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (18:31): I do have a grievance, concerned with the current management of the economy in the first instance. After six years of the Liberal government, in the third term of the Liberal government, the economy is undoubtedly floundering and Australians are struggling to meet the cost of living. The Morrison government has no plan to turn things around. In fact, it appears to be in denial that there's even a problem. The economy is growing at its slowest pace since the global financial crisis. Wages have stagnated, almost two million Australians are looking for work or for more work, and living standards and productivity are going backwards.

Right when the Australian economy needs responsible, proportionate and measured stimulus, the Prime Minister and the Treasurer are all about politics and not about a plan. It is time that the Liberal government brought forward a budget update to fix their forecasts and properly outline an economic plan that supports the floundering economy and better safeguards it from global risks. The economy is growing at its slowest pace since the global financial crisis. Unemployment has increased, with almost two million Australians looking for work or for more work. Wages growth is slowing, with wages growing at one-sixth the pace of profit. This government is presiding over the worst wages growth on record.

Household debt has surged to record levels, to 190 per cent of disposable income. Household living standards have declined, with real household median income lower than it
was in 2013. Business investment is down 20 per cent since the Liberal government came to office, and is now at its lowest level since the 1990s recession. Consumer confidence is well below average, consumption growth is weak and annual retail trade volumes are growing at the slowest pace since the 1990s recession.

Australia became one of the two fastest growing economies in the OECD under Labor and the eighth fastest when the government changed hands in 2013. But under this government we have dropped to 20th—that is, from 8th to 20th. So much for being strong managers of the economy! Net debt has more than doubled under the Liberals and has rocketed to record highs. These are terrible figures, but what is particularly terrible is that the government is not paying attention. They're asleep at the wheel. They're supporting their surplus by cutting funding and underspending on areas such as the NDIS. They're simply in denial of the state of the Australian economy.

Speaking on the Australian economy, I want to dig a little deeper than the usual figures that we hear so often. We continue to drift down the global league ladder in a whole range of metrics. We know the basic ones—wage growth and productivity growth, but there's a whole stack of others that really highlight exactly how bad things are.

A good indicator of economic health relative to the rest of the world is the value of currency, and the Aussie dollar tumbled against every major currency in 2018-19. It lost more than five per cent against the US dollar and just about every other currency. But, thanks to Alan Austin, who wrote a really quite good article on the economy, I know we did actually rally slightly against the Zambian currency! But that's about it. We slid marginally against the euro—I'm being slightly unfair—but really we tumbled against virtually every major currency.

The number of people unemployed in June was back above 710,000. Again, for all the talk that the government puts out about growing jobs, the jobless rate was 5.24 per cent, barely changed from 5.31 per cent a year earlier. And the figure was back above 710,000 for the first time in 13 months. That's at a time of boom around the world. We are declining in our global standing on jobs. Our jobless rate now ranks 75th in the world and 19th in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. That's the club of 36 wealthy developed countries, and we should rank higher, but we're 19th. But 75th in the world—that's an astonishing figure. This is the lowest we've ranked since records have been kept. When government changed in 2013, Australia ranked eighth. Now, even against the biggest economies in the world, we rank 17th. So we've gone backwards on that as well.

On youth unemployment, we've gone backwards. The number of 15- to 19-year-olds out of work has grown. In fact, it's ballooned. It's quite ridiculous. It's up over 19 per cent. As a proportion of the youth workforce, it has risen from 13.9 to 16.4 per cent. We've collapsed again, from eighth in the world when government changed hands, to 11th in 2014, to 14th in 2015 and to 18th in 2017, and now we're 20th, the lowest we've ever been on youth unemployment.

Hours worked per person fell from 32.3 hours per month to 32.1 over the year, the third consecutive annual decline. Again, these indicators are not good. And the number of weeks that people spend looking for work has just gone through the roof. I've spoken about this in the parliament before. In June 2013, just before we lost government, people spent an average of 37.7 weeks on Newstart before getting a job. A year ago the figure was up to nearly 50
weeks. Now it’s 50.9. That’s 13 weeks longer than when the government took office. Again, these are terrible figures.

We hear from the government about how good they are for seniors. Well, they’re really not. The number of people who are working above retirement age is at an all-time high. The percentage of Australia's population aged 65 and over who are working has increased from 13.8 to 15.1 in the last financial year.

On government debt, we hear from the government that they’re fixing Labor's debt. Well, you don't fix it by doubling it, and it has actually doubled since the government came to power. It’s now $542 billion. Some people may remember that, when the government were elected, in 2014 one of the first things they did was remove the debt ceiling so that they wouldn’t have to keep coming back to the parliament to increase the debt ceiling. So it was removed altogether, with the help of the Greens. That was just as well, because the debt has doubled. It’s now $542 billion, an amazing amount of money. This consolidates Australia's position as having the second-highest debt blowout of all OECD countries since 2013.

This is the real challenge for the government. They whitewash out, photoshop out, the fact that there ever was a global financial crisis. But we came out of the global financial crisis better than most countries in the world, and now, while the rest of the world economy booms, we’ve gone backwards. We have the second-highest debt blowout of all OECD countries since 2013, and this is from a government that claim to be good on debt. I don't know how you can be paying off someone else's debt if you've doubled it and you've totally blown Australia's position in the world in terms of debt. It really is quite astonishing what the government get up to with their rhetoric. The reality is something quite different.

In the remaining time I want to talk about the disaster of the NDIS, and about one case in particular. Alanna is a six-year-old girl who loves singing, swimming and making magic potions and wants to say her promise as a junior girl guide. She was born with fragile X syndrome and autism. In November, following her annual review, Alanna’s mother was told to expect less funding, because her daughter had met her goals last year. Last year's funding was not enough to provide Alanna with what she needs, but she did meet her goals, and her goals were such simple ones. They were really the kinds of basic things you expect a girl to be doing in her home. The funding was about one-third of that suggested by therapists. The funding ran out after nine months and Alanna's mother was forced to remortgage their home several times in order to fill the gap in services, so that she could provide the services her daughter needs. This year, Alanna desperately needs therapy to support her in continuing on her path to becoming a functioning member of society and in transitioning to mainstream classes at school. But her mother expects to receive half the funding needed for her daughter. It is a disgrace. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Gillespie): A quorum has been called for in the House of Representatives. Proceedings are suspended to enable honourable members to attend the chamber.

Sitting suspended from 18:41 to 19:00

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member for Kennedy. The question is that grievances be noted. I call the member for New England.
Extradition Law

Mr JOYCE (New England) (19:00): I rise tonight to talk on an issue that I don't believe is going to get me many friends, but it's incredibly important. The issue is that we have to believe in our sovereignty as a nation. We have to believe in it in our philosophical approach, in our ethical approach and in our legal approach. We have to believe in our sovereignty when it comes to who owns what in our land. We have to believe in our sovereignty when it comes to defending our land. And we have to believe in our sovereignty when it comes to the rule of law in our land.

On the issue of Mr Julian Assange, I do not give any endorsement of his character whatsoever, but I do hold in great respect the legal principle of jurisprudence for this nation. It is a reflection of what we are as a nation. It is a reflection of our sovereignty. Mr Assange never committed a crime whilst in the United States. In fact, you might go so far as to say that Robert Mueller, in his investigations, has never called for an indictment of Mr Assange. It has been said, by the United States, that they wish to have Mr Assange convicted of espionage. But Mr Assange was in Australia; he was certainly not in the United States.

If we create a precedent in this nation where a third party, a third nation, can say, 'We believe you've committed a crime in our country, even though you were never here, and Australia has to extradite you to our country to face those charges,' that is an appalling precedent. What happens when the autocracy of China says, 'We believe someone in Australia has committed a crime, the way we see it in China; therefore, you must extradite that person to China to face charges.' It is a ridiculous precedent.

In 2010, then Prime Minister Julia Gillard wanted to take away Mr Assange's passport and charge him with a crime. The problem was, he hadn't committed a crime—not in Australia. And this process goes on. Once more, I don't think I'd even like the guy if I met him. I look at him from a distance and there's not much I like about him at all. But that's not the issue. Law is not just there for the people we like. Law is not just there for the issues we think are conducive to our view of the world. Law is there as a constant, as a permanent, as a compass. It's a compass so that we can understand what the sovereignty of our nation means to us on a personal level.

Remember, Mr Assange never broke or hacked into any computers. That was done by a person who was at the time a private in the army, whose name at the time was Bradley Manning, now Chelsea Manning. Bradley Manning is now a free person. Bradley Manning was given a pardon by President Obama. Bradley Manning is now walking the streets as Chelsea Manning. Yet we are sitting back contemplating or being silent in a process that might involve the extradition, from the United Kingdom to the United States, of an Australian citizen for a crime that has been alleged, or has been charged, or the process has started, in a third country, the United States of America.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): Order! Unfortunately, we don't have a quorum. Proceedings are suspended until we have a quorum.

Proceedings suspended from 19:05 to 19:08

(Quorum formed)

Mr JOYCE: If Mr Assange committed a crime by reason of reporting what was given to him by Mr Manning, then surely everybody who reported what was obviously printed by Mr...
Assange also committed a crime. Therefore, every newspaper and every editor in this nation has committed a crime. Maybe they should all be deported to the United States to face the music there!

I have to say that hypocrisy reigns supreme when people from the fourth estate, who have campaigned about protection of journalism, seem, in many instances, to have lost their tongues on this issue. Whether it's *The Australian* or *The Age* or *The Sydney Morning Herald* or the ABC or Channel Nine or Channel Seven or *The Guardian*—whoever it is—if they have reported on information that was taken by Mr Manning in the United States and then subsequently reported on WikiLeaks, which has an involvement and of which Mr Assange was a co-founder, then surely all those people in that train of printing things are now up for the same charge.

The only way that you can stand by this is to go back to core principles. If you believe that we are a nation that is good enough to have a process of law that has been tested by time which reflects our sovereignty, which reflects the nature and the tenor—almost the sanctity—of what a nation is, and if we are saying, 'We are not the United States of America and we are not China; we are Australia,' then you have to say that we must stand by our own process of law and not abscond from it from time to time at the behest of what is a strong and powerful ally but is not us. The United States of America knows it's a liberal democracy and that it must stand behind the principle of law. There are certain processes in law—such as *habeas corpus*—which you cannot just arbitrarily dismiss. I say once more that I do not give any endorsement to the character of Mr Assange in any way, shape or form, but I do give an endorsement to the process of law in this nation. And in the past, much to people's disgust—and, people said, to my disgrace—I stood by and tried to make sure that David Hicks—

**Mr BURKE:** I move:

That the member be no longer heard.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan):** I put the question that the member be no longer heard. All those of that opinion, say aye. To the contrary, no. I think the noes have it.

**An honourable member:** The ayes have it.

**An honourable member:** The noes have it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** It will be reported back to the chamber as an unresolved question. There being no further grievances, the debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

**Federation Chamber adjourned at 19:11**