COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

House of Representatives

Hansard

MONDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2020

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SITTING DAYS—2020

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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 Llewellyn Stephen O’Brien MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP

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

Leader of the House—Hon. Christian Porter MP
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Darren Chester MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Anthony Stephen Burke MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Mark Butler MP

Party Leaders and Whips
Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Scott John Morrison MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Joshua Anthony Frydenberg MP
Chief Government Whip—Mr Albertus Johannes van Manen MP

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

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Michael Francis McCormack MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. David Littleproud MP
Chief Whip—Hon Damian Kevin Drum MP
Deputy Whip—Mr Kenneth Desmond O’Dowd MP

Australian Labor Party
Leader—Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Richard Marles MP
Chief Opposition Whip—Mr Christopher Patrick Hayes MP

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

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<tr>
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<td>Mallee, VIC</td>
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<td>Wells, Ms Anika Shay</td>
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<td>Wicks, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth</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;

Heads of Parliamentary Departments
Clerk of the Senate—R Pye
Clerk of the House of Representatives—C Surtees
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic
Parliamentary Budget Officer—J Wilkinson
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<td>The Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for the Public Service</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Women</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Marise Payne</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Greg Hunt MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Indigenous Australians</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet</em></td>
<td>The Hon Ben Morton MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Michael McCormack MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management</strong></td>
<td>The Hon David Littleproud MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Paul Fletcher MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Alan Tudge MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government</td>
<td>The Hon Mark Coulton MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Andrew Gee MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Scott Buchholz MP</td>
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<td><strong>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</strong></td>
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<td>The Hon Michael Sukkar MP</td>
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<td>Senator the Hon Jane Hume</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Finance</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><em>Assistant Minister for Finance, Charities and Electoral Matters</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management</td>
<td>The Hon Trevor Evans MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries</strong></td>
<td><strong>Senator the Hon Jonathon Duniam</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Foreign Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Marise Payne</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon Christian Porter MP</td>
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<td>The Hon Peter Dutton MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon David Coleman MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships</td>
<td>The Hon Steve Irons MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction</td>
<td>The Hon Angus Taylor MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon Michelle Landry MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Veterans' Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Personnel</td>
<td>The Hon Darren Chester MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of the House)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Defence Minister</td>
<td>The Hon Alex Hawke MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon Anne Ruston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme</td>
<td>The Hon Stuart Robert MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services</td>
<td>The Hon Luke Howarth MP</td>
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<td>The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator Jenny McAllister</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Richard Marles MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Defence</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Shayne Neumann MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and Defence Personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting for Defence</td>
<td>Mr Matt Keogh MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence Industry</td>
<td><strong>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon. Penny Wong</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs</strong></td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme</td>
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<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Road Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Attorney-General</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ms Michelle Rowland MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians</td>
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<td>Ms Ged Kearney MP</td>
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<td>Title</td>
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Monday, 24 February 2020

The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 10:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

COMMITTEES

Petitions Committee

Report

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (10:01): I present the ninth report of the Petitions Committee for the 46th Parliament.

Today there's only one petition for presentation. This is due to the combination of the sitting pattern and the four-week signature period for electronic petitions.

E-petitions are approved by the committee on a sitting Wednesday prior to collecting signatures and are open for signatures for four weeks. Frequently the end of the four-week signing period does not neatly align with the sitting pattern to provide a timely opportunity for presentation.

The result of this is the difference in the number of petitions to be presented on a sitting Monday, and today we are presenting fewer than usual.

As an example, e-petitions approved at the committee's last meeting on 5 February will be presented to the House on 23 March, almost two weeks after the period for gathering signatures has ended.

Paper petitions of course are not subject to this cycle, because they are approved for presentation by the committee after signatures have been gathered.

Thank you, and the committee looks forward to further updating the House on its work.

PETITIONS

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (10:01): On behalf of the Standing Committee on Petitions, and in accordance with standing order 207, I present the following petition:

Falun Gong

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT

This petition of certain citizens and residents of Australia draws to the attention of the House that Falun Gong is a peaceful meditation practice based on the principles of Truthfulness, Compassion and Tolerance. Falun Gong practitioners in China have been subjected to the most brutal and relentless persecution by the Chinese Communist regime since July 1999. According to investigative reports published by human rights lawyer David Matas and former Canadian Secretary of State for the Asia Pacific David Kilgour, a large number of imprisoned Falun Gong practitioners have been subjected to forced organ harvesting for China’s transplant market and lost their lives (www.organharvestinvestigation.net).

We therefore ask the House to request the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister to openly and forthrightly call for an immediate end to the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

from 36382 citizens (Petition No. PN0451)

Petitions received.

Responses

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (10:01): Ministerial responses to petitions previously presented to the House have been received as follows:

Immigration Detention

Dear Mr O'Brien,

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 enclosing Petition EN1058 concerning the Australian Government's regional processing and resettlement arrangements.

Regional processing is a key pillar of Operation Sovereign Borders and supports the Government's strong border protection policies. These policies have successfully stemmed the flow of illegal maritime ventures to Australia, disrupted people smuggling activities in the region and prevented loss of life at sea.

The success of Australia's border protection policies has also enabled the Government to make a generous contribution to addressing the global humanitarian crisis and increase our Humanitarian Program annual quota to 18,750 places. This represents the largest ongoing program in over 30 years.

Australia is committed to providing protection to refugees consistent with the obligations set out in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Regional processing arrangements provide illegal maritime arrivals
an opportunity to have their protection claims assessed and for those found to be refugees, resettlement in a third country, without compromising Australia's strong border protection policies.

Regional processing arrangements in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the individuals under those arrangements are the responsibility of the Government of PNG.

The Government continues to support the Government of PNG to reduce the residual regional processing caseload through resettlement, returns and removals. Under current regional processing arrangements, refugees have permanent resettlement options and are being resettled. Australia continues to explore alternative resettlement options for refugees in PNG.

People found to be refugees by the Government of PNG can settle in PNG, seek assisted voluntary return, or move to a country they have the right to reside in. In addition to this, a one-off arrangement with the United States (US) to support the resettlement of refugees from PNG is in place and is progressing.

The Government of PNG has advised it will manage the failed asylum seekers until they depart PNG. Voluntary assistance remains available to the failed asylum seekers to return home or to a country to which they have a right of entry.

A total of 4,183 illegal maritime arrivals were transferred to offshore processing under the previous government. Today, there are no refugees in detention under offshore processing and as at 31 October 2019, 632 refugees have been resettled under the Government's resettlement arrangement with the US.

Australia appreciates the offer from the New Zealand Government to settle refugees, however, the Government is focused on completing the larger arrangement with the US. Australia's border protection policies have removed the incentive for people to join dangerous and illegal people smuggling ventures to Australia. The Government remains mindful of not undoing efforts to combat people smuggling.

The Government's policy that persons who arrive in Australia illegally by boat will not be settled in Australia, remains steadfast.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Dutton (Petition No. EN1058)

Asylum Seekers

Dear Mr O'Brien,

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 enclosing Petition EN1059 concerning the Australian Government's regional processing and resettlement arrangements.

Regional processing is a key pillar of Operation Sovereign Borders and supports the Government's strong border protection policies. These policies have successfully stemmed the flow of illegal maritime ventures to Australia, disrupted people smuggling activities in the region and prevented loss of life at sea.

The success of Australia's border protection policies has also enabled the Government to make a generous contribution to addressing the global humanitarian crisis and increase our Humanitarian Program annual quota to 18,750 places. This represents the largest ongoing program in over 30 years.

People under regional processing arrangements are treated with respect and dignity and in accordance with international human rights standards. Their protection claims are assessed by the Governments of Nauru and Papua New Guinea (PNG) and are undertaken in accordance with each country's respective laws and processes.

Under current regional processing arrangements, refugees have permanent resettlement options and are being resettled. Australia continues to explore alternative resettlement options for refugees in Nauru and PNG. PNG determined refugees can settle in PNG and Nauru determined refugees can reside in Nauru for up to 20 years. In addition to this, a one-off arrangement with the United States (US) to support the resettlement of refugees from Nauru and PNG is in place and progressing.

Australia appreciates the offer from the New Zealand Government to resettle refugees, however, the Government is focused on completing the larger arrangement with the US. Australia's border protection policies have removed the incentive for people to join dangerous and illegal people smuggling ventures to Australia. The Government remains mindful of not undoing efforts to combat people smuggling.

A total of 4,183 illegal maritime arrivals were transferred to offshore processing under the previous government. Today, there are no refugees in detention under offshore processing and as at 31 October 2019, 632 refugees have been resettled under the Government's resettlement arrangement with the US.

Australia is committed to providing protection to refugees consistent with the obligations set out in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Regional processing arrangements provide illegal maritime arrivals an opportunity to have their protection claims assessed and for those found to be refugees, resettlement in a third country, without compromising Australia's strong border protection policies.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Dutton (Petition No. EN1059)
Medicare: Surrogacy

Dear Mr O'Brien

I refer to your letter of 25 November 2019 regarding petition EN1064 concerning Medicare rebates for in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) and surrogacy arrangements.

I understand how difficult the journey to have child through IVF may be for some couples and the financial pressure that IVF treatment can have on a family, especially in the case of surrogacy.

As you are aware, through Medicare, the Australian Government provides benefits (rebates) to support access to medical and hospital services for all Australian residents. There are key pieces of legislation that govern the operations of Medicare. For the payment of Medicare benefits for assisted reproductive technology (ART) services, such as IVF, the services must be: clinically relevant, performed in accordance with state and territory laws and not associated with surrogacy arrangement.

Surrogacy (altruistic) is legalised and regulated by state and territory governments in Australia. When the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) ART items were introduced in 1990, surrogacy was illegal in some states and the MBS items intentionally reflected this. As such, the legislation specifically precludes the payment of Medicare benefits for ART services, such as IVF, rendered in conjunction with surrogacy arrangements.

The Medicare items for IVF are currently being reviewed as part of the work of the MBS Review Taskforce (Taskforce). The Review is being undertaken by clinical committees and working groups comprised of Australia's leading clinicians, consumers and other health system experts. The MBS items for IVF, including surrogacy, have been reviewed by the Taskforce and its report includes a recommendation that MBS funding be available for altruistic surrogacy and egg donation.

The Taskforce finalised its recommendations in August 2019 and they are currently being considered by the Government. For more information or to monitor any developments in the Taskforce's review process please visit: www.health.gov.au and search for 'MBS Review'.

In relation to the cost of IVF procedures, while the Government is responsible for setting the level of the Medicare rebates that assist patients to access these services, it has no direct power to determine the fees charged by doctors. Medical practitioners, including IVF providers, are able to set their own fees and the actual fee charged is a matter between the doctor and patient. Practitioners are encouraged to consider the personal circumstances of their patients when determining the fees they charge.

Thank you for bringing petition EN1064 to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Health, Mr Hunt

Asylum Seekers

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 enclosing Petition EN1070 concerning the Australian Government's regional processing and resettlement arrangements.

The success of Australia's border protection policies has also enabled the Government to make a generous contribution to addressing the global humanitarian crisis and increase our Humanitarian Program annual quota to 18,750 places. This represents the largest ongoing program in over 30 years.

Australia is committed to providing protection to refugees consistent with the obligations set out in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Regional processing arrangements provide illegal maritime arrivals an opportunity to have their protection claims assessed and for those found to be refugees, resettlement in a third country, without compromising Australia's strong border protection policies.

Regional processing arrangements in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the individuals under those arrangements are the responsibility of the Government of PNG.

The Government continues to support the Government of PNG to reduce the residual regional processing caseload through resettlement, returns and removals. Under current regional processing arrangements, refugees have permanent resettlement options and are being resettled.

People found to be refugees by the Government of PNG can settle in PNG, seek assisted voluntary return, or move to a country they have the right to reside in. In addition to this, a one-off arrangement with the United States (US) to support the resettlement of refugees from PNG is in place and is progressing.

The Government of PNG has advised it will manage the failed asylum seekers until they depart PNG. Voluntary assistance remains available to the failed asylum seekers to return home or to a country to which they have a right of entry. A total of 4,183 illegal maritime arrivals were transferred to offshore processing under the previous government. Today, there are no refugees in detention under offshore processing and as at 31 October 2019, 632 refugees have been resettled under the Government's resettlement arrangement with the US.

Australia appreciates the offer from the New Zealand Government to resettle refugees, however, the Government is focused on completing the larger arrangement with the US. Australia's border protection policies have removed the incentive for people to join dangerous and illegal people smuggling ventures to Australia. The Government remains mindful of not undoing efforts to combat people smuggling.
The Government's policy that persons who arrive in Australia illegally by boat will not be settled in Australia, remains steadfast.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the **Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Dutton** (Petition No. EN1070)

**Asylum Seekers**

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 enclosing Petition EN1072 concerning the Australian Government's regional processing and resettlement arrangements.

The success of Australia's border protection policies has also enabled the Government to make a generous contribution to addressing the global humanitarian crisis and increase our Humanitarian Program annual quota to 18,750 places. This represents the largest ongoing program in over 30 years.

Australia is committed to providing protection to refugees consistent with the obligations set out in the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and its 1967 Protocol. Regional processing arrangements provide illegal maritime arrivals an opportunity to have their protection claims assessed and for those found to be refugees, resettlement in a third country, without compromising Australia's strong border protection policies.

Regional processing arrangements in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the individuals under those arrangements are the responsibility of the Government of PNG.

The Government continues to support the Government of PNG to reduce the residual regional processing caseload through resettlement, returns and removals. Under current regional processing arrangements, refugees have permanent resettlement options and are being resettled.

People found to be refugees by the Government of PNG can settle in PNG, seek assisted voluntary return, or move to a country they have the right to reside in. In addition to this, a one-off arrangement with the United States (US) to support the resettlement of refugees from PNG is in place and is progressing.

The Government of PNG has advised it will manage the failed asylum seekers until they depart PNG. Voluntary assistance remains available to the failed asylum seekers to return home or to a country to which they have a right of entry.

A total of 4,183 illegal maritime arrivals were transferred to offshore processing under the previous government. Today, there are no refugees in detention under offshore processing and as at 31 October 2019, 632 refugees have been resettled under the Government's resettlement arrangement with the US.

Australia appreciates the offer from the New Zealand Government to resettle refugees, however, the Government is focused on completing the larger arrangement with the US. Australia's border protection policies have removed the incentive for people to join dangerous and illegal people smuggling ventures to Australia. The Government remains mindful of not undoing efforts to combat people smuggling.

The Government's policy that persons who arrive in Australia illegally by boat will not be settled in Australia, remains steadfast.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the **Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Dutton** (Petition No. EN1072)

**Petrol and Diesel Cars**

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 in relation to the House of Representatives petition EN1073 on banning the importation of petrol and diesel vehicles.

The Australian Government's goal is to encourage cleaner, more affordable cars that use less fuel, as this means cheaper bills for families and is better for public health and for the environment. This includes ensuring Australians have access to the latest vehicle technology. However, take up of new technology must be driven by consumer demand, not regulation that restricts consumer choice.

The Government has no plans to ban the sale of vehicles with petrol and diesel engines. We are heavy users of cars and transport compared to many other countries with 776 vehicles per thousand people. We rank sixth in the world for private car ownership per capita and the number of kilometres driven per adult ranks us above major economies such as France and the United Kingdom. The rate of technology improvement is uncertain. A move to ban vehicles with petrol and diesel engines could impose significant costs on industry and consumers while also limiting choice.

The Government will also not introduce a fuel efficiency (CO2) standard that could increase the upfront cost of cars for Australians. The Government is taking a sensible approach that places fuel savings for the community front and centre, but ensures the vehicles that Australians value remain in the market.
On 25 February 2019, the Government announced the development of a National Electric Vehicle Strategy to plan and manage the transition to new vehicle technologies and infrastructure. This strategy is part of the Government’s Climate Solutions Package, a $3.5 billion investment to deliver on Australia’s 2030 emission reduction targets.

The strategy will build on existing Government support, which includes:

- $21 million of funding for charging infrastructure from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency to roll out ultra-fast charging sites through two networks along Australia’s national highways;
- up to $1.1 billion in finance available from the Clean Energy Finance Corporation to assist uptake of low and zero emissions vehicles finance; and
- $25 million for the Future Battery Industries Cooperative Research Centre.

The Government expects to undertake consultation on the development of the strategy over coming months, and I encourage members of the community to take the opportunity to share their views.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention. I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

from the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr McCormack (Petition No. EN1073)

Dear Mr O’Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 enclosing Petition EN1074 concerning the Australian Government’s regional processing and resettlement arrangements. Your correspondence has been referred to me as the Minister for Home Affairs as the matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities.

The success of Australia’s border protection policies has also enabled the Government to make a generous contribution to addressing the global humanitarian crisis and increase our Humanitarian Program annual quota to 18,750 places. This represents the largest ongoing program in over 30 years.

Australia is committed to providing protection to refugees consistent with the obligations set out in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Regional processing arrangements provide illegal maritime arrivals an opportunity to have their protection claims assessed and for those found to be refugees, resettlement in a third country, without compromising Australia’s strong border protection policies.

Regional processing arrangements in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the individuals under those arrangements are the responsibility of the Government of PNG.

The Government continues to support the Government of PNG to reduce the residual regional processing caseload through resettlement, returns and removals. Under current regional processing arrangements, refugees have permanent resettlement options and are being resettled.

People found to be refugees by the Government of PNG can settle in PNG, seek assisted voluntary return, or move to a country they have the right to reside in. In addition to this, a one-off arrangement with the United States (US) to support the resettlement of refugees from PNG is in place and is progressing.

The Government of PNG has advised it will manage the failed asylum seekers until they depart PNG. Voluntary assistance remains available to the failed asylum seekers to return home or to a country to which they have a right of entry.

A total of 4,183 illegal maritime arrivals were transferred to offshore processing under the previous government. Today, there are no refugees in detention under offshore processing and as at 31 October 2019, 632 refugees have been resettled under the Government’s resettlement arrangement with the US.

Australia appreciates the offer from the New Zealand Government to resettle refugees, however, the Government is focused on completing the larger arrangement with the US. Australia’s border protection policies have removed the incentive for people to join dangerous and illegal people smuggling ventures to Australia. The Government remains mindful of not undoing efforts to combat people smuggling.

The Government’s policy that persons who arrive in Australia illegally by boat will not be settled in Australia, remains steadfast.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Your sincerely

from the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Dutton (Petition No. EN1074)

Dear Mr O’Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 enclosing Petition EN1075 concerning the Australian Government’s regional processing and resettlement arrangements.

The success of Australia’s border protection policies has also enabled the Government to make a generous contribution to addressing the global humanitarian crisis and increase our Humanitarian Program annual quota to 18,750 places. This represents the largest ongoing program in over 30 years.

Yours sincerely

from the
Australia is committed to providing protection to refugees consistent with the obligations set out in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Regional processing arrangements provide illegal maritime arrivals an opportunity to have their protection claims assessed and for those found to be refugees, resettlement in a third country, without compromising Australia’s strong border protection policies.

Regional processing arrangements in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the individuals under those arrangements are the responsibility of the Government of PNG.

The Government continues to support the Government of PNG to reduce the residual, regional processing caseload through resettlement, returns and removals. Under current regional processing arrangements, refugees have permanent resettlement options and are being resettled.

People found to be refugees by the Government of PNG can settle in PNG, seek assisted voluntary return, or move to a country they have the right to reside in. In addition to this, a one-off arrangement with the United States (US) to support the resettlement of refugees from PNG is in place and is progressing.

The Government of PNG has advised it will manage the failed asylum seekers until they depart PNG. Voluntary assistance remains available to the failed asylum seekers to return home or to a country to which they have a right of entry.

A total of 4,183 illegal maritime arrivals were transferred to offshore processing under the previous government. Today, there are no refugees in detention under offshore processing and as at 31 October 2019, 632 refugees have been resettled under the Government's resettlement arrangement with the US.

Australia appreciates the offer from the New Zealand Government to resettle refugees, however, the Government is focused on completing the larger arrangement with the US. Australia’s border protection policies have removed the incentive for people to join dangerous and illegal people smuggling ventures to Australia. The Government remains mindful of not undoing efforts to combat people smuggling.

The Government's policy that persons who arrive in Australia illegally by boat will not be settled in Australia, remains steadfast.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Dutton (Petition No. EN1075)

Indigenous Australians

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your letter of 25 November 2019 concerning petition number EN1076. I note the petition calls for me to make a declaration in the House of Representatives regarding the age of the Earth and of Indigenous culture. I understand the purpose of this declaration is to challenge the belief within some faiths that the Earth is about 6,000 years old.

The Australian Government recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have the oldest continuous living cultures on Earth, with evidence of civilisation dating back at least 65,000 years. The intrinsic value of these cultures to Indigenous identity, as well as their uniqueness and importance to our shared Australian history, cannot be overstated.

All Australians are free to choose their religion, and are entitled to express and practice their beliefs, without intimidation or interference within the framework of Australian law. Australia is the most successful multicultural country in the world today because of these rights and the diversity of cultures and beliefs that co-exist in our society. We are strongest when united by tolerance, mutual respect and a commitment to democratic traditions.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention. I trust this information will be of assistance in responding to the petitioner.

Yours sincerely

from the Prime Minister, Mr Morrison (Petition No. EN1076)

Education

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your email of 25 November 2019 regarding Education petition EN1079.

The Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum (the curriculum) sets the expectations for what all students should be taught regardless of where they live or their background. The curriculum was endorsed by all education ministers in September 2015 following an independent review. A further review of the curriculum is expected to be considered in 2020. This may present an opportunity for the petitioner to express their thoughts about the content of the curriculum.

While the Australian Government takes a leadership role in matters of national education policy, the delivery of education in schools is a matter for state and territory government and non-government education authorities. The petitioner may wish to contact their state or territory education minister to discuss their concerns.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Your sincerely

from the Minister for Education, Mr Tehan (Petition No. EN1079)

State and Territory Education Ministers
Glyphosate

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 regarding Petition EN1082 - Restrict the use of glyphosate in public spaces in Australia.

The Liberal and Nationals Government appreciates the concerns about the impact of glyphosate on people's health. The Government's first priority with respect to agricultural chemicals is protecting the health of people, animals and the environment. This is why we regulate these chemicals, including products containing glyphosate.

In Australia, agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals are regulated under the National Registration Scheme for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals. Before agvet chemical products, such as glyphosate-based herbicides, can be supplied or used in Australia they have to be evaluated and registered by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

The APVMA employs a robust, evidence-based approach to assess risk and regulate agvet chemicals, rather than a hazard-based approach. A hazard assessment, such as that used by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, considers only the potential for harm due to the intrinsic properties of a chemical. A risk assessment combines hazard assessment with exposure assessment in real-world situations, to calculate the likelihood of an adverse outcome. It is a legislative requirement that the APVMA only register agvet chemical products where it is satisfied that the risks of use can be mitigated through specific dosage, application and safety instructions on the product label.
The APVMA evaluated a range of contemporary scientific information about glyphosate in 2016. The review found that, in Australia, when used in accordance with label instructions, glyphosate does not pose a cancer risk to humans and is unlikely to have harmful effects on humans or the environment. The APVMA’s position aligns with recent comprehensive reviews of glyphosate conducted separately by regulators in the United States of America and Canada, as well as the Joint Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/World Health Organization Meeting on Pesticide Residues. The APVMA report can be found at apvma.gov.au/node/13891.

The APVMA continues to monitor and consider new scientific information about the safety and efficacy of glyphosate and considers that, to date, there are no scientific grounds to justify a formal review of the approval of glyphosate.

The decision by a country to ban or restrict a chemical’s use reflects the unique circumstances of that country. Environmental factors, product use patterns, label information, training and expertise of users, and farming practices vary significantly between countries. All these factors play a part in decisions to approve chemicals for use. When used appropriately, herbicides, such as glyphosate, play an important role in safely and effectively managing weeds in Australian agriculture and urban areas.

State and territory governments are responsible for regulating agvet chemicals after the point of retail sale. This encompasses activities such as training and accreditation of chemical users, and compliance and enforcement to ensure chemical products are being used in accordance with APVMA-approved label instructions. Those interested in herbicide use in public spaces in their community are encouraged to contact their local councils, many of which publish their proposed pesticide application plans publically online.

It may be of interest that in September 2019, the Government appointed an independent panel of experts in regulation, agricultural production and veterinary medicine to comprehensively review the regulatory framework for agvet chemicals. The review examines the agvet chemical regulatory framework’s aims, structure and operation, and will make recommendations to ensure that it is contemporary, fit for purpose and reduces unnecessary red tape. During this review the panel will be consulting widely with stakeholders and considering findings and recommendations from other relevant reviews. Further information on the review can be found at agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/ag-vet-chemicals/better-regulation-of-agvet-chemicals/independent-review-agvet-chemical-regulatory-framework.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me on this issue. I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Agriculture, Senator McKenzie (Petition No. EN1082)

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

Dear Mr O'Brien

I refer to your letter of 25 November 2019 concerning Petition EN1083 requesting the House of Representatives to fast track the addition of encorafenib (Braftovi®) in combination with binimetinib (Mektovi®), to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) schedule to treat BRAF mutated colorectal cancer.

Thank you for bringing this petition to list the medicine combination encorafenib and binimetinib on the PBS to my attention. It is a priority of the Australian Government to provide all Australians access to safe, effective, and affordable medicines.

As you may be aware, the medicines encorafenib and binimetinib are not currently listed on the PBS for the treatment of any condition.

Under legislation passed by the Australian Parliament, a new medicine cannot be listed by the Government on the PBS unless the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC)—an independent, expert advisory body—makes a recommendation in favour of listing. When considering a medicine proposed for PBS listing, the PBAC is required by that legislation to give consideration to the effectiveness and cost of the medicine, including by comparing the effectiveness and cost with that of alternative treatments.

The PBAC’s consideration is generally initiated by the pharmaceutical company responsible for a medicine making an application to it for the medicine to be considered for PBS listing. It is usually the pharmaceutical company that holds the scientific data and other information necessary to inform the PBAC’s consideration.

To date, the PBAC has considered one application from the pharmaceutical company responsible for the supply of encorafenib and binimetinib in Australia, Pierre Fabre Australia (Pierre Fabre). In November 2018, the PBAC recommended the PBS listing of this combination for treatment of BRAF V600 mutation positive unresectable Stage III or Stage IV metastatic melanoma.

Unfortunately, Pierre Fabre elected not to proceed with this listing. Pharmaceutical companies are private entities that make their own decisions on their medicines and cannot be compelled to list their medicines on the PBS if they choose not to do so.


With regards to the petition to list encorafenib and binimetinib on the PBS for the treatment of colorectal cancer, Pierre Fabre has not made an application to the PBAC to seek PBS listing for this purpose. Further, while both medicines have been
approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), Australia’s regulator of medicines and other therapeutic goods, for the treatment of unresectable or metastatic melanoma in certain circumstances, neither have been approved by the TGA for the treatment of colorectal cancer. Medicines are not generally made available on the PBS to treat conditions for which they have not been approved by the TGA.

Oncologists treating patients with colorectal cancer may wish to contact Pierre Fabre to find out whether it intends to apply for TGA approval and PBS listing for encorafenib and binimetinib for the treatment of colorectal cancer. Pierre Fabre can be contacted via telephone on (02) 9195 6200 or on line at: www.pierre-fabre.com.au/contact.

There may be options for patients to access these medicines at a reduced cost outside of the PBS arrangements. Pierre Fabre may be able to inform oncologists whether these medicines could be supplied on compassionate grounds or through a patient familiarisation program. Decisions to grant access to individual patients under such arrangements occur at the sole discretion of the pharmaceutical companies concerned.

Further, the Government provides funds to the states and territories to assist with the costs of providing public hospital services, which can include assistance with the costs of medicines that patients are unable to afford.

If there are no other affordable options to access encorafenib and binimetinib, an oncologist doctor treating a patient with colorectal cancer may consider making an application, on their patient’s behalf, to the drug and therapeutics committee at a local public hospital to request assistance with the cost of treatment.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

from the Minister for Health, Mr Hunt (Petition No. EN1083)

Asylum Seekers

Dear Mr O’Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 enclosing Petition EN1089 concerning the Australian Government’s regional processing and resettlement arrangements. Your correspondence has been referred to me as the Minister for Home Affairs as the matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities.

The success of Australia’s border protection policies has also enabled the Government to make a generous contribution to addressing the global humanitarian crisis and increase our Humanitarian Program annual quota to 18,750 places. This represents the largest ongoing program in over 30 years.

Australia is committed to providing protection to refugees consistent with the obligations set out in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Regional processing arrangements provide illegal maritime arrivals an opportunity to have their protection claims assessed and for those found to be refugees, resettlement in a third country, without compromising Australia’s strong border protection policies.

Regional processing arrangements in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the individuals under those arrangements are the responsibility of the Government of PNG.

The Government continues to support the Government of PNG to reduce the residual regional processing caseload through resettlement, returns and removals. Under current regional processing arrangements, refugees have permanent resettlement options and are being resettled.

People found to be refugees by the Government of PNG can settle in PNG, seek assisted voluntary return or move to a country they have the right to reside in. In addition to this, a one-off arrangement with the United States (US) to support the resettlement of refugees from PNG is in place and is progressing.

The Government of PNG has advised it will manage the failed asylum seekers until they depart PNG. Voluntary assistance remains available to the failed asylum seekers to return home or to a country to which they have a right of entry.

A total of 4,183 illegal maritime arrivals were transferred to offshore processing under the previous government. Today, there are no refugees in detention under offshore processing and as at 31 October 2019, 632 refugees have been resettled under the Government’s resettlement arrangement with the US.

Australia appreciates the offer from the New Zealand Government to resettle refugees, however, the Government is focused on completing the larger arrangement with the US. Australia’s border protection policies have removed the incentive for people to join dangerous and illegal people smuggling ventures to Australia. The Government remains mindful of not undoing efforts to combat people smuggling.

The Government’s policy that persons who arrive in Australia illegally by boat will not be settled in Australia, remains steadfast.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Dutton (Petition No. EN1089)

Waste Management and Recycling

Dear Mr O’Brien

Monday, 24 February 2020  HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 9
Thank you for your letter to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, the Hon Angus Taylor MP, concerning petition EN1092 on waste and recycling. Your correspondence has been referred to me as it falls under my responsibilities as the Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management.

While primary responsibility and law-making power continues to rest with the States and Territories on these issues, the Morrison Government is proud to be the first federal government to step in to provide coordination and national leadership here. Our Government has demonstrated its strong commitment to reducing waste, increasing recycling rates and building capacity within our domestic recycling industry by bringing forward a comprehensive package of initiatives, programmes and funding, outlined in more detail below. We note, in particular, the petitioners' concerns in relation to the export of problematic waste streams for recycling. For this reason, the Prime Minister, together with state and territory leaders, recently committed to banning the exports of waste plastic, paper, glass and tyres, while building Australia's capacity to generate high-value recycled commodities and growing associated demand. All of Australian environment ministers recently agreed that this ban should commence from 1 July 2020 using a phased approach, with:

- all waste glass exports to be banned by July 2020;
- mixed waste plastics exports to be banned by July 2021;
- all whole tyres including baled tyres exports to be banned by December 2021; and
- remaining waste products, including mixed paper and cardboard, to be banned by no later than 30 June 2022.

The Government is taking practical action to achieve these objectives through its comprehensive $167 million Australian Recycling Investment Plan. This Plan includes $100 million to support new recycling and re-manufacturing facilities, $20 million for new product stewardship schemes, $20 million to support research into dealing with problematic plastics, and more than $11 million for people to clean up plastic and other rubbish from our beaches and rivers. It also includes commitments to continue action to halve food waste by 2030 under our National Food Waste Strategy, with an additional $500,000 to support the delivery of a Fight Food Waste campaign by OzHarvest.

Australia's environment ministers also recently agreed to a new National Waste Policy Action Plan that will drive the implementation of Australia's National Waste Policy. The Action Plan includes ambitious targets to make Australia a world leader in waste management and recycling, including for:

- an 80 per cent 'recovery' rate of material across all waste streams;
- significant increases to government procurement of recycled materials; and
- halving the amount of organic waste sent to landfill.

I hope this background serves to demonstrate that waste and recycling is a major priority for the Morrison Government and that the Commonwealth is undertaking a comprehensive and ambitious program to address this significant national challenge in close collaboration with industry and state and territory governments.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Your sincerely

from the Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management, Mr Evans (Petition No. EN1092)

Asylum Seekers

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 enclosing Petition EN1095 concerning the Australian Government's regional processing and resettlement arrangements. Your correspondence has been referred to me as the Minister for Home Affairs as the matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities.

The success of Australia's border protection policies has also enabled the Government to make a generous contribution to addressing the global humanitarian crisis and increase our Humanitarian Program annual quota to 18,750 places. This represents the largest ongoing program in over 30 years.

Australia is committed to providing protection to refugees consistent with the obligations set out in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Regional processing arrangements provide illegal maritime arrivals an opportunity to have their protection claims assessed and for those found to be refugees, resettlement in a third country, without compromising Australia's strong border protection policies.

Regional processing arrangements in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the individuals under those arrangements are the responsibility of the Government of PNG.

The Government continues to support the Government of PNG to reduce the residual regional processing caseload through resettlement, returns and removals. Under current regional processing arrangements, refugees have permanent resettlement options and are being resettled. Australia continues to explore alternative resettlement options for refugees in PNG.

People found to be refugees by the Government of PNG can settle in PNG, seek assisted voluntary return, or move to a country they have the right to reside in. In addition to this, a one-off arrangement with the United States (US) to support the resettlement of refugees from PNG is in place and is progressing.

The Government of PNG has advised it will manage the failed asylum seekers until they depart PNG. Voluntary assistance remains available to the failed asylum seekers to return home or to a country to which they have a right of entry.
A total of 4,183 illegal maritime arrivals were transferred to offshore processing under the previous government. Today, there are no refugees in detention under offshore processing and as at 31 October 2019, 632 refugees have been resettled under the Government's resettlement arrangement with the US.

Australia appreciates the offer from the New Zealand Government to resettle refugees, however, the Government is focused on completing the larger arrangement with the US. Australia's border protection policies have removed the incentive for people to join dangerous and illegal people smuggling ventures to Australia. The Government remains mindful of not undoing efforts to combat people smuggling.

The Government's policy that persons who arrive in Australia illegally by boat will not be settled in Australia, remains steadfast.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Dutton (Petition No. EN1095)

Parliament

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your letter of 25 November 2019 regarding petition number EN1097.

The Queen's role in relation to Australia is entrenched in the Australian Constitution. Section 1 states that the Commonwealth parliament consists of a House of Representatives, a Senate and the Queen. Under section 2, the Queen is empowered to appoint the Governor-General as her representative in the Commonwealth. Under section 61 the 'executive' power of the Commonwealth is vested in the Queen and exercisable by the Governor-General. The Queen does not, however, play a day to day role in Australian government. Further, it is a fundamental principle of Australian constitutional practice that few functions which the Queen does perform as Queen of Australia are performed in accordance with advice from the Australian government.

It is now generally accepted that, as Queen of Australia, the Queen holds an entirely distinct position from that which she holds as Queen of the United Kingdom (or any other country). A former Chief Justice of Australia, the Hon Sir Harry Gibbs, stated that '[t]he allegiance which Australians owe to Her Majesty is owed 151 not as British subjects but as subjects of the United Kingdom (or any other country) is a successor to Queen Victoria and that references in the Constitution to 'the Queen' encompass under references to the current Queen. This is reflected in the Royal Styles and Titles Act 1973, under which the current Royal Style and Titles in Australia are 'Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God Queen of Australia and Her other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth'.

The preamble to the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act refers to the historical fact of the agreement to federate under the 'Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland'. Covering clause 2 of that Act states that references to 'the Queen' extend to 'Her Majesty's heirs and successors in the sovereignty of the United Kingdom'. The oath and affirmation set out in the schedule to the Constitution, which members of the Commonwealth parliament must make under section 42 of the Constitution, refer to 'Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Her heirs and successors according to law.'

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Your sincerely

from the Attorney General, Mr Porter (Petition No. EN1097)

National Disaster Relief

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your letter of referral for petition number EN1101 which was presented to the House of Representatives on 25 November 2019 with the following terms:

Reason: The $4 billion raised to help the farmers because of drought/disaster is being held until June 2020 when it will be far too late for most farmers. Holding these funds is disgraceful as it was deemed that the farmers would get a fair share instantly, but the government are holding it for no reason.

Request: We therefore ask the House to instantly release these $4 billion to aid the farmers Australia wide. Install a separate, non government body to oversee and distribute these funds fairly, include ANY interest accrued by holding these funds.

My response to the petition is as follows.

As the Member for Maranoa, I have seen first-hand the devastating and far-reaching impact drought has on farmers and their communities. My own electorate is continuing to experience prolonged drought in some parts. I am extremely proud of the resilience shown by our farmers, but understand farmers and rural communities need support to face challenges on the land.

The Australian Government has a three-part plan to tackle the most pressing issues for people affected by drought, including more than $8 billion in assistance and concessional loans.

Firstly, the government is taking immediate action to support those affected right now by the drought. This includes:
the Farm Household Allowance, which includes income support and funding for planning and training

the Rural Financial Counselling Service, which provides free financial counselling to farmers and related small businesses in, or at risk of, financial hardship

$1 billion through the Regional Investment Corporation (RIC), to deliver concessional drought and farm business loans

$98 million for providing up to 100 gigalitres of discounted water to grow fodder, silage and pasture

$50 million for the On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme to help farmers purchase and install on-farm infrastructure for stock and permanent plantings

$27.6 million to improve Great Artesian Basin drought resilience through funding to repair uncontrolled bores and replace open bore drains, which will save water for when it is needed

$25 million for wild dog fencing and other pest and weed removal

$65.4 million to continue the Drought Community Support Initiative, which provides up to $3,000 in immediate aid to drought-affected families

taxation measures and concessions, including the Farm Management Deposits Scheme and accelerated fodder storage asset depreciation measures

$774,000 for the National Farmers' Federation to deliver FarmHub, a one-stop shop website that puts information on all drought assistance measures in one place

$29.9 million towards localised support for rural mental health services and community organisations

$77.2 million for Bureau of Meteorology radars

$2.7 million for better localised weather and climate forecasting services to help prepare for drought and

$4.2 million to develop, improve and maintain the National Drought Map.

Secondly, the government supports the wider communities that depend on farmers for their livelihood and are doing it tough. This includes:

$300 million for the Drought Communities Programme Extension, to provide $1 million to individual councils for projects that use local supplies and employ local people

$200 million to prioritise the Building Better Regions Fund projects in drought-affected communities

$138.9 million to target Roads to Recovery projects in drought-affected communities;

$7 million for a rural financial counselling pilot to help small regional and rural businesses with financial planning, mentoring and coaching

A Drought Loan product through the RIC for agriculture-dependent small businesses

$10 million for schools facing financial hardship as a result of ongoing drought conditions, including fee concessions for boarding students

$5 million to assist early child care centres that are experiencing decreased demand and financial pressures due to families being unable to pay for child care and

$15 million for the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, which gives grants to small not-for-profit and community groups.

Thirdly, the government will enhance long-term resilience and preparedness to withstand drought periods in the years ahead. Our vision is to have farm businesses and rural communities that are prepared for, and capable of managing through, the next drought. This includes:

the $5 billion Future Drought Fund (the Fund) to boost resilience, preparedness and response across Australia and

building infrastructure to increase water security, including through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund.

The Future Drought Fund Act 2019 passed the Parliament on 24 July 2019. The Fund begins with an initial credit of $3.9 billion, representing a capital investment that will generate earnings over the long term. With the balance expected to grow to $5 billion by 2028-29, the Fund will provide a permanent and secure revenue source for drought resilience projects. From 1 July 2020, $100 million will be available each and every year to invest in initiatives that help Australian farms and communities become more prepared to respond to the impacts of drought.

I have appointed the Future Drought Fund Consultative Committee to advise me about the Drought Resilience Funding Plan - a high level framework to guide the approach for supporting future projects. The Consultative Committee is seeking feedback from stakeholders on the draft Funding Plan between 28 October and 13 December 2019.

You can find out more about the Fund, including how to make a submission on the draft Plan and the dates and locations of meetings, at: haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/future-drought-fund.

The Government's three-part plan will help our rural industries get through and recover from this drought, so they can make the most of our growing global market access and our strong reputation as a quality producer of food and fibre long into the future.
You can find information about the range of assistance measures at drought.gov.au. More information on assistance is also available at FarmHub via-farmhub.org.au.

Thank you for taking the time to share your views. I trust this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management, Mr Littleproud (Petition No. EN1101)

Asylum Seekers

Dear Mr O’Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 enclosing Petition EN1102 concerning the Australian Government's regional processing arrangements. Your correspondence has been referred to me as the Minister for Home Affairs as the matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities.

As a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (the Refugee Convention), Australia takes its international obligations seriously. Australia is committed to providing protection to refugees consistent with the obligations set out in the Refugee Convention and other relevant international treaties to which Australia is a party.

Regional processing is a key pillar of Operation Sovereign Borders and supports the Government's strong border protection policies. These policies have successfully stemmed the flow of illegal maritime ventures to Australia, disrupted people smuggling activities in the region and prevented loss of life at sea.

The success of Australia's border protection policies has also enabled the Government to make a generous contribution to addressing the global humanitarian crisis and increase our Humanitarian Program annual quota to 18,750 places. This represents the largest ongoing program in over 30 years.

People under regional, processing arrangements are treated with respect and dignity and in accordance with international human rights standards. Their protection claims are assessed by the Governments of Nauru and Papua New Guinea (PNG) and are undertaken in accordance with each countries respective laws and processes. Nauru and PNG are both signatories to the Refugee Convention.

Individuals under regional processing arrangements receive a range of services to support their stay in Nauru or PNG including health and welfare, accommodation (rent and utility free), education and employment opportunities.

No refugees under regional processing arrangements in Nauru or PNG are detained in immigration detention. Refugees reside in open living arrangements in the community and are free to move around without restriction.

Under current regional processing arrangements, refugees have permanent resettlement options and are being resettled. Australia continues to explore alternative resettlement options for refugees in Nauru and PNG. PNG determined refugees can settle in PNG and Nauru determined refugees can reside in Nauru for up to 20 years. In addition to this, a one-off arrangement with the United States (US) to support the resettlement of refugees from Nauru and PNG is in place and progressing.

A total of 4,183 illegal maritime arrivals were transferred to offshore processing under the previous government. Today, there are no refugees in detention under offshore processing and as at 31 October 2019, 632 refugees have been resettled under the Government's resettlement arrangement with the US.

Regional processing arrangements provide illegal maritime arrivals an opportunity to have their protection claims assessed, and for those found to be refugees, resettlement in a third country, without compromising Australia's strong border protection policies.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Dutton (Petition No. EN1102)

Driving Age

Dear Mr O’Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 forwarding petition EN1105, seeking to reduce the legal age for driving in all states and territories to 17 years of age.

Road safety is a priority and the Australian Government is committed to reducing road trauma in Australia. Together with state and territory governments, the Government undertook to strengthen graduated licensing systems for car and motorcycle drivers and explore opportunities for better access to vehicle safety technologies for young drivers as Priority Actions of the National Road Safety Action Plan 2018-2020. The next National Road Safety Strategy is in development across all levels of government and will build on these actions.

The success of the graduated licensing system is the staged approach it takes to obtaining a full driver's licence, starting with supervised driving in relatively low risk situations. As the driver grows in knowledge, skills and driving experience the restrictions are gradually lifted. A zero blood alcohol level applies across all states and territories in Australia until novice drivers have successfully completed their learner and provisional driving stages.

I note the petitioner's proposal to use federal legislation to set a national driving age to reduce the likelihood of young people driving under the influence of alcohol. State and territory governments are responsible for driver-licensing legislation,
and therefore setting the legal driving age. The petitioner may wish to contact the Minister with responsibility for road safety in their jurisdiction to explore that proposal further.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

from the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr McCormack (Petition No. EN1105)

Climate Change

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 concerning petition number EN1106, regarding climate change science.

The Australian Government takes its primary advice on climate science from the Bureau of Meteorology and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. This advice aligns with information provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other national and international organisations, such as the Australian Academy of Science, the World Meteorological Organization, the National Academy of Sciences and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

These world leading scientific organisations have found that the Earth's climate is changing and humans are primarily responsible. This finding is informed by long-term observations of air temperatures, the heat content of the ocean, changes to glaciers, ice sheets and sea ice.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Your sincerely

from the Minister for the Environment, Ms Ley (Petition No. EN1106)

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November 2019 concerning petition EN1109 about the Shark Control Program.

I understand the management of sharks in the marine environment is a sensitive issue and there is no question of the need to protect people and ensure visitors to the Great Barrier Reef feel confident about the measures in place to support their safety.

Advice to government from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is that legislative change is unnecessary to allow a compliant Shark Control Program to continue to operate at beaches in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park if it complies with the court ruling requiring the program to operate, to the greatest extent possible, as a non-lethal program within the Marine Park.

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal (the Tribunal) stated that neither the South African nor the New South Wales program has reported an increase in shark incidents as a result of changing to a non-lethal program. The Tribunal also concluded that overwhelming evidence presented during the hearing demonstrated that a non-lethal program would not reduce the safety of swimmers. This position was at the Tribunal hearing by the Queensland government's own expert witness, Associate Professor Daryl McPhee, who gave evidence that if the Shark Control Program became non-lethal tomorrow, there would be "no discernible change in unprovoked shark bites, in particular, fatalities."

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is committed to working collaboratively with the Queensland Government's Department of Agriculture and Fisheries on actions that can be taken now and in the medium to long term to protect human life while also complying with the conditions imposed by the Tribunal.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for the Environment, Ms Ley (Petition No. EN1109)

Mental Health

Dear Mr O'Brien

I refer to your letter of 25 November 2019 concerning Petition EN1111 to fund Recovery Colleges through the Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan (Fifth Plan).

I support the intent of the petition - to support better mental health in Australia. Mental Health is a priority for the Australian Government and the Government's Long Term National Health Plan. At the recent COAG Health Council meeting, Health ministers agreed to work in partnership to address the nationally critical issue of mental health, and help deliver a seamless integrated mental health system.

However, it is not possible to amend legislation as proposed. This is because neither the Fifth Plan, nor Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are legislatively based, and because PHNs are independent organisations operating under contractual arrangements to deliver local priorities.
The Fifth Plan and its Implementation Plan articulate a cross-jurisdictional framework for national action on mental health across nationally agreed priority areas. While the plan includes a collaborative approach to commissioning mental health services between PHNs and Local Health Networks (LHNs), it is not prescriptive regarding the models of care commissioned.

I do note Recovery Colleges are an innovative approach that may be beneficial in supporting mental health and wellbeing outside the clinical system. The petitioners may be interested to know that most states and territories are either considering, or have established recovery colleges. In addition, the Commonwealth investment in adult mental health centres will deliver a similar type of walk-in service, and the majority of these will be delivered through PHNs. It is expected that such centres, whether state or Commonwealth funded, will be part of the PHN and LHNs collaborative approach to commissioning mental health services.

Should the petitioners wish to pursue their idea further, they may wish to raise their proposal with PHNs with a view to their consideration in joint regional planning processes with state and territory LHNs. This would enable such services to be prioritised within the context of the broader system.

Thank you for bringing the petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely
from the Minister for Health, Mr Hunt (Petition No. EN1111)

Pensions and Benefits

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your email dated 25 November 2019 to the Minister for Government Services and Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the Hon Stuart Robert MP, concerning a petition for the Cashless welfare card (EN1118). As the matter raised falls within my portfolio responsibility, your email has been forwarded to me for response.

I note the petition calling for the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management to Cashless Debit Card Transition) Bill 2019 be amended to include all Commonwealth members of parliament be placed on the Cashless Debit Card (CDC), was presented to the House of Representatives on 25 November 2019 and acknowledge the 107 signatories.

The Australian Government is committed to supporting people, families and communities in places where high levels of welfare dependence co-exist with high levels of social harm. The CDC is a useful tool that operates alongside other reforms to address the devastating impacts of drug and alcohol misuse and problem gambling.

Amending the Bill to include all Commonwealth members of parliament to be placed on the CDC would not be consistent with the focus of the program, which is limiting community harm. The objective of the CDC is to learn more about whether limiting the amount of welfare payment available as cash will lead to a reduction in the overall harm caused by welfare fuelled drug and alcohol misuse and problem gambling in the community. The Future of Employment and Skills Centre is currently undertaking a second independent impact evaluation of the CDC, with results expected in the coming months. Any future plans for further expansion of the CDC will be considered by the Government once the outcome of this evaluation have been finalised.

I also note, the CDC was developed in close partnership with community leaders who have a thorough understanding of local issues and felt that the card would support them to address the devastating impacts of drug and alcohol misuse, and problem gambling in their community. The goal is to support people to stabilise their life circumstances through buying the essentials, paying bills and looking after their children. Anyone who meets the payment criteria is placed on the card, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity or any other factor.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention. I trust this information has been of assistance.

Yours sincerely
from the Minister for Families and Social Services, Senator Ruston (Petition No. EN1118)

Medical Funding

Dear Mr O'Brien

I refer to your correspondence dated 25 November 2019 on behalf of the Standing Committee on Petitions concerning Petition EN1123. The petition asks the House of Representatives to debate increased funding for testing of genetic recessive diseases such as cystic fibrosis, fragile X syndrome, and spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) in Australia.

The Australian Government is active in improving access to appropriate genetic tests for genetic recessive diseases such as cystic fibrosis, fragile X syndrome and SMA.

As part of supporting the Genomics Health Futures Mission, the Government has provided $20 million over three years to Mackenzie's Mission, a pilot research study of reproductive carrier screening in partnership with the University of New South Wales, the University of Western Australia and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. The Mackenzie's Mission project will offer screening to couples to identify those with an increased risk of having children with debilitating and often fatal genetic conditions. The genetic conditions to be screened include cystic fibrosis, fragile X syndrome and SMA.

Additionally, there are currently ten Medicare Benefit Schedule (MBS) items for testing of genetic recessive conditions, including six items for cystic fibrosis. In 2018-19, there were 103,803 such Medicare rebated services provided in Australia at a total cost of more than $12.8 million.
With regards to the possible future listing of new items on the MBS, the Government relies on the advice of the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC). The MSAC has been established to undertake rigorous and transparent appraisals of new medical services before they are considered for public funding. MSAC is an independent scientific committee comprised of individuals with expertise in clinical medicine, health economics and consumer matters. MSAC provides advice to Government on the level and quality of evidence relating to the comparative safety, clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of such services.

I note the MSAC has received an application for funding of genetic carrier testing for cystic fibrosis, fragile X syndrome and SMA (MSAC Application 1573). This application is currently progressing through the MSAC process. The MSAC evaluation is expected during the first half of 2020.

I trust that this information is useful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Health, Mr Hunt (Petition No. EN1123)

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Dear Mr O’Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 9 September 2019 regarding petition PN0420 presented in the House of Representatives, requesting the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (NDIS Act) be changed to enable people over the age of 65 with a disability to access National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) benefits.

The NDIS Act reflects the Productivity Commission's recommendation that a person needs to have acquired their disability and requested access to the scheme before the age of 65, and have met other eligibility criteria, to become an NDIS participant. This is because the NDIS is a scheme designed to address the chronic unmet needs of people with significant, non-age-related disabilities. The NDIS is not intended to replace services already provided through the health or aged care systems.

After an existing NDIS participant passes the age of 65, they have the option of continuing to receive their supports through the NDIS or of choosing the aged care system. The choice is theirs. In addition, people under the age of 65 with a degenerative condition who would benefit from early intervention supports can enter the scheme before their condition has resulted in profound or severe impacts. Consequently, as the NDIS matures, the scheme will cover an increasing proportion of people aged 65 and over with significant and permanent disability.

The limitations on NDIS access to people under 65 years of age are considered reasonable as they support the broader intent of an integrated system of disability and aged care supports and provide seamless transition through different phases of life. Adherence to the intended design of the NDIS ensure the future sustainability of the scheme and that people with disability receive the supports they need over the course of their life.

People who are aged 65 or over and not eligible for the NDIS, but who were already receiving state-administered disability services, can receive Australian Government support through the Commonwealth Continuity of Support program. The Continuity of Support program ensures that older people with disability continue to be supported in a manner equivalent to state-administered disability services or through an existing aged care program. Further information about this program is available at www.agedcare.health.gov.au/programs-services/commonwealth-continuity-of-support-programme.

Alongside the NDIS, the Productivity Commission also recommended the establishment of a National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS) to cover people, regardless of age, who suffer catastrophic injuries. The Productivity Commission recommended the NIIS be comprised of four 'streams' of coverage: workplace, motor vehicle, general and medical. The NIIS, unlike the NDIS, would not have aged-based eligibility criteria and would fund people who have a catastrophic injury, including those resulting in significant and permanent disability, over the age of 65.

The NIIS was recommended as a separate scheme to help reduce the cost of the NDIS by using existing expertise and established institutions, with incentives to reduce risky behaviour and to cover a broad range of health costs associated with catastrophic injuries. The recommendation was based on the intention that the four recommended streams of the NIIS would be fully implemented and funded by the states and territories (states) through either new or existing accident insurance or compensation schemes in their jurisdiction.

While there are national minimum benchmarks under the NIIS for motor vehicle accidents and workplace accidents, on 9 June 2017, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed not to proceed with the medical treatment stream of the NIIS at this time.

The feasibility of the general accident stream of the NIIS is currently being explored, as requested by COAG.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Mr Robert (Petition No. PN0420)

Aged Care

Dear Mr O’Brien

Thank you for your representations to the Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Petitions concerning petition PN0430. Your correspondence has been referred to me as the Minister for Aged
Care and Senior Australians and Minister for Youth and Sport, with portfolio responsibility for this matter. I apologise for the delay in responding.

This petition asks the House of Representatives to form an inquiry into the overuse of psychotropic medicines in the aged care, mental health, disability and the criminal justice sectors.

Minimising the use of restraint in aged care, mental health and the disability service sector is a top priority for the Australian Government as the use of restraint must always be the last resort.

**Aged Care**

I can assure you the Government is committed to the delivery of quality of care for older Australians and considers the health, safety and welfare of aged care recipients a high priority.

The Government considers minimising the use of restraint in residential aged care requires a multi-pronged approach, which includes regulation, clinical governance, education and cultural change.

The Government is protecting the rights of vulnerable senior Australians by developing regulations and implementing non-regulatory activities to provide that restraint must always be the last resort.

**Quality of Care Amendment (Minimising the Use of Restraints) Principles 2019**

Since 1 July 2019, residential aged care providers have had specific responsibilities in relation to the use of physical and chemical restraint. These new requirements, for the first time, put explicit obligations on residential aged care providers in respect of the use of restraint.

These responsibilities require providers to satisfy a number of conditions before restraint can be used, such as completing an assessment. Where restraint is used, further requirements must be met by the provider, including monitoring the consumer.

In addition, the Government has taken action to further strengthen the regulation of chemical restraints in residential aged care.

The aged care legislation now:

- makes it clear restraint must only be used as a last resort
- refers to state and territory legislation which regulates the responsibility of prescribers to gain informed consent for chemical restraint
- requires a review of the first 12 months of the operation of the restraint regulations to ensure aged care facilities are minimising the use of inappropriate restraint.

The new legislative changes will strengthen the restraint regulations to give older Australians and their loved ones greater confidence aged care providers with their responsibilities.

In addition, to minimise the use of physical and chemical restraint, the Government has recently announced $25.5 million to improve medication management and safety for older Australians living in residential aged facilities and at home, and increased funding over two years (2019-20 to 2020-21) for:

- $5.7 million for the Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service and Severe Behaviour Response Teams
- $4.3 million for the Dementia Training Program to increase the availability of dementia training for aged care workers and health sector staff.

You may also be interested to know that the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Commission) wrote to all residential aged care providers in June 2019 with a 'Self-Assessment Tool for Recording Consumers Receiving Psychotropic Medications' to support their process of continuous improvement in relation to the standard of care and services. This form of assessment contact was used specifically to assist services to identify where chemical restraint is used and take action to use alternative strategies to minimise its use.

The Commission has also published a 'Regulatory Bulletin' and 'Scenarios involving physical and/or chemical restraint' to help providers understand issues and their responsibilities around minimising the use of physical and/or chemical restraint. This is to ensure the use of physical and chemical restraint is a last resort.

**Aged Care Clinical Advisory Committee**

The Government Chief Medical Officer is chairing a Clinical Advisory Committee (Committee) to consider non-regulatory activities to reduce the inappropriate use of chemical restraint in residential aged care. The Government supported all of the Committee's recommendations for implementation.

A program of work is underway to address the Committee's recommendations and reduce the inappropriate use of chemical restraint in residential aged care, including:

- establishing an additional Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) authority code for repeat prescription of the antipsychotic risperidone after an initial 12-week period. This was a recommendation of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee. From 1 January 2020, the PBS listings for risperidone for the treatment of Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD) of the Alzheimer type will change. This change involves the addition of a new continuing listing that will require prescribers to seek a telephone authority from the Department of Human Services prior to prescribing risperidone beyond 12 weeks of initial therapy, when appropriate
• awareness raising activities for prescribers of antipsychotics and benzodiazepines in residential aged care and targeted letters to high prescribers. The Chief Medical Officer in the Department of Health will be writing to all prescribers in December who have been identified as prescribing PBS medications to residents of a residential aged care home between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019. The letter and accompanying factsheet ‘Six steps for safe prescribing’ will provide information and resources that support the appropriate management of dementia in a residential aged care setting.

• development of education messaging about the appropriate use of antipsychotic medications and benzodiazepines in residential aged care for doctors and other prescribers, pharmacists, nurses and personal care workers, and families and decision makers.

• workforce training initiatives addressing: continuing professional development for doctors, nurses and other prescribers.

• expanding a trial of embedded pharmacists to all residential aged care homes in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Funding has been provided to the ACT Primary Health Network who will work partner with the University of Canberra to conduct the trial. It is anticipated that the first cohort of pharmacists will be placed in aged care homes by February 2020.

This program of work promotes cultural change within aged care homes, which can best be achieved by a person-centred care approach in residential aged care facilities. It is complemented by the new restrictions on the use of restraint by providers, which impose restrictions, safeguards and conditions on the use of restraint. Together, these measures work to protect the rights of vulnerable senior Australians within the aged care sector.

Aged Care Inquiries

There have been a number of recent inquiries into aged care that have considered issues related to medication practices and the use of physical and chemical restraint within aged care services. These include:

• the 2016-17 Australian Law Reform Commission Elder Abuse Inquiry

• the 2017 Review of National Aged Care Quality Regulatory Processes conducted by Ms Carnell AO and Professor Ron Paterson ONZM

• Senate Community Affairs References Committee’s 2017 inquiry into the effectiveness of the aged care quality assessment and accreditation framework for protecting residents from abuse and poor practices and ensuring proper clinical and medical care standards are maintained and practiced

• the current Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, which has specifically considered regulation of physical and chemical restraint in aged care residential services.

The Government continues to make deliberate and sustained changes in response to the findings of these inquiries. On release of the Interim Report by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Health ministers agreed to make the Quality Use of Medicines and Medicines Safety the 10th National Health Priority Area.

Health ministers agreed the Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council, in collaboration with relevant agencies including Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and the Australian Digital Health Agency, would prepare a national baseline report on the Quality Use of Medicines and Medicines Safety. This report would identify priority areas such as the improvement of current frameworks, new best practice models and new national standards.

Disability

Significant work has been undertaken to increase oversight and regulation of chemical restraint in the disability service sector.

Where an individual receives support and services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), any use of medication, including psychotropic medication, for the primary purpose of influencing a person's behaviour is defined as ‘chemical restraint’ and is a regulated restrictive practice. Chemical restraint does not include the use of medication prescribed by a medical practitioner for the treatment of, or to enable treatment of, a diagnosed mental disorder, a physical illness or a physical condition.

All Australian governments support the reduction, and ultimately the elimination, of restrictive practices in the disability service sector in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, it is recognised that in limited circumstances, as a last resort and for the shortest possible time, states and territories may authorise the use of restrictive practices to prevent significant harm to the person or others. For this reason, there are monitoring and oversight provisions for any use of restrictive practices in the NDIS.

In the NDIS, the regulation of restrictive practices is a shared responsibility between the Commonwealth and states and territories under the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Restrictive Practices and Behaviour Support) Rules 2018. These policy and legislative frameworks require that any NDIS participant receives a functional behavioural assessment and a positive behaviour support before any regulated restrictive practice is used.

Where a behaviour support practitioner has deemed the use of a regulated restrictive practice is necessary as a last resort to ensure safety, both the NDIS Commission and states and territories have a role in safeguarding the person with disability. The use of a regulated restrictive practice must be authorised by the relevant state or territory body where required, and all uses of regulated restrictive practices must be reported monthly to the NDIS Commission. A copy of the behaviour support plan is also provided to the NDIS Commission.

The NDIS Commission’s behaviour support function sees the role of behaviour support as creating individualised strategies for people with disability that are responsive to the person’s needs in a way that reduces the occurrence and impact of
behaviours of concern and minimises the use of restrictive practices. For this reason, the NDIS Commission focuses on person-centred interventions to address the underlying causes of behaviours of concern or challenging behaviours while safeguarding the dignity and quality of life of people with disability who require behaviour support.

The NDIS Commission is also responsible for engagement with the NDIS sector around the use of regulated restrictive practices including chemical restraint and is in the final stages of developing practice guidance around the use of chemical restraint for NDIS providers.

**Mental health**

In addition to the policy and legislative frameworks that apply to NDIS participants, the states and territories have individual legislation on the treatment of people with mental illness.

Each state and territory's mental health act and associated regulations provide the legislative cover that safeguards the rights, and governs the treatment, of patients with mental illness receiving care. Further information on restraint and mental health legislation, including a comparative table, is available at: www.ranzcp.org.

**Criminal justice**

Under Australia's federal system of government, the Commonwealth, states and territories have different areas of responsibility. Criminal law enforcement is primarily a matter for the states and territories with each managing their own criminal justice system and related programs including policing, administration of the courts and prison systems. This includes the use of psychotropic medicines in the criminal justice system.

Thank you for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Senator Colbeck (Petition No. PN0430)

**Climate Change**

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your email of 19 September 2019 regarding petition PN0432 about climate change, emissions reductions and renewable energy.

The Liberal National Government is taking real and practical action to reduce our emissions while ensuring a strong and prosperous economy.

As a part of a coordinated global action to address climate change, we have strong targets to reduce our emissions by 2030 by 26 to 28 per cent below 2005 levels. This target is achievable and responsible.

The Government has a track record of meeting and beating our targets. Just as Australia beat our first Kyoto target by 128 million tonnes, we are on track to overachieve our 2020 target by 240 million tonnes.

We have a clear plan to meet and beat our Paris commitment through our fully-funded $3.5 billion Climate Solutions Package that has mapped out, to the last tonne, how to meet our 2030 target. This package will:

- Support farmers, businesses and Indigenous communities reduce greenhouse gases;
- Bring new electricity generation projects on-line, such as Snowy 2.0 and the Battery of the Nation; and
- Support households and businesses improve energy efficiency and lower their power bills.

We are also supporting renewable generation technology and funding research into new technologies.

Australia is a world leader in per capita investment in clean energy. Bloomberg found in 2018 that we have more than double the investment of countries like the United Kingdom, Germany and France. This is an achievement Australians can be proud of.

All of this is focused on achieving our emissions obligations while maintaining a strong economy.

In the region, Australia established the Asia-Pacific Rainforest Partnership and works closely with the governments of Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Fiji on several bilateral programs purposed to assist countries with their emissions accounting and management of forest and blue carbon ecosystems.

The Government has a number of initiatives in place to support local sustainability projects. To give a few examples:

- The $5 million Solar Communities Program and the Energy Efficient Communities Program provide funding across Australia to install rooftop solar photovoltaic, solar hot water and solar-connected battery systems to reduce emissions, reduce electricity costs and support renewable energy.
- The Communities Environment Program will invest up to $22.65 million to support a wide range of small-scale, on-ground projects that aim to conserve, protect and manage our environment.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the issues raised in the petition.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, Mr Taylor (Petition No. PN0432)
Newstart Allowance

Youth Allowance

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your letter dated 14 October 2019, concerning petition PN0435 presented to the House of Representatives, regarding Newstart and Youth Allowance.

The petitioners raise a concern that Newstart and Youth Allowance are not maintained at a level above the poverty line where recipients do not have to rely on charity. The petitioners also raise a concern that recipients over the age of 50 are trying to survive on this payment for over a year. The petitioners request a one-off additional increase to Newstart and Youth Allowance to ensure that those doing it tough do not have to go without.

The Australian social security system aims to support the basic living standards of all Australians and increase their social and economic participation. The Australian Government is committed to a welfare system that supports the most vulnerable, encourages those who are able to work or study to do so, and is sustainable for future generations.

Newstart Allowance is the main income support payment for people of workforce age, while they are unemployed. It is designed to provide a safety net for people who require financial assistance, and to provide incentives to enable them to join or return to the workforce. One of the Government's key objectives is to ensure that people who have the capacity to work and support themselves do so, to the extent possible.

Newstart Allowance, like most social security payments, is means-tested and operates in conjunction with taxation concessions, productivity initiatives, employment services, and labour market strategies, as part of an integrated package to support workforce participation objectives.

The rate of Newstart Allowance is indexed twice a year in March and September, in line with movements in the cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index. Payment rate increases are calculated according to provisions in social security legislation.

A higher rate of Newstart Allowance is payable to single recipients aged 60 years and over after nine continuous months on payment. The maximum fortnightly amount at this higher rate is $620.40 a fortnight. This fortnightly amount includes the maximum base rate of $604.70, the Energy Supplement of $9.50 and Pharmaceutical Allowance of $6.20.

In addition to Newstart Allowance, recipients may also receive a range of additional benefits and concessions to increase their economic security, depending on their particular circumstances. These benefits include:

a) assistance for people who rent in the private rental market, through the Commonwealth Rent Assistance payments;

b) Family Tax Benefit for those raising dependent children;

c) subsidised prescription medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme;

d) subsidised health care and related products; and

e) concessions provided by state and territory governments. Concessions offered vary between states and may include subsidies for electricity, gas and water, and reduced public transport and vehicle registration fees.

Thank you again for raising this matter with me.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Families and Social Services, Senator Ruston (Petition No. PN0435)

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Dear Mr O'Brien,

Thank you for your correspondence of 3 December 2019 regarding petitions PN0442 and EN1113 presented in the House of Representatives, requesting that the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (NDIS Act) be changed to enable people over the age of 65 with a disability to access National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) benefits.

The NDIS Act reflects the Productivity Commission's recommendation that a person needs to have acquired their disability and requested access to the scheme before the age of 65, and have met other eligibility criteria, to become an NDIS participant. This is because the NDIS is a scheme designed to address the chronic unmet needs of people with significant, non-age-related disabilities. The NDIS is not intended to replace services already provided through the health or aged care systems.

After an existing NDIS participant passes the age of 65, they have the option of continuing to receive their supports through the NDIS or of choosing the aged care system. The choice is theirs. In addition, people under the age of 65 with a degenerative condition who would benefit from early intervention supports can enter the scheme before their condition has resulted in profound or severe impacts and remain in the scheme once they turn 65. Consequently, as the NDIS matures, it will cover an increasing number of people aged 65 and over with significant and permanent disability.

The limitations on NDIS access to people under 65 years of age are considered reasonable as they support the broader intent of an integrated system of disability and aged care supports. Adherence to the intended design of the NDIS ensures the future sustainability of the scheme and that people with disability receive the supports they need over the course of their life.

People who are aged 65 or over and not eligible for the NDIS, but who were already receiving Commonwealth or state-administered disability services, can receive Government support through the Commonwealth Continuity of Support...
Programme. The Continuity of Support Programme ensures that older people with disability continue to be supported in a manner equivalent to state-administered disability services or through an existing aged care program. Further information about this program is available at: www.agedcare.health.gov.au/programs-services/commonwealth-continuity-of-support-programme.

Alongside the NDIS, the Productivity Commission also recommended the establishment of a National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS) to cover people, regardless of age, who suffer catastrophic injuries. The Productivity Commission recommended the NIIS be comprised of four ‘streams’ of coverage: workplace, motor vehicle, general and medical. The NIIS, unlike the NDIS, would not have aged-based eligibility criteria and would fund people who have a catastrophic injury, including those resulting in significant and permanent disability, over the age of 65.

The NIIS was recommended as a separate scheme to help reduce the cost of the NDIS by using existing expertise and established institutions, with incentives to reduce risky behaviour and to cover a broad range of health costs associated with catastrophic injuries. The recommendation was based on the intention that the four recommended streams of the NIIS would be fully implemented and funded by the states and territories through either new or existing accident insurance or compensation schemes in their jurisdiction.

While there are national minimum benchmarks under the NITS for motor vehicle accidents and workplace accidents, on 9 June 2017 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed not to proceed with the medical treatment stream of the NIIS at this time. The feasibility of the general accident stream of the NIIS is currently being explored, as requested by COAG.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Mr Robert (Petition Nos PN0442 and EN1113)

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

Dear Mr O'Brien

I refer to your email of 1 December 2019 concerning petition PN0443, presented in the House, requesting me to exercise my discretionary power to approve a new pharmacy in Minto, New South Wales.

I can confirm my Department has recently received a request, from a pharmacist, for the exercise of my discretionary power to approve the supply of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines at pharmacy premises in Minto, New South Wales.

Legislation provides that I must decide whether or not to consider that request by 24 January 2020.

My Department will provide me with a submission, which includes the pharmacist's request, correspondence received in relation to the request and research by my Department. The petition will be included with the submission and I will take it into consideration when making my decision.

My discretionary power can only be exercised where I am satisfied a decision to not approve a pharmacist would result in a community being left without reasonable access to PBS medicines, and it is in the public interest to do so.

Thank you for drawing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Health, Mr Hunt (Petition No. PN0443)

Asylum Seekers

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your correspondence of 1 December 2019 enclosing Petition PN0446 concerning the Australian Government's regional processing and resettlement arrangements.

Regional processing is a key pillar of Operation Sovereign Borders and supports the Government’s strong border protection policies. These policies have successfully stemmed the flow of illegal maritime ventures to Australia, disrupted people smuggling activities in the region and prevented loss of life at sea.

The success of Australia’s border protection policies has also enabled the Government to make a generous contribution to addressing the global humanitarian crisis and increase our Humanitarian Program annual quota to 18,750 places. This represents the largest ongoing program in over 30 years.

People under regional processing arrangements are treated with respect and dignity and in accordance with international human rights standards. Their protection claims are assessed by the Governments of Nauru and Papua New Guinea (PNG) and are undertaken in accordance with each countries respective laws and processes.

The Government works closely with the Governments of Nauru and PNG to ensure transferees continue to be provided with a range of health, welfare and support services, including extensive physical and mental healthcare provisions, free accommodation and utilities, allowances and employment services.

Under current regional processing arrangements, refugees have permanent resettlement options and are being resettled. Australia continues to explore alternative resettlement options for refugees in Nauru and PNG. PNG determined refugees can
settle in PNG and Nauru determined refugees can reside in Nauru for up to 20 years. In addition to this, a one-off arrangement with the United States (US) to support the resettlement of refugees from Nauru and PNG is in place and progressing.

A total of 4,183 illegal maritime arrivals were transferred to offshore processing under the previous government. Today, there are no refugees in detention under offshore processing and as at 17 December 2019, 661 refugees have been resettled under the Government's resettlement arrangement with the US.

Australia is committed to its international obligations set out in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and other international human rights conventions to which it is a party. Individuals who arrive in Australia lawfully seeking asylum and found to engage Australia's non-refoulement (non-return) obligations may be granted permanent protection, subject to fulfilling relevant criteria including health, character and security requirements.

Illegal maritime arrivals who were not transferred to a regional processing country and unlawful air arrivals who are in Australia are only eligible for temporary protection if they are found to engage Australia's protection obligations. They may be granted either a Temporary Protection visa (TPV), or Safe Haven Enterprise visa (SHEV).

A TPV is valid for three years and enables the holder to work, study and reside anywhere in Australia with access to support services. After three years, a TPV holders' protection claims must be reassessed to determine their eligibility for grant of a further TPV.

A SHEV is valid for five years and can be granted to eligible applicants who intend to work or study in a regional area. SHEV holders who have worked without accessing special benefits and/or studied full-time or a combination of both, in a specified regional area for a period totalling 42 months, meet 'pathway requirements' and are eligible to apply for other visas, including certain permanent visas.

The Government has consistently stated that people who travel to Australia illegally by boat will not permanently settle in Australia.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Dutton (Petition No. PN0446)

Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your letter dated 2 December 2019, referring petition number PN0448 to me as the Minister responsible for electoral policy. The petition requests amending section 329 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, extending the meaning of the provision to include misleading advertising. The provision currently covers misleading material that deceives an elector in relation to how to cast a valid vote.

During an election a large amount of information is distributed, which seeks to influence voters. A federal election is a contest of ideas.

In a number of court decisions the High Court has found that freedom of political communication is implicit in Australia's Constitution. As such, the Parliament is limited in its scope to make laws restricting political communication. This is why the Commonwealth Electoral Act does not regulate the political content of electoral messages directed at influencing a voter's choice.

It is the long-standing bipartisan view that voters themselves are the appropriate arbiters of political claims. If there were a 'truth' offence, this would require the courts and the AEC to inappropriately enter the political arena. This would risk politicising these institutions and harming public confidence in their impartiality.

The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters inquiry into the conduct of the 2016 Election specifically considered the possibility of 'truth in advertising' provisions to communication to voters including third-party carriage services'. JSCEM recommended that authorisation laws are the better tool to hold political parties and other participants account for their political statements, by ensuring that those who authorise electoral material are identifiable and traceable.

In response, the Government proposed, and Parliament passed the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2017 modernising authorisation laws, so authorisation requirements applies to electoral communications across all channels including digital media and messaging to mobile phones. These amendments commenced on 14 March 2018 and were in place for the 2019 Federal election.

Authorising electoral material is considered important because this helps to ensure that the person or organisation putting the information into the public domain can be judged by voters and the media, and be held accountable for the claims they make. It is one of the checks and balances in our electoral system to ensure integrity in our democratic process.

In addition, to address 'Mediscare scenarios' where someone seeks to impersonate a Commonwealth official or entity, we have amended the Criminal Code to include new offences for impersonating the Commonwealth. The Criminal Code Amendment (Impersonating a Commonwealth Body) Act 2018 provides for injunctions and for imprisonment for up to 5 years.

Kind regards

from the Minister for Finance, Senator Cormann (Petition No. PN0448)

Asylum Seekers

Dear Mr O'Brien
Thank you for your correspondence of 1 December 2019 enclosing Petition PN0449 concerning the Australian Government's regional processing and resettlement arrangements.

Regional processing is a key pillar of Operation Sovereign Borders and supports the Government's strong border protection policies. These policies have successfully stemmed the flow of illegal maritime ventures to Australia, disrupted people smuggling activities in the region and prevented loss of life at sea.

The success of Australia's border protection policies has also enabled the Government to make a generous contribution to addressing the global humanitarian crisis and increase our Humanitarian Program annual quota to 18,750 places. This represents the largest ongoing program in over 30 years.

Under current regional processing arrangements, refugees have permanent resettlement options and are being resettled. Australia continues to explore alternative resettlement options for refugees in Nauru. Persons determined by Nauru to be refugees may remain in Nauru for up to 20 years, express an interest in United States (US) resettlement, apply for an assisted voluntary return package, or move to a country they have the right to reside in.

Resettlement of refugees from Nauru in the US commenced in September 2017 and is progressing. This arrangement demonstrates the strength of Australia's relationship with the US and our shared commitment to working together on a range of global refugee and humanitarian issues.

US authorities continue to apply their own rigorous assessment and vetting processes to decide which refugees are eligible for resettlement in the US and where and when this will take place.

Non-refugees should return home and can access assistance to do so.

In Nauru, medical services are provided by a range of healthcare professionals including general practitioners, psychiatrists, counsellors and mental health nurses who provide clinical assessment and treatment. Where specialist medical treatment is not available in a regional processing country, mechanisms are in place for temporary transfers to a third country, including Australia, for assessment or treatment.

Persons requiring medical treatment in Australia may be brought to Australia under the Migration Act 1958 for a temporary purpose. Transitory persons must return to a regional processing country when they no longer need to be in Australia for the temporary purpose for which they were brought here and when it is reasonably practicable to effect their return. Decisions to return transitory persons to regional processing countries are undertaken on a case by case basis, in a considered and compassionate manner.

The Government's policy that persons who arrive in Australia illegally by boat will not be settled in Australia, remains steadfast.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Dutton (Petition No. PN0449)

BILLS

Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Amendment (ACT Integrity Commission Powers) Bill 2020

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (10:03): I move:
That this bill be now read a second time.

It is a pleasure to move this bill today, expanding the reach of the ACT Integrity Commission. The ACT Integrity Commission passed the ACT Legislative Assembly in November 2018. It reflects the Barr government's strong commitment to tackling integrity issues within the ACT government.

Labor stands for integrity and transparency. We have zero tolerance for corruption. In the ACT, as in the rest of Australia, the public has a right to trust that their public officials can stand up to justified scrutiny. This was a bill which passed the ACT assembly with support from the ACT Liberals and the ACT Greens. It is vital that the ACT Integrity Commission has the same coverage of bodies in jurisdictions such as Victoria. In Victoria, the integrity commission covers the police but, as a result of the way in which policing services are delivered in the ACT, this is not possible within the scope of the ACT (Self-Government) Act as it presently stands.

This bill makes a simple change. It amends the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act so the ACT Integrity Commission is able to cover the police. This ensures that policing services provided in the ACT have the appropriate integrity oversight which territorians would expect to exist. The current body which deals with law enforcement integrity, the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity, would continue to play a role.
We anticipate the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity and the ACT Integrity Commission would form a comprehensive memorandum of understanding on matters such as jurisdictional overlap. They're not prosecutorial bodies. They make findings of corruption and refer matters to their respective jurisdictions' prosecution services, which then make a decision as to whether to prosecute. So it is perfectly appropriate to have those two bodies providing oversight of the ACT's policing services.

This bill is being moved at a time when the Morrison government is on the go-slow on matters of integrity. Labor announced, under the leadership of Bill Shorten, that we would put in place a national integrity commission. We made that announcement in January 2018. It was airily dismissed by the Prime Minister as a 'fringe issue' at the time. Finally, after significant public pressure, the Morrison government announced in December 2018 that it would move to establish a Commonwealth integrity commission, and yet the Commonwealth has failed to bring forward legislation that would put in place a national integrity commission. The government talks a big game on integrity but has failed to take the necessary action to put in place a national integrity commission.

At the same time, when asked to support the ACT Integrity Commission in having the same powers as, say, the Victorian integrity commission, the Morrison government is again playing a blocking role. Canberrans support this parliament, and yet it is Canberrans who constantly find that this parliament stands in their way. The Liberals are preventing the ACT Integrity Commission from being able to do what integrity commissions in other areas are able to do.

It's not dissimilar from the case of the 1977 Andrews bill, which prevents the ACT from legislating on euthanasia in a way in which states are able to do. At a time when we see euthanasia laws having passed the Victorian parliament and being considered in other states, it is unconscionable that, more than two decades on, the Andrews bill still prevents the ACT Legislative Assembly from legislating on this issue. That's a view which is held not only by people on my side of the euthanasia debate but also by those who disagree with euthanasia but who believe that territory parliaments should have the same right to debate that question as state parliaments do.

In this case, the bar is not one which has been put in place after self-government. It is one that came with self-government and was not anticipated at the time. Labor believes that that bar should be removed—that it should be possible to have appropriate anticorruption oversight of the police through the ACT Integrity Commission. I commend the work of the Barr government, and I'll now cede the remainder of my time to my seconder in order to add to this important issue.

The SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded?

Mr DAVID SMITH (Bean) (10:08): Yes. I rise to second this private member's bill, the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Amendment (Act Integrity Commission Powers) Bill 2020. As outlined by the mover, the member for Fenner, this bill provides the administrative arrangements to allow for the establishment of the full vision of the ACT Integrity Commission. I commend his advocacy on this issue.

Briefly, at the last election in the territory, all parties committed to an integrity commission. In November 2018, the ACT Legislative Assembly passed an act to establish the ACT Integrity Commission. That bill passed with the tripartisan support of the assembly after extensive consultation with stakeholders and two inquiries. The ACT's Integrity Commission Act 2018 covers the activity of public officials and of the private sector where there is a relationship between it and the public sector. However, the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988 prevents the assembly from making laws for the provision of policing services in the territory. This prohibits bringing ACT Policing within the scope of the ACT Integrity Commission.

This bill would amend the exclusion imposed by section 23 of the self-government act in order to allow the assembly to make laws that facilitate the investigation of integrity and corruption in relation to the provision of police services in the ACT. Currently, the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity, ACLEI, is required to provide relevant information and reports to the ACT Minister for Police and Emergency Services in certain situations. However, the ACT Integrity Commission does not have powers to instigate integrity activity relating to ACT Policing's activities provided through the purchase agreement. Further, public inquiries by ACLEI are initiated by the Commonwealth minister, creating a potential political obstacle to the ACT government's ability to initiate inquiries it sees as in the public interest.

Territorians expect proportionate oversight of the people tasked with maintaining peace and order within the territory and are rightly requesting the inclusion of ACT Policing officers in the scope of the ACT Integrity Commission. Like those just over the border in Queanbeyan, territorians deserve to see their police force covered by their integrity body—the same integrity body that oversees all other public officials in the ACT. By bringing ACT Policing matter within the scope of the integrity commission, this bill will enable the ACT government to regulate oversight mechanisms of all ACT public officials.
I spent a considerable time representing members of the Australian Federal Police and I'm very aware of members' concerns around doubling up on inquiries and potential issues around jurisdiction. To this end, as the member for Fenner has said, I'm encouraged and note that it is expected that the ACT Integrity Commission and ACLEI would settle a memorandum of understanding to ensure cases are not pursued twice and avoid unnecessary demarcation issues. I am of the view that allowing for ACT police to be covered by the ACT Integrity Commission will promote a higher level of transparency and a better relationship between Canberrans and their police force.

We on this side of the House stand for integrity and transparency in government, and have no tolerance for corruption. Labor will continue to call on the Morrison government to keep its election promise and establish a national integrity commission—one that is independent, fit for purpose and enjoys public confidence. In the ACT, as in the rest of Australia, the public has a right to trust that their public officials can stand up to justified scrutiny. That trust is not possible without mechanisms that can hold all public officers to account. The ACT Liberals and the ACT Greens both supported the ACT Labor government in setting up the ACT Integrity Commission. The federal Liberals now need to support the integrity powers Canberrans want, and it is up to their ACT colleagues to make sure they do.

Debate adjourned.

National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment (Transparency in Carbon Emissions Accounting) Bill 2020

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Wilkie.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr WILKIE (Clark) (10:14): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This summer Australia has obviously been battered by one natural disaster after another. It started with years of severe drought, record-breaking temperatures and towns out of water; exploded into the series of massive bushfires which killed dozens of people and burned some three per cent of our entire landmass; and finished with storms and floods that brought relief for some farmers and communities, although many missed out and great damage was caused in some of the places where the rain did fall. As the formal summer period comes to an end this Saturday, thousands of people have been displaced and had their homes destroyed or livelihoods wrecked.

It is undeniable that there's a climate emergency, that Australia is on the front line, and that we need to get serious about rapidly reducing our emissions. Indeed dealing with climate change should be a first priority for the federal government, and for the Labor opposition. But instead of a strong bipartisan response, to the complete despair of the Australian community we continue to be subjected to confrontation, disinformation and airy-fairy policies that mean little and will achieve even less. Neither party is willing to stop supporting the fossil fuel companies and to start working in the national interest with a genuine aim of reaching zero emissions as soon as possible. Neither party is prepared to put aside their political self-interest and achieve a consensus that transcends party politics and electoral cycles. Neither party is prepared to be straight with the public.

For example, the Australian public has been repeatedly told by the government that 'we're on track to achieve our Paris commitments' and 'Australian emissions are going down.' According to the government, Australia will meet its Paris 2030 target 'in a canter'. But this is simply not true, because the truth is that Australian emissions are going up and the government refuses to admit it.

To help turn this situation around we need to prevent the government from hiding or corrupting emission figures by giving the public better access to Australia's greenhouse gas data. So to that end, this bill amends the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 to ensure that the minister receives each quarter a report from the regulator on the estimates of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory. The minister must then table the report with both houses of parliament within 15 sitting days of the House after receipt.

This bill should not be necessary. The government should be open and transparent with its emissions data, rather than releasing it as it has done in the past on a Friday night before the AFL and NRL grand finals, seven weeks after the environment minister had received the report in the first place—or, as the minister for emissions reductions did last year, releasing the data weeks after completion in blatant contravention of a Senate order requiring a quick tabling of the report.

The second thing this bill does is to amend the reporting requirements in the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act to capture scope 3 emissions in all reporting obligations. Scope 3 emissions are indirect greenhouse
gas emissions—for example, emissions which occur as a consequence of the activities of a coalmining operation, but which are not directly generated by the mining company. In other words the scope 3 analysis in this example would look at the CO2 the extracted coal will release into the atmosphere when the coal is eventually burnt for energy.

The implication of this reform for Australia's greenhouse gas accounting at a national level is that all our fossil fuel exports, processed and used in energy generation internationally, will be included in the national inventory. And that would allow Australia to track its impact as one of the largest exporters of fossil fuels, and allow the community access to information about Australia's position in contributing to global greenhouse gas emissions.

The government continues to insist that Australia can do little to influence global climate change on the basis that our emissions make up only 1.3 per cent of the world total. But when the carbon dioxide potential of our fossil fuel exports is taken into account, Australia is actually the third-largest exporter on the globe. In fact, when Australian fossil fuels are burned overseas, the amount of carbon dioxide they produce is higher than the exported emissions of almost all of the world's biggest oil-and gas-producing nations including Iraq, Kuwait and Canada.

Indeed Australia is behind only Russia and Saudi Arabia when it comes to fossil fuel exports. So when the government continues to peddle the line that Australia hardly makes a difference to global emissions, it's not being straight with the Australian people. This bill would expose that lie if it persisted, and ensure that the public can see how Australia is tracking in the global effort to reduce emissions.

Australia's domestic emissions are large, but our exported emissions are even larger. It's absolutely essential that the Australian public has timely access to accurate information about this, including an especially accurate understanding of how our massive exports fuel climate change. The government simply cannot be allowed to continue to get away with accounting tricks and historical credits when the public can see our gross emissions skyrocketing. This bill will ensure transparency and accountability in the Australian government's national emissions accounting and is an essential step towards rapid and urgent emissions reduction.

With this bill, the government could no longer downplay the importance of Australia urgently reducing its carbon emissions or continue to peddle its lies about achieving our targets. I commend the bill to the House and invite the member for Mayo, who's seconding the bill, to say a few words in the remaining time allocated for this bill's second reading.

**The SPEAKER:** Is the motion seconded?

**Ms SHARKIE** (Mayo) (10:20): I second the motion. I fully support the content of this bill, the National Greenhouse National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment (Transparency in Carbon Emissions Accounting) Bill 2020. The member for Clark makes a very simple but important proposition—that, where our country has a clear moral responsibility for the carbon emissions it creates, the Australian people need and deserve transparency, and with transparency comes moral accountability. The explanatory memorandum to the bill puts the key proposition quite succinctly. The bill allows Australia to track its impact as one of the world's largest exporters of fossil fuels in the world and allows the public access to information about Australia's position in contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. When we possess the facts, we can make reasoned choices in the public interest.

I recognise that a sizeable proportion of our exports are fossil fuels, and, while they add to our country's coffers, those resources are contributing to the warming of our planet. You can't just take the money and not have any responsibility for that, and so the Australian people and its democratic representatives need to be apprised of the facts so we can understand and quantify the moral cost alongside the benefit. I think the scope 3 emissions data is incredibly important.

A recent ABC RMIT Fact Check was done on how much Australia's emissions are when we look at our exports and our domestic emissions. Australia's domestic emissions, plus the emissions embedded in its exports, added 1,712 million tonnes in 2016. The latest figures that we can get are from four years ago, and this roughly represents 3.6 per cent of total global emissions in that year. As I said, they're the latest reliable figures and they are old. And, if the calculation is restricted to emissions from fossil fuel combustion, excluding land use changes and agriculture, amongst other things, Australia's domestic fuel emissions plus emissions from its fossil fuel exports were roughly equivalent to 4.8 per cent of the global total of fossil fuel emissions in 2016. That is extraordinary. It is terrifying, and it is not presented to the parliament and it should be. We can no longer have emissions data seen as part of the taking-out-the-trash movement. Those figures are dropped on the Australian public when the government think nobody's watching and nobody's listening. It is simply unacceptable.

I commend this bill to the House. This bill seeks to get the facts—and that is what the Australian community deserves; that is what this parliament deserves—and not have them delivered after hours on a Friday night.
The SPEAKER: The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Liability for Climate Change Damage (Make the Polluters Pay) Bill 2020

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Bandt.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr BANDT (Melbourne—Leader of the Australian Greens) (10:25): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This is a bill for every tourism business that's struggling because of the recent climate fires or our dying reef, for every farmer suffering through record drought and everyone who lost their home in raging infernos this summer.

This is a chance for justice for everyone bearing the brunt of the climate crisis and a chance to make the polluters pay for some of the costs of their pollution, because the polluters knew decades ago the economic harm they would cause to businesses, families and communities everywhere, but they went ahead and did it. And, just as the law caught up with asbestos and tobacco companies, now it is catching up with the climate polluters too.

In the last few months Australia has endured megafires of a scale we have never seen before. It was made possible because of a prolonged deep drought. We've had dust storms, heatwaves, floods and hail storms. We've had smoke over our two biggest cities and our capital city for days on end.

Estimates of the damages from these disasters range from $4.4 billion, if we narrowly define damage to physical assets and infrastructure, up to a more credible $100 billion, if we include tourism losses, human health and ecological destruction.

Not surprisingly, people who lost their homes and businesses and people who were injured or lost family members are asking the question: who is to blame?

This is the same question that many people around the world who are also being hit hard by climate impacts are asking.

The answer is thermal coal, oil and gas companies. Their business of mining, fracking, burning and exporting their products has turbocharged these natural disasters. They have been profiting from their pollution. With the brief exception of two years during the carbon price, they have never had to pay a cent for the damage that they are inflicting on society.

Minister Hunt and Minister Dutton and former ministers O'Dwyer, Brough and Pyne are famously photographed celebrating the legislation that abandoned these polluters having to pick up some of the tab for their carnage and pushed it on to taxpayers.

People feel helpless, they feel anxious and they feel frustrated at politicians who are protecting their political donors and are not doing what needs to be done to keep the Australian community safe.

Increasingly, they are turning to courts to pursue the big fossil fuel corporations, which have known about the threat of the climate crisis, yet have kept on polluting regardless.

ClientEarth has partnered with Torres Strait Islander peoples to take the Australian government to court for rising sea levels and inundation of their land and fresh water.

Then there is Mark McVeigh, who will not be able to access his superannuation until 2055, who is taking his super fund, Rest, to court because climate risks are manifesting now and the time lines for his investment horizon mean that investing in fossil fuels is a breach of Rest's fiduciary duties to invest on his behalf.

This bill, the Liability for Climate Change Damage (Make the Polluters Pay) Bill 2020, will ensure that victims of the bushfire crisis and victims of other climate impacts will have a pathway to hold corporations responsible for the damage that they have caused.

In October 2016, Noel Hutley SC issued a legal advice on climate change and the responsibilities on company directors. He said that, in his opinion, section 181 of the Corporations Act—which puts a duty of care and diligence on directors—extends to them a responsibility to consider the risks of climate change.

The advice that climate change is a fiduciary duty has since been cited approvingly by our major regulators—ASIC, APRA and the Reserve Bank—who are all now working on their own regulatory frameworks to manage climate risk.

This bill will clarify the situation under Australian law. What this bill does is put it beyond legal doubt that the thermal coal, oil and gas companies are liable for the climate damage they have contributed to.
It will give survivors of natural disasters the legal right to bring an action against them for damages. It will allow businesses who have been hurt by the climate crisis to bring action against those who've contributed to it. It will allow farmers affected by the record drought to bring actions against those who have contributed to it.

It will allow the Federal Court to determine the amount of damages that the major emitters are liable for. When deciding, the court may assume that the major emitter's share of the climate change damage is at least the same as their proportion of greenhouse gas emissions, to total global greenhouse gas emissions, and may even apportion a higher share of damages if that's appropriate.

It will also give state and federal governments the right to seek reimbursement for the damage to public infrastructure, the expenses involved in responding to climate induced disasters, and the cost of analysing, monitoring and researching weather systems and our rapidly changing climate systems. This is fair. If you broke it, you buy it.

These companies have known what they have been doing and the damage they are causing, just like with big tobacco, who knew their cigarettes caused cancer for decades and kept on selling their deadly product, and just like with asbestos.

The playbook here has been exactly the same, in fact: sow doubt, deliberately spread misinformation about the damage caused by their products, buy off politicians with lucrative jobs and donations, spruik fake science, bury information, and intimidate your opponents.

The thermal coal, oil and gas corporations have followed tobacco and asbestos down that well-worn path, but they have infinitely more money, resources, media and political parties at their disposal. But the history is shocking.

ExxonMobil, the world's largest publicly listed oil and gas producer, and one of Australia's largest emitters, had their own team of in-house scientists that was aware of the dangers of climate change as early as 1977—11 years before it became a public issue. These in-house scientists and researchers produced incredibly accurate predictions of the level of greenhouse gases and temperatures on what is playing out now.

In an internal memo from 15 May 1981, the President of ExxonMobil Research & Engineering Co. was briefed that, at predicted rates of fossil fuel growth, within 100 years there would likely be a three-degree Celsius rise in global average temperatures and a 10-degree Celsius rise in temperature at the poles. And they predicted, close to the degree, the temperature rise that we are on and experiencing at the moment. They knew. They predicted that this would lead to major shifts in rainfall and agriculture and could mean the potential melting of polar ice. They had high-level teams of well-resourced scientists who knew, as far back as 1980, what their products would do. They knew.

Later, on 24 June 1988, the front page of The New York Times declared that 'global warming has begun', with testimony of NASA's Jim Hansen to congress. The earth was warmer in those first five months of that year than any comparable period since measurements began 130 years earlier. The record of 1988 as the hottest year on record has been broken 10 times more since then. They knew.

In 1990 the first ever assessment report was handed down by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The global, widespread dissemination of climate science was clearly in the public arena from this date. This report helped establish the UN framework on climate change in 1992.

From that date onwards, there could be no doubt—everyone knew, including these companies. Yet more than half of the carbon pollution that we have put into the atmosphere since the beginning of the industrial revolution happened after this date—after we knew.

These companies knew with eyes wide open that their increasing profitability would mean higher temperatures and more extreme heatwaves. They knew about the risk of more severe droughts and bushfires. They knew what it would do to other businesses and economies like agriculture and tourism. They knew that it would lead to the melting of ice sheets, sea level rise and more extreme flooding from hotter moisture-holding air.

This time line matters because, under this bill, major fossil fuel producers and the owners and operators of coal-fired power stations will be liable in respect of all emissions since 1990, when the first Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report was released. Where the company had actual knowledge of the effect of the pollution, the time frame for liabilities will extend back to this point.

In conclusion, this bill is about justice. It's about bushfire survivors and tourism businesses. It's about protecting those whose livelihood depends on fertile soils, reliable water flows and a healthy Great Barrier Reef. It's about making sure that companies who have knowingly profited from the pollution that they have emitted pay for the damage that they cause.

**Mr Wilkie**: I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.
Mr Speaker, I'm not going to suspend standing orders—people have asked me about that—but I reserve the right to do so in the future. This has been within the National Party policy. We've come to federal conferences and argued for this. I can't see the point of people coming to federal conferences if you don't actually follow through with what they want; it's just a talkfest. We should be able to stand behind issues like this and see them through.

In the last election, the Labor Party got one senator up in Queensland, so things are not working well for them. The Labor Party, itself, should be looking strongly at how they represent the views of the constituency that they wish to represent in areas such as Central Queensland or Far North Queensland or the Gulf. Maybe in so doing they'd have the capacity to turn policy in such a way as to temper some of the effects that happen when you get an overurbanisation of the vote. Remember, the vast number of the votes in this place are from the capital cities. It is perverse to think there's an even greater representation of senators from capital cities so that, when an issue goes through, it has not only the benefit of the vast majority of the numbers in the House of Representatives, it's also got the support of the vast majority of people in the Senate.
The United States created pastoral states, and, by so doing, they had two senators per state. This gave greater representation. We seem to be completely at odds with creating new states, so the only way to do it—to get this representation of Indigenous people, of regional areas and a better balance—is to have regional senators, who were noted before. I see the member for Kennedy here, who's seconding this bill. I'm going to allow the rest of my time for him to speak.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmermann): Order! Is the motion seconded?

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (10:44): I second the motion. If we had the power in North Queensland, a rail line would have been built into the Galilee some seven or eight years ago. That would have brought $25,000 million into the Australian economy. Hells Gate would have been built 10 or 15 years ago—that's $3 billion into the North Queensland economy. Bradfield was actually announced 30 years ago by both state and federal government—that's $6 billion a year. The northern canal—that's $7 billion. That's $50 billion the Australian people could be having every year. It's not that our voices are not heard; it's that we can't even communicate our voices with anyone.

At the present moment, the government of Queensland has proposed the shutdown of the coal industry. They've advocated that, and they've advocated the shutdown of the sugarcane industry. Well, Queensland only has two industries and they're both centred in North Queensland. The entire economy of North Queensland would simply shut down. There are also some very big question marks hanging over Mount Isa, the only other major employer. Our tourism is down 30 per cent, probably down around 50 per cent now, and that was before this trauma came in.

This is a way to give us a little bit more power, a tiny bit more power. The great commentator on democracy Alexis de Tocqueville—he's famous for 'tyranny of the majority'. Democracy does not deliver a fair go. It doesn't deliver justice. It doesn't even deliver representation, but it does deliver the tyranny of the majority. Locke, in his book on freedom, uses the 'tyranny of majority' phrase again and again and again. In Queensland the main roads department was divided up into five divisions; each division got an equal amount of money. So once upon a time there were fair governments. Now, just to use the approach from the airport into the Brisbane CBD as an example: there's $5 1/2 billion in overpasses, then we go into a $7 billion tunnel and there's another $5 1/2 billion when you come out of the tunnel at Bowen Hills. So $18 billion has been spent just on one road leading into the CBD, and there are four roads leading into the CBD. There's nothing like that in North Queensland, nothing remotely like that in North Queensland.

So fairness in electricity—we have no baseload power in North Queensland. In fact the nearest baseload station is 1,000km away, so the cost of taking electricity from down there to up here is colossal. It works out to about $600 million a year. Now someone has to come up with that $600 million a year.

As far as dams and weirs go, we've got about 85 per cent of Australia's water in North Queensland. We have six dams and weirs. The south-eastern corner of the state would have over 100 dams and weirs. So while we've got all the water, we've got no dams or irrigation to hold it back. Their rivers run all the time; our rivers only run for a short period of the year. (Time expired)

Debate adjourned.

Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Amendment (Strategic Assets) Bill 2020

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Katter.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (10:50): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I ask everyone I meet what they think about things, and I keep a record of that. Thirty per cent of their answers are that they are shocked and horrified by the government selling Australia off and selling Australia out. Some years ago, I was in a debate with a prominent Liberal cabinet minister—one of the top four—and one of the top three in the opposition shadow cabinet. The shadow cabinet minister accused the government of being negative towards foreign investment. The government member said, 'We have been responsible for more foreign investment in this country than any other government in Australian history.' The Labor member then got up and argued that Labor had been responsible for more foreign investment in this country than any other government. When it was my turn, I said, 'Well, listen to them; they're both arguing: "I sold more of my country off than you did." "No, I sold more of my country off than you did."' I said: 'That's what they're saying. I'll tell you, I'm not in favour of selling
any of my country off.' It was at one of those stupid Q&A sessions. The entire crowd burst into spontaneous applause for what I said, and they listened in shocked horror at what the other two were saying.

There is the classic example of just how far out of step this place is with the rest of Australia. They're skiting about foreign investment, and the rest of Australia is shocked and horrified at the foreign investment in Australia. Is it foreign investment? I'm sure that two of my brother-cousin blackfellas were standing around out here in this place saying, 'These whitefellas are coming in and they're bringing tomahawks and blankets—oh geez, it's real good for us all.' I don't think there would be too many First Australians these days who would say that the attitude they adopted then was a good idea. They suddenly woke up one morning and they didn't own or control their own country, or even have a say in the running of their own country. We won't go into the plight of First Australians today.

The governments of Australia, with their wonderful foreign investment, got all this foreign investment in the gas industry. They sold the gas industry for 6c a unit, and we Australians have to buy our own gas at $16 a unit! This may be academic for people in the cities; it may even be academic for the brainless people that run Canberra—I'm talking about the Public Service. It may be academic to them, but it ain't academic for anyone that's concerned with balancing the budget and having prosperity for Australians, because that is one of the major cost input items for industry.

We are not a mining country anymore. We do not mine—mining is when you take it out of the ground and process it and sell a metal. That's mining. When you take it out of the ground and sell the ground, that's called quarrying. So we don't mine; we quarry. The reason we can't mine is that our electricity charges are the highest in the world—that's an advertisement on the television, but I don't doubt it for a moment. Last time I looked, West Germany's electricity charges were above ours, but I understand that since we've moved to nearly 20 per cent renewables we most certainly have the most expensive electricity in the world. And the answer from the ALP is to move to total renewables so we can have a supercharged electricity system—easily the worst in the world. That means all processing simply closes down. You've lost your mining industry; you now only have the quarrying industry. You've lost your gas industry, you've lost your petrol industry and you're going to lose your aluminium industry and your steel industry—they've both made it quite clear that they can't afford the price of doing business in Australia, specifically electricity.

Now, whether electricity is totally foreign owned, I don't know. Clearly the Chinese people own a quarter—arguably, over a third—and there are other foreign interests that own other parts of the electricity industry. There are now only four bodies that own electricity in Australia. You've sold the biggest coal port in the world, so the owner of the coal port can charge whatever they like, under the free trade agreement with China. You've sold the most strategic port for the Americans in the South Pacific. Is there anything that you haven't sold? Well, for those who study history, we yelled out for the British to come and save us in the Second World War; no British appeared on the horizon. Two of their boats tried to escape from the Pacific and got sunk, but they were trying to escape, not attack, so we had to call upon the Americans to come and save us. Do we have any hope? We've got 35,000 silly little complicated, sophisticated rifles to defend the country. When we were at war with Indonesia last time, we had 1½ million rifles. So what are we going do? Call out the Americans to come and save us? They placed 2,000 marines at Darwin because it's the most strategic port for them in the South Pacific. They've got the Philippines, but that's in the central Pacific—nothing in the South Pacific. But the government sold the port of Darwin. They will be remembered in infamy forever for that sale.

The only water available for irrigation in the Northern Territory and Western Australia is the Ord. Thirty-one Australians applied for water in the Ord, expressions of interest were called, and the Liberal government gave all the water—all of stage 2 and stage 3—to the Chinese. You've given away to China the only port in the northern half of Australia, except for coal ports, and the only water available for development in the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Let me be very specific and use two examples. One is the Brisbane Airport: $5½ billion was expended in its development. Brisbane Airport is foreign owned. At five per cent, we lose $250 million a year. That was just on the improvements to the airport and development of the airport. There's no doubt the profits on the usage of the airport would be $1,000 million. So now we have $1,250 million drifting offshore every year as a result of that sale. And the taxis? You gave effectively half of the licences in Australia away to Uber. So there's a thousand million going offshore. Another strategic asset. Our four great mining companies in Australia—Western Mining Corporation, BHP, MIM and Rio Tinto Australia—were all Australian owned. Now none are Australian owned. Not one single one of our major mining companies is Australian owned—and I'm not including the goldmining giants, all of which are foreign owned.

You've failed to balance the budget, and your free markets have been a disastrous failure, so now you're balancing the budget by selling off the farm. Here it is: you sold all your mining assets, you sold all your gas, you
sold half of your electricity—we can't find out how much has been sold—you sold the airports and you sold the seaports. You've sold everything that can't be nailed down. Me and my colleague from Hobart, who I'm very proud to be associated with, are saying 'no more!' on behalf of the Australian people. Eighty-two per cent of them say no more! *(Time expired)*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmerman): Is the motion seconded?

Mr Wilkie: I second the bill and reserve my right to speak.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The time allocated for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made in order of the day for the next sitting.

**MOTIONS**

**Economy**

Dr MULINO (Fraser) (11:01): I move:

That this House notes the Government's economic mismanagement and its sustained failure to deliver improved economic outcomes for Australians during its seven year term in office, measured by:

1. wage stagnation;
2. near record levels of underemployment;
3. high and rising rates of labour underutilisation, particularly for young people and in regional areas;
4. high levels of youth unemployment;
5. Australia's higher unemployment relative to peer nations;
6. weak consumption growth;
7. weak business investment; and
8. weak and declining productivity growth.

This motion calls this government to account for its economic mismanagement and the negative consequences flowing from that. Our economy is weak. We all see this. We see this when we go back to our electorates and talk to our constituents. We see this with the lowest wages growth on record. We see this with labour productivity going back for the first time ever. These are not records that we want to be setting. We see this in the fact that retailers are shutting their doors every night on the news and that when we look on main street there are shops boarded up. We see this in the fact that consumer confidence is low and that the banks gave evidence to the House Economics Committee that roughly only a quarter of the government's first tranche of tax cuts was actually spent. We see unemployment stuck above five per cent. When we look at comparator economies, like the UK and the US, unemployment is far lower; far fewer people are negatively affected by this scourge. We see that in those economies unemployment is at levels that they haven't seen for half a century. Here, we are stuck. We see, more worryingly, that underemployment is high and rising: over eight per cent, and underutilisation of labour is nearly 20 per cent in some regions.

Why are we in this shocking position, where our living standards are lower than they should be and we are less resilient to shocks than we should be? For two key reasons: firstly, this government is actually damaging our economy through its policies and, secondly, this government is not implementing policies that it should to benefit our economy.

Let's imagine the Australian economy were a patient. It turns up to get help. There are two doctors: Dr RBA and Dr Frydenberg. Dr RBA says: 'You don't look well. I'll administer some help.' It lowers interest rates to levels nearly one-third of the level they were at the depths of the GFC. That helps a bit. But then the patient turns around to see what Dr Frydenberg is doing. Dr Frydenberg is heading out the door with the patient's wallet, riffling through it and taking notes out. The patient says, 'Hey, I thought you were here to help me!' Dr Frydenberg says, 'No, I need a surplus.' What we see—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmerman): I call the minister on a point of order.

Mr Wood: When referring to members, could you refer to them by their proper titles.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would encourage the member for Fraser to refer to people by their proper titles.

Dr MULINO: The Treasurer is heading out the door. I like the fact that he didn't dispute me on the facts; he disputed me on the name. That's a very important point, Deputy Speaker. The Treasurer is heading out the door.

What we see is that monetary policy is being counteracted by this government. What we see is a government that is underspending on the NDIS to the tune of $4.6 billion in a year. We have expansionary monetary policy, which is there to put downward pressure on the currency to help net exporters to boost employment in export sectors. We see expansionary monetary policy, which is to lower borrowing costs, which is to boost the capacity
of borrowers to spend. What do we see the government doing? We see its policies counteracting expansionary monetary policy. We see its policies not increasing government spending in key areas based on good policy but taking money out of the economy. It's not only heartless, it's not only bad policy; it's actually counteracting what the Reserve Bank is doing. So at the heart of our economy is a structural problem where our two main economic levers are working at odds. This must change. The Governor of the Reserve Bank said that, with interest rates at the lowest level they have been since Federation, Australia should not rely on monetary policy alone. Too true! This government needs to act on fiscal policy, on economic reform. It needs to take some action with its own levers so that the Reserve Bank is not doing all of the heavy lifting.

What should the government be doing? First and foremost, it should stop underspending in areas where good public policy would suggest more investment needs to be made. Secondly, it should be spending on infrastructure. Economic experts, the Reserve Bank and others are lining up to state that, with record low interest rates and slack in the labour market, we need more infrastructure spending—not just the mega-projects, but local projects in outer suburban areas and in regional areas. This government needs to be doing far more—good policy projects that could boost employment. The Reserve Bank has been saying it time and time again, but this government will not listen. The government should bring forward targeted tax cuts. What this government is focused on is tax cuts, often in the never-never, for the highest income earners. That's not what our government needs. It's not good public policy and it's also not what our economy needs in the short term.

Our economy's weaknesses have been years in the making—years of inaction by this government. What we see right now is that this government is acting in a way that counteracts what the Reserve Bank is trying to achieve and it is not implementing a raft of policies that our economy needs—investment in infrastructure, investment in people through VET, investment in the NDIS. This government needs to take action to boost our living standards and our resilience to economic shocks.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmerman): Is the motion seconded?

Dr Aly: I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (11:06): When we think about words, we have to recognise that they have power. They articulate a point, a proposition, and sometimes they can define a person. Let's think about the word 'hypocrite' and what it means. The opposition went to the last election on a platform of wanting $387 billion of new taxes and then had the temerity and the gumption to come into this place, after the government had been elected on that platform, and say the government should cut taxes. A hypocrite would make that argument. Somebody who lacks any substance or any economic understanding would go into the public domain and argue that case and then come into this place and argue the reverse. The power of words matters. A hypocrite will get up and make those arguments.

Today we have a motion that has been put forward by the member for Fraser. He has done so having gone to the last election, his first election, arguing that the solution to Australia's economic challenges is a massive new set of taxes that undermines confidence in the housing market, undermines investment in the future building of Australia and undermines the disposable income of Australian retirees. Funnily enough, he comes into this place and, going off the verbal diatribe the member for Fraser gave just moments ago, apparently the solution now is to cut taxes! Continuing he has a background in economics, he either lives up to the definition of certain words or he just says what he thinks is necessary at the time to make an argument but there is no sense of core belief or conviction.

He verballed the Reserve Bank governor when he appeared before the economics committee. The member of Fraser is a member of that committee and I am the chair. When the Reserve Bank governor came before that committee he outlined that what monetary policy can achieve can be exhausted, that it is not a lever within itself. But at the last hearing of the economics committee—I can't even remember if the member for Fraser was still there—when it was put to the RBA governor, 'Are you arguing for more and more fiscal stimulus versus actual structural reform,' he said he was arguing for the latter.

The problem the member for Fraser has is that the Labor Party's only solution for structural reform is to impose new taxes. That's what they took to the last election, that's what they took to the previous election, it's what they took to the one before that and the one before that, because in the end they have no sense of vision or purpose.

The fundamentals of the Australian economy show that it is resilient against global headwinds. We shouldn't underestimate the challenge that we face around coronavirus and the impact on global supply chains and the like. We shouldn't underestimate the economic challenges we face because of other countries lowering their interest rates. Australia has to manage and meet those challenges to make sure that our exports are competitive. We've suffered drought and bushfires. But, despite all that, we have millions more people employed in the Australian economy today than there were when we were first elected to government—about 1½ million since we first came
to office, an increase of 13.2 per cent. At every point that the government have faced economic challenges outside our control, we've met them through rational policy that informs and promotes investment in the Australian economy, by doing things like cutting taxes—yes, we have definitely done that, despite the best efforts of the member for Fraser and many of the acolytes on the other side of the opposition benches—and we want to continue to invest in those types of measures so that we continue to build the strength of the Australian economy.

If only the opposition would come on that journey. If only they would take to the next election a platform for structural reform and cutting taxes. Of course, we have no idea what they're going to take to the next election or even what they're going to prosecute in this term of parliament, as they jump around deciding what their targets are going to be. Apparently they're now going to abolish whole sectors of the economy but not admit to it. But the choice we face now and the Australian people face now is whether or not we continue the leadership we need to make sure we have a strong economy into the future—and it doesn't rest on the opposition benches.

Dr ALY (Cowan) (11:12): It is always a treat to hear the member for Goldstein tell us what we're all thinking and what we all said and where we're all heading. He's such a great mansplainer.

Mr Dick: If only he was on the front bench! If only he was a minister!

Dr ALY: If only! If only he was class president! I'd like to start by commending the member for Fraser for bringing the government's dismal performance on the economy to the attention of the House. There's a lot to get through in the 4½ minutes that I have left to speak, but I think the list provided in the motion is quite an exhaustive list.

Unlike those on the other side, I like to rely on evidence and expertise from people who know what they're talking about. So I think a good place to start is to look at the forecasts that were made by a panel of 24 leading economists, published on The Conversation last month. That panel looked at the year ahead and concluded: 2020 is shaping up as a dismal year for the economy, with no progress on many of the key measures that matter for Australians.

One of those key measures is economic growth, which is projected to stay at or below two per cent for at least another year. We're now seeing the longest period of low economic growth since the early 1990s recession. To put that into context, economic growth has rarely been as low as 1.4 per cent outside of a recession. When we take into account population growth, and income and production per citizen, all of this has gone backwards. The last time that happened was during the GFC; and the time before that was in the early 1990s, in the recession. Household spending has failed also to keep up, and we know that households are spending less, primarily because they have less money to spend. There is less disposable income.

That brings me to the point about wage stagnation, which is listed in this motion. We've seen slow growth in real wages under this government. And why would we expect wages to grow when Minister Cormann came out and admitted that keeping wages low is the centrepiece of this government's economic strategy—keep wages low? The panel that I mentioned of the 24 leading economists concluded that it will be domestic rather than overseas conditions that hold back Australian growth. So, the member for Goldstein can talk about conditions that are out of the control of this government, but the fact is that it is well within this government's reach to create the conditions for economic growth. On this point this government is continuing to fail Australians.

Standards of living in Australia: the growth in our living standards is expected to slow to 2.4 per cent. Nominal GDP is expected to slow. The unemployment rate is expected to be at five to 5.5 per cent, rather than falling to the 4.5 per cent that the Reserve Bank states is necessary for economic growth. Household spending, as I mentioned, is barely growing. Financial markets provide less support to households. We've got a drop in labour productivity, and the Productivity Commission makes the point that 'this year Australia's productivity has slid backwards for the first time since the mining boom'. The report by the Productivity Commission shows that two measures of productivity fell in 2018-19.

Despite all of this, despite the weak productivity growth, slow wage growth and wage stagnation, despite economic growth being the worst it's ever been since the GFC, despite high unemployment, despite weak consumption growth, despite weak consumption growth, despite low rates in retail growth, with, as the member for Fraser mentioned, shops closing their doors left, right and centre—even huge multinationals that were successful in Australia are now closing their doors—despite weak business in investment and weakness in productivity, this government refuses to enact any fiscal measures, instead relying on the Reserve Bank. (Time expired)

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (11:17): We've heard it all now: the Labor Party's worried about multinationals closing their doors in Australia. Well, I never thought I'd see the day when they'd send someone all the way from Perth to tell this government that the problem that we face is that multinationals are closing their doors in Australia. That's it: we had it wrong all this time. Most of this time we thought the unreconstructed economics of
'Chairman' Swan that has guided the Labor Party through the mists of time and election failure would get them through, but apparently the problem all along was multinationals closing their doors.

This message really resonates with me—and has resonated with me for a long time. But this is what we get from the Labor Party: they pre-select and elect to this parliament—through fluke, I assume, not good management—such economic thoroughbreds as the member for Fraser, Professor Leigh, and what do they do with them? They leave them languishing on the back bench as far away from the dispatch box as they can. It is ironic, because I find myself standing about as far away from the dispatch box as you can get without joining the National Party, so I'm probably in a worse position than the member for Fraser. Nonetheless, we've got plenty of experts on economics. We've got plenty of people. Our front bench is full of people who understand how the economy works, and not once have they stood up in this chamber and complained about the fact that multinationals are finding it a bit difficult in the economy at the moment. That's what we have here.

Mr Stephen Jones: He's got nothing!

Mr FALINSKI: We'll get to you: don't worry, Jonesy, we're coming to you.

As the member for Fraser knows, if you want to get real wage growth going, underemployment down and create economic opportunity, you have to get productivity moving. The only way to get productivity moving is through innovation. How do you get people to innovate? You get people to innovate when you reward risk and forgive failure. What is the Labor Party doing every single day of the week, besides bemoaning the fate of multinationals in our economy? They make sure that if you fail you get punished, and if you succeed you also get punished. This is the party that created an industrial relations system that ensures that enterprise agreements are rolling over and being terminated at record numbers. We only have to look at McDonald's. I don't know why the member is leaving.

Dr Aly: Because you're giving me a headache!

Mr FALINSKI: We were about to talk about her favourite thing—a multinational—and then she leaves through the door. I thought I was making it relevant for her. McDonald's recently, with the support of the union, went to the Fair Work Commission and said, 'We want to roll over our enterprise agreement.' The Fair Work Commission has made it so impossible for them to do that. The enterprise agreement has now lapsed and all their workers will go back on the award. Does this mean higher wages? No; it means lower wages. Does this mean more hours for hardworking Australians trying to get ahead? No. McDonald's has made it clear that they will have to close a significant number of their stores for hours that they would prefer to have them open, because of the complexity of the award system that they support, that they aid, that they abet, that they refuse to reform. And the member for Fraser knows this. The member for Fraser can pretend otherwise, but I know that he and Professor Leigh are fully aware that the huge problem in this country is the rigidity of the industrial relations system—a system that they created, but their major donors won't let them talk about reforming.

So don't be fooled when they walk into this place and bemoan the fact we have underemployment and that real wages aren't growing fast enough, because they are the obstacles to any increase in real wages, they are the obstacles to innovation in this country, and they are the obstacles to ordinary Australians being able to get ahead. They are the obstacles to young Australians from being able—

Mr Perrett: Seven years! Seven years!

Mr FALINSKI: The member for Morton says we've been here for seven years. Give us your proposal on industrial relations that doesn't involve embedding the special power and privilege of your largest donors at the centre of it, because you don't care about Australians; you only care about the donors that you get. You're appalling. You should be ashamed of yourselves for even bringing this motion to this House.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (11:22): Bring back Bronwyn Bishop! I'm pleased to speak on the motion moved by the member for Fraser which notes the government's economic mismanagement. I thank him for bringing it to the chamber. It highlights the government's sustained failure to deliver improved economic outcomes for Australians during its seven long, wasted years in office. I just want to repeat that: this is the coalition's seventh year in office. We heard from the previous speaker that, somehow, this is the Labor Party's manufacturing of economic dire straits.

The current dismal economic prospects for working Australians have this coalition government's economic fingerprints all over them, as mentioned by the member for Fraser. Just last week we saw new economic data revealing that wages growth, which has been weak, has further stalled. The ABS Wage Price Index confirmed that wages growth remained stagnant at 2.2 per cent, effectively meaning that many people are going backwards. That falls way short of the budget forecast, which had been downgraded only two months ago. The Treasurer's claim that 'wages growth is a core focus for this government' is a joke. A core focus? It's been a complete failure. January labour force figures, also released last week, show youth unemployment has increased to 12.1 per cent.
There are now 271,000 young Australians without a job. That's disgraceful. In my home state of Queensland, it's even worse at 15.6 per cent. About one in six young Queenslanders are unemployed.

But it's not just the unemployed; it's also the underemployed. Recent labour force figures reveal a record high number of underemployed Australians. Figures reveal that 1.2 million Australians are looking for more work but are unable to find it. There are 273,000 more Australians underemployed today than in 2013 when the Abbott government took office. Since Prime Minister Morrison took office, there are nearly 90,000 more underemployed people.

Labor's been calling on the government to take action about the growing problem of underemployment for more than five years. The underemployment rate of 8.6 per cent and the underutilisation rate of 13.9 per cent for January are both way too high. The result of all of this is that more than two million Australian citizens are underutilised—they're looking for work or more work because the coalition's economy is floundering.

The serious structural issues that the Morrison Liberal government has not dealt with in the labour market will continue to generate insecure work and low wages growth. This is a recipe for generational inequality. Not surprisingly, those who've already had a pretty good go at accumulating wealth are the only ones who are continuing to get a go. Wage earners with few assets are struggling just to break even, and some are going backwards. Those who've already accumulated substantial assets will be the big winners as their assets increase in value. Falling interest rates mean cheap money, which in turn pushes up asset prices.

These twin problems plaguing the economy—growing unemployment and low wages growth—are impacting on Australians everywhere. We can see that it's harder for working Australians to make ends meet, to pay the bills and to pay off debt. Working Australians are trying to have a go. But if economic growth doesn't improve, their chances of getting ahead are zero.

The decision of General Motors last week to finish off forever the iconic Holden brand in Australia was the result of nearly seven years of manufacturing neglect by the Abbott, Turnbull and Morrison governments. I remember former Treasurer Joe Hockey goading General Motors to leave Australia. Wasn't that a wise decision! Of course Holden chose to close down their car-making factories in Melbourne and Adelaide the very next day, way back in December 2013. And what has the government done since? Without government support, Holden's gone.

Government action or inaction has consequences for the market. The coalition government ripped away support from the car industry, and this is the result. The decision to end the brand—to see dealerships disappear all along the Moorooka magic mile and elsewhere, along with between 600 and maybe 6,000 jobs—is in part a result of the neglect and indifference of the A-T-M governments. Australians who've worked for the Holden brand for generations, Australians who've built their businesses and livelihoods around the Holden brand and Australians who've owned and driven Holden motor vehicles their whole lives—these people all deserve an explanation from the Morrison government.

Australians need a plan to boost the economy and get wages moving again. But the Morrison-McCormack government is too busy finger-pointing, blame-shifting, attacking unions and playing musical chairs to actually do their job. Like much of the Australian economy, wages growth was weak long before the bushfires hit or anyone had heard of the coronavirus. For seven years, the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison governments have failed to address this fundamental economic challenge that impacts on the lives of all working Australians. It's time the Morrison government stopped navel-gazing and focused on coming up with a comprehensive plan to restore the economic and wages growth—(Time expired)

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (11:27): Well, it's Monday morning of a new sitting week but, as sure as the sun shines upon us, Labor are up to their favourite activity, and that is talking down the Australian economy. They love talking down the Australian economy because, for them, it is all about the politics of this place. With the absence of any economic plan whatsoever, the Labor members instead offer up and revert back to this one trick that they have, which is to seek to ignore the facts and try political point-scoring. The idea that Labor and the Morrison governments have failed to address these twin problems plaguing the economy—growing unemployment and low wages growth. This is a recipe for generational inequality. Not surprisingly, those who've already had a pretty good go at accumulating wealth are the only ones who are continuing to get a go. Wage earners with few assets are struggling just to break even, and some are going backwards. Those who've already accumulated substantial assets will be the big winners as their assets increase in value. Falling interest rates mean cheap money, which in turn pushes up asset prices.

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Whilst I know that my efforts today to educate Labor members on the economic record of this government is likely to fall on deaf ears, I do think it is important that Australians understand just what the economic plan of this government is achieving for Australians. We have fixed the Labor mess yet again. On this side of the House we're working together, growing our economy, easing the cost of living and getting more people into work. Under this government, if you have a go you get a go, and the more people that have a go the more productivity is driven up and the better off we are together as a nation.

Increased productivity is leading us to a brighter future and higher wages, with employment growth that is now more than three times what we inherited from Labor. We're also putting more Australians into the workforce. This government has created over 1.5 million jobs in the last six years. Australia, we now know from a recent announcement, has the lowest level of welfare dependency in 30 years. Despite some tough economic conditions, we are enjoying our 28th consecutive year of economic growth. The Australian economy has grown, on average, 3.1 per cent per year—this is in comparison to the OECD average, which sits at 2.2 per cent. We have maintained our AAA credit rating, and we are one of only 10 developed countries to have this rating.

All of that does not come about without hard work and discipline from this Morrison-McCormack government. The Labor members opposite would have you believe that these aren't achievements, that they can simply talk the economy down to where they want it, to where they can play politics with it. Well, the answer is this government is in fact putting more people into work and delivering lower taxes to boot for more than 10 million Australians. Because while Labor wants to take more money out of your pocket, this government wants to make sure that you keep more money and more of what you earn. We are giving businesses more incentives to employ more Australians, to boost productivity, to export more, to make more and to sell more. We've delivered tax relief for 3.4 million small mum and dad businesses that are employing over seven million Australians.

Our strong budget has meant that we can deliver the essential services that Australians rely on, because at the end of the day a surplus is not a means to an end in itself, but a way of supporting our fellow Australians: with an extra $37 billion in funding for schools over the next decade, new hospital agreements delivering $31 billion in funding over five years, 2,300 new life-changing medicines on the PBS, $100 billion invested in vital infrastructure around the nation, and record investments in defence and national security. Because of our strong economic management, we have faced the unprecedented disasters of this summer and supported our fellow Australians, and we continue to do so. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien): Order! The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Roads to Recovery Program

Mr RICK WILSON (O'Connor) (11:32): I 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.

I rise to speak today on the Roads to Recovery Program. As the member for O'Connor, my electorate covers around 886,000 square kilometres. It's great to see the member for Durack here, who represents the other two-thirds of Western Australia. Between us, we represent around one-third of the Australian continental land mass, and of course that encompasses a massive road network, much of which is maintained and built by our local governments. I have 38 local governments in my electorate. I know the member for Durack has some 40-odd local governments. The Roads to Recovery Program, which will deliver $6.2 billion from 2013-14 to 2023-24, is much loved by those local governments. It's untied funding direct from the Commonwealth to those local governments so that they can pursue road projects that make a difference within their local road networks.

Mr Deputy Speaker Llew O'Brien, I know that you're very passionate about road safety, as am I and as is the member for Durack. With our massive road networks, we have a disproportionate number of fatalities on the country roads in our electorates. Tragically, around my home town of Katanning, a town of only 4,000 people, in a seven-day period in January we had three fatalities. These rocked the community and left us wondering what more we could do. And while I don't know the exact reasons for those accidents, obviously roads always play a part in road fatalities.
It's with great pleasure today that I also commend the government for committing another $124 million to the Roads to Recovery Program for those drought affected shires. Unfortunately, that hasn't been extended, Member for Durack, to Western Australia, but we can work on the Deputy Prime Minister for that. But certainly, amongst those drought affected shires on the east coast, there is another $128.9 million—I think that's the exact number—that has been committed to the Roads to Recovery Program, which will allow those local government authorities to get stuck in and do some road works, and get their crews and the local contractors working at a time when there's significant downturn in their local economies.

The Roads to Recovery Program complements many other very important road safety and road funding programs that the Commonwealth government is funding. The Bridges Renewal Program is particularly important, once again, for our local government authorities, who may have many bridges across their shires and a small rate base, and struggle to find the funds to upgrade and maintain those bridge networks. So the Bridges Renewal Program is very important.

The road Black Spot Program—Minister Buchholz very kindly appointed me as chair of the WA road black spot committee—the other day committed $13 million to road black spots across WA. But, importantly, 40 per cent of that money went to projects in regional Western Australia to make sure that, where danger spots have been identified, they are worked on and upgraded to improve our safety.

The Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program, which is about providing adequate and appropriate pull-over space for particularly heavy road haulage drivers. They need to have their mandated breaks and they need to be able to do that in the right sorts of facilities. That project has invested in several very large projects across my electorate, which is much appreciated.

One last project that the Deputy Prime Minister was in Western Australia talking about only last week was the Roads of Strategic Importance. There's $70 million that the Commonwealth government has invested in this program. It's about our grain freight network through the central and southern Wheatbelt that crosses both my electorate and the member for Durack's electorate, and also runs into the member for Pearce's electorate, and upgrading those roads. We've got a lot of heavy vehicles, multicombinations and, sometimes, up to three trailers operating on roads that are built and maintained by the local governments. These are roads that are outside the main roads network, and they need support to maintain and upgrade those roads.

I commend the Deputy Prime Minister and the committee that put together that program. I also commend the Roads to Recovery Program to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien): Is there a seconder for the motion?

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (11:38): I second the motion. The Roads to Recovery Program is very important for our nation. There have been significant benefits for local government areas around the country, and this motion is a good one. I commend the member for O'Connor for putting it forward. It does recognise the real and meaningful difference the Roads to Recovery Program is making in communities right across our nation, including in my electorate of Solomon and including in my friend the member for Lingiari's electorate, which, like the member for Durack's electorate, is a big bit of dirt.

Roads are incredibly important for the economy and for us to be able to harness the massive potential of rural and regional Australia, particularly in the Territory. I'll just quickly go to my electorate. The city of Darwin, in this financial year, received $862,000 from the program, and the city of Palmerston received $411,000 from the program, with more to come in the next couple of years. There are many local government areas in the member for Lingiari's electorate that are receiving much-needed funding. Dirt roads in particular, if they're invested in, are a boon for our mango industry—that's one example—our beef industry as well as agriculture across the board and increasingly aquaculture. What congests our roads is a bit different to the big cities. Miles and miles of corrugated roads rattle the trucks that get our produce to market. So that is an expense to the farmers and, in the case of mangoes, it bruises the fruit, so any funding for those main roads in the Territory is always going to be welcome.

Roads opened up large parts of the Northern Territory to the cattle industry about 60 years ago—and this is really nation-building stuff—opening up vast areas of bush. This created a very important industry not only for the Northern Territory but for our nation that we continue to develop. Road development is an enabler of economic growth, improves productivity and unlocks the economic potential I mentioned. It enables us to access land which is in the best interests of not only industry but in our case in the Northern Territory regional communities such as those that First Nations people inhabit. Roads to Recovery is an important program, and that is why I've seconded this motion.

I also want to call on the government to do more to fund roads in the Northern Territory and around the country with a view to the merit of those programs. We've seen recently some grant funding delivered by the current federal government that to any reasonable person would be seen as being based more on politics than merit. So I
want to caution the government: people in regional Australia are keeping an eye on things like the road congestion funding. A lot of urban Labor seats missed out on this congestion-busting funding to fix up our roads and improve efficiencies while some rural regional seats received this funding, like Corangamite, for example. Now, I've got nothing against the people in Corangamite, but there are rural roads around this country that also need funding so it would be much better if the federal government put the needs of our nation first when it comes to using grant funding such as the road congestion funding, rather than their own political interests. I hope that can happen. I support the Roads to Recovery program, and I thank the House.

Dr MARTIN (Reid) (11:43): I rise to speak on the motion put forward by the member for O'Connor and to commend the work of the Morrison government in conjunction with local councils in providing funding for the repair and improvement of local roads in my community and to improve safety on our roads.

From this financial year, $500 million will be released to councils under the $2.2 billion Local and State Government Road Safety Package announced in the budget. This is up by $100 billion from previous years. In fact over 10 years from 2013 to 2023, the government will provide $6.2 billion to councils as parts of the Roads to Recovery program.

I want to provide an update to the House about local projects which have been funded under the Roads to Recovery program and delivered in my electorate of Reid—these are just some of the 25,000 projects nationally that have been supported under Roads to Recovery. In the City of Canada Bay, on First Avenue, Five Dock, repairs have been carried out to the roundabout at Ingham Avenue. Resurfacing has been carried out as well as new line markings painted to replace sections of road that had sunken due to age. The Morrison government provided over $127,000 towards this project. Also in Five Dock, resurfacing works have been undertaken in Lavender Street to repair worn-out asphalt, with $97,000 provided by the federal government. In Chiswick, Blackwall Point Road has been stabilised and repaired after significant cracks appeared. I'm pleased that the Morrison government was able to contribute $232,000 towards this work. In Mortlake, Hilly Road has been impacted by constant water flow over the road surface, and the federal government supplied $100,000 towards new guttering work, a pram ramp and resurfacing to address this issue. At Concord, a $50,000 contribution from the Morrison government allowed improvements to traffic flow at the intersection of Correys Avenue and Majors Bay Road, including a bike lane marking and improved parking, which will greatly benefit businesses. Over in the Inner West Council, the installation of a speed hump on Croydon Road in Croydon and the construction of a kerb, guttering and tram ramps will improve pedestrian safety near the intersection with Parramatta Road. The federal government has provided $70,000 towards this project.

In my electorate of Reid, congestion is one of the No. 1 local issues for residents right across the area. As the density of the area grows, it becomes more and more important to maintain suburban streets, particularly if they are used as shortcuts by locals to access the main roads during peak hour. The projects funded under Roads to Recovery complement funding delivered for other road infrastructure in my electorate, including the Black Spot Program, which has funded safety improvements to roads such as Woodside Avenue in Strathfield.

Major road infrastructure has also been delivered in Reid. The first stage of WestConnex opened shortly after the election. The tunnels from Ashfield to Concord are already diverting traffic away from Parramatta Road, easing congestion across suburbs like Five Dock, Croydon, Burwood and Homebush. Shortly we will also see progress on the $50 million upgrades to Homebush Bay Drive and the Australia Avenue roundabout, which will come as a huge relief to residents of the Sydney Olympic Park, Wentworth Point, Newington and Homebush.

The benefits of the Roads to Recovery Program are even more significant this year, with extra funds released to be directed to drought affected council areas. In November the Morrison government announced an additional $138 million would be distributed into these drought affected communities, repairing roads, providing jobs and stimulating the economy. The projects I outlined today are just a handful of the many projects funded under Roads to Recovery, the Black Spot Program and the Urban Congestion Fund in my electorate, which are making our roads safer and getting our communities home sooner to be with their families.

Ms STANLEY (Werriwa—Opposition Whip) (11:48): Almost 80 per cent of the nation's roads are administered by their local governments. The federal government's Roads to Recovery Program has been in place through successive governments since 2001. It's an important program that supports local government with the upkeep and maintenance of those local roads. Any increase to that program, which assists with making these roads and by extension our community safer, is very welcome. However, look at the numbers and listen to the experts before making assumptions that the government is doing enough.

Analysis by the NRMA of local councils' financial statements shows that in 2016-17 local road infrastructure backlog in New South Wales alone increased by $2.2 billion. Clearly neither the current funding for the Roads to Recovery Program nor the recently announced increase for drought affected communities will adequately address
this backlog. The shortfall is getting bigger and now runs into the billions of dollars. The NRMA has proposed an increase of $180 million to both Roads to Recovery and the financial assistance grant programs to address this shortfall, but that's just in New South Wales. Nationally the Australian Local Government Association, the peak body for local government, has called for Roads to Recovery to be increased by $800 million per annum.

This is not merely an argument about numbers in an accountant's spreadsheet. Sadly, the consequences of the government's failure to address this backlog has tragic and real-world consequences. According to that same NRMA analysis cited above, over the period 2013-17, the regional and local roads network accounted for 68.9 per cent of all fatalities and 77.6 per cent of all injuries. According to that same NRMA analysis cited above:

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The impact on the New South Wales economy was a staggering $3.9 billion. Unfortunately, it's those regional communities suffering under drought and bushfire that carry the majority of that burden—close to two-thirds of that cost, or $2.6 billion. If this government had the ability and the will to undertake genuine, long-term, real leadership, it would realise that the cost of addressing this backlog is far less than the economic and human cost of death and injury on dangerous roads.

Unfortunately, this funding deficit is not just a regional or rural one. Werriwa is one of the fastest-growing areas in the country. Suburbs that were full of semirural market gardens a few years ago are now densely populated by housing estates and Western Sydney Airport development. Due to the way the New South Wales government has tied the hands of local councils, many of the major roads into and out of these new population centres remain unsealed and riddled with potholes. These roads are incapable of handling the increased amount of traffic the growth has brought, yet the state government stubbornly refuses to act. It's more interested in shifting the costs to local councils and shovelling profits to toll operators.

The New South Wales state government could allow local councils more flexibility and scope by allowing them to determine when and how developer contributions are spent. The government could also step up and accept responsibility and reclassify these once local roads as state roads, given the extra traffic that now uses them. Instead, residents in growing suburbs of my electorate such as Middleton Grange, West Hoxton and Horningssea Park are subject to grinding traffic congestion every morning and afternoon just to get in and out of their suburbs. This lack of action from state and federal Liberal governments means critical projects remain unfunded and incomplete. These include congestion-busting initiatives such as the Middleton Drive extension in Middleton Grange, the completion of Buchan Avenue in Edmondson Park, and the upgrade of Cambridge Avenue at Glenfield. Transport and infrastructure projects that could get cars and trucks off the road—such as the South West Rail Link extension, the Fifteenth Avenue Smart Transit corridor and a fuel line to the Western Sydney Airport—sit on the to-do list, consigned, it seems, to the never-never.

I'd also like to mention the rort that is the Urban Congestion Fund. In New South Wales, coalition seats and some marginal seats received 70 per cent of the $541 million allocated across New South Wales. In Sydney, the coalition targeted the then Labor seat of Lindsay, which shares a border with my electorate, with promises of over $818 million. In Werriwa, however, we got nothing—and we're the ones hosting the airport.

We all need to recognise and acknowledge the tragic impact of the drought on regional and rural communities. However, we don't need to wait for drought, bushfires, flood or any other natural disaster for state and federal governments to do the job they were elected to do.

Mr RAMSEY (Grey—Government Whip) (11:53): I rise to speak on the motion by the member for O'Connor, which recognises that $6.2 billion was committed to and is being spent on the Roads to Recovery program through the current funding cycle.

There are 27 councils in the electorate of Grey, and then there are a number of other bodies that take care of rural roads as well, including the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure in South Australia, and on the APY Lands there's another body which looks after these funding responsibilities. I'm going to run through some of those councils that have benefited through this current funding cycle. On the APY Lands, for instance—and it's worth remembering that we're spending $110 million on a main access road into the lands—there's been almost a million dollars spent on sealing the streets out there in the small communities. The District Council of Barunga West has used their $1.2 million for re-sheeting roads, as has the District Council of Ceduna, which has resurfaced Decres Bay Road and Marchant Road. The District Council of Cleve has used the money for re-sheeting. The District Council of the Copper Coast has spent over $2 million on new bitumen and a reseal of other roads. The District Council of Elliston has spent $10 million on sealing Mount Wedge Road. I drove upon that recently, and actually attended the opening—$2.67 million has gone into that for Elliston council, one of the smallest in our state.

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These are vital funds for very small councils, and it is right that the Commonwealth government is showing that it is deeply involved and interested in our regional communities. We've spent money with the Flinders Ranges Council and the District Council of Franklin Harbour in Cowell for re-sheeting works. The Regional Council of Goyder spent $847,000 on the Booborowie Road—most people may not know where Booborowie is, but I can tell you they need a road! These are important things. My local council, the District Council of Kimba, for street sealing and then rural re-sheeting—that is $1.9 million into another very small district council. These are very important funds. For the Northern Areas Council, we've seen Boonderoo Road, Fogarty Road and Zanker Road all re-sheeted, and, Mr Deputy Speaker, I can tell you the people there are very happy with that result. Interestingly, Port Augusta City Council spent half a million bringing Shack Road up to speed. There's a lot of people in Port Augusta that live on the beautiful western side of Spencer Gulf, up near the top, and they, too, deserve to have decent services. As I said, there are 27 councils, and I will keep going down the list. The Kingoonya to Yantanabie Road has been done up by the South Australian Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure. There is Kemp Road, there's $5.2 million on the Oodnadatta Track, there's the Strzelecki Track, and the Outback Highway from Lyndhurst to Marree has been completely sealed now. I drove upon that stretch of road recently as well, and it is an enormous boon to those people that live in that part of the world to be able to get their cars up to Marree without shaking them to bits.

I should also mention the Special Local Roads Program, which is a South Australian-only program: It recognises that local governments in South Australia control 11 per cent of Australia's rural road network but receive only seven per cent of the funding under the financial assistance grants, the untied grants, which come forward to councils on a regular basis. Consequently, right back since Nick Minchin was in this place, there's been a special allocation to the South Australian state to make up this shortfall. It's something that has not become permanent, I must say. But the member for Barker and I worked very hard a year and a half ago to get it inserted in the budget for two years. It is current for the coming financial year, but, at the end of that financial year, I can guarantee you that he and I will be in this place again and arguing for the continuation of that support to South Australia. It recognises a fundamental flaw in the road-funding formulas. As long as we leave things basically the same, we must continue to recognise this discrepancy and make sure that the people of South Australia, and particularly the rural councils of South Australia—27 of which are in Grey, as I said before—receive that ongoing recognition.

Dr HAINES (Indi) (11:58): I rise to speak on the Roads to Recovery motion. Roads are the circulatory system of my electorate of Indi. Our wellbeing, education and prosperity depend on the network of roads that crisscross the north-east of Victoria. Examples abound. The Woolworths distribution centre at Wodonga stocks 58 outlets with over $2 billion worth of stock via the Hume Highway every year, employing over 400 people. The Tolmie TOAST carpooling initiative gives elderly residents free lifts to Mansfield for medical appointments and coffee dates. There are hundreds of school buses that trundle up dirt roads and over bridges, to collect schoolchildren each day, not to mention the humble country roads that transport our wine, dairy, beef, and fruit from the farm gate to the market and to the world. The Roads to Recovery program has funded many projects in my electorate that make this prosperity possible.

Road infrastructure is a responsibility shared by federal, state and local government, and it's a credit to all levels of government that most people rarely give roads a second thought. We see some remarkable things when governments work together. Last Saturday when I hosted Minister Littleproud, for a visit to bushfire affected communities, we travelled down the Shelley-Walwa Road, recently reopened after a $7.6 million resurfacing project jointly funded by the federal and state governments, Towong Shire, and HVP Plantations. This newly surfaced road will benefit local industries and the jobs that depend on it.

Although it's a shared responsibility, local governments shoulder the load. And it's the local governments of Indi that have told me in no uncertain terms that climate change and the obvious impact of bushfire risks mean we need to evaluate our investment in road infrastructure. The recent—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next day of sitting.
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BILLS

Financial Sector Reform (Hayne Royal Commission Response—Protecting Consumers (2019 Measures)) Bill 2019
Financial Sector Reform (Hayne Royal Commission Response—Stronger Regulators (2019 Measures)) Bill 2019
Higher Education Support (HELP Tuition Protection Levy) Bill 2019
VET Student Loans (VSL Tuition Protection Levy) Bill 2019
Treasury Laws Amendment (Combating Illegal Phoenixing) Bill 2019

Assent

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

Student Identifiers Amendment (Higher Education) Bill 2019

Second Reading

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

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney) (12:00): I rise to speak on the Student Identifiers Amendment (Higher Education) Bill 2019 and to move an amendment. I move:

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

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes that the Government has damaged the quality of Australia's world-class education system by:

(1) cutting billions from universities by effectively capping undergraduate places;

(2) slashing research funding; and

(3) failing to develop a long-term education policy for the nation".

Labor will support this bill and the extension of unique student identifiers from vocational education and training to higher education students. There are currently two student identifiers in tertiary education: the student identifier for the vocational education and training sector and the Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number in the higher education sector. This bill consolidates these two schemes into a single identifier by decommissioning the Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number. This will create a single record of a student's tertiary education journey, following individuals as they move between different institutions in different sectors.

This makes a lot of sense at a time when a lot of students are studying at university when they finish school and then later upgrading qualifications through a TAFE course or the other way around. It makes a lot of sense to have one student identifier in the tertiary sector. It's a useful change as far as it goes, reflecting the policy's original purpose, which the Gillard government developed almost a decade ago and introduced into parliament in 2013. All the way back in 2009 we had a COAG communique which stated:

Improving data collections for all education sectors is of critical importance to Australia. A national student identifier could track students as they progress through education and training and would further support a seamless schooling, VET and higher education experience for students.

So of course we support the principle. We started down this track when we were last in government.

What's very disappointing is that it has taken until the government's third term to introduce this legislation connecting the higher education and vocational education schemes. We still don't really have a system that would also include student records across their schooling. We're no closer, really, to harmonising student records that would cover both schooling and postschool education. We've seen seven years of procrastination in this area; seven years of indifference and neglect.

The government has been urged on a number of occasions to make this change. The government's own reviews have urged it to accelerate the consolidation of student identification across schooling, higher education and vocational education and training. This was recommended in March 2018 in the Gonski review, which found:

The absence of a national, persistent USI is a barrier to creating national education data sets that would assist in developing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of policy or partnership efforts. Without the USI, the numerous existing data sets are disconnected and analysis of these can only provide limited insight.

It's disappointing that this bill is only a partial remedy for this issue.
Labor are very supportive of fulfilling the potential, the capacity, that extending the USI from vocational education to higher education would provide us with. We'll better understand how people progress through their post-secondary school education, including the different pathways—if you follow a vocational education pathway or a higher education pathway—and the intersection and interoperation of these two sectors. We need to make sure that, as a national unique student identifier is extended to school students, the system really is fully integrated so that we can make the most of all of those different datasets. Of course, we do that in a way that protects student privacy, but it is an incredibly valuable resource to see what kinds of interventions genuinely make a difference for students.

In recent years we have been suffering from very poor outcomes. All of our international testing results are going backwards. We're very concerned about the fact that, in literacy, numeracy and science—a range of different areas—our school students' results are plummeting in the international rankings. Having a unique student identifier that follows a student throughout their schooling into post-schooling education and tells us what interventions that student has had and what difference it's made in their educational outcomes is a very rich data source indeed. To make the most of this very rich data source, of course, we have to make sure that we have funding set aside for research in education. At the time of the last election, Labor was proposing a well-funded institute that would engage in exactly this sort of educational research so that we could take what is best practice in classrooms and make it common practice across our education system. The government have said they are up for more research in schooling, but they haven't actually provided any extra funding for this type of research. When you look at the benefit of medical research to the health of our community, you can picture the potential benefit we can have for our students with a methodical, widespread approach to taking the best research and implementing it in our classrooms.

We know the importance of evidence based policy. Our $280 million commitment at the 2019 election to establish a national evidence institute, with a mission of evaluating what works and what doesn't work in our schools, would have meant the commissioning of new research. It would have given educators an opportunity to stay up to date with the most recent research and know how to apply it in their classrooms. It would have saved money, because, of course, we spend a lot of money on things that don't work in our classrooms. It would have lifted standards and it would have helped schools that are already doing excellent work to share that success with others.

We believe that to give students the best education we need to put an end to the decades of ideological debate about what's best in the classroom and in fact base our interventions purely on the science, purely on the evidence of what's working in our schools. This bill does enable a better look at vocational education and university results. It does help with the aim that Labor has of education policy based on credible research with proper data collection through a national unique student identifier scheme that would improve outcomes for all students. It does help with that, but in a very small way. It does fall short, dramatically short, of that goal. But we're never going to stand in the way of small improvements when we see them, so we'll support the bill.

The other criticism it's important to make while we're talking about this legislation is that it's good as far as it goes, but it doesn't even begin to stem the tide of damage done by the very substantial cuts to both vocational education and higher education in this country. It doesn't solve the deeper problems that are facing TAFE and our universities. And it really doesn't in any way even begin to acknowledge the most fundamental connection between investing in education and economic growth.

The backdrop to the discussion that we're having about education policy at the moment is the dismal state of the Australian economy. If you look at all of our key economic indicators, they are all going the wrong way. Wages are stagnant. Productivity is static. Business investment's down. Household debt keeps going up. Labour market productivity is going backwards for the first time ever since we've been collecting these statistics. Economic growth is at its slowest level since the global financial crisis. This is not a picture of a thriving economy. It is not a picture of a country that's putting its best resources, its people, to their best use. If we're being blunt about the situation, we're in a period of stagnation and decline, we're in a period of malaise, driven by the lack of a plan from those opposite for jobs and growth.

We've got an era of low growth, low productivity and low investment which has been absolutely disastrous for our nation. It's squeezing people financially. You don't have to go far to find people who will tell you how anxious they are about the fact that their wages aren't going up and that their households budgets are under pressure. We've got almost two million Australians now who are out of work or looking for more hours of work—millions of Australians living with the reality of unemployment or underemployment who haven't had a decent pay rise in years, and thousands who've actually suffered flat-out wage theft in recent times.

In the face of this, we know that investment in education can change our national economy and it can make a huge difference to people's own lives, to their own family budgets. We know that a university degree or a
vocational education qualification can expand the opportunities that an individual has, expand their employability and help erase the barriers of class and inequality that have trapped people in poverty in some communities around Australia. We know very clearly that investment in education is a driver of economic growth in countries around the world. World Bank analysis shows that the social return—not the private return but the return for our whole community—of an extra year of schooling sits at around 10 per cent, and it is even higher for women.

In Australia, research by Deloitte Access Economics placed the value of our universities to our productive capacity at $140 billion—that is, Australia's GDP is $140 billion a year higher because of the improved productivity of the 28 per cent of our workforce that have a university qualification. Of course, it's not just about the dollars-and-cents return that we make as a nation and we receive as a nation when we invest in education. All of the evidence shows us that that return is real, it's reliable, it's predictable and it's waiting for us to grasp. The Deloitte Access Economics report estimated that Australia would require an extra 3.8 million university graduates by 2025. We need those graduates in science, engineering, medicine, nursing, the humanities and law, just as we need people trained in the vocational educational sector. We've got shortages in both and we shouldn't for a moment believe that this is about one sector versus another sector. Australia needs a strong and excellent university sector and a strong and excellent vocational training sector.

The minister himself has acknowledged that productivity improvements in the post-secondary school sector can increase economic growth by $2.7 billion a year. So that's even before we take note of the huge difference that university campuses make in our regional communities, how they provide jobs, attract investment and train regional workers. And, in many cases, of course, that regional workforce, trained in a regional university, goes on to live and work in a regional community. When we've had shortages of medical workforce in the past in regional areas, the evidence is always that we are most likely to improve that situation by training young people from regional areas in regional universities. If they stay in the regions to do their higher education, they're much more likely to stay there and go on to work in a regional community.

We've also seen in recent times these vast benefits ignored, and universities in particular are seen as great places to make cuts in order to try and balance the budget. It's a government that's cut $2.2 billion from the higher education system, $328 million from university research and re-capped university places, which means that probably 200,000 Australians will miss out on a university place—200,000 people who would otherwise have qualified for a university place will miss out.

It's also this government that has cut more than $3 billion from TAFE and training. That's never been our approach. We want to make sure, as a Labor Party, that a university education or a TAFE education is available and accessible to every Australian who's prepared to work hard, study hard and go to university or TAFE. We opened up the university system by uncapping places, giving an extra 190,000 students an opportunity to go to university. That decision was driven by our commitment to those individuals to give them the best opportunities in life, but also by our sure knowledge that a modern developed economy requires these graduates. And it's worked.

Under Labor universities' policy, financially disadvantaged student enrollments increased by 66 per cent; Indigenous undergraduate student enrollments increased by 105 per cent; enrolments of undergraduate students with a disability grew by 123 per cent; and enrolment of students from regional and remote areas increased by 53 per cent. These are the kinds of aspirations that should be driving decision-making in higher education.

We've seen similarly in TAFE the obverse, I suppose—massive cuts to TAFE and vocational education have seen growing skills shortages right across Australia. We've got, as I said earlier, almost two million Australians unemployed or underemployed yet three-quarters of Australian businesses will tell you that they can't find the skilled staff they need.

Education is our greatest force for equity and it can also be our most effective tool for economic progress as a nation. Education helps create jobs, boosts wages and gives a better quality of life for all Australians. Education underpins economic growth and improved productivity that is desperately needed in our economy today. Education is not just social policy. It doesn't just help individuals. Education is economic policy—a bedrock for economic development in this country. We need to make sure the government stops viewing our education system as simply a target for cuts and recognises it as the engine for growth that it is.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the amendment seconded?

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (12:19): I second the amendment and reserve my right to speak.

Ms HAMMOND (Curtin) (12:19): I rise to support the Student Identifiers Amendment (Higher Education) Bill 2019. In my electorate of Curtin education is very important. Significant numbers of people are employed and work in the education sphere, from early childhood through to higher education. There are over 50 schools, with almost 30,000 children enrolled in them. There is one world-class university, the University of Western Australia, and a number of other higher education providers. Of the population in Curtin aged over 15 years, over 52 per
cent has post-secondary qualifications above the level of diploma. This is compared with the national average of 30 per cent.

Education is extremely important in Curtin, and education matters to our government. We know that Australia's capacity to grow, compete and thrive in an increasingly global economy is dependent on all employers and all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances, being able to access and use the right training, knowledge and skills at the right time. A strong and seamless post-education sector encompassing both higher education and VET is critical to our economy and to helping prepare Australians for the workforce opportunities of today and of the future. Equally importantly, having the opportunity to obtain knowledge and skills—and to be able to pursue employment and work opportunities using that knowledge and those skills—is vitally important for both individual and societal wellbeing.

I've said it in this place previously, but I think it's worth repeating: Australia and Australians cannot afford to be left behind in this time of rapid change, a time of escalating digital transformation and disruption. We need to be adaptable. We need an accessible, high-quality post-secondary education sector, one that is innovative, robust and responsive to our country's needs and ever-emerging gaps.

There are differences between vocational education and higher education, and these are differences we should encourage and celebrate as they provide choice and opportunity for people to follow a path which best suits their talents, ambitions and passions. At the same time—and more so now, I think, than ever before—we need to be cognisant of the fact that the offerings in these two sectors are not mutually exclusive; they are complementary. For example, there are many areas in which somebody learns something in higher education which can be enhanced with further VET studies, and the same in reverse. Also, with the rapidity of technological advances, people are frequently having to upskill or reskill and to do so at a relatively rapid rate. Both higher and vocational education have vital roles to play in this, and it's vital that the two systems speak to each other so that people can access, as easily as possible, the best path for themselves.

This particular bill amends the Student Identifiers Act to enable the extension of the unique student identifier, also known as the USI, from vocational education and training to higher education students, and to enable the Student Identifiers Registrar to assign a student identifier to higher education students. The USI initiative commenced on 1 January 2015 in the VET sector. It is a reference number, made up of 10 numbers and letters, that is free and easy to create and stays with a student for life. The USI gives access to an online record of nationally recognised training in the form of a USI transcript. This can be used by people when applying for jobs, seeking a credit transfer or demonstrating prerequisites when undertaking further study. The USI initiative is also extremely valuable for government, as it enables the collection of information about students' training activities and their movements within the VET sector. This information provides an important foundation for understanding and improving VET performance and better meets the needs of students, training organisations and employers.

Currently, in the higher ed sector, the equivalent to the USI is the Commonwealth higher education student support number, known as the CHESSN. The CHESSN is not currently compatible with the USI, and this creates difficulty for those VET students transitioning to higher ed, or those higher ed students transitioning to VET. The higher ed sector has long supported the establishment of USIs and the importance of establishing a national USI to support a seamless transition between schooling, VET and higher education. The call for the national USI across all education sectors was repeated in 2018, on at least two occasions, through the STEM Partnerships Forum, led by Chief Scientist Dr Alan Finkel. The forum summarised that the lack of a consistent national identifier was the largest barrier to understanding the impact of policy efforts to improve engagement in STEM education. In the same year, in the final report of the Higher Education Standards Panel into improving retention, completion and success in higher education, it was recommended as a way to better understand student pathways across tertiary education.

This bill is responding to those calls by amending the current act so as to include the higher education sector, thus enabling the assignment, collection, use, disclosure and verification of student identifiers for higher education students. The registrar has powers and functions that will expand to include the operation of the student identifier in the higher education sector. From 1 January 2021, new domestic and onshore overseas students studying at a registered higher education provider will be required to apply for a USI. As noted, the benefits of the USI are numerous. Key among those benefits is that it will help students engage with their studies across sectors. It will facilitate people's ability to upskill and reskill, build their careers and fulfil their goals and aspirations. It will also strengthen the integrity and richness of data available and help the government to gain a better understanding of student pathways across tertiary education. A more robust evidence base will help inform future policy development and program delivery. This will further improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the government's investment in tertiary education. This project is going to trigger the decommissioning of the existing CHESSN.
and replace it with the USI. This will reduce from two to one the number of tertiary identifiers issued by the government.

Our government knows that an excellent education system really, really matters to the future of our society and our country. This why our government is investing record levels of funding in our education system. This is why we are committed to taking considered and appropriate steps, such as those contained in this bill, to ensure that the system, from early childhood through to primary, secondary and tertiary education, is fit for the demands and challenges of the world we live in. We want a system that is responsive to the needs of students. We want a system that provides the best platform and opportunities for people to individually thrive. We want to make sure the system continues to strengthen and underpin the vitality and success of our wonderful country. I commend the education minister on all he has done in this space, and continues to do, and I offer my support for this bill.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (12:27): I rise to speak on the Student Identifiers Amendment (Higher Education) Bill 2019, a bill that seeks to amend the Student Identifiers Act 2014 to enable the extension of the Unique Student Identifier, the USI, from vocational education and training students to higher educational students. Since 2015, students enrolling in a nationally recognised VET course have been assigned a randomly generated alphanumeric code, the Unique Student Identifier. That code is used by the student each time they enrol in a VET course. Since 2017, persons who have a USI have been able to access, view and download their authenticated VET transcripts via the USI transcript service. The bill before the chamber extends the USI framework to higher education students. It will enable the USI to record a student's entire tertiary education. The bill proposes that, from 2021, new domestic and onshore overseas higher education students can apply for a student identifier and, from 2023, registered higher education providers will not be permitted to confer a regulated higher education award on an individual unless the individual has been assigned a student identifier or has an exemption for some reason.

Labor developed a proposal for a national USI scheme almost a decade ago. In 2009 a COAG communique stated:

Improving data collections for all education sectors is of critical importance to Australia. A national student identifier could track students as they progress through education and training and would further support a seamless schooling, VET and higher education experience for students.

A USI for the VET sector was introduced by Labor in the 43rd Parliament but was not voted on before lapsing when parliament was prorogued. It was reintroduced by the coalition government in 2014 and then passed into law. The coalition government has neglected the education sector by wasting time when they could have been extending this important scheme to include higher ed and by failing to extend the scheme to all education sectors.

The coalition government's failure has disadvantaged students and the education sector as a whole. The March 2018 Gonski review—the Report of the review to achieve educational excellence in Australian schools—recommended:

Accelerate the introduction of a national Unique Student Identifier for all students to be used throughout schooling.

The report contends:

The absence of a national, persistent USI is a barrier to creating national education data sets that would assist in developing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of policy or partnership efforts. Without the USI, the numerous existing data sets are disconnected and analysis of these can only provide limited insight. This has particular implications for areas such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, where there are calls to increase the relative priority of specific skills and subjects but the impact of previous and future policy changes are uncertain.

Labor understands the importance of evidence based policy. Labor took a $280 million commitment to the 2019 election to establish a national evidence institute to evaluate what works and what doesn't work in Australian schools. The institute would commission new research, help educators stay up to date, save money, lift standards and help schools that are already doing excellent work to share those successes with other schools. Labor believe that to give students the best education, we need to put an end to decades of ideological battles about school education. Education policy based on credible research along with data collection through a national USI scheme would improve outcomes for all students.

The bill seeks to enable a single student identifier to record a student's entire tertiary education journey by decommissioning the Commonwealth higher education student support number and expanding the USI to higher education. However, for school students and for their parents and carers this bill does nothing to alleviate the problem of a school student's educational history and being left behind when the student moves from school to school, or from state to state. The 2018 Gonski review said this was an important problem that needs addressing. A USI that included all school students would facilitate a smooth transition to a new school for students and would result in less impact on their learning development. It is important that the national rollout of the USI to
school students is accelerated, as recommended by the 2018 Gonski review. The benefits for students, employers and the education sector would be enormous. It will be important to ensure the new system is protected by adequate security safeguards and that the information is used only for the purposes for which it was collected.

Sadly, Australia's economic growth is slowing. It's the slowest it's been since the global financial crisis, and one of the reasons for this can be traced back to the fact we have a coalition government in its seventh year. Let's look at the economic landscape: we've got stagnant wages; household debt has sky rocketed; almost two million Australians are looking for work or more work, and unemployment is higher than it should be; business investment is at the lowest levels since the 1990s recession; productivity, a great measure of whether the engine of society is working, is going backwards; living standards are going backwards for many people. A decline in educational outcomes and a skills crisis are contributing to these dire circumstances, and we see the results in our electorates every day. We see it translate to people coping with record low wages growth and crashing productivity, business investment at its lowest level since the 1990s recession, as I said. It's dampening consumer and business confidence. You just need to go to retail shops and talk to retailers to find out what's happening. Business is down 10, 20 or 30 per cent, and some are even down 50 per cent; no-one is pulling money out of their wallets. Obviously those opposite will say, 'You're talking down the economy,' but I'm telling the facts as reported to me by businesses in my electorate.

The Australian Industry Group says that 75 per cent of businesses surveyed are struggling to find the qualified workers they need. A great education can be the ticket to a lifetime of opportunity for the individuals who obtain that education. And it's the ticket to a wealthier and more productive nation. A university education transforms the lives of individuals and is one of the best investments any government can make in its citizens.

The coalition government has the power to close the gap in just one generation and provide all the spill-on effects to the whole community. Put simply, investing in and maintaining our world-class universities is good for all Australians. The value that university education has added to Australia's productive capacity is estimated at $140 billion in GDP. We know that Australia will require an additional 3.8 million university qualifications by 2025—additional, that is—yet, when it comes to our higher education system, let's look at what the coalition government's priorities have been. You can sum it up in three words: cut, cut, cut. That history is important, especially in the current context, where university vice-chancellors are telling us about the impacts of the coronavirus right now—damage that could be rolling out for months, perhaps even years, if people don't turn up to universities and, instead, go to those countries where the borders aren't closed.

Before the coronavirus came along, let's look at what the coalition had done. They'd capped university places, cutting $2.2 billion from the system and locking more than 200,000 students out of the opportunity of a university qualification; and they'd cut $328.5 million from university research. The minister himself said to the National Press Club that productivity improvements in the higher education sector can deliver $2.7 billion to Australia's GDP per annum. How are these cuts going to improve productivity?

Universities are also economic powerhouses within the community, particularly the universities in our regions. They provide jobs, train regional workers and prepare our young people for the future challenges our country will face. Research has found that seven in 10 regional university graduates take up work outside of metropolitan areas and that those universities and students reinvest more than $2 billion a year back into those regional communities with university campuses. I'm talking about the great contribution the universities of Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Cairns, Townsville and the like make. I would have thought that National Party MPs would understand this and would be in there championing these universities. Instead, we hear from vice-chancellors that they are flat out getting a meeting with regional representatives in the Morrison government.

During the last campaign Labor took a different approach. We committed $12.3 million to establish the national institute for flood resilience at Southern Cross University in northern New South Wales. I give these examples because these are policies that could be taken off the Labor shelf by the National Party or the Liberal Party and used to stimulate a sector that is reeling at the moment. The Northern Rivers is one of the most active flood plains in Australia, so locals know firsthand the devastating impact these natural disasters can have. That's why we took the idea of a national institute for flood resilience to the election. It is estimated that floods cost the Australian economy $18.2 billion per year. The knowledge that would have been developed in a regional centre like Lismore could have been shared across our nation and the world. Labor also committed to build an emergency response and innovation centre in Townsville at James Cook. The centre would have used state-of-the-art augmented reality technology to create realistic simulations to support vital research and training. In the summer we've just experienced, the black summer, we've seen our country at its most hostile. We've seen communities at their most vulnerable. These are just some of the examples of the nation-leading and nation-building research that can occur right here in Australia, particularly in regional universities, and lead to real emergency mitigation.
In government what do Labor do? We continue that great tradition of ensuring that university education never remains out of reach for our brightest people. In order to achieve this goal we invested in universities. After years of neglect under the 12 long years of the previous Howard government, Labor boosted investment in universities from $8 billion when we came to government in 2007 up to $14 billion in 2013. We also opened up the system with demand-driven funding in 2012, which has seen an additional 190,000 Australians able to obtain a place in university. We also wanted to ensure that the opportunity to go to university was made available to all Australians, particularly those who have had to overcome structural disadvantages. And what happened? Well, it worked. Labor's policies saw an extra 220,000 Australians get the opportunity. Financially disadvantaged student enrolments increased by 66 per cent; Indigenous undergraduate student enrolments increased by 105 per cent; undergraduate students with a disability grew by 123 per cent; and students from regional and remote areas, those areas represented by the National Party particularly, increased by 50 per cent.

Labor supports this bill and the member for Sydney's sensible amendment. We support the extension of the USI to higher education students, but we need this framework to be completed by extending it through to school students so that everyone can gain the maximum benefits of a unique student identifier, as envisaged by the Labor scheme developed over a decade ago.

Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (12:40): I rise to support the Student Identifiers Amendment (Higher Education) Bill 2019. The unique student identifier is a number given to a student upon enrolment in any tertiary institution. This bill amends the Student Identifiers Act 2014 to enable extension of the USI from VET to higher education. For the first time, a student identifier will follow a student throughout their education and be extended from vocational education to universities.

Imagine a student finishing school after completing the VCE. She enrols in a VET course in aged care and gains work as a care assistant. She realises she really enjoys looking after and supporting people and their families when someone is unwell. As a result, she enrols in a Bachelor of Nursing. During her degree she is able to support herself by working in an aged-care facility. She completes her degree and starts work at a hospital. After a few years, she decides that she enjoys the energy and fast paced environment of the emergency room, so she enrols in a master's degree specialising in emergency care. She sees how practice could be improved and wants to enact change in her workplace to ensure the hospital is giving the best level of care to patients, so she enrols in a doctorate and completes a thesis on clinical practices. Despite moving from TAFE to university to another university, her student identifier will be able to follow her right through her professional and educational career. This will alleviate the administrative load of the institutions, and the student will be supported and encouraged throughout their lifelong learning.

We all know that lifelong learning is now a fact of life. We know, with the future of work, that we have to prepare our students for ongoing learning now and into the future. With the 21st century knowledge economy coming online and the ability for people to access education becoming faster and easier, this unique student identifier is going to make sure that we can map the progress of people as they move through our educational system and that we are able to track them on an ongoing basis. By having one unique student identifier throughout a person's educational journey, it will help inform government policy and help both federal and state governments understand the pathways tertiary students take after leaving high school, a journey which is often complex and varied but doesn't just stop at the age of 25. It continues on for many people throughout their life.

In the last decade there's been a focus on encouraging students to undertake higher education in Australia. However, ensuring students stay enrolled and complete their studies has proved more challenging, particularly amongst rural, regional and remote students. Research from the Australian Council for Educational Research indicates that after nine years of commencing a degree only 59.5 per cent of remote students and 69.8 per cent of regional students graduate. This is in stark contrast to the 75 per cent of their metropolitan counterparts. We need to do better to understand the gaps, to ensure that once students gain access into an educational system they can be supported to be retained and maintained in that system. These students face certain financial pressures and emotional, social and cultural pressures from relocation to new environments, which their metropolitan counterparts are less likely to experience. Having one unique student identifier will allow policymakers to track the educational journey of rural, regional and remote students, and that can be used to inform policies to help ensure that students are maintained within the system and supported throughout their journey.

Furthermore, at the STEM Partnerships Forum, led by the Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel, there was a recommendation for a lifelong unique student identifier to be established and implemented by this year. It was found that a key barrier to understanding the impact of policy efforts to improve engagement in STEM education was a lack of a consistent national identifier. I'm pleased that we are now debating this bill and I expect the support across the division on this.
As a professor at not one but two universities, I understand the unique situation that students face when they're making life decisions about where they would like to develop their education and where they would like to be in the future. We know that tracking student progress is very important when we are looking at strengthening the integrity and richness of the data that is provided so that we can see where we can better use our resources and where we can better support our students.

This bill will amend current requirements under the act to include the higher education sector. Specifically, the bill will enable the assignment, collection, use, disclosure and verification of student identifiers for higher education students. The register, appointed under subdivision B of the act, has powers that will expand to include the operation of the student identifier in the higher education sector. From 1 January 2021, once this bill is passed, new domestic and onshore overseas students studying at registered higher education providers will be required to apply for a USI. From 1 January 2023, registered higher education providers must not confer a regulated higher education award on an individual unless that individual has been assigned a USI or an exemption applies.

This is a simple, practical, sensible measure which points to the fact that our government understands that higher education needs to be flexible, it needs to be open and it needs to allow students to traverse the different sorts of educational outcomes they wish to achieve. It puts the student in the driver’s seat with regard to their career development. I'd like to congratulate the minister on bringing this bill forward and I support it fully.

Ms MADELEINE KING (Brand) (12:46): I'm very pleased today to rise in this place to speak on the Student Identifiers Amendment (Higher Education) Bill 2019. Labor will support this bill, but I also support the amendments moved by the member for Sydney. They're very sensible and factually correct amendments that note the ongoing failure of the Liberal-National government to support higher education. They also note the slashing of funding to universities by this government and also the retrograde funding cuts for science and research made by the Liberal-National government.

Many of us here are passionate about the value of our higher education system and the benefits it brings to Australia economically, socially and of course personally for every individual, but only the Labor Party supports the higher education sector with policy and practice when in government. After seven long years of this Liberal-National government, all the sector has seen, very sadly, is cuts, cuts and only ever more cuts. Labor understands the prosperity that comes from keeping our higher education system strong. It lifts the nation up, it opens doors for individuals and gives opportunities to those who may not have had them before. A university education transforms the lives of individuals and is one of the best investments any government can make. In one generation it can close the disadvantage gap and has flow-on effects for entire communities. As the member for Sydney said earlier in this place today, education is the greatest opportunity to achieve equity and equality.

In government, we continued that great Labor tradition by ensuring that a university education never remains out of reach for anyone. In order to achieve this goal, Labor invested in Australia's universities. After many years of neglect under the Howard government, Labor boosted investment in universities from $8 billion in 2007 to $14 billion in 2013. We also opened up the system with demand-driven funding in 2012 which has seen an additional 190,000 Australians able to get a place in universities. Now this Liberal-National government has cut $2.2 billion out of the sector, which is an effective cap on places. That means that 200,000 people who could have gone on to further education in this country no longer can. That's an opportunity that has been denied to many people in my electorate: once they could have gone to university, but, thanks to this Liberal government, they are no longer able to.

This bill speaks to the importance of the sector as a whole by modernising and making sure that universities, governments and appropriate agencies have the tools required to continually provide the best support possible to students in this country. The bill amends the Student Identifiers Act to enable the extension of the unique student identifier from vocational education and training to higher education students. The unique student identifier is a secure online record of a student's nationally recognised training. The national system was developed to track student outcomes and pathways through the education system, and to facilitate assessment of overseas students and communications between relevant state and federal departments.

Critically, the Gillard Labor government developed a business case for a unique student identifier within the vocational education and training system, but sadly that legislation elapsed at the 2013 election. It must be noted that the Abbott government, in 2014, did pass the Student Identifiers Act, but that did not extend to the higher education sector, which is what we are seeking to do today. Since 2014 there has been a radio silence on this very sensible reform that will help students and policymakers alike.

As has been noted before, the higher education system still uses the Commonwealth higher education student support numbers, and this bill will enable a single student identifier that will record a student's entire tertiary education by decommissioning the old CHESSNs and expanding the student identifiers to higher education. It
proposes that from 2021 new domestic and onshore overseas higher education students can apply for a student identifier. If we extend this identifier from vocational education and training to higher education then universities and governments will better understand how Australians use post-secondary training as well as pathways between vocational education and other higher education institutions. This is useful as it will more clearly inform future policy development and program delivery through new up-to-date evidence based data.

It will be important to ensure that, as a national universal student identifier is extended to school students, we continue to maximise the new data that is gained while at the same time protecting the privacy of students at home and abroad. That is why Labor is happy to support this bill; however, as usual, it is clear that something like this should have happened a lot sooner. Seven years in power and this government has failed, until now, to adopt what is quite a simple reform. It is abundantly clear to the Australian public and everyone involved in the higher education and VET sectors that this Liberal-National government have no plan, have no agenda other than chasing weird ideological pursuits and are distracted always by their own internal bickering. The coalition government have failed once again to see the real importance of the higher education sector. They should have extended this scheme to the sector years ago. This government can't even do the simple things quickly—it's taken seven years!

Two years ago the government's own Gonski review, in 2018, the Report of the review to achieve educational excellence in Australian schools, said:

The absence of a national, persistent USI is a barrier to creating national education data sets that would assist in developing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of policy or partnership efforts. Without the USI, the numerous existing data sets are disconnected and analysis of these can only provide limited insight. This has particular implications for areas such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, where there are calls to increase the relative priority of specific skills and subjects but the impact of previous and future policy changes are uncertain.

This is from their own report, and here we are, two years later, and finally this unmotivated government are getting around to this simple, uncontroversial change that could help the nation understand how the education system is working. Perhaps they could even think about developing policy to improve it. The truth is that the Liberal-National party simply don't care enough for good policy in this country and they never pass up a chance to cut university funding and funding to the vocational education and training system in this nation.

Labor is committed to developing policy based on evidence. At the last election, Labor committed to establishing a national evidence institute to evaluate what works and what doesn't work in Australian schools. This institute would commission new research, help educators stay up to date, save money, lift standards and help schools that already doing excellent work to share their successes and their knowledge with other schools. Practical, helpful education policy; it's an idea that this current government might want to look at themselves and perhaps seek to implement for the good of the nation.

It's a policy we developed because, on this side of the House, Labor understand the needs of the education sector and we understand the importance of building a policy around solid evidence and facts. It's time we gave students in this country the best education possible and put an end to the ideological battles that have been waged in the sector. Strange and paranoid red-herring arguments about freedom of speech on uni campuses have distracted this government from doing the important things—simple things like this student identifier bill. Instead, they chase their tails on ridiculous arguments that just seek to denigrate people who work at universities and people who study at it. Labor supports education policy based on credible research, not strange conspiracy theories. Data collection through a national universal student indicator scheme would improve outcomes for all students—and not just students, of course.

A strong higher education sector has fantastic benefits for the economic health of a nation. Australia's economic growth has been the slowest it has been since the global financial crisis. Wages are stagnant; household debt has skyrocketed; almost two million Australians are looking for work or more work; and the unemployment rate is higher than it should be. Business investment is at its lowest level since the 1990s recession. Productivity and living standards are going backwards. A decline in educational outcomes and a skills crisis are contributing to these dire circumstances. We see it every day. Put simply, investing in and maintaining our world-class universities is good for all of us. The value that university education has added to Australia's productive capacity is estimated at $140 billion in gross domestic product.

It is a sector under extreme pressure, with the outbreak of COVID-19 affecting international students. As we all know in this place, the internationalisation of Australian education is a great success story and one that has enriched our society as well as our campuses. International education is a $33 billion export industry, one of Australia's largest. The international education industry also supports over 130,000 jobs in this country. We mustn't forget that the international education industry also supports science and research in our public universities. As science and research has been cut by this government year upon year upon year, universities have
but one choice: to turn to their international student market to ensure they can get the funding from those students to support science and research. If this government would care to think about the benefits of science and research and perhaps start funding it instead of cutting it all the time, they would find our universities under less pressure to continually seek to grow on a massive scale the international education sector.

It is a sector we want to grow but, in times like this, when we see the outbreak of COVID-19, we can see how easily it can be damaged by something that is beyond everybody's control. I must say, when this crisis with COVID-19 is over, all Australians—certainly us in this parliament—will warmly welcome back to these shores Chinese students and other students from across Asia, because we know the participation they bring to the university education system in this country is gravely important not only for other students on campus but also for the entire education system itself.

As I said at the start, Labor supports this bill. I also support the amendment moved by the member for Sydney. I urge the government to do more to support this important sector that is facing so many challenges on so many different fronts.

Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (12:58): My dad started his working life at the age of 14 at my grandfather's garage 'pumping gas', as the Americans put it. Some 71 years later, he still goes to work as a motor mechanic. By anyone's measure, that is a long time in just one career. I didn't follow my dad's footsteps into his motor mechanics business. In fact, like so many of my generation, I've had a number of careers, and only time will tell how much more I have here and beyond. This bill, Student Identifiers Amendment (Higher Education) Bill 2019, will be very important not just for my generation but increasingly for those who are younger than I.

It is a little known fact that I began my adult life pursuing a different kind of vocation. I studied to become a Catholic priest for a short while with the Pallottine order in Victoria. I know that for some that may be unpalatable with the issues that have arisen in recent times regarding sexual abuse, but I, for one, am proud of the work that I did and the many good men and women that I interacted with at the time. In my second career, I took up tools and worked with my hands as a carpenter. I studied for my vocational qualifications at Holmesglen TAFE as an apprentice carpenter and joiner. After establishing my own building business, with an incredibly supportive wife, two children and one on the way, I had a brain explosion and went back to uni and studied law at QUT. I went on and practiced as a barrister for 16 years after that. So I've received a formal higher education, I've received a formal vocational education and, on Victorian building sites at the peak of that recalcitrant union the BLF in the 1980s, you can safely say I've received plenty of informal education along the way.

For a person of my age that mixture is not unique, but it is unusual. For students growing up in Australia today it will be the norm. Students today don't think for a second that they will have only one job, one career or one skill set during their lives. With the pace of technological change, they have never known anything other than continuous learning. They expect that their working life will be the same, and it will.

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment's Australian jobs publication describes studies which estimate that soon Australians will make an average of 17 changes in employers across five different careers. Each career change will need fresh training and in many cases new formal qualifications requiring multiple types of learning. Our students today are going to need to mix vocational education with university courses flexibly, as they move from one industry to another. But it won't just be in moving between careers that vocational education and higher education will need to interact.

Recently, I visited the site of EndED Butterfly House in Mooloolah Valley with co-founder Mark Forbes. The coalition government has contributed more than $6 million towards the construction and operation of this Australian-first facility, and it's terrific to see it racing towards completion. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mark, EndED, the Butterfly foundation and BA Murphy Constructions on what will become Australia's first residential eating disorder facility. While I was touring the site with Mark, we spoke to one of the carpenters installing cladding. He very kindly gave me the chance to borrow his nail bag and make some good use of my building licence I've been keeping for all of these years. We reflected on how much faster we were able to clad the building than I—or even when he—could have when I began my career. With strong, battery powered tools and nail guns everywhere saving labour, and the tangled wires of hoses a thing of the past, custom manufactured structures created by machines elsewhere are slotted seamlessly, with a little bit of gentle persuasion, into place.

It doesn't take a university education to work with building tools today, but on more complex builds it won't be long before it does. In some trades, the change is already happening. On my recent listening post tour in Fisher, I was helped out by one of my most dedicated volunteers John Pozzey. John was telling me about his first career decades ago in one of the most advanced machining tool shops in Australia. John, and the company he worked
for, were tireless innovators in their day, building some of the most advanced components available. But I doubt that they would recognise them in the workshops of companies like the coast's own HeliMods today.

To work in today's aeronautical and mechanical engineering shop, you need hands-on skills. But you also need cutting-edge design, engineering and IT skills. At HeliMods, a pure vocational education is not enough but nor is a pure university education. You need both sets of skills and, as the industry's technology continues to change, you need constant refreshment of both. We must make gathering those dual skills easy, seamless and efficient. What I found was that each of the many stages of my education was anything but. Every time I took up a new course, I found that I was starting again. I was laboriously establishing my existing learning—trying to get it recognised, and studying how to make the system work—before opening my first book.

It can't be like that in the future. If we cannot encourage more Australians to study more, and to study in more varied ways, then we will all fall behind our international competitors. Certainly, we need to ensure that we are getting the right number of students into the right courses at university. The coalition government is helping to achieve that with record funding of some $18 billion this year. Those opposite like to talk about cuts, but you can't have cuts when you have record funding. The coalition government is helping to achieve that. In my own electorate of Fisher, the government has provided the University of the Sunshine Coast with additional funding for teaching and learning—from $165 million in 2018 to $172 million last year. That's on top of an additional $69.4 million that we are delivering for new students over the next four years at the USC Moreton Bay campus.

But, instead of degrees, we need to encourage more of our young people to get a trade. In Queensland in 2018, in the construction trades, 37 per cent of employers attracted no suitable applicants for trade jobs they had available. Only 49 per cent of vacancies were filled. Glaziers, tilers and cabinetmakers are some of the hardest types of employees to find in my state. These are facts. I know firsthand. When I tried to get a glazier to replace a window that had been smashed in a storm, it took six months to get a glazier out. We have skill shortages among sheet-metal workers, fitters, welders, bricklayers, plumbers, chefs, bakers and childcare workers. We need many more people to be learning a trade, yet our society tells young people that a university education is the only route to success. We must change that culture. In the meantime, we can also work with it to achieve the doubly skilled workers we'll need in the decades to come.

This bill, by extending the operation of the Unique Student Identifier to the university sector, will actually support recruitment for the trades. It will help show the direct paths which exist between vocational education and university education. It will help to demonstrate that they are part of the same continuum, reinforce for potential students that beginning in a trade doesn't have to mean ending in one, and show that movement between the two is seamless and commonplace. It will, with the passage of this bill, be literally built into the system. I believe this is an important message to be sending to our young school leavers today.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention a group who are particularly badly affected by the obstacles that currently exist in our education system, and that is ADF veterans. We are well aware of the challenges that face some former service men and women when they leave the ADF. It can be difficult for our veterans to find new meaning in their lives and to build a fulfilling career once they leave the ADF. I believe that, for many, education could provide them a new path forward. Former service men and women should be fantastically well-placed to begin a degree or a new vocational education course. The ADF demands continuous training and learning from its personnel, and in many cases it provides qualifications to recognise that work. However, achieving recognition for that prior learning in the civilian world can be very difficult. I hope and trust that over time we will be able to incorporate all of the ADF's training programs into the national unique student identifier system and make it that little bit easier for our service men and women to demonstrate the skills they already possess.

As the minister has described, this bill will set up a universal national system which will lay the groundwork for a much more seamless movement of student information across institutional and state boundaries, across the gulf between the university sector and vocational education, and across long breaks from study. This will particularly help women who take time out of the workforce to raise children. But it will have one further important outcome. Governments, just as much as a modern worker, need continuous learning to develop good policy. Up until now, we have had no means of tracking the contemporary student journey. The trail for government ran cold at the boundary between vocational and university education. This bill will ensure that in future we'll be able to understand these complex new educational paths and design policies that will deliver the learning that we need in the 21st century.

I enjoyed learning to be a carpenter and joiner and then a builder. I enjoyed learning to be a lawyer. I'm enjoying learning how to be a federal member of parliament. I'm excited for the next generations of Australians and the varied careers that they too will enjoy. This bill will make those paths a little bit easier. For them and to all young people who are studying or who are looking to study, I commend this bill to the House.
Mr IRONS (Swan—Assistant Minister for Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships) (13:12): I would like to thank those members who spoke on the Student Identifiers Amendment (Higher Education) Bill 2019. The bill gives effect to a key national education reform announced in the 2019-20 budget to extend the unique student identifier known as the USI from vocational education and training to higher education. The Student Identifiers Amendment (Higher Education) Bill 2019 outlines amendments to reflect consistency between VET and higher education, providing continuity for all tertiary students. This will ensure that both the VET and higher education sectors are able to provide students with the best support and services possible to enrich their entire education journey.

For the first time, all students studying at a tertiary level will have access to the same national identity system. With almost all students in tertiary education using the USI we will be able to monitor and collect unprecedented data to better inform education programs and policies. As with all information that is maintained by the government, privacy is our No. 1 priority. USIs are kept in a secure environment, with all necessary steps taken to protect identifiers from misuse, interference, unauthorised access and modification. Through the USI, students will be able to move between VET and higher education more easily, encouraging ongoing engagement in education and lifelong learning, personal development and career aspiration.

The amendments in this bill were designed with innovation, fairness and longevity at their core. They were informed by a collaborative approach between stakeholders and government agencies, with a focus on ensuring that the students of today and tomorrow have access to the best quality tertiary education. Again, I thank the members for their contributions to this key debate on measures that will facilitate the expansion of the USI to higher education. I commend the bill to the House.

The SPEAKER: The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Sydney 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 Sydney be agreed to.

The House divided. [13:18]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....................65
Noes .....................75
Majority ..................10

AYES


CHAMBER
AYES
Zappia, A

NOES
Alexander, JG
Andrews, KJ
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Chester, D
Conaghan, PJ
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Evans, TM
Fletcher, PW
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hastie, AW
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Joyce, BT
Laming, A
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
Marino, NB
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
Morton, B
O’Brien, T
Pasin, A
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Sharma, DN
Steggall, Z
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wicks, LE
Wilson, TR
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T

Question negatived.
Original question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.
Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Third Reading

Mr IRONS (Swan—Assistant Minister for Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships) (13:23): by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation)
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:
(1) notes that Australia's Official Development Assistance (ODA) investments are an important way of advancing Australia's interests, projecting our values and tackling global poverty;
(2) expresses concern that since 2014 Coalition Governments have cut $11.8 billion from the foreign aid budget with the result that Australia's ODA investments are now at a record low as a share of Gross National Income;
(3) agrees that active and engaged participation in multilateral institutions, including multilateral development institutions, is essential for advancing Australia's interests in a stable, secure and prosperous international environment; and
(4) expresses concern that the Prime Minister's recent public attacks on global institutions are contrary to Australia's interests in an international rules-based order supported by multilateral institutions which promote economic growth, global security and human development'

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney) (13:24): I rise to support the amendment moved by the member for Shortland, because, while of course I am very supportive of replenishing the multilateral funds, I am very concerned about some other very serious elements of the government's official development assistance program. This bill, the Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill 2019, provides a special appropriation to enable the Australian government to meet its commitments to replenish a range of multilateral development funds over coming years. These funds carry out essential work in tackling poverty and promoting economic growth and sustainable development in some of the world's poorest countries. The funds also help us tackle serious environmental challenges which require global cooperation.

Australia has played an active role over many years in supporting these funds. We have to continue to do so in the interests of our neighbours and in the interests of the global community, but also in our own interests. Our support for these funds is part of Australia's commitment to being a good global citizen. Being a good global citizen requires active, determined and purposeful diplomacy, building a framework of strong partnerships to help advance a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, and, of course, playing our role to strengthen the rules based international order.

Labor is a strong supporter of Australia's international development program, and it is a strong supporter of this rules based international order. There really should be nothing controversial about saying that Australia ought to be a proactive member of the international community. Good international citizenship aligns with enduring Labor values of solidarity, fairness, equality, justice and inclusion. Ben Chifley said, about the light on the hill:
…we aim to reach it by working for the betterment of mankind, not only here, but anywhere we may lend a helping hand.
That's something that is deeply ingrained in our psyche as the Labor Party. But foreign aid is not just altruism. As my very good friend Gareth Evans once observed:
Good international citizenship is no more and no less than the pursuit of enlightened self-interest.
That is absolutely true. It's why Labor strongly believes that our national security and prosperity improve with greater international security and prosperity, when all countries have a say in making the rules—especially vital for smaller nations—and when countries that break the rules face the censure of the international community.

Doc Evatt, when he went off to the conference that established the modern United Nations, was the voice for small nations. He was the one saying that small countries, like Australia in population terms, should have as large a say in setting the rules in international affairs as big nations. He said, 'Not all the wisdom is with the big nations.' By acting as a good international citizen, and by enhancing the rules based international order and promoting respect for universal human rights, we are working for the long-term peace and prosperity of Australians. A more prosperous and peaceful world means a greater chance of Australians living in peace and prosperity. As we build Australia's international reputation, we also build economic and strategic advantage. Being a good global citizen is good for our citizens in the long run.

That's why I was very concerned to hear the Prime Minister, at the Lowy Institute last October, talk about what he called 'unaccountable internationalist bureaucracy' that uses:
… a negative globalism that coercively seeks to impose a mandate from an often ill defined borderless global community.
I don't know what he means by this. I don't know which organisations he's talking about. I don't know which bureaucracy he's talking about. I don't know what he is being made to do that he doesn't want to do. If the Prime Minister holds these views, I think it would be important for him to talk about what these views are specifically. Which borderless global community is he talking about? What is 'negative globalism'? It really does sound like something from the QAnon manifesto—very heavy on the rhetoric, but light on the details.

Of course no-one pretends that the United Nations is perfect as it is. It could be more effective in many respects; so could its constituent bodies and so could, in some instances, the global funds or the international
courts. Labor has expressed some of our concerns about some of the elements of the trade deals that have been signed in recent times. I would be the very first to support the Prime Minister if he were saying: 'How can we improve on these arrangements? How can we strengthen them?'

Through international cooperation, we have also achieved some magnificent victories. We have solved great global problems. The Millennium Development Goals show the importance of setting those optimistic, but achievable, goals. We've raised, globally, more than a billion people out of extreme poverty; the percentage of people living in extreme poverty globally fell to a new low of 10 per cent in 2015, which is the last year we have full numbers for.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Domestic and Family Violence

Ms Ryan (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:30): I rise today in grief and horror—enraged, sad and despondent—but also determined that my time here and our time here will see us make a difference to the disastrous statistics and the absolutely appalling week that we have had in this country around domestic violence.

Two women and four children have been lost in the past five days. In 2017, 53 women lost their lives to someone who purported to have loved them. In 2018 it was 63 women and in 2019 it was 61 women. In Victoria we had a royal commission into domestic violence led by my good friend Fiona Richardson, and I am desperately sad today to see that we are still in the same damned place.

Love is not possession! Marriage is not ownership, and children are a precious gift. They are not a commodity. They are not pawns in adult games! I speak for everyone sitting around me today by saying that we are in loss, but we are determined—determined!—to move this ship on.

Coronavirus

Dr Allen (Higgins) (13:31): I rise to note that as Australians we should all feel proud of our government's handling of the coronavirus outbreak thus far. Our swift and proportionate response has resulted in speedy containment of the virus. Clear communication has been key, but as the world gets closer these events will become more frequent, not less.

Global public health emergencies are a part of the globalised world that we live in. Last week, one of my constituents showcased for me work being done by two companies he is the director of. MicroBio is an Australian diagnostics company that has developed and validated a process that creates a test which homes in on a pathogen's DNA fingerprint. The process is fast, inexpensive and highly sensitive, and can be adapted to address different target pathogens—including coronavirus. The test could dramatically improve the time to diagnosis in a fast-moving global epidemic.

Sementis is an Australian unlisted public biotechnology vaccine company that is using platform technology to generate a portfolio of innovative vaccine candidates for the prevention of infectious diseases, which include coronavirus. The platform technology has the potential to produce large-scale and rapid production of vaccine in response to global threats. These are just two new and innovative biotech start-up companies that build on our world-class medical research sector. I'm proud of our Australia medical research and development community, and the impact we're having on the global stage.

Domestic and Family Violence

Mr Hayes (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (13:33): Last week, our nation was rocked to the core by the tragic and senseless deaths of Hannah Clarke and her three children: Aaliyah, Laianah and Trey. Ms Clarke was killed in a disturbing set of circumstances which certainly highlight the need for continuing action in respect of the issue of domestic violence.

Although there certainly has been a profound transformation in community awareness and understanding about this very complex issue, it's been there for a long time. But the unspeakable brutality that we witnessed last week makes it clear that domestic violence continues to remain a significant and pressing issue in our community. On average, one woman is killed every week by a partner or former partner. This isn't a statistic where we can afford to put our heads in the sand and say it's a matter for the authorities. This is a matter for all of us, and it must be addressed holistically.

Today we remember Ms Clarke, her children, the countless other women who have lost their lives through domestic violence and their grieving families. If someone you know needs help, I urge them to speak to
1800RESPECT, Lifeline or the Men's Referral Service. We can and must do everything possible to break the scourge of this violence.

**Senior Australians**

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies) (13:35): We know from decades of social research and from common human experience that social connections are closely tied to physical and mental wellbeing. Having someone to talk to and to listen to you is so important. We know that older people who remain connected to others and have strong relationships are likely to report better quality of life and satisfaction with their life; have delayed progression to illness, especially dementia and mental decline; need less domestic support; and, indeed, enjoy greater independence. Overall, social connections can improve physical and mental health and wellbeing.

It's in that context that I'd like to congratulate a number of the seniors' organisations and other organisations in my electorate who provide this focus for people coming together and therefore the focus for improved physical and mental health. Amongst them are the Women's Friendship Group, founded by Helen Jurcevic OAM, who used to do a marvellous job, particularly for women in the electorate of Menzies; the Macedonian Senior Citizens Club of Manningham, which is presided over by Anna Eminagov, and they celebrated their 30th anniversary last year and are a wonderful group; and of course the Chinese Senior Citizens Club of Manningham, the president of whom is Hardy Shum, and the club has hundreds of members. They are all wonderful institutions.

**Domestic and Family Violence**

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (13:36): It's sadly familiar to speak of the scourge of men's violence against women. The recent murder of the Clarke family has struck a collective nerve across the nation. I know that I'm not alone in choking up when considering the smiles of those three children Laianah, Aaliyah and Trey—they were splashed across newspapers and television broadcasts across the nation—and choking up at the furious obscenity of this crime and the injustice of the murder of their mother, Hannah. It's no compensation, but my thoughts are not only with their anguished friends and family but also with the witnesses and emergency responders, the other victims of these horrific crimes.

I recall Fiona Warzywoda, who was murdered on the main street of my electorate in the year I was elected into this place. She was stabbed to death in front of people going about their business—passers-by, women and children. Sometimes it feels like we have made very little progress since then. I know that community attitudes are changing and that government is changing, but we need concerted action across all aspects of Australian society, because we cannot continue with more than one woman being murdered every week by a man in this community.

**Bass Electorate: Infrastructure**

Mrs ARCHER (Bass) (13:38): The Launceston City Deal is focused on making our city one of the most liveable and innovative cities in Australia. Two and a half years after it was signed, the deal is delivering for the region. The recent launch of the smart traffic initiative is another integral component to delivering on this promise. I am a firm believer in collaboration to effectively deliver what the community needs. This project is a fantastic example of this. Smart traffic is part of the Greater Launceston Transformation Project, a joint effort between all three levels of government plus the University of Tasmania and Telstra working together to produce significant social, environmental and economic outcomes for our region.

Though we're lucky enough not to have to deal with the traffic issues of our largest city counterparts, we certainly have our challenges with traffic flow. This system, co-operatively funded with the Morrison government's $2.9 million investment, will not only ease congestion through innovative technology but also go some way to meeting the demands of the future population growth of our greater city region. Also, by using smart technology, we can generate more accurate data to inform greener land-use planning and infrastructure investment, which in turn will support our community in getting from A to B in Launceston by walking, cycling and catching public transport, which can only be a good thing. This project has so much to offer the greater Launceston region, and I can't wait to see how it unfolds after the system becomes fully operational later this year.

**Domestic and Family Violence**

Mr JOSH WILSON (Fremantle) (13:39): It's terrible to think that, for all women in Australia and elsewhere, the threat of physical and sexual violence is never far away. The most awful events reach out and shock us—as occurred last week. The fact that men whose family relationships ought to be characterised by love and by care at all costs commit acts of senseless rage and cruelty is incomprehensible. But we can't put these crimes aside as aberrations, because they're an extreme form of a behaviour that is widespread. We need to be shocked and galvanised into action by the everyday and everywhere nature of domestic abuse.

It should disturb all of us all the time that intimate partner violence contributes to more death, disability and illness in women aged between 15 and 44 than any other preventable risk factor in this country. On average, one
woman is murdered by her partner every week. Across Australia, one in five women will have experienced sexual violence, and one in six women has experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner.

For that to change, we can't leave any stone unturned. We cannot see a reduction in resources for crisis support or community legal services, we must look to expand things like domestic violence leave, and a national summit is a sensible means of focusing attention on this epidemic of harm and on the measures required to make it stop.

Hatfield, Mr William (Bill)

Ms BELL (Moncrieff) (13:41): On Saturday, the Southport Yacht Club welcomed Mr Bill Hatfield as he claimed the world record for the oldest person to circumnavigate the globe nonstop and unassisted. His west-about voyage began on 8 June, on board his Northshore 36 yacht, L'eau Commotion, sailing to the south of Africa and hugging the coast of South America. His final leg home was across the Pacific Ocean towards the Australian coastline, after eight months at sea. Bill celebrated his 81st birthday on board his vessel on 14 January and he completed the voyage in 259 days, on his fourth attempt. The previous record was set just last year by British woman Jeanne Socrates, 77, who completed her journey in 320 days, in September 2019.

Bill had several harrowing experiences during his journey, which we chatted about on Saturday, including a fall overboard 225 miles south-east of St Helena, which is in the Atlantic Ocean between Africa and South America. In his blog, Bill recounts the endless tasks and repair jobs, and the constant changing conditions to which a sailor must adapt his vessel. It was a privilege to accompany him during the final hours of his journey on Saturday, cheering him from the Gold Coast Seaway, with past and present commodores and the Vice Commodore of the Southport Yacht Club. This is no doubt an incredible achievement by Mr Hatfield. He is an extraordinary human being who did not give up. His story is truly inspirational to sailors around the globe and demonstrates that age is not a barrier.

Domestic and Family Violence

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (13:42): I, too, want to put on record my profound sadness at the vicious, senseless murder of Hannah Clarke and her three children by their father. Let's be absolutely clear, there is no excuse for this behaviour. This is a man who poured petrol over his wife and his three children and set them alight. This was a brutal act of murder perpetrated by a cowardly criminal, and anyone who says otherwise is part of the problem. It doesn't seem to matter how often these appalling murders face us, how horrified we are or how genuine the outpouring of grief and fury is; they still keep happening. They are a devastating reminder of just how dangerous the post-separation world is for victims and survivors of domestic violence.

And that's why bestowing an Order of Australia on Bettina Grant is egregious. Without wanting to give this matter any further oxygen, she is toxic and divisive, and I cannot let this lie. This is a woman who defends paedophiles and forgives sexual assault against children; the woman who has referred to 'the myth' of domestic violence; and, more recently, the woman who publicly defended the man who murdered Hannah Clarke and her children. It is outrageous, and it is time for this honour to be revoked. In 2019, 61 women died violently. This year, already, nine women have been killed in shocking acts of violence. It's time this government led.

Ovarian Cancer

Mr BROADBENT (Monash) (13:44): This is the face of Sally Anne Edwards, who died on 14 February of the scourge that is ovarian cancer. She was 54 years of age. This is a beautiful photo of her as a child. She is one of a thousand who will succumb to this disease over the next 12 months. Fifteen hundred women or more will be diagnosed with this shocking disease that hides its symptoms away until it's too late. One of the stories told in the upper chamber a few moments ago mentioned the fact that one woman who died, who was very important to a particular community, had one symptom of all the symptoms. This disease hides itself away.

We punch above our weight in health. We're one per cent of the world's community, and we punch above our weight in gene therapy and all other forms of medicine, but we can't find a way to rid ourselves of this disease through early detection. All we need is research that clearly delivers us early detection for ovarian cancer to save the women of Australia and therefore the women of the world. We have an enormous amount of work to. We've put an extra $20 million in, and I thank Greg Hunt for that, but we've got to start somewhere, and it's got to start today.

Aged Care

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (13:45): Last Friday the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was in Adelaide for hearings, and I was quite pleased to hear that the royal commission supports transparency around staffing in aged care. We do not know who works in aged care; we do not know how many registered nurses, carers and enrolled nurses are at each site. In fact, there's no requirement, in South Australia at least, to have a registered nurse in an aged-care facility, and it is really just woeful. It needs to be addressed by government. I
brought a bill into this House. The bill went to an inquiry. It was supported that the bill should be made law, and yet here we are, more than 12 months later, and nothing has been done.

I'm very supportive of the inquiry's recommendations, and I might just raise a couple of them here: introducing legally enforceable, mandatory minimum staffing ratios for residents in aged care; a minimum number of care minutes between 186 minutes and 265 minutes—I mean, that alone is really minimal—30 minutes of care time by a registered nurse per resident per day; a minimum of 22 minutes of care by an allied health professional; and mandatory minimum staffing of at least one registered nurse on shift at all times. We are failing older people in Australia if we do not address this in this parliament at this time today.

**Assange, Mr Julian**

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson) (13:47): As you know, I'm a conservative, and as a conservative I support free speech and press freedom. That's why I went with the member for Clark over to the UK last week to visit Australian journalist and publisher Julian Assange, who's detained in HM Prison Belmarsh in England. He's self-described his state of health as 'not good'. It was clear that he was disoriented, which was obviously the result of prolonged isolation because he has been in jail and, before that, in an Ecuadorian embassy. Why? Because the US is seeking to extradite him on apparent allegations that he was involved in espionage and conspiracy to hack.

These allegations amount to WikiLeaks calling for information from whistleblowers and then receiving and publishing such information. Well, that's not espionage and that's not conspiracy to hack; that's journalism. Is he a journalist? I'd say yes, and probably more purer than most, but does it matter? Of course not. He's a publisher at the very least, and it shouldn't be a crime to publish material that's in the public interest. In my books, he's actually a hero for exposing war crimes. Whether you think he's a hero or whether you think he's a ratbag, again, it doesn't matter. If he's a ratbag, he's our ratbag, and he should be brought home. No Australian should be facing a situation where a foreign court is deciding whether they should be sent to another foreign country to face trial for simply publishing the truth. My message to both the US and the UK is: bring Julian Assange home now.

**Domestic and Family Violence**

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (13:48): The murder of Hannah Clarke and her beautiful children has impacted on all Australians. I extend my sincere sympathy to the Clarke family. But, as a lawmaker with the privilege of being elected to represent Moreton, I know that thoughts and prayers are not enough. In the past two years we've had a House of Representatives report of the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs with 33 recommendations to improve the family law system and an Australian Law Reform Commission report into the family law system with 60 recommendations.

This government has work to do now. Each of these two reports call on the coalition government to amend section 61DA of the Family Law Act. That provision contains the presumption of equal shared parental responsibility. It is a common misconception that this provision presumes that parents should equally share their time caring for children post separation. It does not mean that; it never meant that. But, sadly, this provision incentivises violent men to litigate and is dangerous to women and children escaping domestic violence.

Over the weekend, the Women's Legal Service Queensland again called on the Morrison government to follow the recommendation of the ALRC report and immediately remove section 61DA from the Family Law Act. It could be done today. So I call on Prime Minister Morrison and Attorney-General Porter to act now. Make this Hannah Clarke's amendment. It is not a silver bullet to fix the scourge of domestic violence, but it is a start. And if it helps one mother and child to safely leave a dangerous situation, surely it is worth it. The time for Hannah Clarke's amendment is now.

**Type 1 Diabetes**

Mr CONNELLY (Stirling) (13:50): Early in my new term as an MP, I visited the Type 1 Diabetes Family Centre in Stirling and met CEO and all-round powerhouse Bec Johnson. Bec lives with type 1 and uses a continuous glucose monitor or CGM, and she used this during her heroic efforts this past weekend where she completed the 19.7-kilometre Rottnest Channel Swim solo. I'm thrilled to represent this award-winning organisation, and I joined their advocacy efforts to extend the government's CGM funding efforts.

Recently, the Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, announced that more Australians with type 1 diabetes will benefit via free access to the FreeStyle Libre Flash Glucose Monitoring System. Rather than a constant series of pinpricks, this CGM device uses a patch on the arm which transmits data to a mobile phone. So, for adults with type 1, this means less disruption to everyday life. For kids with type 1, it means getting feedback on what they can eat in real time. For parents, it provides certainty and more simplicity in caring for their kids. This $300 million CGM initiative has been made possible as a result of the Morrison government's strong economic management.
Well done to Bec. To all those inspired by her activities, please visit www.lifewithoutlimits.com and donate today.

**Domestic and Family Violence**

Ms Butler (Griffith) (13:52): Last week's brutal killing of Hannah, Aaliyah, Laianah and Trey has devastated our south-side community. I want to give my condolences—and, I am sure, on behalf of the House—to Lloyd, to Sue, to Nathaniel and to their entire family, who were so brave at last night's memorial service in Camp Hill.

I also want to pay tribute to all victims and all survivors of violence, including those who are right now afraid for their lives. I want to thank the first responders, including neighbours—people with no training, who were good Samaritans—but also the police and the ambos who came onto the scene, and I thank them for being there at last night's memorial, as well as the fireys and the SES, who turned out in massive numbers. So did so many people in our community, because so many people were connected to Hannah and to her kids. Sergeant David Beard, from the PCYC, who worked with Hannah, spoke, and so did her friends Nikki and Lou, and they really gave voice to some of the great loss that our community is feeling. Hannah looked after thousands of kids in her time at the PCYC, my son amongst them, and she was so connected to our community. There's distress. There's devastation. And people want action.

I want to thank the DV service that looked after them—all of the DV services. I want to particularly mention Brisbane Domestic Violence Service. I want to encourage everyone in this House to redouble their efforts to support victims and survivors.

**Cowper Electorate: Port Macquarie Tidal Pool**

Mr Conaghan (Cowper) (13:53): I'd like to congratulate Kathryn Butler, Josh Rummery and Ken Wilson of the Port Macquarie Tidal Pool Committee for their advocacy and hard work in the push for an ocean tidal pool in Port Macquarie. There have been calls for an ocean tidal pool since the 1970s, and in recent years a petition of over 18,000 signatures had been presented to Port Macquarie's local council calling on them to investigate the potential for a great community resource and tourist attraction. On 18 June 2019, it was great to be with the tidal pool committee and the Deputy Prime Minister in Port Macquarie confirming almost $4.5 million for the pool.

So it's with a great deal of disappointment that I find that some councillors on Port Macquarie-Hastings Council deem this major project 'not a priority'. A facility that would serve the young mums and their kids; one that would serve for the recreation and rehabilitation of the record number of aged citizens living in Port Macquarie; a pool that would serve as a tourist attraction, particularly for the 10,000 people annually attending the Ironman triathlon in Port Macquarie—not a priority? No. What is a priority is the council's intention to proceed with a plan for an orbital road, disrupting several hundreds of homes, against the cries and protests of the community. But there are a few councillors, including Mayor Peta Pinson, who do listen, and she is championing the tidal pool and all the benefits that come with it. So I say to the tidal pool committee and the community of Port Macquarie: keep up the great work. We have the 35th iron man competition this May and local council elections in September.

**Domestic and Family Violence**

Ms Collins (Franklin) (13:55): There were two tragedies in Queensland in this last week: a woman, Hannah, and her children murdered in the suburbs of Brisbane in horrific circumstances; and another woman stabbed to death, in a case the police are saying was yet another case of domestic violence. I want to extend my sincere sympathy to the family, friends and loved ones of those lost, and to the first responders.

This type of violence is pervasive. We need to stop it. On average, more than one woman a week is murdered by a current or former partner. We all need to do more. The figures on the murders are truly horrific, but they don't count all the others—those who are injured, disfigured, maimed; those who have suffered psychological abuse, financial abuse, controlling behaviour; the children exposed to trauma, and the impact it has on them for the rest of their lives. This violence is about power and control. These murders don't exist in a vacuum. Sadly, it appears to have been the case in these recent situations that some people's attitudes to women and their roles in the community are still an issue. Gender inequality is still an issue.

Labor want to see more action. We're calling for a national summit. We want to make sure that every single person is doing everything that we can and should do to make it stop now. I want to reiterate to anybody who is experiencing family violence to call 1800RESPECT.

**Shepparton Bypass**

Mr Drum (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (13:56): In last year's federal budget the Liberal-National Party government announced a commitment of $208 million for stage 1 of the Shepparton bypass. This project will significantly boost road safety in Greater Shepparton by removing the B-doubles from the CBD. It is a very
important project that will see an increase in national and regional economic output of over $590 million and the creation of thousands of jobs at the construction stage.

The Andrews state Labor government committed funds for a business case back in 2017-18, nearly three years ago. The absolute farce is that they still haven't completed this business case, and there's no indication as to when the Andrews government is likely to release this business case. The Labor government in Victoria are saying that, because they haven't finished it, they can't consider this money in the budget that is coming up, but they can say that the project is going to cost more than the previously estimated $250 million. So the Labor Party in Victoria don't know how much this project is going to cost, but when put under pressure they do know how much it's going to cost.

The Morrison-McCormack government has put stage 1 funding on the table. If we need more, we'll have to go back to the government and see if we can get more. I call on the Labor Andrews government and the Victorian Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Jacinta Allan, to get on with it and deliver the business case. Table the business case, stop kicking it down the road, and commit this funding so that Shepparton can get the bypass that it needs. Maybe the Labor government will stop spending money in their own seats and look after regional Victoria.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left! I'm trying to call the member for Barton. I now do.

Domestic and Family Violence

Ms BURNEY (Barton) (13:58): To bring about any change in the domestic violence and family violence space requires brave, uncompromising leadership, not just when an awful incident occurs, as we saw in Queensland in the last week, but each and every day of each and every year. It's not just about the weekly murders, the shocking unheard statistics that we so often don't see—women left broken, scared, with no sense of self, isolated, with permanent scars and disability.

Domestic and family violence does not discriminate. We saw that so clearly in the last week. We are getting better at talking about it, but not in all cultures and not in all places. As I said, this requires uncompromising leadership. Cultural change has to come about in this country on this issue. We must value women and understand the insidious nature of control and the insidious nature of this issue. We cannot see this only through a gendered lens. Men must be champions and men need to change. We just can't leave this another moment. It is to do with housing, economic independence, self-esteem and support. But, most importantly, domestic and family violence is all of our business.

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

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE

Domestic and Family Violence

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:00): On indulgence, and having consulted with the Leader of the Opposition through our offices today, as the member for Barton just spoke in this place of these terrible murderous events, the sad truth is they are not isolated incidents; they have happened on so many occasions. Taking this indulgence today, as we reflect in particular on the terrible crime that was committed against Hannah Clarke and her children, Aaliyah, Laianah and Trey, we also speak of the terrible murders of so many others—mothers and children. Murder: that's what it is—murder that again, last Thursday, shocked our country. When Jenny and I spoke about it, we just couldn't get our heads around it, as I'm sure is the case for every parent. It doesn't matter whether you're a parent or not, you can't imagine it. It is just too horrible to contemplate. The act itself, and that someone could perpetrate that act, particularly as a father, is incomprehensible. It's an act of such depravity that only makes you ask: 'How does such evil happen on our land?'

To the Clarke family, all of us here extend our sympathies and our love. But I must wonder if that could ever be enough to cover the profound grief. They have shown incredible resilience and character in the worst of all possible circumstances. As best as we can, we also send the country's love to you. In your grief, you have every right to be angry—furious—because everything we've done across this country to protect women and children didn't protect Hannah from this evil. I believe state and territory and national governments, our agencies and, importantly, the judiciary—all of us—must reflect again on these terrible murders. We must reflect on how and where the system failed Hannah and her children, as it has failed so many others. It's so frustrating. It's so devastating.

Whilst this was the action of a depraved and evil man, we know enough of the circumstances leading up to the murders to know this should not have happened. There will rightly be an inquest in Queensland. I commend the Queensland government for taking that action, as they should. It will speak the truth, I have no doubt, as so many others have spoken the truth. And we already know this: Hannah deserved to feel safe and be safe and to watch
For all of us in this chamber, the words 'family violence' just jar. Saying those two words together, they should never be together; they have nothing to do with each other—quite the opposite, because our families should be the safest places in all of the world, particularly for our kids, but, sadly, all too often, they are not. We know that, as hard as it is to believe. One woman is killed every nine days by a partner or a former partner. One in six Australian women have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner since the age of 15. We know these figures. We've spoken these figures I don't know how many times in this place. Regardless of who has sat on this side of the chamber or on that side of the chamber, we know these figures—or on this side of the chamber or on that side of the chamber in every state parliament in this country. Every two minutes somewhere in the country police are called out to a domestic violence incident. As members, we know that the Commonwealth, states and territories do work closely on tackling violence against women and children, and we must continue to do this together.

This has been, I think, one of the shining lights of bipartisanship in this chamber, and in so many chambers around our country. I acknowledge the work, as I have done and others have done, on the establishment of the first action plan under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children from 2010 to 2022, which was commenced under the Rudd and Gillard governments. That was a great initiative. Now, as part of the fourth action plan, that spirit continues, that partnership continues—a partnership that exists not just across this aisle, which is closed by our commitment to addressing this, but between the state and territory governments and the Commonwealth as well. A record $340 million has been provided under this plan for frontline services to protect and support women and children. In total, since 2013, some $840 million has been committed to addressing domestic and family violence, to carrying on the work that was initiated by the previous Labor government.

In August last year, COAG agreed to the fourth action plan. In November, we released the national implementation plan. It includes funding for prevention strategies and frontline services, including for groups which needed additional support; funding for safe spaces; as well as funding for 1800RESPECT. That 1800RESPECT line is open 24 hours to support people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse. When COAG comes together in a few weeks time, this will once again be on our agenda.

This is a time for us all to reflect, but to reflect together. There are never any excuses—there are none—or justifications for the evil that Hannah and her children experienced. Never. Not under any circumstances. With the states and territories, and together as a parliament, we will continue to work together to translate these words, which I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition will also state with the same passion, into actions and changes that make a real difference for women and children.

This violent crime, this murder, sought to deny a woman her voice and her future. Let me read one of Hannah's last Instagram posts, which expressed a hope. She wrote:

I am a Strong Woman—
no doubt she was—
I don't sit around feeling sorry for myself, nor will I ever let anyone mistreat me again … I am a survivor not a victim. I am in control of my life and there is nothing I can't achieve. My girls will grow up being strong women who understand their worth.

This hope was crushed when Hannah and her children were murdered.

We must work together, as we have been, for as long as it takes to restore that hope to those that we know, right now, today in this country, are living in exactly the same danger as Hannah and her children.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:09): I thank the Prime Minister for not just his words but, no doubt, his sincere commitment to do something about this, along with the rest of this parliament. The murders of Hannah Clarke and her children, Aaliyah, Laianah and Trey, have shaken us to the core. Yet again, a woman has lost her life to a former male partner. Yet again, children are robbed of their futures by a father who betrayed what should have been the most powerful bond of all, between a parent and their child. We cannot let their shocking and horrific end be their whole story. We must hold on to their names; hold on to the image of those four faces, so happy because they were with each other; and hold on to the courage that Hannah showed. As the Prime Minister said, she left, and that takes courage. She took her kids to what she thought was the safest places in all of the world, particularly for our kids, but, sadly, all too often, they are not. We know that, as hard as it is to believe. One woman is killed every nine days by a partner or a former partner. One in six Australian women have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner since the age of 15. We know these figures. We've spoken these figures I don't know how many times in this place. Regardless of who has sat on this side of the chamber or on that side of the chamber, we know these figures—or on this side of the chamber or on that side of the chamber in every state parliament in this country. Every two minutes somewhere in the country police are called out to a domestic violence incident. As members, we know that the Commonwealth, states and territories do work closely on tackling violence against women and children, and we must continue to do this together.

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This hope was crushed when Hannah and her children were murdered.

We must work together, as we have been, for as long as it takes to restore that hope to those that we know, right now, today in this country, are living in exactly the same danger as Hannah and her children.
On Wednesday morning I was in Brisbane, and Terri Butler, the member for Griffith—the local member—rang me up about this before the news broke, because I was giving a speech at the media club and didn't want to be caught out. We had a much longer conversation than you would expect because it was difficult to comprehend the sheer horror of what had happened.

Our sympathies are also with the family and friends of Hannah, Aaliyah, Laianah and Trey. They are grieving in the worst of circumstances, and they are showing incredible resilience under those circumstances.

We were, of course, shaken again just days later when, in the early hours of Saturday morning, a woman in Townsville was stabbed to death in her home. Once again, we heard that most dreadful but all-too-familiar line that police were treating it as a 'domestic violence incident'. We must confront the awful truth: that this is an epidemic and that, on average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner. All of us in this place and many other people are directly impacted by this. These women are our mothers, our sisters, our neighbours, our aunts, our cousins, people we have contact with, members of our political parties, members of parliament, nurses—everyone is affected by this scourge. Violence and abuse against women exists in many forms: physical, emotional, financial. We cannot be mere bystanders. We shouldn't keep relearning the same lesson that evil happens when good people do nothing.

Last May, I suggested a national summit. I know there have been meetings such as that in the past. I do think it is worth consideration as put forward, not in a political way but in the spirit in which it's intended. The Prime Minister indicates he's taking it. It's time, once again, to use the extent of this horrific act to get it through that we need to listen to those people who are impacted by family violence and to the experts. We need to learn. We desperately need to act.

I do want to say that I think that we need to repel some of the attacks as well. We need to speak up when people make the sorts of comments—including in the aftermath of this tragedy—that are entirely inappropriate. We must repel attacks on the Family Court of Australia. The existence of a standalone specialist family court is a Labor legacy that we will defend. Whatever problems there are with the current family law system, the existence of a standalone specialist family court is not one of them. It is a necessary part of the solution. Government and opposition can work together on this. All of us, as members of parliament, have a role to play. The memory of Hannah Clarke and her three beautiful children must galvanise us all into further action to eliminate violence against women and children. We can't accept this as normal. We have it in us to be so much better. Lives depend on it, as we see all too often.

I did write to you, Mr Speaker, and spoke to you earlier today about the need for the parliament to acknowledge this, and I thank the Prime Minister for the way that he has conducted the capacity of us as a parliament. I do think it would be appropriate that we acknowledge—as I wrote to you, in the normal way that we do—the fact that this parliament stands as one in respect for Hannah and her three beautiful children: Aaliyah, Laianah and Trey. Let's hope, let us just hope, that in years to come there will be a Prime Minister standing on that side of the aisle and a Leader of the Opposition on this side of the aisle who give very different speeches about how we've been through a considerable period of time without there being a murder, a fatality. That is truly an objective worth each and every one of us working towards each and every day in whatever capacity we have.

The SPEAKER (14:17): As a mark of respect, I ask all present to rise in their places.
Honourable member having stood in their places—

The SPEAKER: I thank the House.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:17): I inform the House that the Treasurer will be absent from question time today as he's representing Australia at the G20 finance ministers' and central bank governors' meeting in Saudi Arabia. I will answer questions on his behalf as Treasurer, and the Attorney-General will answer questions on the behalf of the Minister for Finance. The Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure will also be absent from question time today and for the remainder of this week due to a serious family illness. The Deputy Prime Minister will answer questions on his behalf. And the Minister for Home Affairs will answer questions on behalf of the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs. I thank the House for the arrangements that have been put in place both for the minister for immigration as well as for the Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

New South Wales: Bushfires

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:18): My question is addressed to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister confirm that he suggested to the New South Wales Premier that the scope of the
bushfire recovery clean-up funding proposal by New South Wales was not consistent with the Black Saturday framework in a bid to reduce the cost to the federal government?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:18): As I confirmed to the journalist who put this same matter to us on the weekend, the proposal I put to the New South Wales Premier was the proposal that was adopted and the proposal that was announced—that is, the proposal that was arranged between the Treasurer, the Treasurer of New South Wales, the head of the National Bushfire Recovery Agency and their counterpart in New South Wales. What we proposed is what was announced.

Climate Change

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (14:19): My question is to the Prime Minister. Why is it important to have a clear and balanced plan to meet our environmental commitments to reduce emissions while supporting our economy—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Mackellar will resume his seat. The member for Rankin and others will cease interjecting or I'll have to start interjecting them. The member for Mackellar can begin his question from the top.

Mr FALINSKI: My question is to the Prime Minister. Why is it important to have a clear and balanced plan to meet our environmental commitments to reduce emissions while supporting our economy by reducing taxes, reducing electricity prices and supporting the economies of rural and regional communities? How does this compare against the risk of alternative approaches?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:20): I thank the member for Mackellar for his question and commend him on his editorial on the weekend. This year under our government Australia will meet its 2020 Kyoto emissions reduction target. And we won't just meet it; we will beat it by 411 million tonnes, which is the equivalent of about 80 per cent of Australia's annual total national emissions. Labor sought to achieve that target when they were in government by having a carbon tax that they promised they wouldn't implement.

Ten years ago, when we were in opposition, we set out a plan as to how we would meet that 2020 target without a carbon tax. We took that plan 10 years out. We took it to the election and Australians endorsed the plan to reduce emissions without having a carbon tax. Today, the plan we outlined in opposition 10 years ago is the plan that has ensured that we've met our Kyoto agreements 10 years later, here in 2020. Also some 50 million tonnes on average lower per year are our emissions now than they were under the average of the Labor government. Renewable energy is at record levels in terms of investment, and electricity prices have fallen some 3½ per cent in the last year. We did this all without a carbon tax, and we did it all while at the same time increasing the number of jobs in this country by over 1½ million. We are taking the same balanced approach when it comes to meeting our 2030 commitments. It's a balanced plan that's about technology, not taxation; a plan that is investing in new technologies and energy sources like hydrogen, investing in the Snowy scheme, investing in hydropower in Tasmania and investing in transmission lines.

I'm asked about alternatives. Those opposite can't agree on what they want to do in 2030, so how can you trust them about what they want to do 30 years from now? How can you trust someone who hasn't been able to deliver a surplus in 30 years? And now they want to tell you what they want to do about emissions in 30 years! This Labor opposition is the same bill you couldn't afford at the last election and it's the same bill you can't afford now. They are reheats of the failed policies that were offered to the Australian people at the last election. At the last election our balanced plan was endorsed. Those opposite's plan was rejected, and it's the same reheat they're forcing on the Australian people now.

Climate Change

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:23): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. Isn't it the case that cabinet committed to net zero emissions by 2050 when it signed up to the Paris Agreement?

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (14:24): That's incorrect. We signed up to the Paris agreement, which involves the world achieving net zero in the second half of the century. That was our commitment. We have strong targets, we have a clear plan and we have an enviable track record, as we've just heard from the Prime Minister.

Climate Change

Mr SHARMA (Wentworth) (14:25): My question is also to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. How is the Morrison government delivering on its balanced plan to reduce emissions to meet our international commitments, and what are the risks of alternative approaches?
Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (14:25): I thank the member for his question, and I acknowledge his strong focus on reducing emissions and of course doing that while we maintain a strong economy. He knows that the way to do that is to take real and practical action, and that's through technology, not taxes.

We'll meet and beat our Kyoto 2020 targets by 411 million tonnes, as we just heard from the Prime Minister—80 per cent of a years worth of emissions—having inherited a 700 million tonne deficit when we got into government. We have a strong 2030 target and, according to the December emissions projections, we'll meet and beat those targets as well. According to emissions data that's come out today, we've seen a 2.3 per cent reduction in emissions in the domestic economy this year. We've seen reductions in the total economy and of course in the National Electricity Market we've seen a 3.2 per cent reduction, to the lowest level of emissions in our electricity market since records began. Right at the heart of that is world-leading investment in renewables. Increasingly, we're seeing a focus on dispatchable power to drive down wholesale prices, which have come down 35 per cent, year-on-year, in the last 12 months.

I was also asked if there is an alternative approach. The Leader of the Opposition has announced a target for 2050. Taking a leaf out of the member for Maribyrnong's book, he's done it without outlining his plan to get there. They've failed to front up and look miners, farmers, manufacturers and truck drivers in the eye and tell them what the implications are of those targets.

Today, we've had members of the opposition out there citing the CSIRO's Australian National Outlook 2019 report to back up their target and to describe what their plan really is. Let me let the House in on a little secret about what's in that report: it models a $273 carbon price, and it slashes the sheep industry, the beef industry and cropping, decimating country towns, and of course putting regional Australians out of a job.

Mr Marles interjecting—

Mr TAYLOR: The member for Corio will be happy to know that the report says it's the end—the death—of the coal industry. We know where this ends: with a massive carbon tax, slashing jobs and incomes in the Australian economy.

Climate Change

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:28): My question is to the Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister agree with the Liberal Premier of New South Wales that her government's target of net zero emissions by 2050 is consistent with both the Paris Agreement and the federal government's own commitment to the Paris Agreement?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:28): I refer the member to the answer by the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, which spelt out very clearly what the government has signed up to in terms of the Paris Agreement.

I'm asked about the Paris Agreement, and our commitment is 26 per cent reduction in emissions over 2005. I'm pleased to tell the House that, as of the most recent report, that is now down by 13.1 per cent, which means we're half the way there. And we have a plan to meet the 2030 commitment. The only problem is that when I look at what those opposite are talking about, they have no idea what they want to commit to for 2030. They say, 'Well, I don't know whether I'll tell you before the election or I won't.' They want to talk about things 30 years from now; they can't even agree on what they want to do 10 years from now! When we were in opposition, we set out a 10-year plan.

Ms Murphy interjecting—

Ms Conroy interjecting—

Mr Giles interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will resume his seat. The member for Dunkley is warned, as is the member for Shortland. If the Leader of the Opposition would just bear with me a second, I'll get a few of these warnings down. The member for Scullin will cease interjecting. The Leader of the Opposition, I guess on a point of order.

Mr Albanese: You guessed correctly, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: No—just state the point of order.

Mr Albanese: It's on relevance. He hasn't mentioned Gladys Berejiklian once and her commitment to net zero—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. As he well knows, the Prime Minister is not compelled to mention anyone by name, particularly if the name wasn't in the question.
Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Yes, that's right. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr MORRISON: I'm asked about the Paris Agreement and I'm asked about a 2050 zero-carbon commitment. I'll tell you what, on this side of the House—because this is what we took to the Australian people—we said we'd hit a 26 per cent reduction by 2030. We have a clear plan to achieve that. Those opposite won't even tell you what their 2030 commitment is, because of the Otis group. And now we've got the Milo group, which I assume has been established to counteract the Otis group, and they put a big slap-down on the Otis group with the ill-timed and ill-prepared commitment which the Leader of the Opposition made on the weekend.

What I do know is this: Australians will always pay the price for Labor's ill-considered decisions. They will pay the price of a plan that doesn't even exist for 2050. They can't even tell you what they would do 10 years from now, so how could you believe anything they say about what would happen 30 years from now? This is a classic example of the Labor leader trying to have it both ways. He won't tell you what's happening in 2030; he wants to tell you what's happening in 2050. There are no details, there's no plan, there's no specificity. He just says, 'Trust us. We're Labor.' Well, the last time the Australian people trusted Labor when it came to climate, they said there wouldn't be a carbon tax and then they delivered a carbon tax, breaking their promise. I'll tell you what I won't do: I'm not going to make a promise to Australians; I'm not going to put a tax on them to get emissions down; I'm not going to take away their jobs in the way that the Leader of the Opposition wants to do.

Ms Coker interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Corangamite is warned!

Mr MORRISON: I'm not going to turn my back on workers in rural and regional Australia, who depend on the commitments that we've made. I'm not going to jack their electricity prices up in the way they doubled under the Labor government. They doubled under the Labor government; electricity prices have fallen 3½ per cent as a result of the policies that we put in place. You can't trust Labor on climate—(Time expired)

Climate Change

Ms STEGGALL (Warringah) (14:32): Since we're hearing about who can tell the Australian people what they are planning, since you are in government and the climate is on track to three degrees of heating on current emission reduction commitments, to ensure sensible economic management of Australia's economy, has the government assessed the cost to jobs and to the economy of the outcome of three degrees of heating? And what is that cost?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:33): I thank the member for her question. The issues that she has raised go to why our government is taking action on climate change. That is why our government is taking action on climate change. That is why we signed up to the Paris Agreement and we've made our commitment—

Ms Coker interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will just pause for a second. The member for Corangamite will leave under standing order 94(a). Yes, that's right. I asked you to cease interjecting. I warned you, you kept interjecting and now you're leaving. That's the way it works. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr MORRISON: That is why our government is taking action on climate change. That is why we signed up to the Paris Agreement and that's why we're meeting our targets. As I said, we are meeting the Kyoto targets. I must note, when we announced, 10 years ago, our plan to achieve the Kyoto emissions reduction target, it was mocked by those opposite. They said you couldn't do it without a carbon tax. It was mocked by others around this place, but I'll tell you what: it wasn't mocked by the Australian people, because they backed that plan at the 2013 election, seven years out from that 2020 target, and we delivered on that commitment. And we have not only met but beat our targets by 2020.

Mr Gosling interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will resume his seat. The member for Solomon is warned! The member for Warringah on a point of order.

Mr Gosling interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Solomon is warned. The member for Warringah on a point of order.

Ms Steggall: The point of order is relevance. The question went to what is the cost.

The SPEAKER: As I often point out, the question had a long preamble. I don't want to have an argument with the member for Warringah, but I listened very carefully and there was quite a long preamble before she got to a very specific question. If you need the answer to be tied tightly to a specific question, you need to not have a
broad preamble that allows the minister or the Prime Minister answering it to range more widely. The Prime Minister is in order.

**Mr MORRISON:** It is because we do understand there are costs associated with climate change that we, indeed, are taking action on climate change to reduce emissions. But I tell you what we also need to do to take action on climate change: we need to build the resilience of this country for the climate that we need to live in, that we will live in, for the economy that we must grow in this climate and in the environment that we are in. We need to put in place adaption measures to ensure that Australians can thrive in the climate we will live in while taking the action, the necessary action, when it comes to emission reduction. We will also take action on building the dams, which means climate action now, on hazard reduction, which is climate action now just as emissions reduction is climate action now. We will take those actions because we understand the risks and the need to take action in relation to those risks. Those opposite don't offer any plans. They don't offer any policies. They have an uncosted, glib—

**The SPEAKER:** I just say to the Prime Minister—

Honourable members interjecting—

**The SPEAKER:** Members can cease interjecting just for a second. It's very difficult for the Prime Minister to go to the policies of those opposite when, one, he wasn't asked about it and, two, the question was from an Independent. The Prime Minister either needs to wrap his answer up or—the Prime Minister has the call.

**Mr MORRISON:** I'm happy to do that. I'm asked about the costs of climate. What I can assure the Australian people is they will always pay the price of Labor's failed climate policies.

**Infrastructure**

**Mr PASIN** (Barker) (14:37): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development. Deputy Prime Minister, how is the Morrison government delivering on its balance plan to support the more efficient transport of freight across the country and to connect with overseas markets? How does this compare against the risks of alternative approaches?

**Mr McCORMACK** (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of the Nationals) (14:37): Firstly, I'll set out our approach to making sure that we've got the right infrastructure in place to help our national freight task. The member for Barker is right: we are approaching this in a very diligent and practical manner, as you would expect, with $100 billion over the next 10 years to ensure that we've got the right supply chain strategies in place; to make sure that we've got the right rail—indeed, the Inland Rail, a $9.3 billion investment—in place; and to make sure that we've got the right road network in place.

I'm sure the member for Barker and other regional members are absolutely delighted with the $4 billion, up by $1 billion from last year's budget, for the Roads of Strategic Importance that is playing such a critical pathway in making sure that we get product from paddock to port to plate, wherever that might be, whether it's in our new markets that we've established or whether it's in our domestic markets.

The Roads of Strategic Importance initiative includes $32.4 million to improve agriculture export systems and $70 million to develop an advanced train management system in order to improve supply chain efficiency—that's all part of the $100 billion we're spending on our transport networks on our infrastructure. The member for Barker knows that Whyalla steel is being used for the inland rail. He knows that in his home state of South Australia, the government has invested $252 million into the Adelaide-to-Tarcoola rerailing upgrade.

He asked me about alternative approaches, and alternative approaches are writ large across those opposite. They've got the Otis group. They're so divided over there. They well remember 18 May last year, when they took a wrecking ball to the people of Australia and promised that they were going to take away the investors who were investing in real estate—those people who had retired and were working towards having a proper state of living. They took that, and now they've got zero net emissions by 2050.

I challenge those opposite to go and look a farmer in the eye and ask: 'How are you going to produce zero net emissions and still produce the $100 billion task that we've got by 2030?' Indeed, look a steer or a wether in the eye and ask: 'How are you going to stop your methane production?' That's indeed what they're challenging farmers and their stock to do. They're going to ruin the resources sector. Look a truckie in the eye while you are at it and ask: 'How are you going to make sure that you get zero net emissions?' It's a tax on farms, it's a tax on transport, it's a tax on the check-out and it's a tax on Australians trying to work hard and make ends meet. *(Time expired)*
Climate Change

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (14:41): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister, and I refer to his previous answer. Is the government aware that both the National Farmers Federation and Meat & Livestock Australia have plans for their sectors to be carbon neutral by 2030?

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of the Nationals) (14:41): I can tell you what they do have a plan to do, and that is increase agriculture to $100 billion from the $60 billion that it is now. If ever there was a friend of the farmers, if ever there was a friend of the National Farmers Federation, it is the Liberal and Nationals who sit on this side of the House.

Dr Chalmers interjecting—

Mr McCORMACK: We sit on this side of the House—you may well laugh, Member for Rankin; you wanted to totally destroy agriculture. And the member for Watson over there wanted to take water away from our irrigators. The member for Hunter got the biggest wake-up call on 18 May last year, and all of a sudden he's discovered farmers, he's discovered his regional roots—

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Prime Minister will resume his seat for a second. I just say to the Deputy Prime Minister: the question didn't go to any alternative policies. The Deputy Prime Minister needs to confine his answer to the question that was asked.

Mr McCORMACK: NFF CEO Tony Mahar has actually said that there's been no consultation from those opposite with their reckless plan, their irresponsible plan—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition on a point of order?

Mr Albanese: It was a very specific question. It went to whether the Deputy Prime Minister was aware that the NFF and Meat & Livestock Australia both planned for their sectors to be carbon neutral by 2030.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. The Leader of the House is seeking the call.

Mr Porter: There was no mention of what the point of order was with regard to the standing orders. We have the Leader of the Opposition taking a non-point-of-order when it should have been the leader of the Rebel Alliance!

The SPEAKER: I point out to the Leader of the House that he is right, but, given that the Leader of the Opposition directly followed a ruling I made with respect to the question, I've been fairly lenient. The reason ministers are able to canvass alternative policies is they're asked about them. And, if you're not asked about them, I'll allow a little bit of tolerance for compare and contrast. But, given that 10 questions come from my right-hand side, I think there's ample opportunity. When there is a specific question, as this one was, the Deputy Prime Minister needs to confine himself to the question that's been asked.

Mr McCORMACK: I'm aware that the Meat & Livestock people and the NFF people are wanting to make sure that they grow agriculture to $100 billion by 2030. How you do that is you have the right policies in place. They know that in this government we've got the right policies in place. We'll make sure that we continue to put those right policies in place. I realise he's had his road to Damascus moment. I realise the member for Hunter has all of a sudden seen the light. (Time expired)

Energy

Ms FLINT (Boothby—Government Whip) (14:45): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. How is the Morrison government delivering on its balanced plan to reduce electricity prices and ensure stability in our electricity grid? How does this compare to the risk of alternative approaches?

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (14:45): I thank the member for Boothby for her question. I was in her electorate last week, and she is relentlessly focused on delivering a fair deal for Australians on energy, on households, on small businesses and on industry in her electorate, her part of the world. She knows we took to the election a plan for a fair deal for all Australians on energy, and since then we've been delivering just that. We've introduced price caps. We've ensured there's more supply coming into the market. We've established a Retailer Reliability Obligation. We're doing more on gas. We're making sure customers can get the best deal through both price caps—the default market offer—and reference prices. As a result, we are seeing prices coming down.

The CPI tells us that for four consecutive quarters we've seen electricity price reductions totalling 3½ per cent for the first time since records have begun. On top of that, wholesale prices are down. In the last three months, we've seen wholesale prices 35 per cent below where they were year on year in the previous year. In South
Australia, in the member's electorate, wholesale prices are down 50 per cent in the last quarter on the previous year. We have a good government in South Australia working with the federal government to make sure those prices are coming down.

Of course, the member of Boothby knows that a fair deal on energy, alongside emissions reductions, is best achieved through technology, not taxes. Technology, not taxes! Last week in Tonsley, in her electorate, we announced the establishment of the Australian Hydrogen Centre, which is all part of our National Hydrogen Strategy. We've committed $500 million since announcing that strategy at COAG last year.

But I was asked if there was another option. There is. There is, and he's sitting opposite. He's sitting right there, next door to the member for Hindmarsh. Their election-losing machine! He's focused on driving up the cost-of-living pressures and business costs for all Australians. He called the target they took to the last election a mistake, but he's doing it all over again. It's deja vu all over again: setting a target without a plan. They don't want to tell Australians what their plan is, because we know what it involves. It involves a carbon tax—a tax on fuel, a tax on electricity, a tax on gas and a tax on farmers. We will not stand for it. It always comes back to a carbon tax. On top of that, it comes back to pink batts, Green Loans and cash for clunkers. Those opposite have no plan, no policies and no idea.

**DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

The SPEAKER (14:48): Before I call the member for Rankin, I'd like to inform members that we have present if the Speaker's gallery this afternoon the former premier of New South Wales the Hon. Nick Greiner.

 Honourable members: Hear, hear!

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Climate Change**

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (14:48): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. I refer to the Prime Minister's earlier failure to answer the question from the member for Warringah. Has the government modelled the economic impact of failing to meet its Paris Agreement commit of net zero emissions by 2050?

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (14:49): That's not what's in the Paris Agreement. Article 4.1 is very clear. It is about global commitment to reach net zero in the second half of the century. Our commitment, the commitment that is more immediate, more pressing, and that we are focused on is achieving our 2030 target: a 26 per cent reduction. We have clear targets, we have a strong plan, and we have an enviable track record. That enviable track record does not involve imposing a carbon tax. It is about technology, not taxes.

**Agriculture Industry**

Mr DRUM (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (14:50): My question is to the Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management. How is the Morrison government delivering on its balanced plan to support our farmers and agricultural producers? Will the minister outline how this compares against the risks of alternative approaches?

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and Deputy Leader of the National Party) (14:50): Can I thank the member for Nicholls for his question and for the contribution that the Nicholls electorate makes to the agricultural sector in helping us reach the $100 billion goal by 2030. Our job, with respect to hitting that goal, is to put the framework around our primary producers to make sure they're empowered to reach that goal. We've done that with the trade agreements with Japan, Korea, China, Peru, Hong Kong and Indonesia—243 million people on our doorstep that are now giving us market access, reducing the tariffs and opening up the commodities to allow our farmers to have access and spread their risks. Also the TPP-11, that $13 trillion marketplace to which those opposite said: 'Don't worry about that. Just forget about it. It's all too hard.' But we stuck the course and we got access to another market—that those opposite recklessly walked away from, forgetting about the agricultural sector. They didn't give a hoot. But then we continued, and we said that we have to empower our farmers to be the best environmental stewards they can be. We put $34 million into the Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Pilot Program to pay the farmers—not just for their carbon abatement but also for improvement in biodiversity, empowering them to look after the environment and to grow better food and fibre in the world.

But we've also talked about bringing our young people home. We've lost generations of young people out of agriculture and out of regional and rural Australia, and we're saying: we're going to increase the innovation and modernise our industry, to bring our young people back to agriculture and bring them back to regional and rural Australia. We're saying to them, there are the new jobs of agriculture, not just the traditional ones—the pick and
shovel jobs—but the new ones in science and technology, empowering young people to come back, and empowering our farmers with the tools to be able to adapt. But what they want, to be able to do that, is certainty in policy settings. And, in one fell swoop, those opposite—in a reckless act against young people who are empowered to want to come back to regional Australia—have set a carbon emissions target of zero by 2050 that says: 'You will not have a future’—because the only way that they will achieve that is through culling the national herd or putting in place draconian vegetation management laws that will lock up the productivity of agriculture and will rip the heart out of regional and rural Australia. This is a reckless, heartless attack on regional and rural Australians. Let me just put the member for Hunter back in his place, after he misrepresented the NFF chief executive—if he'd like to read what he said, his comments are: 'NFF is in the process of considering its climate policy which does not currently include a specific position on net carbon zero by 2050; however, the industry would have real difficulty supporting any target proposal.' There you have it. You have actually misrepresented the NFF in one of the lowest acts I have seen by a shadow agriculture minister.

Morrison Government: Climate Change

Mr BUTLER (Hindmarsh—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (14:54): My question is for the Prime Minister: why is the government's climate change policy still being driven by extreme climate sceptics on its backbench when net zero emissions by 2050 is supported by 73 countries including the UK, Canada, France and Germany, every Australian state and territory, the Business Council of Australia, our largest airline, our largest bank, our largest mining company and our largest telecommunications company?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:54): I simply make the observation that the shadow minister responsible for that portfolio area can't even get 20 of his own backbench to agree on a 2030 target for emissions reduction—something that we did when we were in opposition. He, as a shadow minister, can't even get unity amongst his own backbench on being able to say what happens 10 years from now, so he's had to punt it right down the other end of the field, out to 2050, because it's going to take them 30 years to agree on anything on that side when it comes to emissions reduction.

Tonight they'll go out to their restaurants—they'll go out to Otis or wherever they go—and they'll get into their huddles, and there will be a yawning gap when it comes to climate policy on that side. If you can't say what you're going to do in 10 years, how can they honestly be trusted about what they say is going to happen in 30 years? But they've raised some of the other countries—even the New Zealand government was smart enough not to include the agricultural sector when it came to their net zero emissions. It only happens to be 34 per cent of the emissions in New Zealand. They make reference to those in Europe and to those who are leaving Europe, but I note that the European Community, who has made that commitment, has given Europe's largest coal-generating country, Poland, an exemption—an exemption!

The Leader of the Opposition was so desperate, at the urging of the Milo group, to slap down the Otis group that he rushed out on the weekend and he said, 'No, no, no, I promise 2050; I'll make sure that those rebels over there won't get their say and I'll slap them down.' This Leader of the Opposition is in charge of his position. It is a rabble of views when it comes to the issue of climate policy. What I do know is this: the bill you couldn't afford at the last election is repeated by this Labor policy, under this Labor leader. It is a reheat of the bill they couldn't afford before, and they still can't afford it now. No plan; zero assessment of the cost; zero assessment of the impact; zero consultation, whether it be farmers or others; and zero positive news for the Australian people, who would be hit by a policy, if those opposite were ever elected, with a higher price on electricity, a higher price on farming, a higher price at the check-out, and a higher price on transport and petrol. A higher price is always what you'll pay under Labor, who just can't manage money.

Agriculture Industry

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (14:57): My question is to the Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management. How is the Morrison government delivering on its balanced plan to support our farmers to ensure they can deliver the food and fibre Australia needs? How does this compare against the risk of alternative approaches for Australians at the check-out when they are buying their groceries?

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and Deputy Leader of the National Party) (14:57): I thank the member for Lyne for his question. I also thank him for the contribution his electorate makes to the agricultural sector and to our community in underpinning the best food and fibre in the world being produced right here in Australia, giving not only the rest of the world confidence but also our own consumers confidence. The federal government has supported that through significant investments in biosecurity—making sure that we keep those pests out that are foreign to our farmers to protect our image, because that means that we're able to command a higher price internationally and make sure that our consumers have confidence in the product they are consuming.
We've gone a step further with respect to the country-of-origin labelling. We have taken the green and gold kangaroo and we've given it greater currency, with a barcode underneath it so that when consumers go to the supermarket they can make sure they have a clear understanding of the level of Australian ingredients in it. We're empowering consumers to support Australian farmers, to make that decision at the check-out, and to be able to go in with confidence and understand that they are consuming the best produce in the world because it's come from an Australian farmer. That's about putting a framework around not only our farmers but also our consumers.

We've gone another step with respect to our infrastructure spending. Our job as the federal government is to put the environmental infrastructure around our people and our farmers. We're doing that now with the infrastructure that we're putting put in place—roads, rail and airports—to make sure that our produce gets to these supermarkets as quickly as it possibly can, to ensure that our Australian consumers get that produce as quickly as possible. But there's a real threat to that, and that came only on the weekend with, again, the reckless policy of zero emissions, because it's not just farmers they are going after; they put a gun to the head of Australian agriculture and said: 'We don't believe in supporting you. We are going to take you out and we're going to put you in the place of this.' But now they're going after a 'check-out tax'. Every consumer will pay for this, and not just at the farm gate. They will also pay for this—

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

Mr Albanese: Mr Speaker, I think it would be a really good idea if we avoided violent analogies like that one.

The SPEAKER: The minister might just withdraw that.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: I thank the minister. He can continue.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: It is a serious issue—and I take the objection. But let me say that what they are creating is a check-out tax. It is not just the farm sector that will be penalised; it will be the processing sector. Twenty one per cent of the cost of processing the beast is for transport and energy. What those opposite will do is lift that portion of it up again. What that means is consumers will pay for this at the check-out. It's a check-out tax.

Mr Fitzgibbon interjecting—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The member for Hunter interjects. He had this brave moment after the political near-death experience he had on 18 May. He called out from under that rock where he was hiding for six years. And now, all of a sudden, the Left of the party have put their thumb back on his forehead and pushed him back under that rock he came from. For all the bravado he had after the election, he sold out the coal workers in the Hunter, he sold out the agricultural sector, because he is just not strong enough.

Morrison Government

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (15:01): My question is to the Prime Minister. So far in this parliament the Prime Minister has used his numbers to shut down debate with me on 42 occasions. If the Prime Minister is so confident of his position, will he agree to a climate change debate at the National Press Club before the climate change conference in Glasgow this year?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (15:01): It's all about you, Albo; isn't it, mate? It's all about you. We come to this place and all the Leader of the Opposition can complain about is that he can't get his 15 minutes of fame. What an indulgent Leader of the Opposition! If you want to sit in this chair, you've got to put the Australian people first, not put yourself first and worry about how much airtime you're getting. The problem with the Leader of the Opposition is that is so focused on the bubble politics of Canberra, and all of this, that he even forgets his own record. This is how many closures he moved when he was sitting on the government side—44 in 2008; 33 in 2009; 18 in 2010; 11 in 2011, and they didn't even have the numbers then; 33 in 2012; and 13 in 2016. That's 152. There will be debates before the next election and, if you can last long enough to see me there, I'll see you there!

Economy

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (15:03): My question is to the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology. How is the Morrison government delivering on its balanced plan to support Australian manufacturers to remain competitive and create jobs, and how does this compare against the risk of alternative approaches?

Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson—Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) (15:03): I thank the member for Robertson for her question and acknowledge her as a champion of manufacturing in her electorate. Her electorate, like many electorates right across Australia but especially those in regional Australia, has a very strong manufacturing base—businesses like Chamberlain Australia, which manufactures garage door openers in West Gosford. Chamberlain Australia has received support and mentoring from the federal government to help them
grow their business. In the last financial year alone their revenue increased by 11 per cent, to $52.8 million, and they're now aiming to grow sales to the Middle East from $2 million to $10 million by the end of this year. I would be very confident that they didn't just pluck that figure of $10 million out of the air having no idea how they were going to get there; they would have worked through how their business was going to expand, how their businesses was going to grow. That's because most businesses—in particular, small and medium enterprises—understand that you actually have to have a plan and a way to get to where you want to be, not just make a big announcement at the end.

Labor is always putting out doomsday media releases that talk down Australian manufacturing, but the fact is that total manufacturing exports have increased by almost $1 billion in the year to December 2019, and that's close to a 10 per cent increase in 12 months. We are continuing to back Australian manufacturing businesses. We announced the $160 million Manufacturing Modernisation Fund. This fund is going to help our small and medium manufacturers to grow, upgrade and upskill so that they can continue to compete globally and create local jobs for us.

Manufacturing businesses are certainly benefitting from our balanced plan to manage the economy, to reduce taxes, to cut red tape and to keep energy prices down. When I speak to manufacturers across Australia, the single biggest issue that they have is the cost of their inputs, particularly the cost of energy. It is one of their most significant issues, and those opposite are only promising that they're going to increase energy pricing. What they have offered is an uncosted, headline-grabbing policy. This is a policy offering from the Labor Party. What have they delivered in the past for us? They have delivered pink batts, Green Loans, 'cash for clunkers' and the carbon tax.

Roads

Ms CATHERINE KING (Ballarat) (15:06): My question is to the Prime Minister. Why did $2.5 billion out of $3 billion of the Prime Minister's Urban Congestion Fund go to projects in Liberal seats and seats targeted by the Liberal government? Does traffic congestion stop when commuters hit a road that is not on his list of partisan political priorities?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (15:06): A very ironic question coming from the member for Ballarat, given the views of the Auditor-General on her performance. Let me remind the member of the following: in the electorate of McMahon, $95 million for Horsley Drive; in the electorate of Dobell, $6.635 million for 16 projects under the Central Coast Roads Package; in the member for Moreton's electorate, $73 million for the Coopers Plains level crossing level crossing; in the electorates of Calwell and McEwen, $70 million for northern lines commuter car parking; in the electorates of Gorton and McEwen, $50 million for upgrades to the Calder Freeway and the M80 Ring Road; $50 million for upgrades to the Hume Freeway and M80 Ring Road, also in McEwen; in Fraser and Gorton, $50 million for upgrades on the Western Freeway and the M80 Ring Road; in Western Australia, across multiple Labor electorates—there aren't too many of them there, I confess—$50 million for transforming freeways, the widening and introduction of the ITS Kwinana and Mitchell freeways; in South Australia, in the electorate of Adelaide, $115 million for the Torrens Road level crossing removal; in Makin, $6.5 million for the Main North Road, Kings Road and McIntyre Road intersection upgrade; in the electorate of Adelaide and Makin there's $9.5 million for the Grand Junction Road and Hampstead Road intersection upgrade; in the electorate of Adelaide, another $9½ million dollars for the Main North Road and Nottage Terrace junction intersection upgrade; in Tasmania there was some $25 million in the electorates of Clark and Franklin for the Hobart congestion package; in Franklin there was $10 million for Tasman Highway Intelligent Transport Solutions; and in Bass and Lyons, with Lyons held by the Labor Party, $1.5 million for the Launceston eastern bypass study.

I do note though that, under the program run by the member for Ballarat when she was minister, the Auditor-General found that she deliberately—

Government members interjecting—

The SPEAKER (15:09): Members on my right! Before I call the member for Ballarat, I refer her to my earlier rulings during the last sitting fortnight on points of order. I call the member for Ballarat on a point of order.

Ms Catherine King: As I see the Prime Minister wants to talk about audit reports, I didn't actually ask him about that—

The SPEAKER: The member for Ballarat will leave the chamber under 94(a).

The member for Ballarat then left the chamber.

The SPEAKER: I want to make it very clear that I'm not going to have political debate on points of order.

Mr MORRISON: To conclude, I note in that Auditor-General's report I referred to—
The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business is raising a point of order?

Mr Burke: A point of order on direct relevance hasn't been raised during the answer to this question. What the Prime Minister's now going to is not directly relevant to what he was asked.

Mr MORRISON: On the point of order, Mr Speaker: I was asked about the allegation that the government had been acting against non-government electorates. Now, I think it entitles me to compare and contrast the actions of those opposite on those matters.

The SPEAKER: I just say to the Prime Minister, that's right, but my rulings on this have been pretty clear. You can briefly compare and contrast. There are 55 seconds to go, and I can assure you—it is my pledge—you will not spend 55 seconds doing that.

Mr MORRISON: I won't—

The SPEAKER: No, you won't!

Mr MORRISON: I can assure you. I simply note summary point 15 of that report on the then minister, which says:

- 80 per cent of Ministerial decisions to not award funding to applications recommended by the advisory panel related to projects located in Coalition-held electorates.

The former minister's hypocrisy is outstanding.

Trade

Mr THOMPSON (Herbert) (15:11): My question is to the Minister for Education, the Minister representing the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment. Minister, how is the Morrison government delivering on its balanced plan to support our exporters, and how does this compare against the risk of alternative approaches?

Mr TEHAN (Wannon—Minister for Education) (15:11): I thank the member for Herbert for his question and for his passion for trade. He understands that one in four jobs in regional and rural areas are dependent on trade, and one in five right across the nation. That's why he backed a $75 million investment in the Townsville port which will see us grow our trade from that port.

We went to the last election with a balanced plan when it came to trade. We said we were going to implement the Hong Kong and Indonesia FTAs—and we are on the way to the Indonesia FTA, following the fantastic visit from the President of Indonesia. We said we would get closer economic relations with India, and, as we speak, the minister for trade is in India, with 100 companies, making sure that we strengthen our relationship with India when it comes to trade. We also said we would pursue FTAs with Mexico, Chile, Peru and Colombia through the Pacific Alliance. We've begun those negotiations and they're going extremely well. We said we would pursue free trade agreements with the EU and with the UK, and the minister for trade is already undertaking discussions on both those agreements. At the last election we said we would grow coverage from 70 per cent to 90 per cent for those countries we're doing trade with through our free trade agreements, and we are on target to meet that. We took a plan, a balanced plan, to the last election, and we're pursuing it.

I am asked about alternative approaches. On the weekend, we heard about Labor's uncosted, untested, no-plan approach to zero emissions by 2050. If you were in a emissions-intensive trade-exposed industry, you would have been asking yourself on the weekend, 'What does this mean to me? Are we going to face a new tax on our industry?' Now, what are those emissions-intensive trade-exposed sectors? They are the aluminium, glass, cement, printing, steel, and abattoir sectors. As I said before, trade delivers jobs for one in four people in regional Australia; all those industries are in regional areas. So those people who are working those sectors would be asking themselves today, and asking themselves in the weeks and months ahead, 'How can we trust Labor? What will this do to my family budget? What will this do to my job?' They would be asking themselves why you would trust Labor on anything, especially when it comes to protecting those in emissions-intensive trade-exposed industries. (Time expired)

Roads

Ms McBRIDE (Dobell) (15:14): My question is to the Prime Minister. Why did 94 per cent of the Central Coast package from the Urban Congestion Fund go to one seat—the marginal Liberal seat of Robertson? Is traffic congestion in the rest of the Central Coast not a problem?

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of the Nationals) (15:14): Here by popular demand, obviously, from those opposite. The Urban Congestion Fund—

Opposition members interjecting—
The SPEAKER: Members on my left! The Deputy Prime Minister has the call.

Mr McCORMACK: I'll start again so they can hear me properly.

The SPEAKER: No, we can always hear you.

Mr McCORMACK: I'll speak slowly so they can understand. The Urban Congestion Fund is busting congestion and ensuring vital road projects are getting built. This $4 billion fund is bringing to life 166 crucial projects: 70 will start construction this year, four are already underway with geotechnical investigations and there is other preparatory work underway on many, many more. We took these projects to the Australian people on May 18—remember that date? May 18. And guess what? We got elected. In the same way that Labor, to our knowledge and our understanding—I'm not quite sure of all their policies and all their promises—had 66 election commitments in small-scale urban projects, 100 per cent, means that every single one of them was in a Labor or targeted seat.

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

Mr Burke: On relevance. The question's in two parts. All parts refer to the Central Coast, and the Deputy Prime Minister's yet to refer to it at all. I don't know how it can be directly relevant if both the first and the second part of the question only refer to the Central Coast. He's been asked by a Central Coast member. It's reasonable that he be relevant to it.

The SPEAKER: Just before I call the Deputy Prime Minister, I was listening very carefully for that very point because I thought when the question was asked that that particular point of order was at risk of being invoked. But listening to the Deputy Prime Minister when he's explained essentially that they were election commitments and that is really the answer—

Mr Albanese: But they weren't; that's our whole point.

The SPEAKER: If you want me to take on the added responsibility of vetting every fact that's said in this place, I'm going to be looking at a lot of copy. But I think the Deputy Prime Minister, in answering the question, is giving an answer to the member for Dobell. He doesn't have to mention the Central Coast or the seat of Robertson. I think he is being relevant to the question. The Leader of the Opposition on the point of order?

Mr Albanese: On the point of order, the Urban Congestion Fund was in the government's budget. These were not election commitments. This is something that was announced in a budget and then allocated. These were not election commitments. That is our whole point.

The SPEAKER: Sure, but the point the Deputy Prime Minister's making, nonetheless—put it this way—in answering the question is giving an explanation for how the projects were decided.

Mr McCORMACK: I'll be very quick. These are decisions of government; they're not competitive grants. We took into account other spending within the infrastructure program—that's $100 billion over 10 years, a record amount of money, thanks to the Liberal and Nationals government, thanks to the fact that we get our books balanced unlike those opposite. When was the last time there was a surplus? 1989 under those opposite. We take into account demand. We take into account population growth appreciating and the fact that the Central Coast is a large growing population. And this is important—

Mr Albanese interjecting—

Mr McCORMACK: I hear the Opposition Leader screaming out, but this is important.

Mr Albanese: This is a joke!

Mr McCORMACK: No, it's not a joke; it's the truth. Nearly all road and rail projects are decisions of government as they have been for decades under both coalition and Labor governments.

Employment

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson) (15:18): My question is to the Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia. How is the Morrison government delivering on its balanced plan to support our resources industry and the local jobs it creates, especially with exports? How does this compare against the risk of alternative approaches?

Mr PITT (Hinkler—Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia) (15:18): I thank the honourable member for his question. The honourable member's constituents know it is our balanced plan for the resources sector which delivered not only jobs for the member for Dawson but support for the coal sector. The member for Dawson understands it is our balanced plan that is delivering jobs right across Australia.

The resources sector accounted for eight per cent of Australia's GDP, 59 per cent of Australian export earnings in 2018-19 with nearly 245,000 Australians at the end of 2018-19 employed—that is roughly two per cent, one in 50, of every individual that you run across who is working employed in the resources sector.
What does that mean for our country? It means that the coal industry alone contributes more than $6 billion—$6 billion!—every year in royalties, and accounts for over 54,000 direct jobs, with the majority in regional areas. We continue to open up new resource basins around Australia, like the Galilee and the Beetaloo. We continue to support these high-wage jobs right around the country.

But I was asked about alternatives. To my surprise, in The Australian on the weekend, I noted the intrepid reporter Greg Brown had a report, 'Labor’s senior frontbenchers eyed putting cap on coal exports'. I know those opposite are keen on a cap-and-trade system, but I didn't know they were keen on a cap-or-trade system! Because a cap on trade is a cap on jobs, a cap on trade is a cap on exports and a cap on trade is a cap on opportunity; a cap on trade is a cap on opportunities for our youth to be employed right around the country.

On this side, we know that Australia is a trading nation. For Australia, trade means jobs and more trade means more jobs, and it's our balanced plan that is continuing to deliver those jobs right across this country. The member for Dawson and his constituents absolutely know it. That's why, during the election, he had people in CFMEU T-shirts signing up in his shopping centres and signing his petitions, because they support high-paid jobs. We support those jobs and we are supportive of those opportunities. Those opposite want every worker in this country lined up, cap in hand, to the Leader of the Opposition, saying, 'Please sir, can I keep my job?'

Roads

Mr MARLES (Corio—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:21): My question is to the Prime Minister. Why was over $700 million—almost one-quarter of all the funds allocated from the Urban Congestion Fund—channeled to the three Liberal seats of Higgins, Deakin and Latrobe? Is there no congestion in Cowper, Wills, Holt, Hotham, Gellibrand, Lalor or Maribyrnong?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (15:21): When I gave an answer to an earlier question, I ran through the considerable commitments the government made to electorates that are held by Labor members.

At the last election we took a plan to the Australian people, and that was to deal with congestion busting in our cities. We believe that's an important issue, to try to get people home sooner and safer. And so we put the fund together—$4 billion—to ensure that we could address those issues in our cities and in our communities. But what's more important is that Australians trusted our plan, because they know we can deliver our plan and because they know we know how to manage money. They heard all the same promises from the Labor Party at the last election. They promised to spend some $250 million on various projects around the country. They promised to spend billions of dollars here, there and everywhere, but they didn't trust Labor to deliver on these things because they know they cannot trust Labor with money.

Mallee Electorate: Roads

Dr WEBSTER (Mallee) (15:22): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development. How is the Morrison-McCormack government delivering on its balanced plan to deliver infrastructure for rural and regional Australia? How does this compare against the risk of alternative approaches?

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of the Nationals) (15:23): I thank the member for Mallee for her question. She is a fine advocate for her fine seat in regional Victoria.

Through her advocacy and this government's stronger economy we are delivering on election commitments that we made in Mallee. The member for Mallee is a fighter; she's a fierce advocate for improved medical services, for improved infrastructure services and better delivery for regional Victoria and elsewhere. I would say that across the parliament we know that better roads save lives. People living in and travelling throughout Mallee deserve better roads and better infrastructure, and the safest possible journey to get to where they need to be sooner—and perhaps most importantly, safer.

In Mallee alone, as part of our election commitments, we've invested $6 million for black spot road upgrades. These are black spot upgrades which are going to take away those deadly intersections and make sure that we improve those sections of road which have proved so costly to so many families in the past. There is $91 million in Roads to Recovery funding over nine councils.

Roads to Recovery funding is a function of this government. It was thought up by this government and is being delivered by this government. It goes back years and it has brought such benefit to regional areas. We committed $10 million to installing passing lanes and introducing two new intersections along the Calder Highway to Mildura. This investment in road safety is also improving freight efficiency for local producers, with more than

CHAMBER
280 heavy vehicles utilising this section of the highway each and every day. We want to increase it so that the fine food and fibre from the Mallee region get to port quicker and to market faster.

Ensuring a steady flow of traffic and improving conditions for freight and transport networks on the intersecting Sturt Highway is crucial to the broader road safety measures that we are introducing and investing in. They're part of the $100 billion record amount of infrastructure that we're doing, right across the nation.

There's $60 million for a new bridge in Swan Hill. I know how much the member has fought for this.

We committed $2 million to the Mildura airport. That was for an instrument landing system. The Mayor of Mildura, Simon Clemence, said it was the best investment that any government of any political persuasion had ever done for Mildura, and already the number of inquiries from pilot training academies is writ large, making sure that that investment is well spent.

I was asked about alternative approaches. Those opposite ignore regional Australia. But they do so at their peril, because when the regions are strong, so too is our nation. When our farmers are at their best, so too is our nation. When our truck drivers can transport goods around our nation in a more efficient and timely manner, then our nation benefits. But those opposite just want to impose a carbon tax. They want to make it harder for farmers. They want to make it harder for our truckies—our truckies who deliver everything in this nation except babies! They need the support and they need the help. And they'll get it from this side. (Time expired)

Roads

Mr CHAMPION (Spence) (15:26): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can you confirm that 42 per cent of the Urban Congestion Fund for South Australia is allocated to the marginal seat of Boothby? Is there no traffic congestion in the seats of Hindmarsh, Spence or Kingston?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (15:26): I refer the member to my earlier response when I listed quite a number of Adelaide and other South Australian seats which are benefiting from the investments of this government. But I've got to say: the member for Boothby does a fantastic job! You'll find no better advocate for dealing with the issues and challenges in the electorate of Boothby than the member for Boothby. That is why the member for Boothby was re-elected, because she understands what's going on in her community and she fights for her community and she has the ear of a government that can deliver for the people of Boothby. And that's why the people of Boothby made the right decision by re-electing the member for Boothby and all the other members who sit on this side of the House, because they know: when our government makes a promise to Australians, we keep it. And that's what our government is doing.

Morrison Government

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (15:27): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister outline to the House how the Morrison government's policies and clear and balanced plans are providing certainty for Australian families and businesses, both now and into the future? How does this compare against the risk of alternative approaches?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (15:28): I thank the member for Goldstein for his question, and I commend him on his excellent piece in the weekend press. Our government, as I just said, is getting on with the job of delivering on the commitments that we made that have been able to be delivered because of the strong financial stewardship of this government, which means we can invest in the things that make a big difference to Australians.

We are getting on with the job of putting people into jobs. We've seen more Australians get into jobs. We've seen more than 1.5 million people come into jobs, and we've pledged to make another 1.25 million over the next five years.

We're getting Australians into their first homes, as we promised they would do. I was with the member for Deakin just last week, as we saw more and more people come through the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme and get access to their first home.

We are putting money back into the pockets of Australians, as we promised, with the tax cuts that we delivered and legislated. And that legislated plan delivers more tax relief in the future. We are delivering the infrastructure that we promised to deliver and that has been the discussion point today in question time. We are standing by our farmers and our graziers when it comes to drought and when it comes to flood. It's a year since those terrible floods up in North Queensland, and we continue to stand by them. We are standing by the small business owners, with lower taxes and less paperwork and ensuring they are getting paid on time, as we promised and said we would do. We're increasing the incentives to get apprentices on the tools in those small businesses, building the future skills capabilities of our country in the sectors and the industries that need them, particularly in our defence industries. We're keeping Australians safe, as we promised we would do. Through our investments in defence,
through our investments in border protection, through our investments in border protection, through our investments in law enforcement and counterterrorism efforts, we are keeping Australians safe. We're expanding our trade borders to ensure that we create more jobs. We are protecting our environment with new initiatives on waste management and on reducing emissions without increasing taxes, as we said we would do.

Those opposite have a different plan for this country, and the cat was belled on the weekend. Their no-plan—zero assessment, zero costing—of a policy of apparently having zero emissions in 2050 demonstrates the zero ideas the Leader of the Opposition has, proving that he is today the same 'bill Australia couldn't afford' as the previous Leader of the Opposition was. That reckless commitment to their un-costed 2050 target betrays something very important. It betrays that the Labor Party is disconnected from the aspirations of Australians and is hardwired to the shouty voices who sneer at the livelihoods and the jobs of Australians in our suburbs and in rural and regional Australia. They're disconnected from that. (Time expired)

Mr Morrison: On that note, I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS

The SPEAKER (15:31): I present the Auditor-General's performance audit report No. 25 of 2019-20 entitled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation targets in major procurements: across entities.

Document made a parliamentary paper in accordance with the resolution agreed to on 28 March 2018.

DOCUMENTS

Presentation

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:31): 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.

COMMITTEES

Membership

The SPEAKER (15:31): I have received advice from the Chief Government Whip discharging Mr LS O'Brien from certain committees.

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:32): by leave—I move:

That Mr L. S. O'Brien be discharged from the Standing Committee on Petitions, the Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement, the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Family Law System and the Joint Select Committee on Road Safety.

Question agreed to.

BILLS

Treasury Laws Amendment (Recovering Unpaid Superannuation) Bill 2019

Returned from Senate

Message received from the Senate returning the bill without amendment.

Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) 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:

(1) notes that Australia's Official Development Assistance (ODA) investments are an important way of advancing Australia's interests, projecting our values and tackling global poverty;

(2) expresses concern that since 2014 Coalition Governments have cut $11.8 billion from the foreign aid budget with the result that Australia's ODA investments are now at a record low as a share of Gross National Income;

(3) agrees that active and engaged participation in multilateral institutions, including multilateral development institutions, is essential for advancing Australia's interests in a stable, secure and prosperous international environment; and
(4) expresses concern that the Prime Minister's recent public attacks on global institutions are contrary to Australia's interests in an international rules-based order supported by multilateral institutions which promote economic growth, global security and human development.

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney) (15:33): I was saying before I had to pause my remarks that we have, through global co-operation, solved a number of really significant international problems. We've solved great problems in the past by, for example, adopting the Millennium Development Goals and seeing the decline in extreme poverty. Sadly, the rate of decline of extreme poverty has slowed just recently. Progress in this area has slowed just recently, but we've had other great achievements. For example, we've lifted primary school enrolment rates in developing regions from 83 per cent to over 90 per cent. And we actually fixed the hole in the ozone layer.

Perhaps it's only people my age who remember the fact that we were worried many years ago about the hole in the ozone layer. Because countries got together and worked co-operatively, we were able to reverse this worrying trend. Under the Hawke Government in 1987, Australia was one of the first countries to ratify the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. We avoided the worst aspects of the global financial crisis because countries launched stimulus at the same time. The global financial crisis was very serious; they were the worst economic circumstances sense the Great Depression but could have been worse if we'd not taken this action together globally.

We got rid of small pox—what an amazing achievement. It was one of the most infectious diseases ever to have been eradicated, a disease with a 30 per cent mortality rate. We saw a coordinated global effort that eliminated small pox. This effort has been credited with saving as many as 200 million lives between 1980 and 2018, and, of course, it gets an honourable mention in the Ian Dury song, 'Reasons to be Cheerful, Part 3'—a terrific song, Mr Acting Deputy Speaker; if you haven't heard it, I'm sure you'd enjoy it.

We've done a very substantial job on reducing HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. This year, we have seen data here in Australia, and we've reached our lowest number of HIV diagnoses in nearly two decades. But importantly, around the world, global deaths from AIDS have halved over the past decade. It shows the sort of return on investment we get from investing in these global funds.

We've seen the terrific success of things like the invention of Gardasil, a discovery here in Australia. To date more than 200 million doses have been distributed in 130 countries. This cervical cancer vaccine protects against about 70 per cent of cervical cancers, saving lives globally. Australia is playing such an important role there. In Ebola in August 2014, we went from seeing the risk of a global epidemic—an international health emergency which killed 11,325 people and infected nearly 30,000 others—to seeing very quickly that the global effort meant we developed a vaccine that is about 90 per cent effective.

We now have coronavirus, of course—COVID-19—and Australia, again, has contributed to this global effort. Australian researchers have been able to sequence the genome of the virus, growing it from real patients as we developed a vaccine that is effective treatment and vaccination.

Since the advent of the current international order, global conflicts have also decreased substantially. That's a great effort in health, but look at the story when it comes to conflict. After the Second World War, there were nearly 250 battle deaths per million people. We've got down now, thankfully, to about 10 per million. These are significant achievements. If you look at international coordination on nuclear non-proliferation, we've got from a high of 70,300 active weapons in 1986 to approximately 3,750 active nuclear warheads left in the world in 2019. I think that's 3,750 too many nuclear weapons in the world, but when you look at the fantastic work of ICAN and others—ICAN, of course, won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize—you see what is possible when we cooperate.

Sadly, of course, the United States has withdrawn from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and I'd have to say that is a real step backwards in this area. If we look at cluster munitions, Australia signed and ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions when we were last in office, under Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard, prohibiting the use, transfer and stockpile of cluster bombs. For the first time since 2015, the report last year was that there was no new use of cluster bombs in Yemen and a significant decrease in the Syrian conflict.

Chemical weapons have been banned since 1997, but sadly we have tragically seen some governments—the Syrian government, for example—use these against their own people. If not for the ban, how much more widespread would the use of chemical weapons and cluster munitions be?

These achievements have only happened because of international cooperation—small countries like us, small in population, working together with the big nations in a way that has changed our world and has made it safer and stronger, and it is firmly in the tradition of Australian foreign policy to do this. The Liberals, of course, criticised our bid for the UN Human Rights Council, but the then foreign minister was able to use our position on the UN Human Rights Council, when we won it, to stand up for the interests of Australia after MH17 was shot down.
We have to participate in these global challenges. When it comes to aid, this, of course, is one of the most important ways we can do it. Our aid budget makes our world safer and more prosperous, and, when our world is safer and more prosperous, Australia is safer and more prosperous. We still have 736 million people living on less than $1.90 a day, 47.2 million of whom are on our doorstep in the Indo-Pacific region. You don't win the battle against global poverty by retreating, by turning your backs on the international community. We need to continue to play a strong role globally on all of these issues—on health, aid, peace and disarmament, economic growth and prosperity, and, of course, climate change. That's because our neighbours' successes are our successes.

Economic modelling from the Australian National University has found that every additional dollar spent on Australian foreign aid in Asia has resulted in $7.10 in Australian exports. The results speak for themselves. Between 2013 and 2018 our total aid to Indonesia nearly halved to less than $300 million, and our two-way trade with Indonesia has grown to nearly $17 billion, making Indonesia our 13th largest trading partner. We hope to build on that success because, as countries in our region leave poverty behind, they become trading partners for us. As they improve their health systems, our own health is protected. If we've got outbreaks of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis and malaria on our doorstep, then of course the risk to Australia is greater.

Our participation in aid, our strong backing for official development assistance, has always been because we morally believe that it's the right thing to do. But in purely practical terms: when our neighbours succeed, when our planet is more peaceful and more prosperous, then Australia can look forward to more peace and prosperity for our own citizens.

Ms THWAITES (Jagajaga) (15:42): I'm pleased to rise to speak on this bill, the Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill 2019, and the amendment moved by the member for Shortland. That's because, of course, meeting our commitments to replenish these development funds is an essential part of being a good global citizen. Several crucial multilateral funds are covered by the special appropriation included in this bill, and Australia has a proud history of support for these funds. We've historically played an active role in supporting them. That's why it is appropriate for parliament to make a special appropriation to support these commitments on an ongoing basis.

We know that these multilateral funds alleviate poverty and promote economic growth and development in some of the world's poorest countries. The funds also help tackle the big global challenges of our time, things like climate change, which require international cooperation. These multilateral development funds have contributed to lifting more than a billion people out of extreme poverty since 1990, and Labor continues to be a strong supporter of the multilateral institutions at the heart of this system. We know that supporting international development is in Australia's interests.

But the Prime Minister and those on the other side seem to be unsure about their support for multilateralism, and I note that there's a heavy list from our side of parliament speaking to this bill but very few from the other side who came to speak on this. Last year the Prime Minister gave the Lowy Lecture. At that time, he said: We should avoid any reflex towards a negative globalism that coercively seeks to impose a mandate from an often ill defined borderless global community. And worse still, an unaccountable internationalist bureaucracy.

Well, unlike the Prime Minister, Labor is proud of Australia's support for multilateral development institutions. These types of institutions are the ones that have helped to promote peace and prosperity across the globe since they were set up in the aftermath of World War II. They were set up because we'd seen the impact of going it alone. They were set up because we'd seen what happens when nations acted unilaterally. They were set up so that we could achieve global cooperation. They further Australians' interest in a stable, secure and prosperous international environment.

As we see the dominant economic and political forces in our region and around the globe continue to shift, it's crucial we remain engaged with these multilateral institutions. Multilateralism ensures Australia is able to play a role on the global stage. They are somewhere where we, as a middle power, can come together and exert influence and make sure that our voice is heard and that we work constructively for a better future for all. And at a time when nations like the United States, who once we may have looked to as being leaders in these forums, are also disengaging from multilateral organisations, now's the time for Australia to strengthen our role and our leadership in these organisations at a time when we really are facing global problems, problems that can't be tackled by one country alone. Things like climate change—well, we can't tackle that alone; we need international institutions and international agreement—the movement of people across borders and people seeking asylum. These are all difficult problems that require us to be able to cooperate on an international level. That's what these institutions do, and that's why it's so disappointing that from the Prime Minister we have doubt about these international institutions and from the rest of his government's members we have disinterest about these institutions. This undermines Australia's commitment to these organisations, and it undermines our commitments to the rules based order which has been essential for ensuring a stable, secure and prosperous international environment.
Of course, it's not just Australia's spirit of cooperation that's lacking; it's our financial commitment too. Despite more than one billion people being lifted out of poverty since 1990, there is more to be done. More than 700 million people around the world still live in extreme poverty, and progress is made through those who can afford it doing their share. Unfortunately, that is not what Australia is doing. The coalition government has now cut $11.8 billion from Australia's foreign aid budget since 2013. In 2013-14 our aid budget was 0.33 per cent of our gross national income. On its current trajectory, it is expected to hit just 0.19 per cent in 2022-23. This is the lowest level on record. Within the OECD, we've fallen from being the 13th most generous country in 2012 to the 19th in 2017, making us one of the least generous members amongst OECD member countries.

We're now seeing the devastating impact of the Morrison government's cut to foreign aid. Spending on education, cut by 41 per cent; spending on health, cut by 32 per cent; support for South-East Asia, cut by 30 per cent; support for South Asia, cut by 42 per cent; support for Indonesia, our nearest and largest neighbour, cut by half. It is a disgrace that this government is ripping foreign aid money from countries with demonstrated need. These programs work. They make people's lives better and they make our region stronger. They're an investment in our relationships with our neighbours, but the Morrison government has shown that it is short-sighted and cold-hearted.

I've had the privilege of seeing firsthand the impact of Australian aid. I worked in the aid sector during the Rudd government years, when our aid budget was growing. I've travelled to South Africa, I've travelled to Timor-Leste, I've been to Vanuatu, I've been to the Solomon Islands. In all of those countries I saw the diverse ways that Australian aid was making real and practical changes in people's lives: women's groups who were getting a voice where they've never had one before; farmers in Timor-Leste who were being supported with small-scale farming, which meant they had gone from having a lengthy 'hungry season' to being able to feed their families; and people in South Africa who were being funded to get through the stigma and the difficulties of having HIV and AIDS.

These are vital programs. These are the programs that this government has cut. They've said they don't care about these people's lives: 'We want to leave you to yourself. We're not a good neighbour; we're not part of this community. We don't have any interest in supporting you.' That's what this government has done, and it is so disappointing to all of those good people working on those programs, people who were committed to improving others' lives. That work has now been undone, including the relationships we built and the knowledge we built about how things work in other countries. If we are engaging with other countries, if we want to go and talk to them about how things work, how we might have a better relationship with them—we've just lost decades of work. We've lost relationships that we had. We've lost contacts and knowledge that we had because of this government's cuts to foreign aid. It's short-sighted and it's mean.

Of course, it doesn't have to be like this. In contrast, the Conservative government in the United Kingdom put into law a target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income on foreign aid spending. That's right: a conservative government. Former British Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron championed raising the foreign aid budget, calling on better-off countries to meet their moral obligation. In 2012, in a speech to the United Nations, Cameron warned of the dangers of continuing to underspend. He said:

If we don't, the problems of conflict, the problems of mass migration, the problems of uncontrollable climate change are problems that will come and visit us at home.

If other conservative parties across the globe can see the importance of committing to foreign aid spending, why can't this government? This government continues to slash the aid budget and weaken Australia's reputation as a generous nation.

We know that Australians expect us to support these programs overseas. We know that they value foreign aid. Research conducted by the Lowy Institute in 2018 found that the average Australian actually believed that we invested around 14 per cent of the federal budget on foreign aid. They thought that maybe the right level would be about 10 per cent. What a difference! The Australian people think we should be investing 10 per cent; 0.19 per cent is what we're on track for. Australians know that it's in our interests to be generous. They are big-hearted. They are people who see that we can reach out, that we are wealthy enough to support others and that we are wealthy enough to be good neighbours. But this government is so short-sighted that it can't see those benefits.

There are other benefits for Australia. Reaching out to our neighbours can enhance our security and reduce the impacts of global instability. More importantly, it's an expression of our Australian values. It shows that we, as Australians, care about others and it demonstrates to the world that we want to be seen as a country that is engaged, supports others and sees beyond our borders.

The need for strong multilateral institutions and for a strong foreign aid budget is also apparent when we look at some of our closest neighbours in the Pacific region. The Pacific region is one of the most aid dependent in the world, and Australia does remain the largest donor in the region. Within the region we need to work to remain the
partner of choice for Pacific nations through improved diplomatic development and economic links. Labor has long been an advocate for deeper Australian engagement in the Pacific.

One of the ways that we really need to look at stepping up in this space is our engagement when it comes to climate change. Leaders from across the Pacific have been clear with us that their countries are already seeing the effect of devastating climate change. I hark back to my previous experience working in this space. Even back in 2013 I remember travelling to countries in the Pacific and being told that the climate was changing and that farmers couldn't grow food in the same way. These are people whose lives are already being impacted and these are people whose lives were already on the edge. If we're not stepping up to be a good neighbour, if we're not showing that we're part of a global effort, a community effort, to tackle this, what are we demonstrating? We're showing our Pacific neighbours that we're not genuine and that we're not really listening to them—we're not interested in their priorities. Actually, we'll give them some money, but it's based on what we think they need, not on what they think they need and not on what they're telling us they want support for. We have to make sure that we're listening to the Pacific, and that means we need to be supporting them on tackling climate change.

While this government has initiated the Pacific step-up, and Labor supports part of that, the Pacific step-up is undermined by the fact that we've ripped aid money from other countries and by the fact that we refuse to spend some of this money on tackling climate change in the Pacific. That's a vital problem there at the moment. Until we can listen to our neighbours, until we can demonstrate that the money we're giving them hasn't been ripped from other people around the world, we're not setting ourselves up to have the relationships we need to be able to support people around the world.

This government has also lost valuable expertise from our aid program. By cutting the aid program, they've lost the people who knew what they were doing. By cutting the people who had years and years of experience in this space, they're finding that—oops!—we've got to outsource to the private sector. And the private sector is saying, 'Actually, the amount of money you're spending doesn't really make this worth our while.' So there's no-one delivering these programs who has the expertise or the knowledge that they used to have. We're finding that people who had built decades of knowledge and experience in a particular area are being pushed to one side, and, again, this undermines the relationships that we've had. People in other countries who may have been able to walk into, say, a bureaucracy in Pakistan and know who's who and know their way around are no longer on Australia's side, because we've cut their funding. It's short-sighted. It's undermining us all. This government have shown they don't care about foreign aid. If they cared, they'd invest. If they cared, they'd be thinking about the future, they'd be putting their money where their mouth is and they'd be supporting efforts to reduce global poverty.

Mr GORMAN (Perth) (15:55): I rise to speak on the Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill. Australia's aid program should make us proud to be Australians. It preserves our way of life at home and helps the most disadvantaged across the world. It's clear that the member for Jagajaga is proud of the achievements of our aid program, when it's been performing at its best and doing what it's meant to do—projecting those Australian values of compassion and fairness across the world. Australia has some of the great aid organisations that participate in so many regional and international forums—for example, Caritas, APHEDA, Save the Children, World Vision and Oxfam, where the member for Jagajaga once worked. There are so many good institutions that do so much good in the world. I will give a particular shout-out to Global Citizen, which is headed up by a few Australians, including Hugh Evans, and a good friend of mine Michael Sheldrick. Noting that this bill ensures that we can meet our commitments to organisations including the World Bank, I'll also give a shout-out to one of their staff, Daniel Street, who worked in this building for Channel 9. I was also very pleased to work with him on Australia's aid program in foreign minister Rudd's office. We all know that when the Micah crew come into this building, you can't miss them. They make their voice and their commitment to helping the poorest people in the world heard, loud and clear.

However, just because we have all these great organisations, it doesn't mean that we always receive the message. Sometimes, rightly or wrongly, we go down the wrong track. Some say 'negative globalism' is a danger. I think the bigger risk is actually positive isolationism—that is, making a virtue of Australia withdrawing from international organisations. To make a virtue of participating less is a complete affront to our democratic values, which say we should engage. A prime minister that is proud to have skipped a United Nations climate conference to visit an automated McDonald's drive-through is not representing the sort of Australia that we should be projecting to the rest of the world. A shrinking aid budget is something that we in this place should all be concerned about.

While many talk about a Pacific step-up, the reality is it's a Pacific 'catch-up'. We are catching up, because we cut programs to our closest neighbours. We are catching up, because other people filled that space. We are catching up, because our Pacific neighbours fell behind on their achievement of the UN sustainable development goals. And these are big problems. Some people say they're too big, they're too hard, and so we shouldn't try.
'Can't Someone Else Do It?' was Homer Simpson's campaign slogan when he ran for garbage commissioner. It shouldn't be Australia's foreign policy platform. Over six years, this government took a systematic approach to their decision to cut our aid programs. It was their plan. It went through their ERC, it went through their cabinet and it went through their party room. This was not a mistake, where they can just turn around and say, 'My God, where did all that money go? Oh, we've cut the aid budget.' It happened year after year after year. The government was warned that this would create strategic risk in our region and across the world. And guess what? It did.

No, Australia is not the richest country, but we are a wealthy country. We can use our influence to encourage others. It's what Australians have done for decades. In 1948, under Australia's presidency, the United Nations General Assembly passed the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and established the Commission of the Status of Women in 1947, and Australia was one of the largest global donors of aid to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. At our best, we do more than our fair share, and, at our best, we are proud of doing more than our fair share. But recently we've seen an approach that denies billions and billions of dollars to the poorest people in the world.

You look at just our bilateral program to Pakistan. We're going from in the 2018-19 financial year, $39.2 million a year to the people of Pakistan down to zero. That is a huge cut, and it's to just one of our friends, the people of Pakistan. I was lucky enough to visit in 2010 following some horrific floods, where Australia proudly committed $40 million to build hospitals, provide health services and prevent people dying from entirely preventable diseases that came about as a result of those floods.

I heard the member for Jagajaga speaking earlier and she talked about real changes. The reality is that, just like I saw when I travelled to Pakistan with Foreign Minister Rudd, our aid does deliver real change to people's lives. She talked about giving voice to women in our region, talked about helping farmers—something we're lectured on all the time by those opposite but we've actually got an aid program that does help our farmers. The Australian Agricultural Centre for International Agricultural Research is a great organisation that actually shares some of Australia's best farming practices with emerging economies across the world. We should be proud of that. We should talk about it more.

I was pleased on 29 October 2019 to host an aid forum with Senator Penny Wong. Some 200 people from the electorate of Perth attended that forum, talking about how we increase compassion. We had young students come up and say, 'I've got a great education. How do we make sure that every child across the world has a great education? We had people raise concerns about climate change, making sure that we continue to invest in these multilateral funds. It was a great forum, and I want to thank Senator Wong and all of my constituents who attended.

When we talk about the amount and the quantum that we invest in aid, so many people think that we are spending unreasonable or unaffordable amounts on it. There was a statistic given to me actually by someone opposite whom I won't name—it would be very unkind to do so—that just puts this in perspective. Sadly, we spend less than $4 billion a year on direct foreign aid. Australians, according to the Pet Industry Association of Australia—and I should declare a conflict of interest here: my brother Joey is the proud owner of a pet store in the electorate of the member for Fremantle; a great small business, doing fabulous things. But if you look at the amount we spend on aid as a country, about $3.8 or $3.9 billion, Australians spend $12.2 billion a year on their pets. Everyone loves their pets, but don't tell me that we can afford to spend $12.2 billion a year on pets and we can't afford to run a big strong, growing aid program.

Under the Rudd and Gillard governments, Australia had a commitment to reach 0.5 per cent of gross national income spent on our aid program. In 2013, that budget had reached $5 billion. We are now at an historic low of just 23c in every $100 that the government receives being spent on our aid program. It is just impossible to think that we've done so much damage in just six years.

I was proud to stand at the election and be elected on the Labor platform of Australia, once again striving towards 0.5 per cent of gross national income. I think we should talk more and more to our friends in the United Kingdom about their target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income—something that is entirely reasonable over the long term. But at the moment we sit at the bottom third of OECD countries when it comes to aid spending.

On this, I think former Prime Minister Julia Gillard was 100 per cent right. We need a new bipartisan agreement on aid spending and a bipartisan plan for growth. It's the only way that we can take this debate out of these chambers and get back to where we were for many decades: bipartisan support and a bipartisan approach to growth. On that front, I'll note that in government things were different, but in opposition the shadow minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop, was a very strong supporter of that bipartisan commitment.

When we look at our progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: on 32 indicators we are in need of improvement; 24 of the indicators we are in need of a breakthrough; and 32 of the indicators are off track. We are...
signing up to these agreements and then we are not doing the heavy lifting and the hard work to meet our obligations under those agreements.

One area where we're not meeting our commitments in the Sustainable Development Goals is climate change. The 2013-14 aid budget referenced climate change 46 times, estimating that we would be spending about $600 million of our aid program on environmental initiatives. The budget that followed in 2014-15 referenced climate change just three times, with $0 estimated expenditure. If that is not an ideological obsession seeing its way into the heart of our aid program, I don't know what is. The reality is: if you believe in climate change action, you need to believe in Australian aid programs. There are so many lectures that tell us Australia can't do it alone. I agree; Australia can't do it alone. But we should do a little bit to help out, because the reality is not every country in the world has the expertise, the intellectual property and the capacity to do what Australia is so fortunate to be able to do.

To come back, you can't talk about this program without looking at the very detail of the cuts. We remember the 2014 budget cutting many, many things, but it also cut our foreign aid budget by $700 million. It's always hard when you talk about money—what does $700 million get you? One of the things that I was lucky to once hold in my hand was what they call Plumpy'nut. It is a peanut paste like substance of 500 calories that UNICEF said, 'changed the world'. When you are dealing with malnutrition, particularly in children and babies, Plumpy'nut is the thing that saves their life. It costs about 50c a packet. That $700 million could buy 1.4 billion packets of Plumpy'nut, and at certain times this is in short supply and is desperately needed. Indeed, when there was the Horn of Africa famine in 2011, Australia funded the distribution of Plumpy'nut to literally save the lives of babies, toddlers and children.

The cuts didn't stop in 2014. In 2015, we go further. We see the commitment from the government for the aid spend to drop to 0.21 per cent of gross national income. Today, it's been cut by some 27 per cent from the 2013 levels. And, to help make sure that there was never any questioning voice in these cuts to the aid program, the government actually closed the agency that was supposed to be the voice for aid within the bureaucracy. They shut AusAID, getting rid of hundreds and hundreds of long-standing professional staff and closing the doors on our aid agency. And, it does make a difference. I understand that the government will say they merged it with DFAT and there were foreign policy benefits of doing so, but the reality is rather than two agencies, both who would take different perspectives on and both who would provide their input into the development of government policy, you now just have the voice of DFAT. No disrespect to DFAT, but they can't be the foreign policy voice to government and the voice for an effective, strong and growing aid program.

The Lowy Institute notes:

Australia's aid program has been the disproportionate victim of the Coalition government budget savings measures since forming government in 2013.

Every time we see the back-in-black surplus mug dragged out, you've got to remember that was off the back of $11 billion in cuts to the aid program. And, while the mantle of being the progressive former Prime Minister is currently one that Malcolm Turnbull would love to hold, the reality is a large amount of the cuts happened on his watch, and that can never be avoided. But the current Prime Minister—who was the Treasurer, who helped enact so many of Prime Minister Turnbull's cuts—in his first speech to this place, on Valentine's Day on 14 February 2008, said:

As global citizens, we must also recognise that our freedom will always be diminished by the denial of those same freedoms elsewhere, whether in Australia or overseas.

He quoted Bono!—saying that we should increase our aid to Africa. In fact, sometimes we hear quotes about the great moral challenges of our time. Well, the Prime Minister said:

Africa, though, is a humanitarian tragedy on an unimaginable scale. It is a true moral crisis that eclipses all others.

That's right, the Prime Minister said that what we do in Africa is the moral crisis that eclipses all others. So I couldn't believe it when I looked at the numbers. What has this government actually done when it comes to funding Africa and the Middle East in our aid program? When they came to office, they had $388 million in aid being spent there. But, by 2019-20, they have proudly gotten down to $199 million. That's a 48.5 per cent cut by this government. If that's how the Prime Minister treats something he thinks is a moral challenge, we're in trouble.

Mr JOSH WILSON (Fremantle) (16:10): I'm glad to speak in support of the amendment to the Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill 2019 moved by the member for Shortland and shadow minister for international development. And I'm glad to follow some very fine contributions from the members for Perth, Jagajaga and Sydney. Like my colleagues, I'm unashamedly a friend and supporter of Australian aid. It's welcome that, through this bill, we're taking the legislative action required to guarantee Australia's contribution to various multilateral aid funds—six of them. Australian aid is, without
question, vital in saving lives and reducing poverty. Poverty hurts people. Poverty causes suffering and preventable death, regional instability and conflict—all the terrible things that can befall human communities. It is hard to think of a more important cause than Australian aid.

This guarantee is welcome but it has to be seen in context—because, under this government, Australian aid has been badly knocked about. AusAID was dissolved, with a significant impact on skills, personnel, knowledge, morale and development assistance capacity. We know that $11.8 billion has been cut from the development assistance budget. It's the one area of government that has taken the largest impact of cuts from this government. For quite a long time, the government wasn't prepared to be open about where those cuts were falling. Thanks to inquiries by the shadow minister for international development and the Pacific, we know some of the detail of those cuts. We know, for instance, that those cuts have resulted in a 41 per cent decrease in education programs, a 32 per cent decrease in aid programs focused on health outcomes and a 42 per cent decrease in South Asia alone.

The funding in this bill is welcome but it comes against a background of huge cuts and a huge retreat in the scope and capacity of our development assistance program, and it's a shame when you consider what well-targeted aid can achieve. The multilateral funds whose support is guaranteed through this bill include the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative, which supported 36 underdeveloped nations. An analysis of this initiative has found that participation is associated with a 16 per cent and a 12.5 per cent reduction in child and infant mortality respectively and that those beneficial effects are the largest in the poorest countries. But this government, since it was elected in 2013, has taken a wrecking ball to Australian aid. It's where the largest cuts that it has inflicted have fallen. And that's despite the supportive statements that the current Prime Minister made upon being elected. It is despite the interest that the former Foreign Minister, the former member for Curtin, had in aid. She is highly regarded, and not without justification. But she was the Foreign Minister who presided over the dissolution of AusAID and the massive cuts to Australian aid.

Development assistance has dropped to 0.19 per cent of GNI. It was 0.37 in the last term of the former Labor government. It has dropped to 0.19 per cent of GNI. That's the lowest in Australia's history. We've fallen from being a solid, middle-of-the-pack OECD contributor to being one of the least generous. It's been a brutal hit in terms of the development assistance we provide to poor nations, including poor nations in our region. It means our influence on the economic development of countries in our regions has diminished, and our economic wellbeing will suffer as a result, because a lot of our programs are devoted to democratic capacity and other kinds of government systems that allow underdeveloped countries to develop and to become more economically capable. It means our influence on building peace and security in our region has been diminished. If you are serious about peace and security and serious about keeping Australians safe, one of the things you do not do is cut Australian aid, because it is one of the best ways of building peace and regional security. So, by not supporting better governance and democratic capacity, by not supporting better health aid and education, and by not supporting best environment and climate outcomes, we undermine the peace and security of our region and our own peace and security. Make no mistake about that.

Taking the hammer to Australia's aid program also means that we save fewer lives. We save fewer lives and we lift fewer people out of poverty. We look at the awful decision made last year to stop assistance to Pakistan altogether after 70 years—an underdeveloped country which faces many challenges and which with we've had a strong partnership and an aid program partnership that's lasted 70 years, now cut away to nothing. In April last year, the Morrison government's aid budget summary said that gender disparities are stark in Pakistan and noted that nine in ten Pakistani women experience violence in their lifetime, among the world's highest rates of gender based violence. The summary noted that it was a key objective of Australia's aid to Pakistan to assist women and girls, with a focus on education, access to reproductive health and combatting gender based violence. Pakistan is one of the poorest countries in Asia. It was placed 150 out of 178 nations on the most recent United Nations human development index. So, despite the circumstances of Pakistan and despite only in April last year, less than 12 months ago, the Morrison government identifying the needs of Pakistan and the reasons why we should be supporting Pakistan, the decision was made late last year that we would stop supporting those kinds of development goals in Pakistan altogether.

I've listed the three consequences of our aid cuts—the fact that it undermines regional economical development, it undermines regional peace and security, and it prevents us from reducing aching poverty and saving lives. I have listed the consequences in what I consider to be the reverse priority. I think our aid program should proudly have as our No.1 priority saving the lives of desperate people and reducing the poverty that hundreds of millions of people face. It's absolutely a part of our character and values to lift up the lives of some of the most desperate and disadvantaged of our fellow human beings. But, if you don't find that compelling enough, it's worth remembering that Australian aid, dollar for dollar, is one of the best kinds of government expenditure when it comes to economic capacity, and that ultimately means our own economic wellbeing through trade in our
region as countries develop and, as I've said before, building peace and security in our region. That's why I'm an all-day and everyday supporter of Australian aid and that's why that's the position of the Labor Party. It was in government; it has been and will be in opposition.

I encourage people to consider and support Australian aid. I know the member for Perth talked about some of the misunderstandings about how big our aid program is, how much we contribute and what it achieves. I note that the campaign for Australian aid, which people might like to consider at australianaid.org, includes a whole number of reasons why we should support that program, and I will name a number of them. In 2014 alone, Australian aid vaccinated more than 2.3 million children; it ensured nearly one million additional mothers had access to a skilled birth attendant; it provided critical services for more than 66,000 women who have survived violence; it supplied 2.9 million people with access to safe drinking water; and it responded to emergencies in 24 countries, including Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and flooding in the Solomon Islands. That's what Australian aid does. It's absolutely part of our character and our values as a nation and it should be supported.

I know that the government is going through the process of reconsidering and redesigning the aid program. I guess I have to observe that it's hard to imagine how they could make it worse.

Mr Hill: Don't put it past them!

Mr JOSH WILSON: I know I shouldn't be too optimistic. I should be cautious and we should watch carefully. But you start by dissolving Australia's stand-alone aid agency and you follow that by making Australian aid the victim of the largest budget cuts as a category of government expense. You take Australian aid to the lowest level it has been in our history. You talk about how you're going to focus aid in our region, but actually aid to South Asia declines by 42 per cent. You talk about how you are going to be more Jakarta than Geneva but you cut 50 per cent of all aid to Indonesia, which means 86 per cent of programs that deliver health assistance in Indonesia and 57 per cent of programs that deliver education in Indonesia. You come in and fashion your aid related four-word slogan, 'more Jakarta less Geneva', and then you go and make a 50 per cent cut in aid funding to our nearest and one of our most significant neighbours in the region.

We welcomed the President of Indonesia here last week to talk about how trade agreements are important. We talked about how the strategic position of comfort that Australia has enjoyed in our region for a period of time is changing, that it's much more challenging and that it's a geopolitical contest in which need to be involved. Yet one of the means by which we are involved in our region in that process, our Australian aid program, has been ripped into a hundred pieces and thrown on the floor. Anything has got to be better than what we've got, I say cautiously. You could only hope that this process of looking at our aid program going forward will do a number of things. It will certainly ensure that there are more resources, that the cuts stop, that the retreat from supporting our regional neighbours stops and that we look at what we've done in relation to Pakistan and reconsider it. Any and all of those things should occur.

I note the comments of the CEO of the Australian Council for International Development, the peak body for Australian NGOs in the international development space, Marc Purcell. In relation to this aid review he has said:

"For 70 years, Australia has assisted countries to create a more stable, peaceful and prosperous world through international aid and development. But we must always be vigilant about how the international environment is changing and tailor our foreign policy accordingly.

"A new development cooperation policy provides an opportunity to consider that environment and shape our response accordingly so it can best tackle poverty, injustice and inequality.

"The case for relevant Australian development assistance is compelling: Pacific Island nations are facing an existential crisis created by climate change; in Bangladesh, more than one million Rohingya people have fled persecution from Myanmar; and in South-East Asia over 300 million people live in extreme poverty, and inequality is rising.

"Australia's response should be to rise to these challenges and for the best of Australian expertise and experience to be harnessed to work with our neighbours.

Hear, hear! I entirely endorse that. I can only hope that the government and the responsible minister are listening to what the sector has been saying for a long time.

Let me finish by paying tribute to all those who work in the aid sector both within Australian aid and in the non-government organisations that are our delivery partners. I was fortunate to be with a number of colleagues as part of a regional leadership initiative that visited Bangladesh in January. We saw the work that's being done to combat one of the greatest humanitarian crises afoot in the world, where you have nearly 1 million Rohingya people from Myanmar who have been forcibly pushed off their land and subjected to terrible violence. They are being looked after in Bangladesh with the support of international NGOs, including NGOs that rely on Australian government support.
There are also programs in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, because Bangladesh itself is a country that has very significant development challenges. It has some 10 million people who are classed as ultra poor, which means they survive on considerably less than US$1.50 a day and generally struggle to have more than two meals.

So to all people involved in aid: we know you take on work that can be physically and emotionally draining. What you do is vital. What you do is some of the most compassionate and life-changing work that human beings can undertake. It matters so much. Thank you. Keep going.

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (16:25): I'm speaking in support of this bill, the Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill 2019, because Australian aid saves lives. As a former Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs, I've seen firsthand what a difference the Australian aid budget can make to the lives of some of the poorest people in the world living within our region.

Australia is a wealthy nation. We're fortunate to enjoy relative high living standards, and we have a moral obligation to support economic development and growth and improved living standards in the region in which we live. The Pacific region, in which Australia is situated, has some of the poorest people and nations in the world when it comes to global development goals and economic indicators—nations in which people die from preventable diseases like diarrhoea; nations in which rates of infant mortality are shockingly high; nations in which rates of attainment of primary school and high school education are very low; nations in which rates of domestic violence and violence against women are shockingly high. Added to those problems is the compounding influence of climate change on Pacific nations—particularly nations like Tuvalu, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands, where governments are actively considering moving populations to other areas because their island nations are simply becoming uninhabitable. When you look at Australia's position in our region in that context, it's very important that bills like this are supported and that Labor and the government remain supporters of a workable Australian aid budget.

This bill provides a special appropriation for the Australian government to meet its commitments to replenish a range of multinational development funds over coming years. Those multilateral funds carry out essential work in tackling poverty and promoting economic growth and sustainable development in some of the world's poorest countries. The funds also help tackle environmental challenges which require global operation. Australia has played an active role over many years in supporting these funds, and our support for these funds is part of the government's commitment to being a good international citizen.

Australian overseas aid is not only the right thing to do but also in Australia's interests. It provides for Australia's foreign relationships, our economic prosperity and our national security by fostering more prosperous, stable and secure international environments. It is positive for our own economy, boosting jobs and living standards at home by encouraging growth abroad, which creates new export markets for Australian products. The classic example of this is the fact that Australia, in the past, has provided aid through various multilateral funds to China, to Korea and to nations like Singapore, which, as a result of that international aid, have lifted literally billions of people out of poverty. That aid improved living standards but also improved the productivity and effectiveness of those economies, and those economies—most notably China—are now important trading partners for Australia. China is of course Australia's largest trading partner, providing huge economic benefits to Australians in the form of increasing growth, productivity and jobs for Australians. So overseas aid not only improves the living standards of people in those countries that we provide it to, but also will return a dividend to the Australian economy in the future through increasing trade.

Overseas aid also reduces the risk of cross-border problems, like health epidemics, political instability and transnational crime affecting Australia. That's why Labor's been a strong supporter and always advocated for a strong international development program for this country. We're also a strong supporter of an international rules based system and the multinational institutions which are at the heart of this system. Supporting international development is in Australia's interests and helping developing countries to grow will promote Australia's interests in a prosperous, stable and secure region.

Growth in developing countries will create new trade and investment opportunities for Australia. It will not only help lift people in developing countries out of poverty but will also support jobs in Australia. Tackling poverty in developing countries is also in Australia's interests because it means a more stable and secure international environment. Poverty and social inequities can generate instability, insecurity and tension in the international environment. By reducing economic disadvantage, we're tackling the root causes of instability and insecurity. This will not only improve the welfare of people in developing countries but also improve our own security in what can be an increasingly unstable region. Supporting international development is squarely in Australia's interests. We're a country that's committed to the fair go and helping vulnerable and disadvantaged people both at home and abroad. Our international development programs and our participation in multinational
development institutions are an expression of our values as Australians—particularly the value of the fair go. That's why I and my Labor colleagues are supporting the bill.

Through this bill the parliament will provide the executive government with a special appropriation from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the purposes of meeting Australia's commitments to a range of multilateral development funds. The funds covered by this special appropriation are the International Development Association, which is the World Bank's development arm and one of the world's main sources of multilateral official developmental assistance; the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, debt relief arrangements administered by the International Development Association which have relieved 36 of the world's poorest countries of about $99 billion worth of debt; the Asian Development Fund, which provides development grants to low-income members of the Asian Development Bank; the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund, which is administered by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to support the sustainable development of activities around the world; and the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, which provides funds to help developing countries to phase out the use of substances which deplete the earth's ozone layer. Australia supported these multilateral development funds for many years on a bipartisan basis. Our commitment to the World Bank goes back to the international financial architecture which was adopted in the aftermath of the Second World War by the Chifley government in its 1947 decision for Australia to join the Bretton Woods initiative. Australia was one of the first countries to ratify the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer under Hawke government in 1987, and the Howard government committed Australia to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative in 2005.

Australia's funding commitments to these institutions are typically refreshed every three to four years in replenishment pledges. The replenishment pledge can commit Australia to provide funding support for several years to come. In the case of the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, Australia's agreed to make an annual funding contribution to 2044, and that's why it's appropriate for parliament to make a special appropriation to support these commitments. An ongoing special appropriation will better reflect the multilateral and multiyear time frames of Australia's commitments to these funds and annual appropriations.

Labor supports the passage of this bill. However, I do wish to take this opportunity to express concern about the government's approach to international aid and in particular their continued cuts to the Australian aid budget. It's a concern that we've had for many years, since the government were elected. We have a concern also with the Prime Minister's role and his comments that undermine Australia's role in multilateral institutions.

Since this government came to office in 2013, they've cut $11.8 billion from Australia's aid budget. Australia's aid contribution is at the lowest level as a proportion of gross national income that it has ever been in our nation's history. And official Australian development assistance is now on track to fall to 0.19 per cent of gross national income—as I mentioned, that's the lowest level it has ever in our nation's history. This is a shameful record for a nation like Australia, particularly given the challenges that I mentioned earlier that we face within our region—not only around development goals, improving living standards and educational outcomes, but also around domestic violence, tackling climate change and strategic issues within our region.

We all know that the government has been withdrawing from multilateral institutions and withdrawing funding for international aid within our region, particularly the Asia-Pacific area, and that has provided an opportunity for countries from our north to enter the door that has been closed by this Liberal government in terms of relationships and partnerships with nations within our region. Under this Prime Minister, Australia's international aid is lower as a share of national income than it was under Liberal Prime Ministers Menzies, Holt, Gorton, McMahon, Fraser and Howard. So congratulations, Prime Minister, your government has set the record for Australia's lowest commitment to the international aid budget under your government! Australia's aid budget as a share of GNI has fallen from the middle of the OECD pack to one of the least generous amongst OECD Development Assistance Committee member countries.

Although I understand that this record may seem popular with the general populace, let me tell you it's an unwise and unstrategic move for Australia to be taking. Some of the things that Australian aid funds are vaccines for children in some of the poorest countries within our region. I'm talking vaccines for polio, for rotavirus and for other ailments that children simply should not be dying from. It funds books for schools. If you go to countries like Papua New Guinea, into the Highlands, just getting books for kids into the schools is a challenge. Some of the programs that Australian aid funds get those books into those schools.

The Pacific has some of the most shocking and some of the highest levels of domestic violence and violence against women of any region throughout the world, and Australia has been a principal supporter of programs to eliminate domestic violence and to change the culture around men's approach to violence against women within these societies. I'm talking about programs such as Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development. This was
instituted by the Gillard government, and has been very successful in not only reducing the rates of violence but also providing important counselling and shelter for women who are forced to leave domestic situations. They are some of the programs that Australian aid funds. They are humane programs that are in the interests of people living in our region and in the interests of Australia and its relationships with those countries.

By reducing the level of aid funding we're giving to these nations, this bill is contrary to Australia's interests in promoting economic development, prosperity, stability and security that economic development brings. It's harming our international standing and our bilateral relationships. We all saw at the recent Pacific Islands Forum how scathing the Pacific nations and their leaders were of Australia and its approach to climate change. They are now actively saying that Australia is dragging the chain when it comes to climate change. And these are nations that know better than most: they are facing the prospect of having to move populations from these islands, their water wells are becoming salinised, crops they've traditionally relied on to feed their populations are becoming unsustainable, and road infrastructure is literally being inundated by the rising sea level.

These nations are at the front line of climate change, and Australia has been walking away from them—and they've been critical of Australia's international aid budget cuts in respect of that. It is at odds with Australian values, particularly those notions of a fair go and of Australia being a generous notion, and it is hurting some of the poorest people in the world.

It is high time that the government accepted that they're doing the wrong thing when it comes to international aid and that they reversed some of the shocking cuts we've seen to the international aid budget, not only because of the effects that those cuts are having on some of the poorest people within the region but also for the future economic prosperity of Australia and for our international reputation.

Mr HILL (Bruce) (16:40): I'll keep my comments fairly brief. I support the Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill 2019. It gives life to Australia's commitments to critical multilateral initiatives: the World Bank International Development Association, the World Bank's debt relief programs, the Asian Development Bank's Asian Development Fund, the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund and the Multilateral Fund for Implementing the Montreal Protocol. It is important work. The expenditure is in the order of $350 million a year. There's no cash impact to the budget; this is to give effect to already budgeted commitments. In that sense, it's a technical bill, because a special appropriation bill is needed for the reasons that have been outlined and I won't go over. These are all existing commitments.

The thing I do just want to put on the record yet again is that this bill comes in the context of a massive $11.8 billion cut to Australia's international development assistance under the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government, the ATM government. This is about leadership; this is not about being popular, let's be honest. In the community, you hear a lot about how charity begins at home. People think we as a nation spend far more than we actually do on international aid. If you ask people how much we spend—they've done surveys on this—the figures are quite astounding. Some people think we spend literally 10 per cent of our national budget on foreign aid, but that's just not true.

It takes leadership to rebut this 'charity begins at home' notion. Firstly, we need to remind people that this is in accordance with Australian values. This is who we are as a people. This is who we have been for decades. We don't forget our neighbours in Papua New Guinea and East Timor, the people who gave us shelter and helped save us during the Second World War, some of whom gave up their lives; in the Solomon Islands; and right throughout the Pacific. We don't forget them. These are our values. We understand that we're one of the world's wealthiest countries, notwithstanding all the issues that we have here. We give thanks for that and we try and share that and do our bit in the neighbourhood. We're good international citizens. You've got to remind people of this. We are good international citizens and we should be proud of that. There are challenges we share with countries in the region. There are a whole bunch of things in the region that we can't do alone and no country can do alone, but we have the resources and the capabilities and the relationships to do our part, and we should be doing our part.

But if that argument doesn't work, if values and international citizenship aren't enough, then there's the argument that works more effectively, I have to say, with many members of the government, and that's fine. It's national interest. International development aid is in our national interest. We can do more and we must do more to ensure that we live in a peaceful and stable region and that the countries nearby don't sink into instability and chaos. We know that global poverty, extreme poverty and extreme inequality provide a breeding ground for terrorism. That's a known fact. We know that, when we have problems like drug-resistant tuberculosis coming in and out of Queensland, it is in our interests—our very narrow, most selfish interests—to do more about this in the countries to our north. And poverty, of course, is a cause of these things. Ultimately, we don't want failed states on our doorstep. If you want to take that really hardline argument, we don't want failed states on our doorstep—and foreign aid is cheaper than sending in the military.
But it's shocking that, under this government, international development assistance is on track to fall to just 0.19 per cent of gross national income. We're on track to give the lowest level ever recorded, from data since 1961, under any Australian government—0.19 per cent of GNI. That's 19c in every $100 of our national wealth. It's the meanest and nastiest level that we've ever achieved. That's what this Prime Minister and this government are driving us towards. At the very time we most need to be engaged in our region, we are cutting international development assistance.

If you look at the global Human Development Index, we should be ashamed that Africa in many ways is getting better in many places, in aggregate. That means that the Pacific—in our backyard, in our sphere of responsibility as a wealthy, large country in the region—will soon be the least developed place in the world and will have the poorest people in the world, with the worst life outcomes.

We're seeing with climate change an increasing need for aid and humanitarian assistance with rising natural disasters. We need to not just lift our game on mitigation—that's a debate for another day—but invest more in resilience and adaptation. Of course there is also the deteriorating security environment, a challenging environment. Someone from the Howard government thought it was a good idea to cut Radio Australia, didn't they? That has turned out well. Now we've cut our foreign aid. The withdrawal of Australia from the region, the retreat, has left space for others who don't share our values.

Only last week the shadow minister finally got some real figures. There was a 10 per cent cut to aid for East Timor. East Timor, a country of around a million people right on our doorstep, with whom we've shared so much, has a 10 per cent cut to aid despite all the troubles there. There was a 50 per cent cut to aid to Indonesia. We had the Indonesian President here in the last sitting week, and the government was proclaiming our wonderful special relationship. Well, they're cutting aid and development assistance by 50 per cent. There is a 86 per cent cut to health funding in Indonesia.

They've got a review underway. I was trying to think of the best analogy. Are they rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic or putting lipstick on a pig? I don't think I'm allowed say 'polishing a turd', am I? That's probably against—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks): Order! The member for Bruce will withdraw the comment.

Mr HILL: I withdraw that one. It is hard to know, isn't it? It is hard to imagine, as the member for Fremantle said, how you think they could make things worse from this review. He's remaining optimistic. Give them a chance—they'll find a way! I've been trying to reflect honestly. I've spent time in the region, in Myanmar and Thailand, looking at some of our aid projects—and in the Solomon Islands. We travel with government members. It's funny, isn't it? They're always there for a free trip. There are no shortage of government members who'll take that free trip and go overseas.

Mr Coulton interjecting—

Mr HILL: Yes, absolutely. I took the free trip; I declared it. My point to the government minister, whoever you are over there, whichever latest one they've served up—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bruce will refer to ministers by their correct title.

Mr HILL: I don't know who he is. I don't know what he's the minister for. They change so often.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Bruce will resume his seat. Member for Bruce, I'm going to give you one opportunity to refer to the minister by his correct title—which is Minister, to assist you—or I will sit you down and call the next speaker.

Mr HILL: I called him 'Minister'. I will call him Minister. I said 'the government minister at the table'. I'm really not sure what you're on about right now, Deputy Speaker, but I said 'the government minister at the table'. They're always happy to take the free trip, but they're not happy to stand up and champion foreign aid and to speak out against the cuts. Ultimately this is a leadership project. There are no votes in aid. We all know that there are no votes in aid. If anything, you go out and preach this stuff and people think you have the wrong priorities. That's the truth of it. But it's a leadership project. We do it because it's right, we do it because it's in the interests of our region and we do it because it's in our national interest. It should shame government members that they're not in here speaking out against the cuts or pushing the government to reverse some of these cuts. It doesn't matter how much you review the program. If you don't put more money in it, it's not going to work.

Ms KEARNEY (Cooper) (16:48): Labor supports the Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill 2019. It provides money to funds that carry out essential work in tackling poverty and promoting economic growth and sustainable development in some of the world's poorest countries. The funds also help tackle environmental challenges which require global co-operation. Our support for these funds is part of Australia's commitment to being a good international citizen. It's one of the ways
Australia contributes to global economic and social development and to tackling environmental challenges. However, our concern with the Prime Minister's undermining of Australia's role in multilateral institutions is something that we are extremely concerned about.

We are also concerned about the coalition government's cuts to Australia's aid budget. Since this government came to office in 2013, it has cut $11.8 billion from Australian aid programs. Our development relationships in south-east and east Asia have seen annual development assistance cut by $384.7 million, or 29.8 per cent, since 2014-15. The aid to Indonesia, as we heard the member for Bruce mention, has been cut in half. We should be investing in the people of Indonesia, yet we have cut aid for health programs by a massive 86 per cent and for education by 57 per cent. Aid to Vietnam has been cut in half; assistance to the Philippines, Laos and Cambodia has been cut by a third; countries in south and west Asia have had their aid cut by $195.3 million; and assistance for Africa and the Middle East has been cut by 48.5 per cent over the last five years. Alarmingly, the figures show that Australia's annual assistance for education in all developing countries has been slashed by 41 per cent, while spending on health is down by $260.8 million. That's 32.3 per cent since 2014-15.

Supporting education is vital to achieving gender equality and preventing violent extremism in our region. The women and children of some of Australia's most important neighbours are suffering. Even within the Pacific region, we are seeing some nations losing direct funding. How can the Pacific step-up be effective if we cut aid to Vanuatu by 42 per cent, or to Samoa by 14 per cent? Cutting health assistance to Samoa by 36 per cent in the aftermath of its measles epidemic raises serious questions about whether the Morrison government is actually responding to the needs of our Pacific friends.

Our overall foreign aid budget has been slashed by 27 per cent in real terms since 2013, and now makes up a measly 0.82 per cent of federal government spending. This is an all-time low. Under Prime Minister Morrison, Australia's international aid as a share of national income is lower than it was under the Liberal prime ministers Menzies, Holt, Gorton, McMahon, Fraser and Howard. Australia's aid budget as a share of GNI has fallen from 0.7 per cent of GNI. We are lagging where we should be leading.

This situation is contrary to Australia's interests in promoting economic development and the prosperity, stability and security that economic development brings. It's harming our international standing and our bilateral relationships. It is at odds with Australia's values as a generous nation. It is hurting, not helping, some of the poorest people in the world. In my role as ACTU president I was on the board of APHEDA, an international aid agency led in true solidarity by the wonderful Kate Lee. APHEDA runs small-scale aid projects that empower communities at the grassroots. It partners with local organisations and individuals to break people out of poverty, through empowering them through skills acquisition and organising capabilities—like establishing sustainable food sources, marketising local produce, learning skills that give lifelong careers, or fighting for human rights and workers' rights, to eliminate systemic exploitation. But APHEDA and the many other aid agencies need more resources to expand their work.

Just last year, it was announced the Morrison government will cease all bilateral aid to Pakistan. Australia has a 70-year history of providing aid to Pakistan but will end all government-to-government development assistance in 2020-21. Pakistan is one of the poorest countries in Asia. A key objective of Australia's aid to Pakistan has been assisting women and girls, with a focus on education, increased access to quality reproductive health services and gender based anti-violence services. It is incredibly short-sighted to scrap all bilateral aid to Pakistan.

I've been lucky enough to see the benefits of Australian aid. Last year I visited the Rohingya refugee camps on the Myanmar-Bangladesh border. Six parliamentarians were guests of Save the Children and—just like this motion states—the delegation saw the positive impact of the international aid we've given in response to this remarkable crisis. We've contributed around $70 million to the response. This solidarity is on display in so many ways. There are water pumps, bags of rice and other food items, medical clinics and so much more. We were able to witness the amazing contributions that our NGOs make in improving the lives and hopes of the Rohingya refugees. It's clear that our aid and solidarity, along with those of other countries, have done so much at a time of such a huge humanitarian disaster. When I visited, it was almost exactly 12 months since the first refugees flooded across the border, reporting atrocities at the hands of Myanmar soldiers.

What was then a forest refuge complete with wandering elephants is now a medium-sized city of almost one million people. The infrastructure of the camps and the food, health and social programs for over 900,000 people,
many of whom are still traumatised by the death of loved ones, is quite remarkable. One of the key lessons I learned was that it will be crucial to provide men and women with real education and opportunities to earn a livelihood within the camps. Work is dignity, and the Rohingya are a determined, hardworking people, not used to doing nothing. We met young people who had completed or nearly completed high school in Myanmar, whose hopes have now been shattered. They don't have any books to read, let alone opportunities for further study. Yet, they too are helping their brothers and sisters in the brother-sister programs, teaching the young ones who can't get to the early learning centres.

The reality is that the vast majority of refugees will be there for a long time. A looming question is: how does development occur that gives the Rohingya hope and opportunity but also deals with the equally pressing needs of the Bangladeshi population? Many programs are now delivering around 20 per cent to 30 per cent of the funding to host communities to try to compensate for this.

This all plays into what commitment Australia will make in the medium to long term. As a nation, we need to lift our aid and effort both to the Rohingya camps and to this region of Bangladesh, not cut it. It's shameful that a country like Australia can't fund the money to play our role in lifting the standards and opportunities of our neighbours. Apart from lacking any humanitarian heart, it's foolish in national security terms not to invest in international aid. If we do not assist countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan or support countries who are suffering through ongoing armed conflict, we can expect that the resulting refugee flows will further strain international agencies and donors. Many parts of Africa are in crisis as a result of civil war, others through drought, floods and the climate crisis. The 65 million people who are currently displaced globally surpasses the number of people displaced during World War II.

Tackling poverty in developing countries means a more stable and secure international environment. We know that poverty and social inequality generates instability, insecurity and tensions. By reducing economic disadvantage we can tackle the root causes of that instability, and it will not only improve the welfare of developing countries but also improve Australia's security.

Labor also makes the point that this bill exposes the Prime Minister's hypocrisy concerning international institutions. On the one hand, Mr Morrison is out in the public arena undermining Australia's commitment to multilateral institutions with his rhetoric about negative globalism. His rhetoric is reminiscent of the right-wing nationalism we're seeing in the US and elsewhere. It takes us back to the 1930s. Our objective should be to promote unity, but we have a Prime Minister who is moving closer to the divisive politics we see in the US and the UK. There is something increasingly obvious about his behaviour and his political trajectory. His attacks on the right to protest, his denunciations of business people—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks): Order, the member for Cooper. The member for Canning on a point of order.

Mr Hastie: The member made a direct historical illusion to the 1930s and right-wing leaders. I ask her to withdraw with regard to the Prime Minister.

Ms KEARNEY: No, I'm not going to withdraw that. I think the rhetoric is reminiscent of the 1930s—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It would assist the House if the member would withdraw the comment and continue the speech.

Ms KEARNEY: I don't wish to withdraw it. It is concerning. It is something that I am personally concerned about and I feel that I have the right to say that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Cooper, could I ask you to rephrase your concern in a way that does not directly link it to the Prime Minister? Would that assist the member for Canning?

Ms KEARNEY: Such rhetoric is reminiscent of the 1930s. I will not link it directly to the 1930s. His attacks on the right to protest—this is about the Prime Minister, because he has attacked the rights to protest—his denunciation of business people who dare to have a social conscience and his Lowy Institute speech parroting dangerous foreign ideas as negative globalism are all characteristic of a reactionary, not a conservative, let alone a Liberal. We are better than this. There is a reason why successive governments, both Labor and coalition, talk about the importance of global cooperation through multilateral organisations. To quote Angel Gurria, the Secretary-General of the OECD:

…the flourishing of multilateral institutions after World War II remain valid today. International cooperation provides venues to resolve differences peacefully; platforms to agree on common rules of the game; mechanisms to better manage international flows; and channels for exchanging ideas, experiences and practices …

This is so important.
Labor welcomes this bill because it will support Australia's continuing participation in multilateral development institutions. Helping developing countries grow will promote Australia's interest in a prosperous, stable and secure region, but fighting global poverty is the right thing to do. Helping the world's most disadvantaged people is an expression of Australia's values. We are a country committed to the fair go and to helping the vulnerable and the disadvantaged, both at home and abroad. Our international development programs and our participation in multilateral institutions are an expression of our values as Australians.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks): The question now is that the amendment be agreed to. I call the member for Perth.

Mr BURNS (Macnamara) (17:00): You could, but he's not here! My electorate is Macnamara.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Macnamara— I apologise.

Mr BURNS: Not at all. He does sit next to me, so I can understand the confusion. The member for Perth is devilishly handsome as well, so I'm happy to be mistaken for him! We are speaking about the Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill 2019, and of course Labor, as the previous speakers have mentioned, will not be opposing this bill and support this bill. The key point of the contribution I want to make with regard to this piece of legislation is that there is a big difference between what this bill sets out to achieve and what we are seeing more broadly from the government with regard to foreign aid, with regard to Australia's place in the region and with regard to how we see ourselves as Australians.

Australians have always punched above our weight. We've always seen ourselves as positive partners, as positive players, in both our region and in the world, and I think Australians would be proud of much of the work that we do internationally, of which I'm going to talk a bit about today. But some of the comments by the Prime Minister, as the previous speaker, Ms Kearney, pointed out, have been small-minded, and they are also against our national interest. That is what I will be speaking about.

The Prime Minister stood in this place and said that we, as a country, need to move away from negative globalization, which stands in so much contrast to what we, as a country, have been about, to what we have achieved as part of the international community and to what we should be striving for in order to deal with the challenges that face not only us as Australians but also people in our region and across the world. But we cannot achieve and reach for solutions, and we cannot reach for better, if we are going to rip $1.8 billion out of the foreign aid budget. We cannot help those in our region if we cut education aid by 41 per cent and health assistance by 32 per cent.

When this government came into power in 2013, Australia's official development assistance was just over $5 billion. Right now, annually, it's $4.04 billion, down by almost $1 billion, which is around $1.5 billion a year in real terms. That's $1.5 billion being ripped out of our foreign aid budget because this government is afraid of what the Prime Minister calls 'negative globalism'. That's $1.5 billion that could be there to pursue our national interest and to assist our partners in the region. I note that the minister, Minister Hawke, is here. I know he shares all of our passion and concern for the Pacific as a region, but that is $1.5 billion that isn't being spent where it's needed.

Last year, as one of the first things I did when becoming a member of parliament, I was fortunate enough to go to our closest neighbour, Papua New Guinea, and I saw firsthand the incredible work that Australians do and the role that Australia plays in small Papua New Guinean communities. We landed in Port Moresby, took a flight up to Goroka, got in a car for about three hours, headed in past all sorts of local and really remote communities and ended up in the small town of Kainantu, where we were told that they'd never been visited by a Papua New Guinean MP. We were greeted with quite the reception. It was something I'll never forget. In the small village of Kainantu we saw a school being supported by the Australian government and we saw a health facility being supported by the Australian government. It is changing lives in this small town, lives which otherwise wouldn't have running water, wouldn't have access to proper medical care and wouldn't have access to classrooms, books or education.

The role that Australia is playing in that small town is connecting these young people not only to Australia but to the world. The ratio of people who leave that school and go on to work in industries even within Papua New Guinea is quite low, but even one person in a class or a family of tens can support their family back in the village. It was inspiring to see the lives that are changed by Australia. There was genuine appreciation from the Papua New Guineans that Australians weren't there to dictate to them what they should be doing; they were there to work with them, to partner with them and to work together as equals, friends and allies. That is prevalent not just in Papua New Guinea but right across the Pacific, right across South-East Asia, yet the government is taking that money away from those communities.

This is not just an argument about what feels good and what we should be doing to help people who need our help. I absolutely understand that there are people inside Australia who also need our help. It is against our national interest to be cutting off ties with these countries, especially countries like Papua New Guinea and others.
in the Pacific. In the region, China is trying to exercise influence. It's trying to increase its influence especially in Papua New Guinea, as I've been speaking about, but also in other areas of the Pacific. They are doing it in ways where we can't compete. They have far bigger budgets and a far bigger capacity to build infrastructure. To be frank, we don't need to compete with China on that. What we need to be doing is continuing to partner with the people.

As Australians we are very good at governance and helping communities set up governance processes, but we are even better at setting up education processes, education institutions and healthcare institutions. That's how we connect with people in our region. That's how we exercise influence over people in our region. That's how we as Australians are able to ensure our place as a key player in our region, not by cutting funding but by partnering with people on the ground, by partnering with communities, and by acknowledging that we as Australians can do more. We do not need to compete with China, because people, especially in the Pacific and other parts of South-East Asia, value Australians for partnering with them. They know that the best thing that we can do as friends is to support them. That's why it is absolutely staggering to see that the government has systematically reduced funding and reduced our footprint and impact in the region and across the world.

The other point to make about it is that it is short-sighted. In a lot of these countries, especially in the Pacific, there are a range of health challenges that are absolutely in our national interest to ensure that we are providing healthcare services for in these communities and not when they ventures overseas. I don't think that it's too much to say that with the coronavirus we are seeing the devastating economic impact of what an infectious disease can do across multiple economies and countries. But in Papua New Guinea, as one example, and other parts of the Pacific HIV is at much higher rates. Diseases like tuberculosis are thankfully not really prevalent in Australia, but drug resistance to tuberculosis is more and more prevalent in Papua New Guinea. That is not something that we would want to be able to jump ship across to Australia. We need to make sure that we are supporting these communities to deal with the what must seem at times insurmountable health challenges in their communities. And we cannot be cutting education services and education funding by $430 million or health services by $26.8 million, not just because it hurts those communities but because it hurts us as Australians. It is not in our national interest to be saying to the region and to be saying to our friends in South-East Asia and in the Pacific that we want to reverse our influence, we want to back track our influence and we want to reduce our influence as Australians.

The message that we should be saying to these people and what we should be saying to our friends is that we understand that you have challenges and it is Australia that will help you overcome them, it is Australia that has always been your friend and it is Australia that wants to see you achieve the things that you need. That's why, only a few weeks ago in a very memorable meeting here in this parliament, we saw the President of Indonesia come here and express a friendship that is so wonderful between our two countries. And yet we are cutting our foreign aid from the Indonesians almost in half, from $610 million in 2014-15 to now less than $300 million. Vietnam has seen a cut by half. The Philippines, who at a time like this, when the Filipino people absolutely need the support of Australians, has seen over $20 million cut. Laos has seen 40 per cent cuts. Cambodia has seen 33 per cent cuts. And it's not just the big figures. In Indonesia, the cuts weren't made to infrastructure; they were made to health, education and humanitarian assistance. We are not just hurting our friends with the way in which we are dealing with foreign aid, we are hurting ourselves and we are hurting our place in the region and across our part of the world.

I want to read out the final figures before I finish my contribution. The Prime Minister talks about the Pacific Islands. In fact, I've even seen the minister do some impressive dance moves on his visits to the Pacific. The minister is nodding his head quietly—very impressive dance movements! But I would plead to the government that taking money away from the Cook Islands is devastating for those small communities. Taking over $5 million away from Samoa, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Fiji—that's tens of millions of dollars from our closest neighbours, from the countries that we so desperately need to remain as our closest partners and our closest allies. Australia should see itself as a nation that helps bring others forward, as a nation that plays a positive part in our region and as a nation that looks outwardly in the world and embraces our neighbours and those around us. We should not have this small-minded small aim of wanting to retreat and cower in the corner. We should be looking at our multilateral organisations and looking at our friends in the Pacific and working with them as partners.

The final thing I'll say is that when you compound the cuts made to these small Pacific islands, with the fact that the Prime Minister ignored the requests, the pleas, from the Prime Minister of Fiji, among others, to do more to tackle climate change, it has a devastating impact on that precious relationship that has been built up for so long. For these neighbours, climate change is not a sport, like the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction sometimes likes to think it is. It's not just getting through the media cycle of the day. For these countries, climate change poses an existential threat—the water is rising on their very toes—and to compound the fact that we are
taking much-needed Australian funds away from these communities, with a Prime Minister who at times seems to be tone deaf to the very needs of these communities, hurts the very good name that Australia has worked hard to achieve for our friends over a long period of time. So we do not stand in the way of this bill. This bill is about working with our partners and working with multilateral organisations. This bill is not about negative globalism, which the Prime Minister likes to spout in his Trumpian style. This bill is about reaching out, working with other communities, working with other organisations and working to improve the lives of people in our region. It's also to act in Australia's national interest to ensure that our region has stability and that Australia's place in the region is increased and not decreased.

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (17:15): Once again, I note that, with respect to the Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill 2019, like so many others, no government members are speaking. Perhaps it comes as no surprise given what speakers on this side have said with respect to the government's commitment to overseas aid. Most Australians have a good understanding of the contrasts of the living standards of Australians when compared with that of people living in so many developing countries. People have sometimes had the opportunity to travel overseas and see for themselves. Others have seen footage from news services, films or documentaries, and some people have actually come from those developing countries. They understand just how fortunate we are to live in Australia. They know how much more difficult life would be in many of these developing countries, even if their own life in Australia is filled with struggles.

In today's world where there is so much affluence, there are still so many people in parts of the world who, through no fault of their own, live in extreme poverty, in conditions that no Australian would ever want to live in. These are often women and children who not only live in poverty but are exploited, enslaved, abused, assaulted and disempowered. We live in a world community. People in developing countries who live in misery are fellow humans who need our help. I acknowledge that there is widespread need, even in our own so-called 'lucky country', and that so many Australian families are also struggling through life. I heard the other day that 3.2 million Australians live below the poverty line. The recent fires, floods and storms have devastated so many of our own communities, yet I believe that we have the capacity to assist Australians in need while simultaneously lending a hand to people suffering overseas.

Over the past months, I've met with several people who are involved in global aid programs or campaigning for Australia to lift its aid commitment. Most of these people represented Christian faith organisations. They all had the same message: Australia could and should do more to reduce global poverty, with a particular emphasis on poverty throughout our Pacific neighbours. Yet Australian aid is declining. Since 2013, $11.8 billion has been cut. For the 2018-19 year, Australian aid spending was just $4.16 billion, or just 0.22 per cent of gross national income. It is projected to fall to just 0.19 per cent. This ranks Australia as 19th of the 29 nations that give aid and it will be the lowest level of aid as a share of GNI since data was first published in 1961 for Australia.

Fighting global poverty is not only the right thing to do but is in the national interest, as so many people have pointed out. I heard the remarks of the member for Macnamara with respect to the fact that, if we don't provide aid, then quite often other countries will, and that will in turn cause further problems for us in years to come. Providing aid not only creates stability in those countries but opens up trade opportunities, creates goodwill between us and improves our own national security—again, a point that has been stressed time and again by speakers on this side of the House.

Over the years, international aid has improved the lives of millions of people, and again that is acknowledged. However, there is still a huge need out there. Millions still suffer, often entrapped in slavery or burdened by disability in places with no social support and extreme poverty. Some 68.5 million people have now been displaced from their homelands and, of those, 85 per cent are living in developing countries where the host nation itself needs help. And yet, for all that, those host nations are in turn helping others who are in perhaps greater need than themselves.

In my meeting with two separate Micah delegations last year, I was presented with five objectives that Australia should pursue in helping our Pacific neighbours. Those five objectives are:

1. Ensure the new aid policy empowers local communities in the Pacific to lead their own inclusive and sustainable development.
2. Ensure the new aid policy recognises the needs of the most vulnerable members of our Pacific family, particularly women and children.
3. Work with the Australian Church and Christian development agencies to leverage and amplify the strength of the Pacific Church as a key partner for human development.
4. Recognise the impact of climate change in the Pacific including the increasing risk and impact of natural disasters.
5. Ensure the Pacific Step Up is not at the cost of 'stepping down' elsewhere in the world.
I believe that those five objectives are all quite reasonable and are things that this country could commit to. I am also concerned that part of the aid that is now being directed to the Pacific comes at the expense of other nations that in past years have been assisted by this country. So we might be stepping up our aid in the Pacific area but we're doing that at the expense of other vulnerable nations. This legislation makes a special appropriation by Australia to six multilateral development funds which are directly associated with global aid initiatives. Australia's annual payments to the six funds average around $350 million.

I raise a matter associated with this legislation. Right now some developing countries, including Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, all of whom may be funding recipients under this legislation, continue to use chrysotile—otherwise known as white asbestos—in construction projects. Chrysotile is a dangerous asbestos product that will cause long-term health harm to people already struggling. It has been banned in most developed countries, yet the exporters of chrysotile are running a dishonest campaign claiming chrysotile is safe and, in turn, they are blocking global efforts to have it banned. Australia should make it a condition of funding under this legislation that chrysotile will not be used in any construction project.

In November the Australian Senate voted unanimously to call on the government to lobby for a change in policy to end the use of asbestos in Asian Development Bank financed projects. I note that the Asian Development Bank itself recently made a statement that it would stop allowing asbestos products to be used in their projects from 2020. It is important that chrysotile is included in the definition of asbestos products. I urge the Treasurer to raise this issue at the Asia Development Bank annual general meeting in South Korea in May this year.

The continued use of this product is simply adding to the woes of people in developing countries and will continue to do so for decades to come if it is allowed to continue. This is one mechanism we have, as a nation, to try and help those people by ensuring that the funds that we assist them with are only used in projects where this product is not being used, and it will in turn help stop those countries who are profiteering from the use of this product and selling it to the needy developing countries of the world.

Most of the other matters that I would have otherwise touched on have been touched on by other speakers on this side of the House, and I concur with what has been said. As others have quite rightly emphasised: this is in Australia's national interest and I, like so many others, quite often out in the community hear concerns about the level of aid that we make. The level of aid pales into insignificance compared to what other countries are doing—and to what we should be doing, given that it is not only in our long-term interests but also, as I said at the outset, the right thing to do.

I note that, regardless of government, as I get around my community, there are church groups, service clubs, schools, businesses and individuals who are taking on board responsibility for overseas aid programs they, individually or collectively, donate towards. This must amount to millions and millions of dollars each year that this country sends overseas because of the goodwill of the people of this country. I applaud and thank all of those people for doing that. But they are setting an example that, quite frankly, this government would do better to follow, because the efforts of this government simply don't match the goodwill of the Australian people.

Ms STEGGALL (Warringah) (17:25): I rise to speak in support of this bill, the Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill 2019, but I do join my voice to those urging the government to do more. Whilst this bill provides funding to meet Australia's official development assistance obligations to the various multilateral organisations that we are members of, it is also a timely reminder of the importance of Australia's international aid program.

In the last sitting week of last year, on behalf of Micah Australia many young Australians visited Parliament House to speak to us about the pressing global justice issues of our time and Australia's role in addressing them. A number of them came from my own electorate, representing community organisations and churches like Seaforth Baptist Church. I thank them for their passionate and dedicated advocacy. They respect the challenges this government faces. Australia needs strong trading partners, reliable allies and close relationships in our immediate Indo-Pacific region. Each of those is key to ensuring Australia's ongoing freedom, security and prosperity, and they do reasonably expect Australia's aid budget to help fulfill such a vision for our nation. However, they also passionately believe, as do I, that, as a nation that values fairness, kindness and compassion, Australia has a moral obligation to ensure that Australian aid is supporting the world's most poor, vulnerable and oppressed people, beyond just their strategic value, acknowledging that every life is of value and worth. The reality is that we can have both: an Australian aid budget that is strategic and moral, through a principled approach to Australian aid that is also in the national interest.

The recent announcement by the government of a review of Australia's aid program with the stated goal of developing a new plan in the coming months is welcome. But, given the government's strong focus on the Pacific
region and the Pacific step-up, I certainly hope that the new aid policy that emerges from the review will seek to
empower local communities in the Pacific to lead their own inclusive and sustainable development; that it will
recognise the need of the most vulnerable in the region, particularly women and children; that it will recognise the
impact of climate change in the Pacific, including the increasing risks and impact of natural disasters; and that it
will ensure the Pacific step-up is not at the cost of stepping down somewhere else in the world.

But we also need to look at the amount of funding allocated to our aid budget. This year we saw the sixth
consecutive cut to the aid budget. The aid budget remains frozen at $4 billion per annum over the forward
estimates. As a proportion of our gross national income, aid spending has now fallen to 0.21 per cent. As the
Reverend Tim Costello has said on many occasions, Australia's aid budget should not be used by the government
as an ATM to withdraw from the poor every time it needs to balance the budget.

Earlier this year, the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, as part of its inquiry
into Australia's aid budget, recommended that the government increase our aid funding to at least 0.5 per cent of
gross national income within five years, and then to 0.7 per cent of GNI within 10 years, and that, like the UK aid
budget, this be legislated so as to prevent an ATM approach. We must be able to be more compassionate and
generous, especially with our Pacific neighbours. The government has not yet responded to that bipartisan report,
so I add my voice to those urging the government to consider the committee's recommendations favourably and
respond accordingly. On behalf of Warringah, I thank all those young people who visited at the end of last year to
add their compassionate voices to many others from around Australia.

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (17:30): It is my understanding from the list there may still be speakers on this side of the
House, so I may take just a couple of minutes to add my remarks to the debate, in the event that one of those
speakers wishes to join us in the chamber. If not, I'm sure the minister will be pleased to wrap up.

Foreign aid is close to my heart, having as a child grown up in Indonesia, in Banda Aceh and Jakarta, seeing
firsthand the impact of Australia's aid program on those communities. For want of simple treatments like oral
rehydration, children have died around the world. Australian aid saves lives. It's been estimated by Reverend Tim
Costello that the cuts to Australia's aid budget may have cost as many as 200,000 lives around the world. That's
because our aid is going to health programs and to anti-poverty programs. It is directly assisting some of the
world's most vulnerable. Australian aid is absolutely critical, as it looks to improve the wellbeing of the world's
poorest.

My predecessor as member for Fraser was Bob McMullan, who once told me that his most rewarding job in
two decades of politics was to serve as Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance in the
Rudd government. In that capacity, he put in place Australia’s disability-inclusive development program. In
practice, this meant that Australia's school-building program in Indonesia ensured that schools built with
Australian aid money had ramps leading to their front doors—so Indonesian children in wheelchairs were able to
attend school for the first time thanks to Australia's aid program. My maternal uncle, Keith Stebbins, spent his
career in Papua New Guinea, working with the education department and writing textbooks for that country. He
spent a lot of time in remote areas of Papua New Guinea, working in those communities and seeing the impact
that a great education can have on life prospects.

We know the importance of human capital in our aid program. We know how absolutely critical it is that
Australia's aid program is focused on the most vulnerable and that it has human capital at its heart. Australia's aid,
though, has been savagely cut by the Abbott, Turnbull and Morrison governments. They've treated our aid budget
like an ATM. As previous Labor speakers have noted, we've seen that the aid cuts have meant that Australia has
withdrawn from regions with which we ought to have a stronger relationship. The Australian aid program to
Indonesia has a long and distinguished history. Australia championed Indonesian independence, and Australian
aid experts were there, working with the Sukarno government, immediately after independence. The Australian
aid contribution in that region is vital, and to see it cut is a travesty. Likewise, the cuts that have occurred in
countries like Pakistan are a travesty. I visited Myanmar at the beginning of 2017 with a bipartisan parliamentary
delegation funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and auspiced by Save the Children. On that delegation,
we saw the impact that Australia's aid program was having on everything from building wells to providing
appropriate sanitation programs.

Last week at the Australasian AID Conference, the ANU's annual dev policy conference, we heard many
speakers talking about the impact that aid can have on changing lives. Yes, economic growth is absolutely critical,
and the trade liberalisation that's occurred worldwide over recent decades has been vital in spurring economic
growth and bringing millions out of poverty. But it's critical, too, that we properly evaluate our aid programs. I
would urge the minister to consider conducting more rigorous evaluations of Australia's aid programs.
Around the globe there is a randomised trials revolution taking place. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and aid agencies such as Britain's and America's have been at the forefront of this process of high-quality evaluation of aid programs. But Australia has been a laggard. That's disappointing, because it means that we are not effectively assessing the impact of our aid programs on the ground. So while I support the intention of the government in providing this replenishment, I do believe it is absolutely critical that the government properly funds our aid programs, that a Pacific step-up is reflected in an overall step-up in Australia's overseas development assistance budget relative to national income, and that we do a better job in letting the randomistas do their work in effectively evaluating the impact of Australia's aid programs.

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (17:35): It's a pleasure to follow the member for Fenner in this debate and to make a contribution towards this proposal on the table around the Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill 2019. I should say at the outset that Labor supports this bill because it's providing appropriation funds to support Australia's commitments to replenish a range of important multilateral development funds. And before I go to the heart of speaking to any of the detail of this bill, I would like to refer to the second reading amendment, which was moved by my Labor colleague the member for Maribyrnong. Quite rightly, it notes not just the importance of Australia's official development assistance, but also the grave concerns that we on this side of the House have with regard to the government's cuts of $11.8 billion out of the foreign aid budget. This places Australia's commitment to overseas development assistance as a share of our gross national income at a record low.

I think this House—let's hope most, if not all of us in this House—would agree that Australian aid saves lives. It's combating poverty across the region. Importantly, it's helping to redress some very gross inequities between men and women that exist in many of these nations. And it's addressing real hunger as well as issues of gross food insecurity that exist across the globe. It's helping countries build the foundations that they need to grow sustainably. And it's building better infrastructure, health and education systems that help people lead happier, healthier and more productive lives in their communities.

Australian aid is also there to help tackle the root cause of instability, and that is economic disadvantage. Clearly aid investment is the right thing to do. It's the ethical thing to do. It's a commitment that this parliament has made over many, many decades now. And we know it's also the smart thing to do, because aid helps build our relationships with other countries; it increases our opportunities to build new trading partnerships and, indeed, strengthen old ones; it bolsters our international influence; and it improves our own security by addressing the insecurities and instability that is felt in other nations.

Under Labor, international development grew to its highest—that is, 0.34 per cent of gross national income—in 2012-13. Regrettably, the Liberals have worked hard at reversing this very proud achievement. Year on year we've seen cut upon cut. From budget to budget we have watched in horror as Australia's aid contribution has continued its downward slide. Under Labor, overseas development aid hit a high-water mark of 0.34 per cent of gross national income, as I said. But it's now on track to be just 0.19 per cent. This is the lowest level of Australian aid since the Commonwealth started publishing data back in 1961. The Liberals have set our country back—and, indeed, our planet. Their abject neglect of overseas assistance has damaged our relationships in the region, it has sullied our international reputation, and it has diluted our influence and opened up a space for damaging new alliances to form.

And now the government are refusing to lift a finger to address climate change, the very thing that we know will drive many poorer countries deeper into poverty and despair. This is a small-minded, ill-educated, petty approach that will be to the detriment of our country and the world. It's time for the Morrison government to grow up and start acting like responsible adults.

There may be some people who think it's an overreach to talk about just how serious climate change is for our region—an issue that this government chooses to ignore. The government can't cope with the debate domestically and it sure as hell can't cope with one at an international level. We saw some very unedifying debate here in this chamber earlier today on the issue. However, I was very privileged to be in this House in mid-January when the Australian parliament hosted the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum. A number of our parliamentary colleagues were present, and I had the honour of chairing the debate on climate change in the forum.

You might recall, Deputy Speaker McVeigh, that people arrived here in mid-January, at the height of the bushfires, the 'summer of dread'. There was toxic smoke all across the nation's capital. We were, indeed, issuing delegates with very fine-particle face masks to wear whilst here in Canberra. In the debate on climate change that I chaired, every single nation—there were about 40-odd nations at the table—began their speeches with condolences to Australia for the pain that our country and our people were going through in that 'summer of dread', for those catastrophic bushfires that had taken place. And the next questions were: How can we help Australia to tackle this serious problem of climate change here? How do we get some cooperation amongst the
Asia-Pacific nations? I can see the minister here in the chamber, and he addressed that forum. There were many Pacific nation members there, all of whom asked me: what will Australia be doing? Having seen the catastrophic fire season unfold in Australia, what would be this government's response to the long-term issues?

I was delighted to enable each of those Pacific island nations to participate in that debate, because many of them did not have full membership status at that forum; many were there as observers. And I do acknowledge the assistance of the Australian government in ensuring that many of our Pacific neighbours were able to attend that forum. But, make no mistake, climate change is front and centre of mind for the people in our nearest neighbourhood—what the impact on their nations will be and what Australia's role is going to be in the Asia-Pacific region in terms of a considered response to those issues of climate change.

I would like to go to the second issue that the member for Shortland has raised in his second reading amendment—that is, our grave concerns about the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison coalition government's cuts to the foreign aid budget. As I said, we know the cuts are now at 11.8 per cent. Despite a lot of rhetoric that we are now hearing from government with regard to the significance of the Pacific and the so-called Pacific step-up, which I will come to in a little while, it is very clear now, through the efforts of my Labor colleagues and Senate estimates processes, just where those cuts have been borne in our foreign aid budget. Cuts to Australian assistance in areas like health, in particular, are impacting on our Pacific neighbours in a particularly hard manner, despite the government's so-called rhetoric around the Pacific step-up. I would note that cutting health assistance to Samoa by 36 per cent in the aftermath of its tragic measles epidemic raises very serious questions about whether the Morrison government is genuinely responding to the needs of our Pacific friends.

The budget has seen big, savage cuts over consecutive years. The cuts in aid to Africa are so savage that aid is near non-existent. There is very little support going into that nation. There are massive cuts in aid to South-East Asian nations. It is unfathomable, given the government's big push for the Pacific step-up, that a lot of Pacific nations are now wearing the brunt of these cuts.

We have alarming figures that show that Australia's annual overseas development assistance spend on education to all developing nations has been slashed by $430 million, or 41 per cent. I already indicated the dire situation for Samoa in relation to health. Overall spending on health has gone down by $260.8 million, or 32.3 per cent, since 2014-15, when the coalition first came into power. We know that supporting education is vital to achieving gender equality in these nations, to preventing violent extremism in our region and to ensuring that people are as best placed as they possibly can be to secure an independent economic future.

The recent outbreak of the coronavirus has shown the importance of building lasting infrastructure and partnerships to deal with regional health challenges. The women and children of Australia's most important neighbours have been found to be very much suffering as a result of the slashing of the health and education budgets in particular. You've really got to ask: how can the Pacific step-up be effective if we cut aid to Vanuatu by 42 per cent or aid to Samoa by 14 per cent? Cutting health assistance to Samoa by 36 per cent in the aftermath of the measles epidemic has to raise serious questions about this government's intent.

The Morrison government's ongoing review of aid policy will be nothing but window-dressing if it fails to address the impact of the coalition's aid cuts on Australia's national interests. The Minister for International Development and the Pacific is present in the chamber, and I hope he is listening very carefully. I've talked a bit about the Pacific, but I was recently in Timor-Leste and the cuts to their budget are also deeply regrettable. Timor-Leste is a very near nation with which we have a very special relationship. Having supported Timor-Leste to become a growing independent nation, the idea that we would cut their budget and put at risk, in any way, shape or form, their growing from strength to strength at a time when they are asking for assistance—it really is a diabolical situation. It's to this government's great shame that they have not been able to explain adequately to the Australian people the incredible significance of aid for our relationships in this region. (Time expired)

Ms MADELEINE KING (Brand) (17:50): I rise today to speak on the Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill 2019. Labor will support this bill as we are leaders in international development and aid policy. I also want to state my support for the amendments moved earlier today by the member for Shortland. Those amendments are really important. It is really important that this House be concerned that, since 2014, coalition governments have cut $11.8 billion from the foreign aid budget, with the result that Australia's ODA investments are now at a record low as a share of gross national income. I also urge the House to agree that active and engaged participation in multilateral institutions, including multilateral development institutions, is essential for advancing Australia's interests in a stable, secure and prosperous international environment.

This bill provides a special appropriation to enable the Australian government to meet its commitment to replenish a range of multilateral development funds over the coming years. These funds carry out essential work
in tackling poverty and promoting economic growth and sustainable development in some of the world's poorest countries. The funds also tackle very important environmental challenges which require global cooperation and have indeed worked with global cooperation. Australia has played an active role over many years in supporting these funds, and our support of them is part of Australia's commitment to being a good international citizen. It is one of the ways Australia contributes to global economic and social development and to tackling very challenging environmental issues across the globe.

We must always remember that supporting international development is always in Australia's best interests. Helping developing countries to grow and prosper will promote Australia's interests in a prosperous, stable, secure and, most importantly, peaceful region. While assisting our neighbours should not always be about Australian advantage, growth in developing countries will create new trade and investment opportunities for Australia that will not only help lift people in developing countries out of poverty but will also support jobs in Australia. Mutual benefit from international aid should be noted before this government seeks to cut that assistance as it has done in every budget since it's been elected.

It is manifestly in Australia's interest to tackle poverty in the region because it means a more stable and secure international environment. Poverty and social inequities can generate instability, insecurity and tensions in the international environment. By reducing economic disadvantage we tackle the root causes of that instability. This will not only improve the welfare of people in developing countries; it also improves our own security in the region. For this reason, Labor supports international aid and the funding of these institutions and these funds.

Tackling poverty is not only the best thing to do; it's the right thing to do. Tackling poverty is a reflection of Australian values. We want to help our neighbours in the region have better, more prosperous and peaceful lives. Australia has supported these multilateral development funds on a bipartisan basis for many years and we will continue to do so.

This bill covers a number of funds. One is the International Development Association, which is the World Bank’s development arm and one of the world’s main sources of multilateral official development assistance. Indeed, our commitment to the World Bank goes back to the international financial architecture adopted in the aftermath of the Second World War and to the Chifley government's 1947 decision for Australia to join the Bretton Woods Institutions. Labor always supports multilateral institutions and always will. Where those multilateral institutions are not performing, perhaps, as we might like, we would always seek to reform them rather than skew away or take our bat and ball and go home when things don't work out as we might have hoped. It is important that Australia takes a leadership role in reform of all multilateral institutions where we think improvements can be made. That is what a good international citizen should do, and I urge the government to show leadership in this area.

Another fund is the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, which the Howard government committed to in 2005. This provides debt-relief arrangements administered by the International Development Association, which has relieved 36 of the world’s poorest countries of some US$99 billion worth of debt. The appropriation also assists the Asian Development Fund, which provides development grants to low-income members of the Asian Development Bank. It also funds the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund, which is administered by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to support sustainable development activities around the world. The other fund which this appropriation bill will support is the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, which provides funds to help developing countries to phase out the use of substances which deplete the earth’s ozone layer.

The Montreal protocol is really a stand-out example of international cooperation to take action to avoid a global disaster, which would have been the loss of the protective ozone layer. I remember when we had a worldwide movement to do something about the hole that had developed in the ozone layer above Antarctica. Indeed, Australia was a world leader, under the Hawke Labor government, in 1987 when action was required. Now, when the world is threatened by another environmental crisis—climate change—Australia lags behind in taking any action at all. This Liberal government and their inability to come to terms with climate change and how they might take action on it makes this nation look like that grumpy old uncle at a family reunion who can't accept the facts in a good debate or who won't debate anything at all, and who just cannot accept that the world is moving on. We run the risk of being left behind under this government's leadership in action on climate change.

It's really important to remember that it wasn't easy to agree the Montreal protocol to save the ozone layer. Large industries lobbied heavily against it; particularly, I must note, in the US, where the Ronald Reagan White House was urged to not ratify this agreement to reduce the use of ozone-destroying chemicals. And we in this place know the effects of lobbyists—they come in here, they meet with all of us, on all sides of this chamber and in the other place. We know how powerful vested interests can be. The world is fortunate that the Ronald Reagan
led White House did the right thing and enacted and ratified the Montreal protocol; likewise in Australia, we were lucky that Bob Hawke and his government enacted the Montreal protocol.

Once the protocol was enacted, the world changed and industry developed new products—and we still have fridges and aerosols. The scare campaign was very similar to what we see today, as some predict economic doom from seeking to develop a strong carbon-neutral economy to limit the warming of the planet. With the Montreal protocol, the sky did not fall in—and, quite frankly, it would have fallen in, without action to get rid of CFCs—and, because of what Australia and other nations agreed to in 1987, the ozone layer should recover by 2050. It's taken a long time for the ozone layer to start to recover, and it's going to take a long time yet for it to fully recover. But the recovery had to get started with an objective, followed by a plan, which, in turn, was followed by action—action despite naysayers and vested interests. We could learn a lot from what the world did with the Montreal protocol. It has saved Antarctica, for one, and the ozone layer that protected those parts of our planet that are more susceptible to the hole in that very thin part of our atmosphere that protects us all from dangerous UV rays. The government might like to take a leaf out of the book of the Montreal Protocol when it's thinking about how it deals with international action and international institutions to address important and dangerous environmental challenges.

I'd like to reflect for a moment on the government's failure on international aid. We cannot ignore the cuts the Liberals and Nationals have made to Australia's aid budget and the Prime Minister's undermining of Australia's role in multilateral institutions. Since this government came to office in 2013, it has cut no less than $11.8 billion from Australia's aid programs. As a result, Australia's official development assistance is on track to fall to just 0.19 per cent of gross national income. That's the lowest level of ODA as a share of gross national income since the Commonwealth started publishing data in 1961.

Under the current Prime Minister, Prime Minister Morrison, Australia's international aid is lower as a share of national income than it was under Liberal Prime Ministers Menzies, Holt, Gorton, McMahon, Fraser and Howard. What a legacy that is! Australia's aid budget as a share of GNI has fallen from the middle of the pack of the OECD to one of the least generous amongst OECD Development Assistance Committee member countries. That's not a record to be proud of. It's contrary to Australia's interests in promoting economic development and the prosperity, stability and security that we all know economic development brings. It's harming our international standing and our bilateral relationships. What's worse, it's hurting some of the poorest people in the world. Does the government think that no-one is watching? Well, they are watching, and people are suffering because of the government's $11.8 billion in cuts to the foreign aid budget.

I'm also concerned about the hypocrisy we see from this government concerning international institutions. I'm really glad that this legislation is here to support these multilateral funds. That is a good thing, and I support it. On the other hand, in the public arena, the current Prime Minister seeks to undermine our commitment to multilateral institutions with that weird rhetoric about negative globalism. What exactly does he mean by negative globalism? Is it the 70-plus nations that have committed to reducing carbon emissions and setting actual targets? Is it the negative globalism of Prime Minister Boris Johnson or the negative globalism of German Chancellor Angela Merkel committing to have their great nations address the challenges of climate change? Is it the Paris Agreement itself? Whether it's all or one of them, who can tell? This strange conspiracy-theory-laden language of negative globalism has become another example of the Prime Minister's approach: playing political games rather than developing actual policies to tackle the important issues for our future.

Labor will support this bill as it supports our continuing participation in multilateral development institutions. It's part of the Labor legacy. It's part of Australia's legacy on the world stage. It's something that this government tends to ignore, and it doesn't pay much respect to the legacy of this nation and its efforts and leadership in international affairs throughout the years. Labor will continue to retain its commitment to strengthening Australia's foreign aid investments, because we know a strong international development program and active positive engagement in global institutions will further Australia's interests in a stable, secure and prosperous international environment. Moreover, it is the right thing to do to be a good international citizen and play a leadership role.

There have also been cuts to international health funding, which we found out in response to Senate estimates questions from Labor. Infrastructure spending is a good thing, but this government has robbed Peter to pay Paul by switching funding from health funding into infrastructure. Cutting assistance in international health is against our national interest. We're witnessing the terrible health and economic impacts of the outbreak of COVID-19 in our region, and we know some of our neighbours have less robust health systems. Outbreaks like this show how important it is that our regional neighbours maintain and prosper under strong health systems. In the face of this tragic set of circumstances with COVID-19, this government cuts health funding to our Pacific neighbours.
It has been reported that health funding has been cut by 75 per cent to the Cook Islands; 22 per cent to Fiji; 13 per cent to the Solomon Islands; and 36 per cent to Samoa, which has also been devastated by a measles outbreak that has claimed the lives of more than 80 people. This is unacceptable. This government likes to talk about its Pacific step-up, but, quite frankly, this reads like a Pacific step-back—a step way, way back—where we cut health funding to the people who need it most, to the people in our neighbourhood, to the people we should be showing leadership and friendship to. Not under this government's watch—no way. Leadership has been lost in the Pacific.

I look forward to the member trying to do some more. I know he's going to have a battle with his Treasurer to stop funding for international aid and development, just like the foreign minister before him, the former member for Curtin, who we all know was powerless in the face of this government to stop cuts to foreign aid. It really must stop. I support the amendments moved by the member for Shortland.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Assistant Defence Minister) (18:06): I'd like to thank all the members who have made contributions to this debate, on the Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill 2019.

As the government has pointed out, the bill is a standing appropriation to meet Australia's international development commitments to the World Bank's International Development Association; the World Bank's debt relief schemes, including the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative; the Asian Development Bank's Asian Development Fund; the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund; and the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

Consistent with our membership arrangements with these organisations, Australia pledges to replenish our financial contribution every three to four years, with payments being made over a three- to 10-year period. The funds to meet the commitments authorised by the bill will come from the agreed official development assistance budget. Our contributions to these organisations constitute an important component of Australia's support for the promotion, protection and improvement of the international rules based order. These organisations complement Australia's efforts at the country and regional level to promote the prosperity and the security of the Indo-Pacific region. I'm glad to see that members unanimously support these measures within the bill.

I do want to briefly address the criticisms that have been raised by those opposite—and I do mean briefly—about the government's financial commitment for overseas development assistance. I particularly note that the government's position on the ODA budget was endorsed by the Australian people. It was the position we took to the Australian people at the election and it was endorsed by them just six months ago. The Morrison government's aid budget is affordable, targeted and effective. This year we're delivering $4 billion in official development assistance, including a record $1.4 billion for the Pacific. For the record, $1.4 billion is the most ever spent in a year by any Australian government.

This year our humanitarian funding is increasing to $450 million in 2019-20, allowing us to work with our friends and neighbours to help them prepare for, recover from and provide emergency relief during natural disasters.

Mr Morton: What about Labor?

Mr HAWKE: The coalition's approach does contrast quite starkly with the Labor Party's. I'm asked here about that. When you do hear members in high dudgeon, I would just say that Labor's own cuts to overseas development assistance leave little for them to be proud of. In their last 15 months in office, the Labor government slashed $5.7 billion from the aid budget.

Dr Leigh interjecting—

Mr HAWKE: I want to say that again: in their last 15 months in office, Labor slashed $5.7 billion from the aid budget. Who could forget that Labor redirected $475 million from the ODA budget to their failed border protection policies? For the first time we saw an Australian government redirect ODA funding to border protection policies. The House has gone quiet.

In addition to running up $240 billion in debt and deficit, Labor cut aid because of their failure to manage the budget properly. We know that from the diary of a foreign minister, Bob Carr, who said, 'The truth is, you can't run aid on borrowings'—that was a learning that he had from his time in government: you can't run the aid budget on borrowings. This government doesn't have to learn that from experience. We don't have to borrow money to fund the aid budget; we fund the aid budget from our incomings. We have real money attached to it.

Dr Leigh: You've doubled the debt! What are you talking about?

Mr HAWKE: We don't borrow every day to fund the ordinary services of the government, so we don't borrow to fund the aid budget either. But Bob Carr learnt that after his time in office, and he wrote a book about it.
The Labor approach, of course, to aid was rejected in 2013, 2016 and 2019. The people have endorsed the stable and certain approach to the aid budget at three elections now. It has been repeatedly endorsed, and it really highlights the government's commitment to a stable, secure and prosperous global community—indeed, a prosperous, stable and secure Indo-Pacific region. We're going to continue to prioritise aid spending in a way that meets Australians' national interest, with a particular focus on our region under the Pacific step-up, and we make no apology for prioritising aid spending in Australia's national interest with a focus on the Indo-Pacific region. I commend the bill to the House.

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

The House divided. [18:15]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ...................... 64
Noes ...................... 75
Majority ................. 11

AYES

Albanese, AN  Aly, A
Bandt, AP  Bird, SL
Bowen, CE  Burke, AS
Burney, LJ  Burns, J
Butler, TM  Chalmers, JE
Champion, ND  Clare, JD
Claydon, SC  Coker, EA
Collins, JM  Conroy, PM
Dick, MD  Dreyfus, MA
Elliot, MJ  Fitzgibbon, JA
Freelander, MR  Georganas, S
Giles, AJ  Gorman, P
Gosling, LJ  Hayes, CP
Hill, JC  Hasic, 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
O'Connor, BPJ  O'Neil, CE
Owens, JA  Payne, AE
Perrett, GD  Phillips, FE
Plibersek, TJ  Rishworth, AL (proxy)
Rowland, MA  Ryan, JC (teller)
Shorten, WR  Snowdon, WE
Stanley, AM (teller)  Swanson, MJ
Templeman, SR  Thistlethwaite, MJ
Thwaites, KL  Watts, TG
Wells, AS  Wilkie, AD
Wilson, JH  Zappia, A

NOES

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  Eatsch, WG
Evans, TM  Falinski, JG
Fletcher, PW  Flint, NJ
Gee, AR  Gillespie, DA
Goodenough, IR  Haines, H
Hammond, CM  Hawke, AG
Hogan, KJ  Howarth, LR
Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Assistant Defence Minister) (18:20): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Ms CATHERINE KING (Ballarat) (18:21): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr McVeigh): Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?

Ms CATHERINE KING: Yes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please proceed.

Ms CATHERINE KING: I do, most grievously, on at least four occasions by the Prime Minister, including on 2GB and 3AW and in a press conference on 20 January, and at the National Press Club on 29 January, and at least once by the Deputy Prime Minister at a doorstep in Sunshine Beach, Queensland, on 14 February. Both claimed that when I was regional development minister I funded ineligible projects. I was also misrepresented during question time by the Treasurer on 6 February and today in question time by the Prime Minister in their statements reflecting decisions made when I was regional development minister regarding the administration of the Regional Development Australia fund, rounds 3 and 4.

The facts are these. The ANAO report confirmed that none of the projects funded by me as minister were ineligible for funding. The ANAO report also confirmed that two-thirds of the projects funded across rounds 3 and 4 were in seats not held by the Australian Labor Party. Finally, the ANAO report and the Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into that report found that so concerned was the incoming government about my project funding decisions that they signed contracts, ratified those decisions and funded every single project themselves, including those where funding agreements were not yet in place.

The Prime Minister and his deputy and the Treasurer should stop being loose with the truth and take responsibility for their own ministerial decisions.
BILLS

Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Flexibility Measures) Bill 2020
Second Reading

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

to which the following amendment was moved:

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

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

(1) the financial difficulties facing Australian parents juggling young children and work;

(2) the Government's repeated cuts to family assistance and programs designed to support children and parents; and

(3) that women continue to do a disproportional share of work in the home and raising children, as well as facing a significant gender pay gap"—

Dr WEBSTER (Mallee) (18:23): Being a parent is arguably the most amazing experience in life. Good parents want the best for their children. The work-life balance is often difficult, and parents want the best for their family and especially their children. There are many mothers who do not want to return to work, but financial constraints mean they must. My government wants to ensure the best support possible for young families.

The Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Flexibility Measures) Bill 2020 introduces changes to the Paid Parental Leave scheme which will provide choice and flexibility to working mothers and families to access their entitlements. The Paid Parental Leave scheme introduced in 2011 is a world-leading initiative which provides an important safety net for new mothers, adoptive parents and other eligible guardians, supporting them to take time off work to spend time with their newborn or newly adopt children.

There are over 300,000 babies born in Australia every year. In 2019, close to 180,000 people claimed parental leave payments. That means the scheme supported over half of all new primary caregivers last year. The Paid Parental Leave scheme provides eligible working parents with 18 weeks of payments at a rate based on the national minimum wage, which is currently $740.60 per week. That's a total of just over $13,000 over 18 weeks. Through the measures introduced by this bill, we will continue to support the objectives of the Paid Parental Leave scheme while offering families flexibility around when they can access their payment in order to support them balance the needs of their young family and their work.

As it currently stands, paid parental leave must be taken in a continuous block. If a parent returns to work before they have received their full entitlement of 18 weeks of paid parental leave, they lose eligibility for the remainder of the payment. Under the amendments made by this bill, parents will instead be able to claim two types of parental leave pay. An initial 12-week period is available, which parents can use at any time within the first 12 months after the birth or adoption of a child. This initial period will be subject to the same conditions as currently apply to the existing 18-week period. Parents will then be able to use the remaining six weeks of their entitlement at any time within two years of the birth or adoption of their child—in blocks as small as one day at a time. These changes are about giving parents choice when it comes to balancing their work and family commitments, and reflect the range of working demands and personal preferences parents have in relation to their work and career aspirations. Many parents will be able to use their flexible entitlement to support a gradual return to work. For example, after their initial 12-week period, a parent could negotiate with their employer to work a four-day week and receive one day of parental leave pay for the fifth day of the week for up to 30 weeks. These changes will also support parents who are small business owners or otherwise self-employed. For these individuals, 18 weeks is a significant amount of time to be away from their work. After taking their initial 12 weeks of parental leave pay, a parent will then be able to tailor their leave entitlements to suit their personal and business needs.

These amendments will support many thousands of parents across the country and many in my electorate of Mallee. Data from 2018 indicates that over 1,800 babies were born in my electorate and there were over 800 parental leave pay recipients. Since the inception of the program in 2011, well over 5,000 people in my electorate have accessed these payments. Once these amendments come into effect, parents in my electorate will begin to benefit in many ways. My experience in the field of social work has given me valuable insights into the challenges faced by young mothers. Over the years, I have worked with many vulnerable and disadvantaged young women who carry with them the burden of being single parents. Due to their circumstances, many of these young mothers have limited capacity to juggle employment and parenthood. Gaining work, and returning to work, is important for these mothers as doing so helps them put food on the table and pay their bills.
The amended Paid Parental Leave bill will give single young mothers greater capacity to work. I've heard many stories about how these changes will benefit mothers. Recently I had the chance to speak with Bec Arnold, from Mildura, the mother of two young children, who was able to access paid parental leave after the birth of her children. She spoke of the uncertainties experienced by new mothers and how there is often a lingering fear of the unknown when it comes to raising a child. She was confident these changes will give mothers like her security and peace of mind. Mothers who have flexible parental leave pay to fall back on will be more able to deal with unexpected events such as a child's illness.

Another mother from my electorate spoke to me about her experience of giving birth to a baby prematurely. She is part of a support group of mothers who have given birth to premmies who have welcomed these changes as vitally important for parents like them. Many parents of babies born prematurely have their leave entitlements exhausted while the child is in hospital, often in intensive care, potentially forcing them back to work or causing them to give up their employment altogether to care for their child. This new amendment will allow parents faced with difficult circumstances to have greater flexibility to care for their child after leaving hospital.

Babies born prematurely often have complicated health outcomes requiring ongoing treatment. Another mother in a premmie support group shared her personal story of her child who developed cerebral palsy. Due to the child's condition, regular treatment was required from a therapist. Fortunately these parents were able to make arrangements through the NDIS and to provide the necessary care for their child. However, when the mother had to return to full-time work the therapist had to make visits to the child's day care centre, which meant additional transport costs to the parents. The proposed flexible leave amendment would have given the parents the option of having the day off work to transport their child themselves to weekly therapy appointments rather than eating into their NDIS funding.

This bill will support the government's work regarding the Women's Economic Security Package, as announced in the 2018-19 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook. This package aims to improve women's workforce participation, economic independence and earning potential. This package identified an increase in the flexibility of parental leave pay as a key means by which women's participation in the workforce could be improved. While the workforce participation rate of women with children is increasing, the participation rate for mothers is still below that of fathers and is strongly related to the age of their youngest child. This is why it is so important to get the settings right for paid parental leave if we are to close the gap between men and women's workforce participation.

At the 2014 G20 meeting in Brisbane, the government committed to closing this gap by 25 per cent by 2025. By 2018, when the Women's Economic Security Statement was released, this gap was already at 9.5 percentage points, meaning we're well on the way to achieving a 25 per cent reduction in the gap. I have no doubt that the flexibility measures introduced by this bill will help close the gap between men's and women's workforce participation even further and help us meet our 2025 target.

As a mother, grandmother, social worker and a member of this House representing the people of Mallee, I am proud to support this bill. All birth and adoption experiences are unique, and, as such, we need to cater for all circumstances, especially when things don't go according to plan. These amendments will help us to do precisely that.

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (18.32): It comes as no surprise that Labor supports any amendments to paid parental leave that encourage both parents to spend more time with their child in its early childhood, but the member for Barton has moved a sensible second reading amendment to this bill, Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Flexibility Measures) Bill 2020, to also talk about the other things that impact families when they are having new babies. It is a wonderful time of life that should be celebrated, but we do understand that many Australian families are still juggling young children and work and that interaction. We still know that there are many things that the government could and should be doing to encourage both parents to spend more time with their young one and to support them when their family makes a choice. We also know that this government has made repeated cuts to family assistance and programs designed to support families and children, particularly vulnerable families and children in some of the social services program.

We also know that women continue to do a disproportionate share of the home chores and the raising of children and that this creates a significant gender pay gap. That pay gap in Australia today is still around 14 per cent. We know that the gender pay gap in Australia has been consistent for around two decades. There have been some movements attributed to primarily the mining boom, but, essentially, from the ABS statistics recently, women on average in full-time work continue to earn $242.90 less per week than men in similar work. That is in Australia today. After decades and decades of work by the parliament and governments, we are still in this situation. There needs to be more done by the government. The Treasurer and the Prime Minister need to get really serious about this. If they were serious, I wonder why they support the cuts to penalty rates. These impact a
lot of women working part time trying to support their families, particularly young families. Penalty rates and the cuts are disproportionately impacting on women who are working in the retail sector. It is harsher for families with childcare costs to raise children. We've seen data showing that the government's recent childcare changes and payments have led to a position where out-of-pocket childcare costs continue to rise. We know that for families who are doing the budgets, who are looking at whether it's worth mum doing an extra day at work on that third or fourth day of the week, often it is not worth it, because of the tax and transfer system, because of those childcare bills and because of the way the childcare payment interacts with that.

We have very serious gender inequality when it comes to raising young families in this country. Still far too many women choose to work part time because they feel like they don't have any other option. We see men starting to make some of the choices to take paid parental leave. When I was minister for women, I had a conversation with the CEO of a bank. I remember him proudly telling me how great it was that his company now offered paid parental leave, and that he was going to take six weeks. I said: 'Oh, that's well and good, but tell me what your company's policy is. What is the amount of paid parental leave?' He said, 'It's 12 weeks, but you can't do that in my job.' I said: 'You've just ruled out a whole heap of people who can do that job. I'd be impressed if you took the same paid parental leave as all of your employees are entitled to, because what you're effectively saying is that there are some jobs that can't be done when people take paid parental leave.' I think that is the wrong message to give Australian families today who are struggling to pay their bills and are trying to make choices that are best for their families. We need to have a better system.

We support the changes in this bill. I will run through what this bill does. It allows carers and parents to take time off work to care for their child after the child's birth or adoption, and it provides them much more flexibility in how they do this. So, of course, we support that. We on this side of the House introduced paid parental leave. It was a long time coming. We were the second-last OECD country to have a paid parental leave scheme that covered all parents one way or another. It is income tested for the primary carer. It is a good scheme but there is always room for improvement. We supported the government's last changes to paid parental leave in 2019, which took effect from 1 January 2020, but again these changes were pretty slow in coming. We think that after seven years of being in government those opposite could probably do a little bit more and focus a little bit harder on what else needs to be done to close the gender pay gap, deal with the budgets of families who are bringing up children in this country today and encourage both partners to do more paid parental leave. I don't think that in this country we're going to get an equal outcome for both genders until we get more men spending time at home with their children and doing more housework.

We need to encourage families to make choices, but it's those families that should make those choices; I'm not suggesting government should impose them on people. We need to do everything we can to encourage both parents, regardless of gender, to have that ability and for families to make those decisions that best suit their family when it comes to accessing paid parental leave in Australia. To be in the year 2020 and to still have the gender pay gap that we have, to still have discrepancies in superannuation and retirement incomes, to still have more women, older women particularly, becoming homeless because of some of the systems and to still have families having tough decisions to make because of the childcare payment system is not good enough. We need to do better. The government can and should do better.

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (18:39): Australia is the best country in the world to raise a family. I've lived my whole life in the Ryan electorate and I'm now raising my own young family there, along with the 39,161 other families in Ryan. So I made a commitment when I put up my hand to seek their support at the last election, as part of the Liberal-National government, to support the families of my electorate in every way I could. It's with that promise that I rise to proudly support this bill, because it goes to the heart of how we in the Liberal-National Party support our families. We want to support our families through flexibility and support through measures that allow them to suit their own needs and things that draw and require the attention of their families. Labor, on the other hand, seeks to tell families how to live, what car to drive and how they can spend their money so much better than the mums and dads who are trying to raise their kids.

It was a great pleasure to talk to many families across my electorate about how, as part of a re-elected Morrison government, we were going to reduce taxes for some 10 million Australians, including many families, who need that money back in their pocket to spend on their own priorities. Being a young dad myself, with another little one on the way, I know that nothing really prepares you for raising a child. The life of every new parent as our friend Tom from Sky News, who had his baby today—congratulations to Tom and his family—and any new dad knows, can be unpredictable with a newborn. In fact, it is entirely unpredictable. It's something you can't really prepare for as a new parent when your first child comes into the world, and so I think there is nothing we can do that can support families more than providing them with as much flexibility as possible to suit their own needs and working arrangements.
It's no different when it comes to our paid parental leave scheme, which this bill addresses. While as new parents we may all be united in the decision to bring a child into the world, it comes with very different circumstances for all of us. Across my electorate, as across Australia, different families, new families, will be juggling different requirements and work requirements so that they can ensure as many opportunities for their family as possible. For families, no one size fits all so it's important that we have a paid parental leave scheme that can be tailored to best suit the needs of any mum and dad. Flexibility is the greatest way to allow choices for Australian families.

Currently, paid parental leave can only be taken as a continuous block of 18 weeks within the first 12 months after the birth or adoption of a child. With these measures that the Morrison government is putting forward in this bill, families will be able to split their parental leave pay into blocks over a two-year period with periods of work in between if that's what mum and dad need. Mum and dads will be able to use an initial 12-week block of their entitlement at any time within the first 12 months after the birth or adoption of their child without returning to work.

Again, I can tell you from my own recent experience that the first 12 weeks are a rollercoaster. It's a time of course of joy and bonding, and it is so important that the government provides that opportunity for parents to spend that 12 weeks with their children. Under this legislation, after that time, parents will be able to take their remaining entitlement of up to six week if they so choose any time before their child turns two years old. Mum and dads will still get the 18 weeks currently allowed—that's an important point. This isn't a reduction in entitlements by any means; it simply allows them greater flexibility to suit their lifestyle and circumstances.

The Prime Minister has spoken previously about this government's achievements when it comes to supporting women in the workplace. Women's workforce participation is at a record high of just over 61 per cent. It is absolutely vital that we do everything we can do to support women working while raising a family, if that is their choice. Work-life balance is different, person to person and family to family. While some women may be able to take the initial block of 18 weeks in one go, other women, with different working requirements, need greater flexibility to suit their personal situation.

As the son of small business owners, I know that one week—as politicians they say a week is a long time in politics—is a long time out of the shop and 18 weeks away from the helm of a small business, particularly during peak times of the year, can seem like too long. Women who work in small business and need to return to work sooner than the 18 weeks should not be disadvantaged and should not lose the balance of their entitlements. Should these changes come to pass in this bill through the House, they won't be disadvantaged. It will allow mothers the choice to return to work on a part-time basis following an initial period of parental leave. They could choose to negotiate with their employer to work a certain number of days, such as working a four-day week and receiving paid parental leave for the fifth day.

Raising a child is a team effort. These changes will enable mothers to transfer their entitlement to partners who also take on the role of primary carer. Fundamentally, on this side of the House, we believe that individuals should be able to negotiate their own outcomes. Good government is there to support Australians in the way that they want to raise and best serve the needs of their family—not to stand in the way, not to tell parents how it's done or what block they should take in terms of paid parental leave, but to try and set up arrangements that allow maximum flexibility so that they can make their own decisions. Unlike Labor, who like to tell Australians what they should do based on the opinion of the few—who say it on Twitter, for example—this government listens to everyday Australians, responds to suggestions and continually adapts to make sure that our policies around supporting families are both flexible and provide the families of Australia with the maximum amount of support we possibly can.

Paid parental leave is an important safety net for nearly half of all Australian mums. We will always make sure it is certain, fair and flexible. To the mums and dads out there who are working tirelessly to raise their families: thank you for everything that you do and for the sacrifices that you make. It is so important for our nation. We know, mums and dads, that you are working your guts out. We appreciate the work that you are doing, and the Morrison-McCormack government is absolutely here to support you.

Ms COKER (Corangamite) (18:47): I rise to speak on the Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Flexibility Measures) Bill 2020 and to support the amendment moved by my colleague the member for Barton. The opposition supports the bill, which builds on the national Paid Parental Leave scheme introduced by Labor, which commenced on 1 January 2011.

On this side we are very proud of the scheme. You will recall, Deputy Speaker Goodenough, that, when the legislation was passed, Australia was only one of two OECD countries, along with the United States, that did not have a paid parental leave scheme. The purpose of the Paid Parental Leave scheme was and is to provide financial
support to primary carers of newborn and newly adopted children in order to allow those carers to take time off work to care for the child after the child's birth or adoption, enhance the health and development of birth mothers and children, enable women to continue to participate in the workforce, and promote equality between men and women and the balance between work and family life. It provides two payments: paid parental leave of 18 weeks at the minimum wage for the primary carer and leave of two weeks for the dad or partner. Paid parental leave signals to employers and the Australian community that parents taking time out of the paid workforce to care for a child is essential and a part of the normal course of life. It also enables participation of women in the workforce. A high workforce participation rate is important in the context of an ageing population. It is also crucial to our economy and retaining skilled staff. Importantly, it helps to address the gender pay gap, particularly for those women on low and middle incomes who often have less access to employer-funded parental leave.

Almost 150,000 parents a year benefit from the Paid Parental Leave scheme introduced by Labor. Nearly half of all new mothers benefit from the scheme each year. The scheme has had its ups and downs. The scheme was not 22 or 26 weeks of paid leave, as it is in many other countries. The research tells us that the optimum time for bonding between mother and child is around 26 weeks. Our 2011 scheme was more modest than many would have liked, but it was affordable and it worked. And, of course, the scheme was always intended to be supplemented by bargaining in the workplace, which would allow additional weeks at the worker's usual rate of pay. An agreement derived entitlement could be taken either simultaneously with the PPL entitlement or added to the minimum 18 weeks PPL scheme.

In the last seven years, we have fought coalition attempts to absorb bargaining outcomes against the scheme entitlement—in other words, to reduce the maximum 18-week payment, currently $13,330, by the amount received under an enterprise agreement. Scandalously, on the other side this was called, to both bargaining entitlements and legislative entitlements, double-dipping. Thankfully, that legislation was defeated in the Senate. It would have seriously disadvantaged lower- and middle-income workers, like cleaners, carers, teachers and nurses, who have often negotiated additional benefits under enterprise. Thankfully, this bill doesn't go down that path. It is one that we can support and which belatedly fixes problems which weren't necessarily contemplated a decade ago.

This bill will enable working mothers and families in my electorate of Corangamite and across the nation to split their paid parental leave entitlements into blocks of time over a two-year period, with periods of work between. Currently, the scheme only allows paid parental leave to be taken as a continuous 18-week block within the first 12 months after the birth or adoption of the child, and then only when the primary carer has not returned to work since the birth or adoption of the child.

The bill will change the paid parental leave rules by splitting the 18 weeks of paid parental leave into a 12-week paid parental leave period and a six-week flexible paid parental leave period. The 12-week paid parental leave period entitlement will only be available as a continuous block, but would be accessible by the primary carer at any time during the first 12 months, not only immediately after the birth or adoption of a child. The six-weeks flexible paid parental leave period will be available at any time during the first two years, and that does not need to be taken as a block. These changes will apply to children born or adopted from 1 July 2020. In practice, this will mean families can split their entitlements over a two-year period, with periods of work between. As with the current rules, the primary carer can be changed during this time. It is likely the most common use of the increased flexibility will be parents returning to work part time and spreading flexible paid parental leave period over several months. This bill may encourage greater take-up of paid parental leave by secondary carers by allowing mothers to transfer their entitlements to their partner at a time that suits the family. This is welcomed. While the changes are modest, we hope they will allow more families to share parenting responsibilities in a way that works for them. Around 4,000 parents each year are expected to use these proposed flexibility changes. Again, that's a good thing, and the entitled cost of $25 million over the forward estimates is a modest price to pay for these changes.

There is some concern the proposed changes will be complex in administration, with required interactions between Centrelink and families accessing paid parental leave increasing several-fold. Given the history of Centrelink managing complex interactions, there is a worry that there will be unnecessary grievances and disputes. This will need to be monitored. It should also be noted that this bill does not increase paid parental leave entitlements for Australian families. Australia is falling behind internationally in the support it provides new parents. This bill does nothing to change that. According to 2019 OECD data, Australia's paid parental leave scheme ranks amongst the lowest in terms of both duration of leave and the amount of pay replaced.

In contrast, other countries are rapidly expanding the support provided to fathers and partners to encourage them to spend more time at home in the first year of a child's life. In Iceland, fathers are entitled to three months paid parental leave. In Finland, the government has announced plans to provide each parent with more than 6½
months of paid leave, with a further six months to share. Parents are also able to transfer some of their leave to their spouse. Single parents will receive both allowances.

Australia has one of the lowest rates of investment in parental leave—just a third of the OECD average. Our public expenditure on maternity and parental leave per live birth in the 2019 OECD comparisons leaves us seventh-lowest of 34 countries, wedged between Israel and Chile. The 2019 OECD comparison on the percentage of usual wage replaced again sees Australia as the eighth-lowest of all OECD countries, with our minimum wage being only about 40 per cent of the usual wage. All but 12 countries—including the US, which still has zero paid parental leave—provide more than 20 weeks of paid leave. So, it is high time that the Scott Morrison government started thinking about improving the scheme in a fundamental way.

Another issue that affects the ability to take time off and spend time with family is the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap remains a problem in Australia, despite the Treasurer's recent contention, in question time on 9 September 2019, that 'the gender pay gap has closed'. Female workers in Australia still earn 14 per cent less than their male colleagues. It is a fact that the gender pay gap in Australia has remained stubbornly high over the past two decades. If the Treasurer and the Prime Minister were genuinely serious about fixing the gender pay gap, they would oppose cuts to penalty rates. The vast majority of workers who have had their penalty rates cut are women. The cuts to penalty rates are exacerbating the gender pay gap, making it harder for women to pay the rent and cover the bills. Of course, we don't hold out much hope for any consideration of marked improvements to the scheme when more minor issues have taken years to fix.

In 2019 the government changed the eligibility rules for the paid parental leave scheme and extended access to women who work in dangerous occupations usually occupied by men or who have irregular employment. Labor supported the changes to the legislation, which took effect on 1 January this year, but, welcomed as they were, those changes were very slow in coming, and too many Australian women and their families have missed out on the benefits of paid parental leave as a result. For example, in 2013 the Australian Jockeys Association publicly identified the access problem and called on the Abbott government to fix the legislation. The community had to campaign for many years before the unfair access issue was fixed. We hope the change will encourage more women to consider careers in roles historically dominated by men. While Labor supports this bill, it is time for this government to do more to build on Labor's paid parental leave scheme and do more to support our nation's young families.

Dr Martin (Reid) (18:57): Today I rise in support of the Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Flexibility Measures) Bill 2020. Our government understands the important role that paid parental leave serves in encouraging workforce participation and supporting the wellbeing of families. This bill introduces greater flexibility to support working parents, particularly women, including self-employed women, casual and seasonal workers, and small-business owners who cannot afford to leave their businesses or workplaces for 18 consecutive weeks. Currently, parental leave pay can only be taken as a continuous 18-week block within the first 12 months after the birth or adoption of a child. From 1 July 2020, families will be able to split their parental leave pay into blocks over a two-year period, with periods of work in-between. These amendments give families, and particularly mothers, much more flexibility so that the scheme can best fit their family's needs and the transition back to the workforce. Parents will be able to use an initial 12-week block of their entitlement at any time within the first 12 months after the birth or adoption of their child without needing to return to work during this initial block. This gives parents a period of recuperation and bonding in the months immediately following the birth or adoption. Parents will be able to take their remaining entitlement of up to six weeks any time before their child turns two years old, and they can return to work at any time during this period. This totals the 18 weeks currently allowed, but with much greater flexibility. These amendments will have a positive impact on families across Australia, including in my electorate of Reid.

This greater flexibility is especially important in supporting women who wish to return to work. This amendment will be beneficial particularly to casual and seasonal workers, or workers who have large breaks in employment, such as teachers, nurses and academics. For many small business owners and self-employed women, 18 weeks is a significant amount of time to be away from work. Under these changes, mothers will be able to take an initial 12 weeks of paid parental leave before returning to run their businesses. They will then be able to take the remaining six weeks of their entitlement when they choose, at a time that suits their personal and business needs. For example, over the Christmas and new year period, if their business is quiet, they may be able to take that time then. Some mothers may choose to use their paid parental leave to support a part-time return to work—for example, after returning to work following an initial period of parental leave—and parents could negotiate with their employers to work a four-day week and receive a day of paid parental leave for the fifth day for up to 30 weeks.
The increased flexibility will make it much easier for mothers who are eligible for paid parental leave to transfer their entitlement to an eligible partner who takes on the role of primary carer where it suits the family circumstances. It is expected around 4,000 parents will choose to take their paid parental leave flexibly each year, which means 4,000 families on an annual basis will get a better experience as parents.

While the structure of the modern Australian family cannot be categorised in any single framework, the value of the family unit remains central to the wellbeing of society. Supporting Australian families by empowering them through choice and flexibility strengthens the fabric of Australia as a whole. By making the Paid Parental Leave scheme more flexible, families have more choices. Parents can tailor their payments to their family's needs and circumstances and make the choice that will have the best financial and social outcome for them. Men who are the secondary carer can take parental leave and share a more balanced caring role in their family. The amendments through this bill reflect and support the needs of the modern family in Australia. This is a step in the right direction for modernising paid parental leave payments for Australian families, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GORMAN (Perth) (19:02): Paid parental leave is about equality for women, equality and care for children and equality for everyone. Economic empowerment is what paid parental leave seeks to provide—to say that, just because you choose to have children, it doesn't in any way diminish your rights to live a good life and to be paid a wage. The reality is that only some people have that privilege, but it is something that is important to all of us.

In this place today, we stood in silence, in one of the more moving moments I have had in this parliament, remembering Hannah Clarke. It reminds us that people are at their most vulnerable when they have just had a baby. The data tells us that is one of the times in a woman's life when there is the highest risk of being a victim of domestic violence. For women aged 25 to 44, the greatest health risk they face is not cancer. It's not road accidents. The greatest risk they face is domestic violence. When we think about these things in the broader context, paid parental leave seeks to achieve equality, and it is an important building block in making sure we have a fairer and more equal Australia.

I want to thank the former Minister for Women, Kelly O'Dwyer, for her work on the government's Women's Economic Security Statement of November 2018. This bill is part of that work, a legacy that continues some nine months after she left this parliament—and, indeed, continues to move us in the right direction.

Flexible paid parental leave, when you think about it, is absolutely sensible. Different parents, different families, have different needs, and different children have different needs, and so allowing the 12-week parental period to be available as one continuous block and then a six-week flexible period to be taken within the first two years makes sense for so many families across Australia. Indeed, if you look at the 2017-2018 financial year, some 159,372 families accessed the Australian Paid Parental Leave Scheme. It is amazing to think that just 10 years ago we didn't have this scheme at all, and now there are more than 150,000 families on an annual basis accessing this scheme.

For those who've fought for these changes, for the rights for parents to have paid time off with their children, it is something that pre-dates many of us in this place. It has been a long fight, and I want to also thank everyone who has been part of the campaign for paid parental leave and who continues to campaign to make this system fairer and even more equitable.

In 1979, the Commonwealth legislated to give 52 weeks of leave for Commonwealth employees. Back then, just 0.4 per cent of the population—that's women Commonwealth employees—were given 52 weeks maternity leave in the maternity leave act. That was 52 weeks unpaid. While by today's standards that is an incredibly inadequate provision from the Commonwealth—indeed, the Commonwealth could have afforded to do a little more—it was 41 years ago, and it started something much bigger.

In 1990, Australia ratified the ILO's 1981 convention on the rights of workers with family responsibilities. That continued us on the path towards more support for families with children. Also in 1990, the Department of Industrial Relations initiated the work and family unit of the department to start to look more at how we can make sure we've got the right economic settings to support parents and support families. The United Nations' International Year of the Family was in 1994, the same year that the Keating government negotiated Accord Mark VII with the ACTU. That accord noted, 'In this International Year of the Family, we should also incorporate consideration of direct assistance to workers with family responsibilities.' That was an important statement for the ACTU and the government to make.

In May 1995, the government did announce a new maternity allowance as part of its agenda for families. This was the first time there was a direct, specific payment in the form of what then morphed into a paid parental leave scheme. It was a means-tested lump sum payment equivalent to six weeks of the parenting allowance, payable to
women back then regardless of their status in the workforce. I note that it was continued under the Howard-Costello government with the baby bonus.

In 2009, we saw further steps towards the legislation that we're amending today. The Rudd government referred the issue of paid parental leave to the Productivity Commission to see what would be the best way of building such a scheme not only to ensure that it supported the families that we needed to support most but also to make sure it was economically sound. And we saw an amendment to the Fair Work Act to ensure that parents would have the right to 24 months of unpaid leave with their children.

Then we saw the historic Paid Parental Leave Scheme, a huge achievement of the Rudd and Gillard governments and a huge achievement of Jenny Macklin, the former member for Jagajaga. It was something that ensured a government funded scheme providing the primary carer with 18 weeks postnatal leave paid at the adult federal minimum wage. Back then, it was $543.78 a week. Now, wages haven't grown as much as they should have since then, but it was a significant change. In 2012, we had dad and partner pay included in the scheme by the Gillard government.

All of these things came into my world on 21 October 2017, when my son, Leo, was born. My wife, Jess, was very fortunate to have access to the Paid Parental Leave Scheme. I was fortunate that my employer provided a significant amount of paid leave and then was happy to let me take unpaid leave so I could be off for three months. That was one of the best decisions of my life. I wish I'd taken longer. As I said, one year I was one of those 150,000 people who access this scheme and their family every year. But we know that the scheme isn't doing all that it intended to.

I'll talk about the history of this. It is now a 10-year-old scheme. The economy has moved on, international expectations have moved on and there's a lot more that should be done. I received an email from a constituent in Eden Hill about what an extended paid parental leave scheme would mean for her. I'll quote from that email, with your indulgence, Mr Deputy Speaker. She says: 'Childbirth can be a very traumatic event for both mother and baby. Mothers can need time before birth off work due to dangerous pregnancies and time after the birth just to recover physically, mentally and emotionally. There are numerous other countries around the world that offer a year of paid maternity leave to mothers and fathers. I think this would benefit Australia a lot. I almost died giving birth to my child, and, while I was extremely lucky to have time off from work and I am so thankful for that, a full year of paid parental leave would have been wondrous and probably would have enabled me to take work off before the birth instead of working so close to her due date.' She says that there are many women in her workplace taking 12 months off to be with their babies but most of that time is unpaid, and she thinks that's unfair. She finally writes: 'I feel we don't only deserve an income but also superannuation during this time.' I think that's a debate that we're going to continue to have over the next decade as we continue to look at how we make sure our paid parental leave scheme does fit the expectations of our community and does fit the economic needs of our people. Indeed, it is now more than a decade since the Productivity Commission looked at our paid parental leave scheme. Maybe it is time the Productivity Commission once again looks at what Australia needs in a future-fit paid parental leave scheme.

Compared internationally, Australia has one of the least-generous paid parental leave policies in the OECD. Current rates of Australia's paid parental leave entitlement only cover an average of 42 per cent of the previous earnings of the participants in the scheme, amounting for most women to just 7.6 weeks of their full-time pay. I went through the history earlier where that first payment scheme in the 1990s provided for six weeks of payment. Now, recognising and not comparing minimum wages and minimum payments to people's full-time pay—but just 7.6 weeks of people's full-time pay? Hopefully, over time, we can talk about how we can do more in that space. Of 36 OECD countries, about half offered six months or more paid leave for mothers. Six months is the minimum recommended amount by UNICEF, and if we think about who would have a good idea of what the minimum should be, I would listen to UNICEF before I listen to many others.

In Norway, parents can access 35 weeks of paid parental leave at the full amount. Estonia offers mothers 85 weeks of paid leave. Hungary offers 72 weeks. Bulgaria offers 65 weeks. Finland recently announced that their paid paternity leave will be extended to nearly seven months, in line with maternity leave. This isn't some utopia; these are actual countries who are listening to the experts, listening to UNICEF and others, saying: how do we make sure that we give kids the best start in life, give parents the best chance to bond with their children and make sure that we actually value the work that people do that they have to give up in order to take some time to care for their children?

The coalition's record of paid parental leave is a bit all over the place. I commend them for bringing this legislation forward, which heads in the right direction, but it's like they've had to try every possible direction before finally landing on this point. In his quest to become Leader of the Liberal Party, Tony Abbott proposed what could only be described as an ambitious scheme.
Ms Thwaites: Rolled gold.

Mr GORMAN: Rolled gold—also a very high-taxing scheme, I think was the other point. I often get lectures from those opposite on Labor's tax policies. I think the idea that you would say, 'We're going to have an ambitious paid parental leave scheme, but we're only going to do it if you accept a huge tax on corporations,' was a terrible way to treat a very important area of social policy. In 2012 the then opposition leader Tony Abbott—he had so many roles it is hard to keep track—described it as a welfare scheme. This isn't a welfare scheme; it is about supporting parents and protecting people's workplace entitlements. We then had the legislation to prevent paid parental leave double dipping. Again, it was treated as some sort of a welfare payment and they said people didn't deserve it. It was all brought down to whether you were a worthy recipient or not.

Talk about going in every single possible direction! All that mess led us to nothing. Which scheme are we amending today? We are not amending the 'rolled gold' Tony Abbott scheme; we are amending the Rudd-Gillard scheme. And that's because it has taken six years for this government to take the policy area of paid parental leave seriously at all. While I commend the changes that are being made with this legislation, it is not the huge change that we saw when this legislation was first put through the parliament.

Think about the challenges faced by families on a daily basis when they deal with Centrelink. For some families, their first engagement with Centrelink is when they go to claim paid parental leave. We know that parents have huge trouble accessing childcare subsidies. We've heard stories in the last few days of Centrelink offices being closed down. This makes it even harder for families to access paid parental leave entitlements. I know a family who, when their childcare subsidy took seven months, were told it was because of a technical issue. They asked Centrelink what that technical issue was, but they still don't know.

I worry that, as we continue to change these schemes, it creates more and more pressure on an understaffed Public Service. It creates more and more pressure on those who work in Centrelink. It creates more and more pressure on IT systems, which we know are well and truly behind the modern IT systems that are needed to run the complex social security architecture that Australia relies on in 2020. Indeed, when I recently visited Centrelink, they referred to it as 'the mainframe'. That's a term I haven't heard in a very long time. I think that gives a really good sense of the ageing infrastructure that sits below our social security system. I have much more to say on how to improve all the other parts of our family welfare system, but I will end it there. Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Ms THWAITES (Jagajaga) (19:17): I am pleased to speak in support of the Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Flexibility Measures) Bill 2020 and the amendment. As we heard from the member for Perth it was Labor that introduced Australia's national Paid Parental Leave scheme, which started on 1 January 2011. I have spoken in this place before about how, at that time, when Labor introduced this scheme, I worked for the minister responsible, Jenny Macklin, the former member for Jagajaga. And I think it's worth repeating that today because, at the time when labour introduced PPL, Australia was lagging behind other comparable countries in how we provided support for women who'd had a baby. Among the OECD countries, only Australia and the US did not provide some form of government funded paid parental leave. So the introduction of Labor's scheme was important in helping us to catch up. It provided support to women who worked in businesses and industries who had never before had access to any paid parental leave when they had a baby. Women in retail, in hospitality, in small business could finally take the time they needed to look after their baby without facing immense financial stress.

But it's almost a decade on and Australia is falling behind again. We now invest just a third of the OECD average in parental leave and, in particular, we are falling behind when it comes to encouraging and supporting fathers and partners to take time off to care for their baby. We are doing a disservice to families, to children and to our community in doing this. So this bill is meant to make paid parental leave more flexible my changing the rules so that the 18 weeks of paid parental leave can be split into a 12-week paid parental leave and a six-week flexible paid parental leave period. This should mean that families can split their entitlements over a two-year period with work in between—and, as with the current rules, the primary carer can be changed during this time. It is likely and hopeful that this will increase flexibility, and help parents to return to work part-time and spread their flexible paid parental leave period out over several months. The government says the bill may encourage greater take-up of paid parental leave by secondary carers, by allowing mothers to transfer their entitlements to a partner at a time that suits the family. Well, I certainly hope that that is something that happens, because, while Labor supports these changes and hopes they'll be beneficial, it's clear there's much more work to be done; particularly on how we share parenting between genders and how that's supported by schemes such as this one.

I'm going to look for some inspiration from Scandinavia, of course. Starting with Finland, where their female leadership team has just introduced almost seven months leave each for mothers and fathers—or for each parent, in the case of same-sex relationships—with a further six months to share. Iceland offers fathers three months paid
parental leave. Norway has been leading the way in this space for quite some time, first introducing a 'use it or lose it' daddy quota, where parents were entitled to extra leave but only if the father took it, way back in 1993. The research on that shows that countries that have a non-transferable form of leave for the father have a much higher uptake of men taking leave than those countries that don't. This benefits men and women and, importantly, it benefits children. Nordic research has shown men who take longer parental leave will also take on more responsibility at home, they do more unpaid housework, they're more involved in the care of their children, and they have better relationships with them. That is such an important point: by having that early time where they actually get to be the primary carer, these fathers build lifelong bonds with their children. Men who spend time caring for their child or children alone establish a more fundamental sense of shared responsibility between the parents and, as I said, they have a stronger bond with their children.

Another study of four countries, the US, Australia, the UK and Denmark, found that fathers who'd taken paternity leave were more likely to feed, dress, bathe and play with their child in the years after the period of leave had ended. In Britain, dads who took time off at birth were almost a third more likely to read books with their toddlers than those who hadn't. These are significant changes. In Australia today, more and more men want to be more hands-on with their children and to be able to take more parental leave, but they are held back by financial considerations, by a lack of support and, probably quite often, by a workplace culture that still sees it as a little bit strange that they might want to spend more than two weeks at home with the baby. In fact, the national average leave of less than two weeks for men leaves men often returning to work sleep-deprived, unable to give 100 per cent at work, and ill-equipped to also provide adequate support at home. A 2018 Human Rights Commission report here in Australia found that 27 per cent of fathers had experienced discrimination in the workplace during parental leave or upon return to work, ranging from negative attitudes and comments to actual threats of dismissal. There are a couple of things we need to do here. One is to look at policies that actively support fathers to take more leave, and the other is to look at the culture in our workplaces and how we can ensure that they're set up to support both men and women to care for their children, so that working parents—because, let's be honest, most families in Australia have working parents—generally share the load of bringing up their children while having a job.

Like many people in this House who've spoken on this bill, I've had some pretty recent experience of parental leave myself. My daughter has just had her second birthday last weekend. When she was born, I took leave for the first 11 months. My partner and I had planned that at that point he would step in and take three months unpaid leave. This is how we had always planned it, and we were ready for this, but I think the change that happened when he took over the primary responsibility was immense. It probably started with a fairly 'crash-through or crash' approach by both of us. My partner decided to take our daughter, at 11 months old, on a flight from Melbourne to Newcastle to go and visit his parents. I thought to myself, will I check the bag that he's packed? Should I have a look at what's in it before he goes? And I thought, no, he's got this; it's his responsibility now. So off they went. The plane was apparently a bit delayed in taking off. By the time they got on the plane, I believe he may have run out of nappies. They then sat on the tarmac for a little bit, and that meant he used up the last bottle he had with them. They took off and they had to get through some turbulence. They were circling around and around. I can see some of the other parents in the room smiling with recognition. So he was out of nappies and he was out of food. There was possibly some wee on his trousers at this point. He's not going to really thank me for that. Should I have a look at what's in it? I don't look around and think, 'Did that happen? Has that really happened?' I don't worry about things like that anymore. I don't look around and think, 'Did that happen? Has that been packed?' He knows what he needs next because he's done it. He's taken that responsibility on. We've all had bad experiences as a parent when we think we could have planned things better, but, if you haven't had that experience, if you haven't done it as a solo parent, if you haven't done it as the main care giver, you need to know it's a really different relationship. I think it is important that we set up a system that allows men and women to experience that, both for our relationships and for our relationships with our children.

Of course, it's also for women's economic security because, until we do a better job at sharing the caring load, women in Australia will continue to be left behind. ABS data that came out just a couple of weeks ago shows the gender pay gap remains stubbornly stuck at 13.9 per cent. That means that women earn $242.90 a week less than men, despite the Treasurer telling us last year that the pay gap had closed. Women's superannuation is, on average, half the rate for men at the age of retirement. This leaves too many older women at risk of homelessness and poverty because they've shouldered a lifetime of being a primary carer. They're the ones who not only took the early leave—again, because they'd fallen into the role of being the primary carer, the one who knows how it all
happens—but became the carer going forward. They were the ones who took the extra sick days when the child couldn't go to child care. They were the ones who came home early for the school excursion or to organise the other things. As that happened over a lifetime, they fell further and further behind in their career and their earnings.

We can do better than this. We do need to strike a better balance between the genders when it comes to caring, unpaid domestic work and productivity. Women are too often forced to make a decision between having a family and their career. Good parental leave policies are still judged too much on the amount of maternity leave afforded to women. Of course this is important, but we must look at how we also make a system that supports women and men to be there for their children. It's an issue that goes to how we set up those systems, how we set up our jobs and our careers and our life, and how we do the ongoing juggle that all parents are trying to make work.

The scheme introduced by the Labor government has been life-changing. There were so many women who, prior to this scheme being introduced, didn't have access to any paid leave. I remember hearing a lot of their stories. Particularly for women in areas like retail who were working casually, this scheme has been so important in that they know they can take some time off with security. It's been important for their employers as well to know that they can afford to have their workers take some time off. It has made a big difference in the lives of a lot of families, so it's good that the Morrison government is looking at what it can do to improve this scheme and how it can improve some of the flexibility in the scheme. But it's a shame that it's taken so long for them to start thinking about this, because there is so much more to be done. We have fallen behind again and we don't need to.

We are a modern, progressive and smart country. We are a country in which families are juggling work, caring, child care and all of those things, and we deserve to have a government that's thought these issues through, looked at what will benefit women, what will benefit men and what will benefit their children in order to give them all a start during a pretty tough time—becoming a parent and working through what that means for your relationship and what that means for your relationship with your child going forward. That needs government support. It needs to be thought about; it needs to be planned.

The fact that this has taken so long to get here is regrettable. It's good that it's here now. We need to see more. I encourage the government to look at some of the overseas examples of what is happening elsewhere and think about what else they can do to support working families in Australia. This is a start. It doesn't get us to where we need to be. It doesn't really give the sort of flexibility that will allow families to set themselves up for a truly equal model, and it doesn't allow women to make up some of those gaps that they still have in their careers and in their earnings—gaps that really, as they get further and further down the track towards retirement, leave them at risk of poverty, homelessness and quite serious consequences that we still see for many women today, and that shouldn't exist in our country.

Debate interrupted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

That the House do now adjourn.

**National Disability Insurance Scheme**

**Mr THISTLETHWAITE** (Kingsford Smith) (19:30): In this role we get the opportunity to meet some very brave and inspirational Australians, none more so than those living with a disability, their parents and carers. When Labor established the National Disability Insurance Scheme, our aim was to ensure that disability services were properly funded for once in Australia; that people living with disability stopped being treated as second-class citizens; and that we ended the lottery around the delivery of services, accommodation and respite, to give Australians with a disability and their families the lifestyles that they deserve.

Unfortunately, under this government, disability services have gone backwards. Many Australians living with a disability and their families are missing out on critical services because of a massive underspend by this government on the National Disability Insurance Scheme. They've seen $4.6 billion ripped out of the NDIS to prop up the coalition's so-called surplus. Under the Prime Minister and the Liberals, the cap on NDIS staffing has led to outsourcing and to a loss of professionalism and continuity of services. And, sadly, the massive delays across the system have meant that more than 1,200 Australians with disability have died whilst waiting for their support package. That's simply not good enough. The Liberals have had six years of stewardship of what should be a world-class scheme, but instead they've pillaged it and left people with a disability out in the cold. Enough is enough. The time has come for changes to be made to ensure that the NDIS works as it was intended, is properly funded, has adequately trained professional staff and is focused on the needs of Australians living with a disability.
It's rare that two state governments from opposing sides of politics would team up to take on the government on an issue. But this is exactly what has happened with the National Disability Insurance Scheme. On Friday Victoria's Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, Luke Donnellan, joined with the New South Wales Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, Gareth Ward, in calling for the government to fulfil their promise on NDIS funding and release the cash that has been earmarked for it that Australians living with a disability so richly deserve. These states have had enough of the Morrison government when it comes to the NDIS. They've seen this money cynically saved by this government from the massive underspend during the transition period as thousands struggle to navigate the scheme and access the services they deserve. The money was meant to be established as a reserve fund, set up by the end of 2019, with accumulated funds committed to helping people with a disability. Yet, despite repeated requests from the Victorian and New South Wales governments, the Morrison government not only refused to release the money but are yet to establish the fund or even provide the proposed fund design governance arrangements so it can be established. This neglect is yet another blow for people living with a disability, continuing to wait too long for their NDIS plan. The result is families and carers being placed under unnecessary stress, people with complex needs struggling to find appropriate accommodation and disabled Australians not getting the care they deserve.

We know where the government sends this money, and it's not to those living with a disability. Australians with disability desperately need action and funding from this government to ensure that our vital National Disability Insurance Scheme doesn't fall into further disrepair. While we'd prefer to see action rather than more reviews, I welcome the findings of veteran public servant David Tune. His findings that the scheme is plagued by delays and is frustrating to understand echo the experience of many thousands of participants. We welcome his recommendations: that the NDIA trial having agency delegates perform all plan functions in-house, though the review notes that this may have a requisite impact on the—Liberal imposed—staffing cap; to fund navigator roles to help people through the system; to create participant services to guarantee and ensure basic standards are met; for legislated time frames for decision-making and for the publication of NDIS reports; for greater investment in the carer workforce; for a national outreach strategy that would facilitate rollout to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and core communities; a reinforcing of the NDIS objectives and principles; and a return to the original vision of the 2011 Productivity Commission report.

Enough is enough for people living with disability under this government. It's time for the government to properly fund the NDIS and properly staff it.

Domestic and Family Violence

Dr MARTIN (Reid) (19:35): I rise today to bring attention to the issue of domestic and family violence. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, one woman is killed every nine days and one man is killed every 29 days by a partner. Any person can experience domestic or intimate violence, regardless of gender, culture, sexual orientation or socioeconomic background. Of course some groups are more likely to be impacted: Aboriginal women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised from family violence and 11 times more likely to be killed as a result of a violent assault. When speaking of statistics, we must also acknowledge that men are more likely to commit acts of domestic violence that result in fatalities. The death of Hannah Clarke and her three young children in what appears to have been a murder-suicide once again forces us as a nation to consider our approach to addressing the tragedy that is domestic violence.

'Domestic violence' is a term which encompasses not only physical violence between members of a family unit but also sexual, verbal, psychological, financial and social abuse. Frequently, this is an attempt by a perpetrator to exercise control or domination of the victim. Murder is the most tragic consequence of the most serious cases of abuse. Many victims suffer silently through sustained and less obvious forms of abuse.

Over the past decade we have seen the government introduce frontline services like 1800RESPECT, improve the legal system and drive cultural change to stop attitudes of sexism or disrespect from escalating to violence. Likewise, the Morrison government's putting an additional $328 million into the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children has placed a sharper focus on prevention.

Drawing on my own background as a psychologist, I think a new approach that focuses on early intervention is necessary. Teaching young people about safe and healthy relationships and wellbeing and better mental health are also desperately needed.

Mental health issues are at the core of domestic violence. Children who have grown up experiencing or witnessing domestic violence have a higher risk of depression, anxiety, relationship issues and substance abuse. They are more likely to grow up to become victims or perpetrators of domestic violence in their adult years. Beneath the surface of violent behaviours lie specific psychological symptoms: poor coping skills, poor emotion regulation, poor distress tolerance, poor impulse control, a lack of empathy and so on. Early childhood trauma and
poor coping mechanisms lead many to addictive behaviours, and substance abuse tends to coincide with domestic violence while masking underlying psychological issues. There are many examples where tackling substance abuse and addiction can significantly reduce violence.

We must recognise that young Australian men are the least likely to access mental health services and are more likely to exhibit poor mental health through behaviours such as aggression, substance abuse and risk taking. Historically, in our culture male aggression has been normalised, and many fail to recognise it as a symptom of poor emotional regulation. Many men are unaware that the symptoms and experiences they are having are psychological and linked to their mental health. For others, stigma makes it too difficult for them to seek help.

The Morrison government has invested record funding into mental health and, for the first time in our history, mental health is a significant policy priority. We have the opportunity to build an accessible mental health system that lays the foundation for addressing a wide range of issues across society, including domestic violence. It is possible for our nation to reduce our high rate of domestic violence if we consider the issue through multiple lenses. Our work to change attitudes of misogyny and sexism is important, but only part of the solution. We need to draw on mental health resources to prevent aggressive and violent behaviours from occurring.

I am certain that both sides of this House stand united on this issue, and I am certain that the Australian government will continue to look for ways to better address this issue, not only so we can respond to those impacted by domestic violence but so that we can prevent it from happening at all.

Global Security

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (19:40): Almost one year ago an Australian armed with semiautomatic weapons walked into two Christchurch mosques and murdered 51 people. As we approach the 12-month anniversary of this atrocity we need to ask what has changed. Almost one year later, what exactly is the government doing differently to stop this happening again, to stop an Australian again murdering dozens in the name of white supremacy, to stop this happening in our own country? Sadly, I believe that the honest answer is: not enough.

Far Right terrorism was growing before the Christchurch attacks and has grown since. The latest report from the Global Terrorism Index says there has been a 320 per cent increase in far Right terror in the past five years. In the United States, since September 11, far Right terrorists have now killed more people on American soil than jihadists. We've seen political figures murdered by far Right terrorists in the UK, Holland and Germany. There has been a sharp and alarming increase in far Right terror in Germany, including last week's atrocity in which nine migrants were murdered.

We also know that these far Right terrorists are frequently radicalised online. We know that the impressionable and marginalised are groomed on mainstream social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and then directed to alternative platforms where extreme views are tolerated, platforms like VK, Telegram and the former 8chan. These views can then be manipulated into murder. The manifesto of the Christchurch terrorist was heavy with the alt-Right slang and tropes that are born online, a smug mixture of irony, sarcasm and hatred particular to modern white supremacists. Maybe to some the alt-Right voice seems just like obnoxious provocation or trolling, but it's precisely the same rhetorical posture that convinced an Australian man to slaughter 51 men, women and children as they knelt in prayer and which inspired copycat attacks in El Paso, Poway and Baerum.

Two months after the Christchurch massacre, the New Zealand and French governments co-authored the Christchurch Call to Action, a global plan to stop this radicalisation machine. The major tech companies signed up, as did many countries around the world, including Australia. There have been positive developments since. Facebook's decision to ban the praise, support and representation of white nationalism from its platform was particularly welcome. The violent abhorrent material legislation was also a welcome step to stop the most revolting weaponisation of the internet, the sharing and live streaming of atrocities by the terrorists themselves. Overall, a year later, Australia has failed to honour the Christchurch call.

The Christchurch call recognises that there are no technology silver bullets for fighting the rise of far Right terrorism online. It offered a holistic response to the threat that demanded changes to the way online platforms operated, yes, but also changes to social cohesion initiatives, countering violent extremism programs, media literacy and law enforcement. The call sought five commitments from governments and 12 joint commitments from online service providers. Answers to questions on notice from the last round of Senate estimates suggest the Australian government's disappointing lack of follow-through on these commitments. The very first commitment in the Christchurch call is to:

Counter the drivers of terrorism and violent extremism by strengthening the resilience and inclusiveness of our societies to enable them to resist terrorist and violent extremist ideologies …
But answers to questions on notice reveal the government has invested less than $2 million a year in CVE intervention programs since 2013-14. The government also says it has spent just under $6 million a year on countering violent extremism programs since 2013-14. Both funding streams are directed at all potential drivers of radicalisation to violence, and it's unclear how much, if any, is targeting white supremacy. The government claims its social cohesion package responds to this commitment, but these programs are overwhelmingly aimed at multicultural communities, not those vulnerable to white nationalism.

The Christchurch call asks governments to work together with online service providers to work with civil society to counter violent extremism in all its forms, including through the development and promotion of positive alternatives and counter messaging. In response, the Department of Home Affairs tells that the government 'undertakes a range of activities to promote positive alternatives and counter the messaging in violent extremist propaganda.' A range of activities. The government couldn't even give a single example of what they were doing in this space. Governments and online service providers are also asked to work together to develop effective interventions based on sharing information and to support research and academic efforts to better understand, prevent and counter terrorist and violent extremism content online. Again, the government is unable to point to a single initiative it is pursuing to achieve this. Instead it points to its Report of the Australian Taskforce to Combat Terrorism and Extreme Violent Material Online and tells us that it's the platform's responsibility.

Well, the task force hasn't met since June 2019 and there has been no public report since—nor has there been a testing event simulating government and industry responses to a terrorist scenario as per recommendation 4.1 of the task force report. There's been no funding of research to better understand and prevent white nationalist radicalisation online in Australia. The government is not a member of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism advisory committee, and we don't know whether a single far-right organisation has been shared with online service providers consistent with recommendation 4.3 of the task force report.

**Herbert Electorate: Queensland Country Bank Stadium**

Mr THOMPSON (Herbert) (19:45): Mr Speaker, you may notice that I'm wearing probably the best tie in the House. For those southerners who might not know what it is, it is the tie of the mighty North Queensland Cowboys NRL club based in Townsville. Mr Speaker, I'm sure you'd be a Cowboys fan. I can tell by the way you are looking at my tie—and I'll get you one! We had a fantastic event on the weekend. The Queensland Country Bank Stadium had its 'people's day'. Our stadium has taken a few years to be built. It has gone through my predecessor and that member's predecessor. It has taken quite a while to get through, but it is the first step and the first tick of the box in Townsville's City Deal. Whilst this stadium has government support at all levels, it is the people's stadium. On people's day we saw people come through to have a look at the field, to have a look around and really get the feeling, to see where their seats are going to be when the Cowboys thrash the Broncos in a few weeks time!

Mr Watts interjecting—

Mr THOMPSON: I didn't hear that interjection; it is probably something trying to slander the Cowboys! But I can tell you that the Cowboys played great in the nines competition just recently, and they'll continue to play great through the NRL season. This stadium has brought the community together. I believe this stadium has now become the heart of Townsville. We've brought everyone together. And it doesn't matter whether you support the NRL or not. This stadium will have Elton John performing this weekend. It will see track and field. Jeff Horn wants to get a boxing match in this stadium. So it's not just about the NRL; it's for the community. And the community is coming together, rallying behind each other, for our new infrastructure that has come to Townsville. And I know that this 'cauldron' will be something that lasts for generations to come. We had locals walking around extremely happy on people's day. While all three levels of government were there, this wasn't about events. While all three levels of government were there, this wasn't about events.

Like I said, this stadium is a great example of all governments working together. There was our contribution of $100 million. The state made a contribution, and the land was gifted by the council to share the burden of the cost. The stadium was built to create an amazing place for the people of Townsville to be proud of and in which to enjoy their beloved NRL games, listen to Elton John, hopefully watch some boxing and see some track and field events.
The stadium created employment opportunities which we definitely needed after a monsoon event only 12 months ago. We have 500 local businesses who were able to reap the benefits of construction contracts, and 2,000 people were employed on the site. A large proportion of these people were from Townsville, making sure the money stayed in Townsville. Of course, there were concerns along the way that out-of-towners would be shipped in—and they were. So we need to be doing more in this space to ensure that our local and tier 1 contractors get this work. We have people who are very capable of delivering such a project.

But now that the tools are down this isn't the end of the jobs. On event days, the stadium's kitchens, box offices and stands will be filled with hundreds of event staff—cooks, cleaners, security, customer service agents, and food and beverage staff. A bigger stadium needs a bigger workforce. No doubt, this will be a key driver for bringing down our city's unemployment rate.

This stadium is so much more than just a place where people kick a football. This is a place where a community can come together, stand side by side and see what we built for our community. It's so important that the people in this place travel up and see the stadium for everything that it is—a place that Townsville calls the heart. *(Time expired)*

**Defence Procurement**

**Mr ZAPPIA** (Makin) *(19:50)*: The mishandling of the replacement submarine contract and Collins class maintenance program highlights the utter incompetence of the Morrison government. But one should not be surprised, given the coalition government's bungling of the NBN and NDIS rollouts—the other two major national projects this government was entrusted with.

This is a government now into its third term. Construction of the submarines has not commenced. The design phase is already nine months behind schedule. We don't know with any certainty when construction will commence, how much work will be local, when the first submarine will be ready for use, when the last submarine will be built and what the total cost will be. Even if construction were to commence by the now delayed start date of 2024—and that is a big if—it means that it would take this government 11 years, from its election in 2013, to commence construction.

With the last of the 12 submarines expected to be finished around mid-century, Australians are quite rightly asking whether the submarines will be out of date before they hit the water and whether they will meet Australia's defence needs in 2050 and beyond. There are growing differences of opinion about whether the submarines are even fit for purpose, with calls for the contract to be scrapped. According to the national audit report, the cost of the 12 submarines has already blown out from $50 billion to $80 billion, and work has not even started. Likewise, the local content of the submarine build is slipping by the day. Increased local content actually reduces the net cost, because the government will recoup much of the outlay through personal income tax, company tax and GST income from wages, profits and income spent in Australia.

In 2016, the former member for Sturt, Christopher Pyne, built his re-election campaign for the seat of Sturt on the claim that he had delivered for South Australia by securing the submarine contract. He had submarine corflutes plastered throughout his electorate. On the ABC's *Q&A* program of 23 May 2016, Mr Pyne said:

DCNS has admitted that probably less than 10% of the work will be done outside Australia. Now, most people regard a local build as about 60 to 70%. So, in fact, that's very good news for Adelaide and Australia.

I repeat: Mr Pyne said that less than 10 per cent of the work would be done outside Australia. Now government ministers, and the former member for Sturt, not only walk away from that claim but have even resorted to blaming SA industries for the shortage of skilled tradespeople in South Australia to do the work, and, therefore, industry being unable to meet local content promises. This is from a government that decimated South Australia's skilled workforce by killing off the auto industry and allowing ASC's own workforce to wither while the government dithered. Skilled tradespeople in engineering industries cannot wait around for years without work whilst the federal government vacillates about what work it will send to South Australia and when. That was the case with the replacement submarine program, which was initially promised to Japan, and now we see it as the Morrison government flounders over the full-cycle docking maintenance of the Collins class submarines.

Work that was previously based at Osborne is now under threat of being lost to Western Australia. It has long been understood that South Australia was to maintain the Collins class submarines. In their book *Collins Class Submarine Story*, Peter Yule and Derek Woolner wrote:

It was not until December 2003 that the contract, worth about $3.5 billion over 25 years, was awarded to ASC, ensuring that the submarines will be maintained through their lives by those who built them.

The government should come clean as to what is in the contract and whether that statement is correct. The continuing uncertainty just adds to the woes of South Australia's struggling economy, where we recently had a call from a prominent SA businessperson for the state's civic leaders to come together and develop a way forward for
South Australia. That, of course, doesn't say much for community confidence in the South Australian Marshall Liberal government. And can I say: I totally understand those feelings.

The Morrison government may feel that it has little to lose or gain in South Australia at the next election, and that may well be true, but people's lives are being left in limbo. The Morrison government should stop turning its back on South Australia and make clear where the future maintenance of the submarines will take place.

**Toowoomba: Defence Properties**

Dr McVEIGH (Groom) (19:55): Last Friday, on behalf of the Minister for Defence Personnel, the Hon. Darren Chester MP, I announced to my local community of Toowoomba that Defence Housing Australia was not to proceed with its plans for a very significant development at the old rifle range and Rifle Range Road in Toowoomba at Mount Lofty on the magnificent escarpment of our city. Tonight I want to talk about the background to that announcement and, most particularly, pay a tribute to many locals involved in advocating for this block of land over many years now.

Back in January 2017—in fact, 20 January 2017, so almost exactly three years ago today—I met with John Swarbrick and many neighbours of this site regarding, for example, a significant tree nomination for a Moreton Bay fig near the end of Henry Street, planted by the late Eric Albury French of Toowoomba before he left to serve in the Australian Army in the First World War. Such was the significance of this site recognised by local residents, not just in recent weeks or months but, in this case, quite some years ago.

Defence Housing Australia, as the owner of this land, transferred as it was from the Department of Defence to them in 2016, took up its right to submit a development application to the Toowoomba Regional Council. Of course, council is the sole decision-maker on such applications. Defence Housing Australia has to look, quite obviously, at Defence housing needs across the nation, and it needs to do so under legislation in as cost effective a manner as possible for the Australian taxpayers. So it's been a long three years for many local residents, and I pay tribute to them.

On 1 August 2018, for example, I met with locals such as Penny Claringbull, Sue Berghofer, Nancy Kenway, Janet Meibusch and Barbara Weller, amongst others, on the corner of Rifle Range Road and Martini Street to talk about DHA's plans. Those plans have evolved over the last few years. Initially, we thought it would be a relatively small development. Of course, as that was lodged with council, and in the various interactions with council over the last few years, it became a significantly larger development than originally envisaged, and I talked about the development we expected in this very House a few years ago. So here we are: Defence Housing Australia has decided to withdraw its plans and not proceed with the very significant plans—well over 340 housing lots on the edge of our range—and to consider other opportunities with the Toowoomba Regional Council instead. This came about because the new CEO of DHA, appointed mid last year—let's say a bit over six months ago—took the opportunity to review its business model, and it gave us the opportunity to review this particular development application.

I've worked very much with the mayor and, as I said, local residents, and they have led the charge, not just those in recent months but, in this case, people from well over three years ago, to the stage where we were able to make this announcement just last week. This is an opportunity to look at this significant asset, some hundreds of hectares, that will provide for a number of options for our city going forward. The Mayor of Toowoomba Regional Council, Paul Antonio, with whom I have discussed this site, as I said, for at least three years, talks about necessary fire trails on the edge of our range. This is quite obvious, given the summer that we've experienced. He talks about mountain biking opportunities. There's already a track there, but that will potentially provide significant tourism benefits for our city and, of course, the environmental and historical significance of this site.

So the message to Toowoomba and locals is that there's an opportunity, given the review of DHA's business plan only in recent months, to potentially look at a new future for this block of land. I would like to see it end up in the hands of council as custodians on behalf of our community. That's up to DHA and council. The job is not done. There needs to be more work on the options for our city going forward, and, as I said, I congratulate the locals involved in the discussion in recent years.

**House adjourned at 20:00**

**NOTICES**

The following notices were given:

Mr Giles: to move:

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

That this House:

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

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

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

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

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

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

(7) calls on the Government to reverse the $83.7 million paused in indexation funding as a matter of urgency.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell): took the chair at 10:30.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Blacktown Girls High School
Dacey, Reverend John

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (10:30): The thing that will define success for our nation increasingly in the years ahead will be the smarts of our people. This will require not only a patient investment but, as we see that talent and those smarts develop before our eyes, we should give a moment to congratulate and encourage. I am here today driven in part by this.

I recently had the great opportunity to visit Blacktown Girls High School, which sits in the electorate of my friend and colleague the member for Greenway. It also hosts a number of students who reside in the Chifley electorate. When I caught up with the students of Team 4802, which is Australia's first all-girl robotic team and called 'Unidentified Moving Machines' I saw them not during school but during the school holidays. They had been there through the course of the end of the year, working day in, day out, basically to prepare for a competition that they will enter in the next few months.

The team formed in 2015, and they've seen a significant jump in students pursuing IT, engineering and architecture post school, with up to one in five girls going on to study STEM at university. As I said, they spent most of January building robots to compete in the FRC Southern Cross Regional Competition, which is going to be held in March. They won this competition in 2018, and if they pass through this round they'll qualify for an international competition being held in Houston.

I was just astonished to see that they were making robots from scratch, writing their own code and creating autonomous and unmanned robots. It just makes me very proud to see Western Sydney talent. As I said, this is what is before our eyes; we're seeing the next generation of talent emerging, and I just want to congratulate them hugely.

The other person I would like to take a moment to congratulate is the Reverend John Dacey, who is moving on after 13 years as community minister at Bidwill Uniting Church. He was ordained as a deacon in the Uniting Church in 1996 and has been a pillar of the Bidwill community since 2007. He has done so many great things in our area. He has pushed for free dental-care clinics and held workshops and activities for FUNPARK, an annual community event, in collaboration with local service providers. There have been free one-on-one digital literacy training, seniors clubs and the Getting Ahead program, which gives families doing it tough a helping hand.

All this has been driven by his passion for social justice. In his own words, 'I chose to place my capacities at the service of those who miss out so that I might contribute something to their efforts to achieve their full potential, as well as to the task of building a fair society.' Well said, and we wish him all the best for his future endeavours.

Boothby Electorate: Glenelg Surf Life Saving Club

Ms FLINT (Boothby—Government Whip) (10:33): Today I want to acknowledge the incredible bravery of a group of Glenelg Surf Life Saving Club nippers, whose courageous actions helped save the lives of two tourists at Glenelg Beach.

On 31 January, Lachy Larven and Quinn Hammersley, both aged 12, and Charlie Crowe, Angus Ganley and Astin Rouvray, all aged 11, noticed two women were caught in a rip and were in serious danger. I understand that on the day of the incident, Lachy and Quinn were attending a training session at the club when they noticed the tourists in distress. Lachy and Quinn's split-second decision to rush into the water and swim out about 80 metres to support the women was the action that saved their lives. Fellow nippers, Charlie, Angus and Astin, then joined the rescue operation. Together, they were able to surround the struggling women with paddle boards and helped to keep them afloat before senior lifesavers arrived to bring them safely back to shore.

This was a truly incredible outcome. On behalf of our local community, I wish to thank all the Glenelg Surf Life Saving Club volunteers involved in this rescue effort. Local residents in our community are particularly proud of the team of young nippers whose swift actions helped save the lives of these tourists. Our community could not be prouder of them.

Under the leadership of President Georgina Cole, Glenelg Surf Life Saving Club is a vital part of our community. Along with my state parliamentary colleague, local member Stephen Patterson MP, who himself is a member of the club, I regularly attend club functions and do my small part to help assist club members. Recently we were delighted to attend a special celebration at the club in recognition of the fundraising efforts of the Rotary
Club of Somerton Park, whose $12,000 donation supported the purchase of a new ATV that will assist with rescues. The Glenelg Surf Life Saving Club relies almost entirely on the generosity of donors like Rotary and fundraising efforts to help keep our beaches safe, which is why I was pleased they successfully obtained a federal government Stronger Communities Grant of just over $15,000 to help fund two new inflatable rescue boats.

Glenelg Surf Life Saving Club and other surf lifesaving clubs in the Boothby electorate, at Somerton Park, Brighton and Seaciff, embody the great Australian spirit of volunteering and community service. Our clubs not only patrol our beaches, helping to keep us all safe; they are also places where local residents, especially our younger residents, learn valuable teamwork skills and the importance of fitness and giving back to our community, all while forming lifelong friendships. My sincere thanks to everyone at Glenelg Surf Life Saving Club, especially the Nippers, and to all the surf lifesaving volunteers in our community for all that you do along our coastline each and every summer to help keep us all safe on the beach and in the water.

**Eden-Monaro Electorate: Australian Bushfires**

Dr MIKE KELLY (Eden-Monaro) (10:36): We have seen a bit of an easing of conditions across New South Wales lately, but I want to reassure this chamber, this building, that I intend to keep the feet to the fire, so to speak, on the recovery effort that is proceeding now. We still have fire issues in Eden-Monaro. If you look on the Fires Near Me NSW app, you will see that unfortunately we still have problems which we will probably be dealing with through to May at this rate. We have a big job ahead of us for this recovery, and it will take several years.

Last Thursday I was down at Bemboka at the Colombo Park site, where the Rapid Relief Team were coming in. Ron Arkcoll and his crew are doing a fantastic job of getting fighters coming over from Western Australia and out to our farmers in the area. I saw how that was putting a smile on the dial of our farmers, who really feel reassured that people care about their situation. Getting that fighter resource is an enormous help to them. At the same time they set up a barbecue on site where people could socialise and share their burdens. They're really performing a wonderful service to that community. A big shout-out to the Rapid Relief Team, Ron Arkcoll and the crew. It's really great to see them in the community and doing this sort of stuff across our landscape.

Getting feedback and sitting down with the farmers there, it's clear they are not happy with the support packages so far. They are just not seeming to be able to navigate those processes, and none of them could tell me of any farmer who had had success in applying for anything so far. We really do have to have a good, close look at the process, and refine it and streamline it.

On Saturday I was at Tumbafest over in Tumbarumba. This is the first activity the community has been able to mount post-bushfire. There was a good debate about whether or not it could even go ahead, but it did. It was wonderful to see the response of the community; we'd been calling for them to turn out to these events, and they did come out in numbers. I was wonderful to see. Kate Ceberano was there, and she was responding to the calls of the community to assist in donating money. It was a wonderful day, and wonderful to see the community being resilient, reviving and staging that activity.

I have to say again that we need better support for the festivals in our region. The $30,000 that is being issued per local government area is simply not enough to support these festivals and activities, and we desperately need that to fill in the gaps between now and next summer. A good example is the Narooma Oyster Festival, which would only get a tiny portion of the $30,000 across the whole of the Eurobodalla Shire for its specific activity; they really need $85,000. So that money would best go direct to the Narooma Oyster Festival if we really wanted to make sure that money arrived quickly enough that those events could go ahead successfully.

**Lake Cathie Medical Centre**

O'Keeffe, Mr John

Taree High School

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (10:39): Congratulations to the Lake Cathie Medical Centre on the official opening of the new rehabilitation centre as part of an $1.8 million expansion. The expansion was made possible thanks to the federal coalition government investing $300,000 towards the project. The federal funding has been made available under the coalition's Rural and Regional Teaching Infrastructure Grants Program. It's an amazing facility. It will enable the medical centre to increase its capacity of physiotherapists as well as add exercise physiology and occupational therapy. The rehab centre has five consulting rooms, increased gym floor space as well as a magnificent hydrotherapy pool and a gym section. It will also expand the facilities available in the co-located medical centre, freeing up rooms for more consulting rooms and space for teaching medical students and supervising GP registrars. Ten local tradesmen were employed during the construction and, obviously, there has

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been expansion in physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Congratulations to Lianda Constructions and Dr Sam Nelapati, who led this expansion in the medical centre.

I would like to congratulate John O'Keefe, a 57 year veteran of the New South Wales State Emergency Services, who was recognised in front of his family, friends and colleagues with a 55-year long service award and clasp. John is a former unit commander and volunteer and is now part of the Taree capability unit and still going strong. He's seen the service change and evolve since he first joined in 1963 and still maintains his passion for New South Wales SES today. The whole state emergency staff and volunteers, including two life members and the local mayor, David West, all came together to recognise John's contribution to the community of New South Wales.

I would also like to congratulate and highlight two students at Taree High School. Year 11 student Amber Kelleher is now the Taree Lion's Club Youth of the Year. She won the overall award as part of a public speaking competition at the Taree Lions Club Youth of the Year quest. The other entrant was Taree High School captain, Sam Moss. The judges were retired teacher Keith Davy, New South Wales Food Authority manager Mr Ruprecht and Manning River Times journalist Rob Douglas. Amber and Sam were both interviewed about their contributions and involvement in school, leadership, sport, culture, community and citizenship. They were both worthy contestants but, unfortunately, only one can go through to the final, and that was Amber. They both gave excellent impromptu speeches on what Australians find most valuable in the future of printed media, such as books and newspapers, in relation of the rise of electronic media. Congratulations to them both, and I look forward to hearing about their future careers.

Scullin Electorate: Community Services

Mr GILES (Scullin) (10:42): I rise to mention in this place two wonderful community organisations in my electorate of Scullin and these are the Lalor Men's Shed and the Whittlesea U3A, an organisation that you would be familiar with, Deputy Speaker Mitchell, member for McEwen. I had the great pleasure of visiting them both last week at the premises their share in Lalor. This is an important precinct in the Scullin electorate with these two organisations sharing premises with a wonderful community garden and with the Northern School for Autism, the Merriang Special Development School, the Peter Lalor Secondary College and the Outer Northern Trade Training Centre. I mention this because this evolution as a precinct is something that I am very proud to see continue and flourish but am also concerned about, particularly as it is a space that hasn't always been served by wonderful community facilities and is very close to the Lalor train station.

The Men's Shed is a relatively recent organisation but one that has been flourishing. It was terrific to check out what they are doing and how many people are being engaged. Many retired men and women and quite a few with disability are being engaged in fellowship, friendship as well as pursuing crafts that they are passionate about. Certainly, as someone who is not very handy, I learnt plenty of things, including which end of a hammer is the correct end to make use of. But, for those who are keen to pursue these activities in retirement, it has been an absolutely critical initiative supporting men and their families in the Thomastown and Lalor areas in particular. I am really pleased, as someone who has spoken often in this place about loneliness and social connection, to see this place flourishing. Next door, Whittlesea U3A is an organisation with nearly 1,000 members.

These organisations rely on many things, not only volunteers that drive activities but also having places to come together, and this is of course particularly important for something like the Men's Shed, where access to some of the devices for woodworking and metal working in particular is absolutely fundamental, particularly in a place people can access either on foot or via public transport, and there aren't too many of those places around. So I am concerned that there have been some significant impediments to the operation of both facilities in recent times. There seem to be difficulties with accessing parking, which is of concern to participants with disability. There have been issues in relation to the availability of toilets, impacting on both facilities. I am really concerned that these issues have not yet been resolved and I will be writing to the Victorian education department and to the school to see what can be done to ensure that the licence that has been given to both these groups can be given proper effect to, because we know how difficult it is to keep people engaged, particularly in later life. We know how dangerous loneliness and social disconnection are. When we have found organisations like the City of Whittlesea U3A and the Lalor Men's Shed that are doing good work, it is on all of us to keep that going.

Aged Care

Mr CONNELLY (Stirling) (10:45): Arguably, one of the most universal and inescapable truths is that we will all get old and we will all die. As we age, our physical and mental health decline. As this occurs, we progressively surrender some of our independence, and at that point we turn to carers, whether they be family members, aged-care service providers or a mixture of both. In a clear sign of prioritisation, one of the very first acts of Scott Morrison as Prime Minister was to call the Royal Commission into Aged Care, Quality and Safety. The royal
commission did identify some deplorable circumstances of neglect and even abuse. The individuals and organisations involved should rightly be condemned and corrected.

However, we must be careful not to paint all aged-care service providers with a negative brush. Since November last year, I have been touring aged-care facilities and meeting people—as have some of my colleagues—in my electorate of Stirling. This commenced with a roundtable meeting in my office convened by Leading Age Services Australia state manager, Liz Behjat. I thanked the organisations that attended, including managers and staff from Bethanie, Brightwater, Echo Community Services, Home Instead Senior Care, Maurice Zeffert Home, Multicultural Services Centre and Stirling Community Care.

A consistent concern is that, in cracking down on unconscionable service providers, we must avoid a temptation to overregulate. Certainly, auditing and compliance checks are extremely important, but we must work together to get the balance right, to ensure that high-quality service delivery, which must maintain our core focus, is not materially impacted. As I have been visiting aged-care facilities in my electorate of Stirling from Joondanna, Gwelup and Karrinyup, I have been struck by a consistent observation that the staff are filled with compassion for their residents. They know their names and the names of family members who come to visit. They show me with pride areas where meals are prepared and functions are held.

I commend the government’s moves to get behind these passionate service providers, including through the increase in funding of over $5 billion across the forward estimates. I am also personally committed to continuing my on-the-ground research and feeding my findings through to the relevant minister. In the words of the Prime Minister, ‘We must establish a new culture of respect for our older Australians.’ Again, I thank the Prime Minister for instituting the royal commission and for driving forward improvements which will benefit every single Australian, including the parents and the relatives who we love and cherish.

**National Disability Insurance Scheme**

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Whitlam) (10:48): The National Disability Insurance Scheme was announced by the Gillard government on 1 July 2013 and was lauded as the most significant economic and social reform since the introduction of Medicare. Currently, 4.3 million Australians who have a disability rely on the NDIS. The NDIS is meant to provide over 460,000 people with funding, support and services. However, currently, it only provides funding to 300,000 Australians.

The Liberals have cut $4.6 billion in funding from the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The purpose of this is to prop up their budget because they cannot manage the economy. It is not just Labor that is making these criticisms. Last week, the New South Wales Liberal government was criticising the government for ripping out this $4.6 billion from the NDIS. It is a national disgrace. My office is contacted on a daily basis by individuals seeking help with their NDIS packages. Typically, the main issues revolve around plans being underfunded and delays in the delivery of services. Here’s one such example from last week. Bruce Mumford, who lives in Moss Vale, has experienced numerous issues with the NDIS. In late 2018 Bruce contacted my office advising that he’d been waiting since the end of 2017 for a new wheelchair. Despite assistance from my office, it wasn’t until 2019 that Bruce received this vital piece of equipment. Unfortunately for Bruce, he had to contact my office again last week as he’d experienced further difficulties with the NDIS. This time he was at risk of being left without a bed. Bruce had been waiting since early 2019 for the NDIS to approve an urgent request for a new bed. Within a few days of raising the issue with the NDIS, my office received confirmation that a new bed had been approved and ordered and that Bruce would have a rented hospital bed until the new bed was delivered.

It should not take 10 months to action urgent pieces of equipment, such as wheelchairs and appropriate beds. Those living with a disability and their carers and families should not have to resort to contacting their local member to get the action required. The coalition have short-changed the NDIS and people, like Bruce, who rely on it. Instead of focusing on improving the lives of those people living with a disability, the coalition have shown they’re more focused, because of their own mismanagement, on propping up their budget numbers. People with disabilities in this country deserve a better deal than what they’re getting from that mob over there.

**Curtin Electorate: Sculpture by the Sea**

Ms HAMMOND (Curtin) (10:51): I rise today to speak on a culturally unique experience that takes place annually in my electorate of Curtin, the Sculpture by the Sea exhibition. In fact, one of my very first contributions in this chamber was to put on record the importance of this event to my local community and my home state of WA.

Now in its 16th year, and this year running from 6 to 23 March, this event attracts established and emerging artists from all over the world to showcase their incredible works of art in the beautiful setting of Cottesloe Beach. The event brings artists to huge audiences and makes art come alive to thousands of people who might not
otherwise be exposed to the beauty of sculpture. It brings together the community, from young to old; it has a strong educational program; and it's a huge boost to tourism and the local economy.

A recent Oxford Economics report evaluating the 2019 exhibition confirmed the overwhelmingly positive economic benefits that this event brings to WA and to my local community. The exhibition attracts people to holiday, to see our sites and to spend money at our local businesses, boosting our economy and creating jobs. It was estimated that in 2019 the event contributed $6.8 million in direct interstate and international spending, and $13.7 million in total spending for WA. The event attracted over 210,000 visitors in 2019, including 3,500 people from interstate and overseas who came to Perth specifically to see the exhibition. I know, from talking and meeting with the local businesses in my electorate, how important this annual event is to them and how much they gain from it economically.

Unfortunately, the long-term future of Sculpture by the Sea is uncertain. This is a consequence of the increased popularity of the event, with the cost of producing it continuing to rise, now to the tune of approximately $2.2 million per annum. On this note, it is both surprising and disappointing that the state Labor government won't commit any substantial funding after 2020 for the exhibition's sustainability into the future, particularly given its positive economic and tourism components. I'm also disappointed that the funding provided by the Australia Council for the Arts is coming to an end, particularly in light of the council's recent report into the positive impact of arts and creativity on Australia's tourism strategies and the economy more broadly. So I will continue, alongside my WA state colleague Dr David Honey MLA, to call on the state government and the federal government to provide funds to ensure that Sculpture by the Sea has a sustainable future in Western Australia.

**Geelong: Limeburners Point**

**Mr MARLES** (Corio—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10:54): As this summer comes to a close, it has again been clear that many people chose to spend their summer gravitating towards Geelong's Corio Bay and all that it has to offer. I like to start some of my mornings running alongside my WA state colleague Dr David Honey MLA, to call on the state government and the federal government to provide funds to ensure that Sculpture by the Sea has a sustainable future in Western Australia.

But today I particularly want to reflect upon Limeburners Point, one of the principal places where people can take a boat out onto Corio Bay. I frequently run past Limeburners Point on my morning runs. Unfortunately, the boat ramp area at Limeburners Point has a chequered history. It continues to be a hooning hotspot. Unorganised burnouts leave the space littered with shredded tyres and broken bottles, and rubbish is being dumped there. Local schoolchildren who participate in the Geelong local history walk, an excursion to see our beautiful bollards along the bay, start that very excursion from the car park at Limeburners Point.

This has been an ongoing issue, and local anglers are angry that this amenity has been misused for years without proper action from the City of Greater Geelong. Many local anglers have made representation to council over many years. In April of last year, a local angler spoke to the *Geelong Advertiser*, saying: 'Sooner or later some car or boat trailer is going to get wiped out. It's a disaster waiting to happen.' In August of last year a horrific incident occurred at Limeburners Point when two women were flung from the back of a ute. The ute was engaging in hooning behaviour, reportedly doing burnouts in the car park. One of the woman lost consciousness after her head struck the ground, while the other woman escaped with grazes and bruises. Both were incredibly lucky to walk away from the incident without more serious injury.

The effects of the antisocial behaviour that is occurring at the Limeburners Point car park extend to environmental impacts as well. Last year, a local Geelong family created a short documentary for a school project, entitled *Project 10.10*. The Woods family visited and cleaned 10 beaches along the south-west coast in 10 hours. What was glaringly obvious from the documentary was that Limeburners Point was by far the most polluted of all of these 10 locations.

The CCTV installed by the council does not and has not solved the issue of hooning. The sheriff department of Victoria Police often send officers down to Limeburners Point after reports of hooning or bad behaviour. These aren't solutions; they're purely reactive and continue to cost ratepayers. Hooning behaviour continues to take up valuable police resources and put local residents at risk. We can't afford to wait until someone gets seriously injured or even worse before we act. It's now time for the City of Greater Geelong to acknowledge that something needs to be done about the design and layout of the car park and come up with a plan that will make Limeburners Point a safe place for anglers, locals and tourists.
Canning Electorate: Rail Infrastructure

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (10:57): This morning I rise to address a matter of public record. On Saturday morning an article was published by the ABC on the funding of Lakelands train station. The journalist reported that plans for a proposed station further north in Karnup had been switched to build the Lakelands train station. The article said:

Karnup, in a state Labor electorate, looked likely to be built first, courtesy of a 2017 election promise by Mark McGowan. That is, until an announcement in November last year by Prime Minister Scott Morrison that his Government would contribute $64 million towards a new $80 million station at Lakelands, in the electorate held by Federal Liberal MP Andrew Hastie.

In sharing the article to Twitter, the journalist who wrote it summarised her article by saying: 'How political games can have a dramatic impact on people's lives.' This mirrors the narrative pushed by the member for Brand, who has accused this government of impropriety. In fact, the member for Brand shared the ABC's story to her Facebook page soon after it was published on Saturday morning. But an important piece of information was not declared by the ABC in the article. It is understood that the journalist who wrote this story is married to the member for Brand's media adviser.

The ABC didn't seek comment from me before publishing this story. Had it done so, I would have taken the opportunity to talk about my community's efforts to fund and build Lakelands train station. Many residents of Lakelands have waited a decade for this promised station to be built. I first met some of them while doorknocking in 2016. Since that time I have campaigned for their interests. Hundreds of houses were doorknocked. Thousands of leaflets and letters were distributed. Community meetings were held. One passionate resident even staged a hunger strike for Lakelands train station, and that man is now a councillor for the City of Mandurah. If asked, I would have told the ABC about my years of lobbying government to fund Lakelands station. Three different infrastructure ministers have visited Lakelands to see the proposed site, listen to councillors and hold community meetings. I have argued for this station in 10 different speeches to parliament since 2017. The article suggests that Karnup had a longstanding commitment attached to it and Lakelands did not. This is wrong. The federal government committed $2 million to a business case in 2018, and Malcolm Turnbull, the then Prime Minister, came to Lakelands for the announcement. By the 2019 election the federal government had already committed $35 million towards building Lakelands train station. Labor had committed nothing. The choice was clear. Labor lost in Lakelands with a 5.7 per cent swing against them. Had the ABC called, I would have pointed to the project's public support from the state member for Mandurah, a WA cabinet minister. The ABC mentioned that Karnup is in a state Labor seat but failed to mention that Lakelands is also in a state Labor seat. Is the ABC suggesting that the federal government is pork-barrelling for Minister Templeman's re-election or is it suggesting he has no influence upon the decisions of the state—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell): In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Ovarian Cancer

Ms WELLS (Lilley) (11:00): I move:

That this House:

(1) recognises that:

(a) February is Ovarian Cancer Awareness month in Australia; and

(b) 26 February 2020 is Teal Ribbon Day; and

(2) acknowledges that:

(a) ovarian cancer has the lowest survival rate of any women's cancer;

(b) every year, almost 1,600 Australian women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer;

(c) every year, approximately 1,000 Australian women die from ovarian cancer;

(d) in Australia, the overall five-year survival rate for women diagnosed with ovarian cancer is 46 per cent; and

(e) there is currently no reliable screening test to aid detection and prevention.

There are people you meet who put life in clear and proper perspective. I first met Kristen Larsen and her sister, Elsa, at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital while they were advocating for more funding for ovarian cancer clinical trials. Kristen was diagnosed with stage 3C ovarian cancer in 2013, at the age of 21. Kristen was one of the most charismatic, zesty and articulate warriors I've met. She lived by the motto 'If your dreams don't
scare you, they're not big enough.' Even while undergoing years and years of gruelling treatment, Kristen was the loudest voice in the room, bringing awareness to ovarian cancer and fighting for better funding.

Every year, approximately 1,000 Australian women die from ovarian cancer. To Kristen, this was 1,000 women too many. Kristen knew firsthand that funding for ovarian cancer research and clinical trials was going to be the only hope for the 1,600 Australian women who are diagnosed with ovarian cancer each year. Kristen also passionately believed that she needed to be vulnerable and share her story so that other women diagnosed with ovarian cancer, especially young women, weren't alone. Kristen was the Brisbane regional coordinator of the Australia New Zealand Gynaecological Oncology Group program Survivors Teaching Students and she chronicled her experience living with cancer on her blog and podcast Ovarshare, where she interviewed fellow survivors.

In 2019 Kristen was deservedly a Young Australian of the Year finalist, and one of my proudest days was working with Kristen and Elsa, alongside the member for Maribyrnong, the member for Ballarat and the member for Paterson here to secure $2.3 billion in a cancer plan as part of the ALP's election commitments in 2019. Kristen's compelling address to Parliament House in 2019 was instrumental in securing $20 million for ovarian cancer research and $15 million for clinical trials into gynaecological cancers, the highest ever amount of funding secured.

Unfortunately Kristen passed away on 9 December last year. Kristen did not believe that death meant losing the battle or the fight. Cancer did not beat Kristen. Kristen beat cancer by living an incredible life. So today I stand in this place to carry on Kristen's work and to honour her remarkable life. While Australia's overall cancer survival rates are the best in the world, only 46 out of every 100 women are still alive five years after being diagnosed with ovarian cancer. With no screening test to aid detection and prevention, most women remain unaware they have ovarian cancer until it is at an advanced stage, with too little hope for a cure. Currently the best way of detecting the disease is to know and recognise the signs and symptoms. But the symptoms can be hard to pin down and are often hidden by women's tendency to be stoic in the face of pain and discomfort or mistaken for feeling tired or for going through menopause.

I commend the government for their $35 million commitment to funding ovarian and gynaecological cancer research and clinical trials, but it isn't good enough that Australian women currently must wait until they notice the symptoms of ovarian cancer as the best method for detecting something so deadly. We need early detection, we need treatment and we need the cure. We need them as soon as possible, because, like I said, 46 per cent of Australian women affected can't afford to wait five more years.

Kristen also spoke frequently about the hidden costs of cancer that not many Australians fully understand until they are faced with them head-on. Medical expenses and regular bills like utilities, school fees and groceries aren't paused or forgotten just because you're diagnosed with cancer. While your world stops on its axis, the world around you continues to spin. In Kristin's case, she ran out of treatment options in the public sector and had to go private. Even between her insurance and subsidies, the out-of-pocket expenses were a huge burden. Kristin spoke about one of her friends who was also diagnosed with ovarian cancer. They had the same doctor and they needed the same drug, but it wasn't yet approved on the PBS. Kristin was able to qualify for the trial and participate for free, but her friend did not qualify and had to pay $6,000 every three weeks to participate. She eventually made the unimaginable decision to stop the trial because she couldn't afford it. She passed away.

I would like to finish by speaking about Kristen's sister, Elsa. When Kristin was diagnosed in 2013, Elsa put her career on hold without hesitation to become Kristin's caregiver and give her the best life possible. Kristin and Elsa were inseparable. Kristen and Elsa were magical. Now we must all follow in their wake. To Elsa: thank you for every minute that you gave. And to Kristen: you will be missed. Together you two achieved great things.

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

Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (11:06): I second the motion and I rise to speak on the member for Lilley's motion. With matters such as this we need bipartisan support. I'd like to note that February is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. Each year, over 1,500 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer. The devastating reality is that approximately 46 per cent of women will die from it within five years. With no early detection test, ovarian cancer is one of the deadliest female cancers. This is because symptoms are non-specific and are often ignored or misdiagnosed. It's so important that we educate women about the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer, which can include increased abdominal size or persistent abdominal bloating, pain, feeling full after eating a small amount, and needing to go to the loo frequently. As a young medical student, I was devastated to be close to someone who died from ovarian cancer. She didn't know that the symptoms of bloating were terminal. She didn't know that she was living with a time bomb. Unfortunately, many decades later, ovarian cancer remains a disease that's difficult to diagnose, difficult to detect. And we don't have good solutions.
That is why I was honoured to be asked to become an ambassador for Ovarian Cancer Australia along with the member for Paterson on the other side of the chamber and Senator Hanson-Young in the other place. To truly tackle diseases like ovarian cancer, we must have bipartisan support in government to make sure we are all striving for a common goal to reduce and eventually eradicate this terrible disease.

As we know, cancer has no rules. It doesn't always do what we want it to. The Ovarian Cancer Australia website is full of so many brave women who are willing to share their stories to help raise awareness. There are stories such as Michelle's. She tells us how she was diagnosed with stage 1C ovarian cancer at just 23. Katherine was just 22 when doctors found a cancerous tumour on her ovary. These women had symptoms that any of us could have.

Ovarian Cancer Australia is at the forefront of raising awareness and supporting those who've been affected by ovarian cancer and their families. Their vision to save lives and ensure no woman with cancer walks alone has been a huge support for hundreds of women. They work to ensure women living with ovarian cancer have a strong and united voice.

Over the last 15 years, we've seen a dramatic improvement in the survival rates of cervical cancer. Education about early detection and the wonderful cervical cancer vaccine that was discovered and developed here in Australia are things that we should all be proud of and have resulted in a significant drop in the rate of cervical cancer and a wonderful increase in survival rates. Now it's time to get those same results for ovarian cancer. And we are heading in the right direction. The Australian government has invested strongly in this area, announcing $20 million in grant funding specifically to look at the cause, diagnosis, treatment and, ultimately, a cure. This is on top of the $15 million dedicated for new clinical trials involving gynaecological cancers, including ovarian cancers. Scientists, researchers and doctors are ready. The science is ready to advance in this space, and the Morrison government is there, ready to invest, to give the scientists, to give the doctors and to give the medical researchers the opportunity to help patients not just here in Australia but around the world. Australia is already punching above its weight in medical research. We have some of the best research coming out of our universities, our centres for cooperative research and our hospitals, but we should be bold and brave and ready to help tackle the scourge of ovarian cancer head-on.

Ovarian Cancer Australia's advocacy work is to be commended. Teal Ribbon Day 2020 is in just a couple of days time on 26 February, and I encourage all in this chamber to pledge their support to raising awareness of ovarian cancer and its symptoms not just in the month of February but all year round. There's so much more that we can do, and ovarian cancer is one of those hidden, silent diseases. If you have symptoms, go see your doctor. Early detection is the only way forward.

Ms SWANSON (Paterson) (11:11): It's really a bittersweet feeling to stand here and talk about ovarian cancer today in Australia. Firstly, I'd like to thank very much the member for Lilley for raising this motion. Along with so many others, her advocacy on this important issue is something that I think we could all learn a lot from. It is just one of those things that not enough people know enough about. Ovarian cancer is the eighth most common cancer in Australia, yet it stills claims the lives of far too many women. More than half the 1,800 women diagnosed each year lose their life to this cancer—more than half. There is no reliable screening test to aid detection and prevention, but there are incredible advocates who are pushing for more research, technology and awareness.

Last year, I was approached by Jane Hill from Ovarian Cancer Australia, and I was delighted by the invitation to become an Ovarian Cancer Australia ambassador, along with Senator Hanson-Young and the member for Higgins, Katie Allen, who just spoke a moment ago. Ovarian Cancer Australia was founded by people directly affected by ovarian cancer who wanted to raise awareness of the disease and support those who had been affected. Over time, Ovarian Cancer Australia has built on its founders' aspirations to become a leading national body taking action for Australians impacted by ovarian cancer. As a proud member of this organisation, our vision is to save lives and ensure no woman with ovarian cancer walks alone.

Any life that is taken by ovarian cancer is, of course, one too many. That includes the life of a dear friend of mine, Jill Emberson. Jill lost her battle with cancer earlier this year. Jill and I had known each other since she first arrived in Newcastle over 10 years ago. She was a radio broadcaster and so was I. Whilst Newcastle is a thriving city, it's still a small town when it comes to the media market. I quickly became friends with Jill. We actually did one of the most rare things that neither of us thought we would ever do: we were asked to be in a 'women of the media' photoshoot in a very beautiful, glossy magazine. We laughed a lot that day, and realised just how out of our comfort zone we were. Jill and I just squealed every time they'd ask us to do something, and say: 'Don't you realise we're from radio and what we look like doesn't matter? It's just how we sound and what we say.' That was one of my fondest days with Jill; we had such a great day. She leaves behind two of the loves of her life: her darling daughter, Malia, and Dr Ken Lambert. She and Ken were only married fairly recently. She had to have
emergency neurosurgery, and in recovery from that surgery she proposed to Ken. She wasn't a big fan of marriage, but she realised that he had probably saved her life. He said, 'Look, we'll just talk about it when you come round a bit more, shall we, Jill?' But obviously he did say yes and they were married.

Jill did an amazing job of being an ambassador for ovarian cancer. One of the big things she was so passionate about was the fact that we know so much about breast cancer—there's been some extraordinary work done there—yet we know so little about ovarian cancer. She said, 'It's time we took, literally, a bottom-down look at this,' and Pink Meets Teal was born. Rather than compete against breast cancer, she wanted to say to the women of Australia, to the medical profession, to the researchers: 'Breast cancer has obviously been a terrific awareness campaign. Now we need the teal side—the ovaries—to be looked at as well.'

Jill has certainly left an incredible legacy: her podcast, Still Jill; the work that she did helping to raise awareness not only here in this building but also through things like Australian Story; and the fact that she had a voice in the media. Rather than just curl up and look after herself, as she was more than entitled to do, she kept a very public life going amidst incredible battles. She really spoke to people on such a deep and human level, and she was able to communicate that message. She spoke at the Press Club with such passion; I'll never forget that day. She wrote to the minister, Greg Hunt, on her deathbed, two days before she passed. She asked him to allocate $20 million annually, reoccurring every year, to ovarian cancer. She didn't receive a response, but I hope that it will come.

The most important thing is that we care for each other and look after each other. In this month of ovarian cancer awareness, I say: vale Jill, and please go to your doctor if you have any of the symptoms which are well known.

Ms HAMMOND (Curtin) (11:16): I thank the member for Lilley for raising this important motion and, more importantly, for putting ovarian cancer on the public record. I also acknowledge and thank other members for sharing personal stories about the impact of ovarian cancer. While I'm about to cite statistics—and we need statistics to inform policy expenditure—there is nothing like the human side; we must never forget the human side in any of these discussions. So I thank members for raising those human stories.

As previous members have outlined, every year over 1,500 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer and every year over 1,000 women die from the disease. It is estimated to be between the eighth- and tenth-most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australian women. It is the most lethal women's cancer and the sixth-most common cause of cancer death in Australia.

In Australia the overall five-year survival rate for women diagnosed with ovarian cancer is 46 per cent. That has to be compared with the five-year survival rate for cervical cancer, which is 72 per cent; for breast cancer, which is 91 per cent; and for prostate cancer, which is 95 per cent. While we celebrate the improvements we've made in those areas, we have got so much more to do when it comes to ovarian cancer. One thing is to start with early diagnosis. At this point in time, and as noted by the member for Lilley, there is no effective early detection screening test for ovarian cancer. Given the advances that we have made in other areas of health, and the talented medical researchers all over our country, the absence of an early detection test is not something we should accept. We need to invest in and support research that leads to improved diagnosis and treatment of ovarian cancer.

I'm pleased to note that the government is doing things in this space. Last year the government announced $35 million for ovarian and gynaecological cancer research through the Medical Research Future Fund. This includes $20 million for research grants, which will contribute to a greater understanding of the causes and underlying factors contributing to the development and progression of ovarian cancer. The government is doing this through subsidising medicines for ovarian cancer on the PBS and continuing to support improved access to medicines and treatments through the PBS and Medicare. The government has also provided $4.5 million to Ovarian Cancer Australia for patient support for the Traceback project and the ovarian cancer case management pilot. While I note all that the government is doing and commend the government on it, I would also urge the government to continue to prioritise investment in and expenditure on research to tackle ovarian cancer and to provide support for ovarian cancer sufferers and survivors. There is still so much more that needs to be done.

I would also add that there's a lot that we can do. One of the things we need to do, given that there is no early detection screening, is ensure that all women are aware of the risks, the signs and the symptoms so that they can seek help at the earliest possible time. To that end, I note that the risks include if you have family history of ovarian cancer or if you have family history of breast or colon cancer or if you have a mutation in one of several known genes. Other risks include increasing age, use of HRT, obesity, tobacco smoking and medical conditions such as endometriosis.

The symptoms, as noted by the member for Lilley, include abdominal or pelvic pain, increased abdominal size or persistent abdominal bloating, the need to urinate often or urgently and feeling full after eating only a small

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amount. As is evident from that list, and as was made clear by the member for Lilley, they are vague and non-
specific. I guarantee that most women in this country could say at various points in their life that they have
experienced all of those symptoms at some point. Women tend to put it down to something you just put up with. I
think the word 'stoic' was used. Given the lethality of this disease, any woman experiencing persistent symptoms
should get them checked out immediately.

My message to all women in my electorate of Curtin and across Australia is: if you are concerned or have any
suspicious symptoms, make an appointment with your local GP. Don't just suck it up and get on with things. My
message to all Australians is: get on board with Teal Ribbon Day and Ovarian Cancer Awareness Day more
generally to ensure that we continue to raise awareness in our communities, that we continue to support those who
are suffering, that it continues to be on the national agenda and that we raise vital funds for research.

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (11:21): I'm very pleased to speak on this motion on ovarian cancer today. I
thank the member for Lilley for bringing it forward, and the member for Paterson—all members, indeed,
including the government members, who've spoken on this bill and made contributions today. This is a
diabolically deadly cancer for Australian women, and it is going to take the will of all in this parliament to make a
change.

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and Teal Ribbon Day are, of course, great opportunities to raise awareness
and understanding of this terrible and, as I said, truly deadly disease and to fight for increased investment into the
research that we know is so desperately needed. Every day four Australian women are diagnosed with ovarian
cancer. Over a year, that's 1,500 women who will learn that they have this disease. While there have been some
incredible breakthroughs that have driven down the rates of other types of cancers, survival rates for ovarian
cancer remain distressingly low. Indeed, 1,000 Australian women will die each year from ovarian cancer, with
only 46 per cent of women surviving beyond five years. That is the lowest survival rate for any women's cancer.
Compare that to breast cancer, which has a five-year survival rate of more than 90 per cent now. That's the
benchmark we should be aiming for.

Part of the problem is that there's currently no early detection test—we've been hearing this in the debate this
morning—and the symptoms are often very similar to a lot of other conditions. As a result, women can wait for
many months for an accurate diagnosis, and often their disease has advanced significantly by that time. These
problems are compounded by difficulties in treatment. It's a complex disease with multiple manifestations and
characteristics. And, for those who do go into remission, the likelihood of that cancer recurring is high. But,
despite all this—despite the multiple lethal challenges and grave statistics—ovarian cancer receives less than a
quarter of the funding of other deadly cancers.

There is, however, a strong movement driven by some incredible champions of change who are fighting to turn
this around. One of those champions has been Jill Emberson. She was a very special advocate and a woman of
enormous strength from my home city of Newcastle. She was an ABC journalist and a community leader, who
was recently named the Newcastle Citizen of the Year. But Jill's life was tragically cut short by ovarian cancer last
December. After a four-year battle with ovarian cancer, she didn't make even her fifth year review period. But her
life touched the lives of so many people, and she has left an enormous legacy for us all. She was, of course, the
most precious of persons in my regard. She was a builder of communities. She knew how to find common ground,
how to highlight injustices and how to build alliances and coalitions, bringing people together from all walks of
life to commit to making our world a better place. For that we remain deeply indebted to Jill.

In her latter years, Jill took on a new role—that of an activist. She championed the call for fair funding for
ovarian cancer research. She became a regular visitor to this Australian parliament, knocking on doors and
presenting a powerful case for greater investment into research to better diagnose, prevent and treat the disease. I
recall vividly the very powerful address that she and Kristen Larsen made at an ovarian cancer breakfast here in
Parliament House just last February—less than 12 months ago. They pleaded for increased funding and additional
funds for research. That both these amazing women are now dead is both diabolical and a stark reminder to us all
of just how appalling the survival rate for this disease is. However, Jill's advocacy in Canberra—both in
Parliament House and at the National Press Club—bore results, including the one-off boost of $20 million for
ovarian cancer research which the Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, announced last year.

In her final days Jill wrote to the minister, thanking him for that money but making very clear that $4 million a
year over five years was never going to be enough to cut this. So I'm standing here, joining Jill's campaign that she
left for all of us—the Pink Meets Teal campaign that she kickstarted in Newcastle—and campaigning for what has
to be really fair and adequate funding. The cause has actually gone on in Newcastle: Jill said $20 million a year
and Pink Meets Teal says $50 million a year might go some way to making a difference.
Mrs ARCHER (Bass) (11:26): As we've heard, each year in Australia over 1,500 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Australia has made great progress towards improving cancer outcomes but there is still much work to do for ovarian cancer. The month of February is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, and in the lead-up to Teal Ribbon Day this Wednesday 26 February it is important for us to do what we can to help raise awareness of the disease, its symptoms and what the future looks like for the treatment of some 4,000 women living with ovarian cancer.

As we've heard, a significant challenge in the early detection of ovarian cancer is the fact that there is no early detection test available and that symptoms can be hard to spot. Some common symptoms are increased abdominal size or persistent abdominal bloating, abdominal or pelvic pain, feeling full after eating a small amount and needing to urinate often or urgently. Women often put any ailment down to being overworked and overtired, but I urge women, if these types of symptoms are persistent or if they think that something isn't right, to make an appointment to visit their GP, and always to seek a second opinion.

Currently, the five-year survival rate for women diagnosed with ovarian cancer is just 46 per cent. This is due in part to the lack of an early detection test and clear early symptoms, leading to a later diagnosis, when survival outcomes are poor. Research remains our best hope of defeating ovarian cancer and of developing more effective treatments that will prevent or control the condition. Since 2013 the government has invested over $43 million for ovarian cancer research through the National Health and Medical Research Council, and it's also committed to supporting life-saving medical research through the Medical Research Future Fund. Last year, the government also committed $1.6 million to Ovarian Cancer Australia for the Ovarian Cancer Case Management Pilot. This will trial the delivery of a psychosocial support case management model using telehealth to support ovarian cancer patients and their families, with a focus on women living in rural, regional and remote Australia.

In my own community, I asked my friend Caroline Brown if I could share her mother's story. Annette passed away recently after a prolonged battle with ovarian cancer, but not before doing what she could to raise money and awareness of the disease. Behind every number is a real person who means so much to those who know and love them, and I would like Caroline's own words to do the talking here.

My mum, Annette Bain was diagnosed in 2010 with stage 4 Ovarian Cancer after multiple trips to the doctor over six months to find out why she was unwell. Once she had her diagnosis there were surgeries to remove tumours and multiple rounds of chemotherapy and radiation treatments. Throughout her battles mum's unbelievable strength shone through and when she was feeling well enough, her mind turned to learning as much as she could about the disease, the ways she could educate other women and help raise funds to find a method of early detection and hopefully a cure. Ovarian Cancer is often called a silent killer due to the symptoms being so vague and once detected it is usually in later stages.

Mum was instrumental in holding multiple Afternoon Teal fundraising events during Ovarian Cancer Awareness month and encouraged me to take part in many Frocktober events, despite not being a great fan, at the time, of dresses. She encouraged awareness for the public in Launceston through numerous interviews with The Examiner and on local radio. She became one of the state ambassadors for Ovarian Cancer Australia and through this position spoke with many groups including Rotary & Soroptimists, as well as taking part in the Ovarian Cancer awareness events held at the Launceston Black Pepper store.

We have many to thank for giving us extra time with mum—the Holman Clinic at the LGH, Dr Penny Blomfield, Dr Jeremy Power and their teams. Finally, to the amazing palliative care team at the Melwood Unit, especially Dr Zhen Lim.

Mum fought her battle like she lived her life—quietly, courageously, with dignity and grace.

Caroline continues:

There are many women still battling this disease and sadly many more will be diagnosed. Thanks to ambassadors like Kristen Larsen, who lost her battle at 27; Jill Emberson, who lost her battle 4 years after being diagnosed and my mum, who lost her battle in December last year, more people are now aware of the disease, getting themselves checked if they have any symptoms and helping raise the much needed funds.

Dr FREELANDER (Macarthur) (11:31): I would like to congratulate the member for Lilley for bringing forward this motion on ovarian cancer to the House, and I would like also to congratulate the previous speakers on this motion. I'm speaking on this motion because, like many in Australia and around the world, my family has been affected by ovarian cancer. Indeed, we lost a very close friend to ovarian cancer in 2014. As has already been mentioned, ovarian cancer is a common cancer in women and the five-year survival rate is only 46 per cent—one of the worst for the common cancers. In most cases, ovarian cancer is diagnosed quite late, at which stage treatment is very difficult. This month is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and in two days time it will be Teal Ribbon Day. Any donation made to Ovarian Cancer Australia will be matched by their sponsors. It's an incredibly worthy cause, and I encourage all members of parliament to consider donating.

The average age of women when they are diagnosed with ovarian cancer is 64. It's mainly diagnosed in women over the age of 50, but I myself have cared for a child aged 13 who had ovarian cancer. Thankfully, she has done
very well. Ovarian cancer is described often as a silent cancer: the symptoms are vague and they often come on at the time of menopause or later. It is easy to ascribe the symptoms of ovarian cancer to menopause, so the diagnosis is often missed. As has already been mentioned, women are expected to be stoic, and often the symptoms are left for a long time before simple screening measures, such as a pelvic ultrasound, are undertaken, and the diagnosis is missed till late.

Every year about 1,600 Australian women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and approximately 1,000 women die from the disease. That is a really shocking statistic. There is no really early method of detection, and, as I've mentioned, many cases are diagnosed after the cancer has spread. Ovarian cancer in 2019 remained the sixth-most common cause of death from cancer amongst females. Unfortunately, there is no reliable screening test, but we do know that there are some risk factors—some of the BRCA genes are associated with increased risk of ovarian cancer, as are other things such as family history. There is no proven method of prevention, and that even includes removal of the ovaries.

The state of women's health in this nation is part of the issue. There has not been an overall, comprehensive look at women's health in Australia, and there's been a lack of investment in research for decades into aspects of women's health. I do congratulate the government on their $20 million package for research and management of ovarian cancer, but this is a drop in the ocean compared to what's required. There needs to be a comprehensive plan for the management of women's health, and in particular for ovarian cancer, going forward over the next 10 to 20 years.

In the last election Labor announced a $12 million funding increase to Ovarian Cancer Australia's national action plan, and that included creating a national ovarian cancer registry to track diagnosis and treatment and to help coordinate research. Clearly, much more needs to be done. The research pertaining to major breakthroughs in other areas of health is not seen in women's health, and that's something that we need to foster: overall research into women's health and in particular ovarian cancer. We need major changes in awareness, and, whilst I do acknowledge the government's funding, much more needs to be done. Whilst we have seen some improvements in survival rates of breast cancer, prostate cancer, cervical cancer and ovarian cancer, the statistics are stark and there's been very little improvement in the last 20 years. We need also to Support Ovarian Cancer Australia's National Action Plan for Ovarian Cancer Research. This is a groundbreaking national action plan that needs to be funded properly and we need much more awareness of ovarian cancer and funding for ovarian cancer research.

Mr BROADBENT (Monash) (11:36): I congratulate all the speakers, and I identify with what they've said. We've just heard reports directly from the doctor's mouth. He has actually dealt directly with these people. In 12 months time, 1,000 women will be dead because of this disease. We just heard the member for Macarthur say that there hasn't been an improvement in the last 15 years. You've heard all of the government's proposals outlined. You've heard it outlined that the current minister has put $20 million into further research. We thank him for that, and then we say, 'That's not enough.' Why is it that with ovarian and pancreatic cancer the moment we hear about it we throw up our hands? Well, obviously the health sector doesn't throw up their hands with any patient in Australia—not one. Everybody gets care. What an amazing country we're in where you immediately get care.

Isn't she beautiful? This is me last week at Sally's funeral. That's a photo of her as a young girl and another photo of her as a young girl on the back, with her devastated father and family. The marriage didn't work out, but she was an amazing person. She was absolutely incredible. She did her masters in environment in her later years and made a huge contribution. She did her work so quickly the public servants around her didn't like her very much, so she decided not to work for the Public Service anymore. She went out and worked for other areas. It was a story of a beautiful girl who died of ovarian cancer. This was the week that I was sitting there hearing this story and thinking, 'We must have worked out fairly quick that there was something wrong.' But it was said in one of the speeches—and the doctor said it then—that we don't actually expect Australian women to be stoic. They are. They are tough. People like my mum went for years with illnesses undetected and just put up with it, until they found out what it was. Women have been doing that in Australia since the tall ships arrived and, probably long before that, touching it out and doing the right thing—'There's nothing wrong with me.' Have you heard the line, 'Oh, there are a lot worse off than me around the place?' Have you heard that line? 'I don't need to go to the doctor.' They accuse men all the time of not looking after their health by going to the GP—true, true—but there are a lot of women who do the same thing because they are busy, because they are active, because they have grandchildren. That average age of 64 frightened me too because that is the age when people should be enjoying the best part of their lives. Sally was 54. She had the perfect opportunity. She looked after her mum; she was looking after her dad, who was over 90. She nursed her mum to death beautifully. She came home to look after them. There wasn't a problem with money—throw everything you like at it. Isn't she beautiful? Well, she's one of 1,000 this year and 1,000 next year and 1,000 the year after. We say to the government of the day, as a group of parliamentarians concerned about our response to ovarian cancer, 'There will be 3,000 people dead over the next...
three years due to this cancer.' If we had that in any other field, for heaven's sake, we would be saying, 'What are we going to do?'

You know, two months ago we were in here asking for more money for lung cancer. Not all lung cancer is connected to smoking. It can be connected to a whole lot of other things, which people have found out over time. Yes, we need to put more research into this. But, when we do that, we have got to remember they are real people with real lives, with real stories to tell and with real families who are broken-hearted. If we had the facilities and resources to have a real go at ovarian cancer, why shouldn't we be first in the world to come up with an early detection? Why shouldn't we be? Not why aren't we but why shouldn't we be the first in the world? If you want a nation that is looking forward, that can change the world not only for the rest of the world but for our women here, our families—our sisters and our daughters and our mums—we can do it. We just need the energy.

Mr CONROY (Shortland) (11:42): I rise to speak in support of this excellent motion by the member for Lilley. I associate myself with all of the fine remarks of everyone who has participated in this debate, especially the heart-felt contribution from the member for Monash. This motion recognises that we are coming up to Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. At the heart of this motion is acknowledgement that there is so much more that this country, the government, this parliament can do to support women who contract this disease. I hold an annual fundraiser for Ovarian Cancer Australia, and this year our morning tea was held last Friday at Belmont Golf Club. I am delighted to say that 150 people took the opportunity to join me for morning tea, where we enjoyed teacakes by Vicki Brogan, Country Women's Association scones baked by Vicky Lovegreen and Aisla Stewart, and a fashion parade by Belmont boutique Uproar.

An honourable member: You will need a bigger suit.

Mr CONROY: I will, indeed, by the number of scones I ate. We also heard from guest speaker Cath Adams, a psychologist who works with cancer patients at Hunter New England Health. We paid tribute to a wonderful woman who was a guest speaker at last year's event, former ABC journalist Jill Emberson, who was such a fierce advocate for this cause. She sadly lost her battle with this disease on 12 December last year. I knew Jill well. She would demand that I pause right now to remind everyone she only had one symptom—that was, constipation. Other speakers have spoken about the challenge of this disease, and Jill's passing started with only one symptom. I previously have told this House of Jill's dogged determination to make her final years count and she did—speaking at Parliament House, rebuking every single member of parliament, helping gain a $20 million commitment for ovarian cancer research and a further $15 million towards women's reproductive cancer trials. Of course, more is needed.

I was so happy that through our one event last week we raised $4,000 for Ovarian Cancer Australia. I would like to thank Andrew Robertson of The Good Guys Warner Bay for donating the major prize; Carolyn Bear for selling her jewellery, which has raised $200,000. I know Meryl has joined with to her. Thanks also to Belmont Golf Club, Murrays Meats, Cafe Macquarie and Islas Canarias Tapas Bar.

There is so much more work that needs to be done. We know that in Australia four women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer every day and, tragically, three women will die of the disease every day. It has the lowest survival rate of any women's cancer. We know that less than half of all women diagnosed with the cancer will still be alive five years later. We know that there is no reliable screening test to aid detection and prevention.

Great research on this disease is being done around the world and in Australia. I want to highlight the contribution that is being made in Newcastle through the Hunter Medical Research Institute. In fact, Jill Emberson chose the HMRI to be the beneficiary of money she raised in her name. The result is a PhD scholarship that will build on important research already occurring. That work is being done by Associate Professor Nikola Bowden, who was also a guest speaker last year's Morning Tea. I want to thank her and her great team of researchers and congratulate them on their commitment to this vital work.

What these and other researchers throughout Australia need is more money. While the federal government committed $20 million to ovarian cancer research, we all need to do more. I want to encourage all my constituents and others throughout Australia to make a contribution, however small, towards Ovarian Cancer Australia's goal of raising $500,000 this month. Paint the Town Teal events are being held throughout Australia. If an event raises just $55 it will provide one woman living with this disease with an Ovarian Cancer Australia resilience kit to help them live as long as possible.

In the past 30 years great leaps have been made in awareness, funding and survival rates of other cancers—in particular, breast cancer and prostate cancer. In comparison to the 46 per cent survival rate for ovarian cancer, the five-year survival rate for cervical cancer is now at 72 per cent, breast cancer is at 91 per cent and prostate cancer is at 95 per cent. That is phenomenally good news, but ovarian cancer continues to be the most challenging of female cancers. It takes away our mothers, our daughters, our wives and our sisters. It is not going away. More
funding is needed. Every dollar counts. I will always remember the passionate speech by Jill Emberson last year in which she challenged every single MP to do more. We must do more. I thank the member for Lilley for moving this motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird): The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Defence Industry

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this House:

(1) notes the important role Australian small business has in the future of our national and economic security through its integral role in our defence industry;

(2) recognises the defence industry's potential for growth in electoral divisions like Herbert and other regional electoral divisions across Australia;

(3) supports opportunities to maximise the participation of Australian companies in all facets of defence procurement; and

(4) acknowledges the Government's commitment to deliver a robust, resilient and internationally competitive Australian defence industry.

Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (11:47): Last week I held the latest in my series of Fisher Defence Industry Initiative events, a roundtable meeting with Air Chief Marshal Sir Angus Houston, AK, AFC, retired—try saying that too quickly! It was at the terrific Landmark Resort in Mooloolaba. Sir Angus spoke to a number of the businesses in my electorate who are taking the lead in our burgeoning local defence industry. He has an incredible depth and breadth of knowledge in this sector, and he was very generous in sharing his time with us. I am very grateful to him for giving us the benefit of his expertise.

One of the most striking insights which I took away from last week's meeting was just how far the sector in my community has come since my first Fisher Defence Industry Initiative forum in 2017. Thanks to some incredible hard work from entrepreneurs and academics on the Sunshine Coast, with the support of the coalition government's $200 billion defence industry capability investment, today our region is fast becoming a true defence industry hub.

At the meeting we had representatives of the University of the Sunshine Coast. The university began its work in defence modestly, with a contract for research on runway materials for the ADF. Today the university has a—

We also heard from David Baird of Praesidium Global. David's business is young but it has developed a unique unmanned ground vehicle which is already beginning to catch the eye of defence forces all over the world. Over the last three years, David has taken his business from its first exploratory contract with the ADF to a position as one of the world's up-and-coming innovators in this field. Not only are Praesidium now working with the ADF to develop Australia's approach to unmanned ground vehicles; they are well advanced in negotiations with defence forces in Europe, the Middle East and the Pacific to trial their products. Praesidium are even beginning to take their technology into civilian environments, creating potentially huge new markets which would bring a significant economic boost to our region and, of course, to Praesidium Global.

We heard from Don Pulver of Eniquest. Eniquest were our region's pioneers in defence, working on contracts for the military at home and overseas long before the Fisher defence industry initiative began. As they have for more than 10 years, Eniquest continue to quietly supply reliable, compact and lightweight electrical generators to the ADF for their Bushmaster vehicles as well as portable generators for a host of other military applications. Eniquest work for export partners all over the world, including the military of Singapore, and Don is already setting up to expand his work at home and overseas. Thanks for all your support, Don; you're a legend.

Finally, we heard from Will Shrapnel of HeliMods in Caloundra. Mr Deputy Speaker, if you want to keep up with everything HeliMods are doing, you can't take your eye off them for even a day. In the weeks since I announced $150,000 in Morrison government funding for a new vertical machining centre for the company, they have already had to move the machine into a new extension to their Caloundra aerodrome facility. In just three
years, thanks to more than a million dollars in federal government funding and Will's truly tireless work, Heli Mods have gone from their first defence contract to engaging with primes all over the world and working to improve the way the ADF look at their entire helicopter capability.

The defence industry in Fisher is going from strength to strength. It is already creating dozens of jobs for the future for locals in high-tech manufacturing and engineering. I commend our region's entrepreneurs for all their hard work. However, without this coalition government's dedication to a robust, resilient and internationally competitive Australian defence industry, none of this would have been possible. I congratulate the government on its foresight.

**Mrs PHILLIPS** (Gilmore) (11:52): I am proud to rise today to talk about the crucial role that local small business plays in supporting and working with defence. Our defence family on the New South Wales South Coast is an important part of our community. They are there for us in our times of need, lending a helping hand and working with us to make sure the community is safe and protected. There has been no better example of this than in the terrible summer we have just endured. I want to talk briefly about the great work of the ADF over the last few months before I get to small business.

This year my electorate, on the New South Wales South Coast, has endured a summer like never before. The devastating bushfires that raged for months have wreaked havoc on our community, causing so much destruction. But there was always a source of comfort to us: the familiar sound of local Navy helicopters and aircraft flying overhead. HMAS *Albatross* and HMAS *Creswell* played a crucial role during the fires. HMAS *Albatross* was a base of operations for a fleet of fixed-wing water bombers and observation platforms, with the Airfield Coordination Centre providing 24-hour air services support to visiting RFS firefighting aircraft and crews. The Naval Air Station Weather and Oceanography Centre also provided detailed daily meteorological and oceanographic forecast support for RFS air operations. It was very important work in difficult conditions.

Defence industry and the Royal Australian Navy worked together to support firefighting efforts on the North Coast, South Coast and beyond over many months. This was crucial to the firefighting efforts, and our community is eternally grateful. I again take the opportunity to thank each and every member of our defence family for all they have done. It has meant so much.

A couple of weeks ago I got to experience one of my favourite exhibits at the Nowra show: the defence industry tent. On display were some of the best examples of how local small business can work with and support our defence teams. Global Defence Solutions had their amazing range of deployable catering equipment on display as well as their expandable hard and soft shelters. Normally at the show this tent is used as a bit of relief from the searing heat—GDS also display their field air conditioners and generators—but this year the tent provided a different sort of relief: relief from the pouring rain. GDS are a Nowra based, family owned company that have been building and supplying mobile field shelters for the ADF for more than 20 years. These deployable shelters can be used as hospitals, kitchens, operation centres and accommodation, but the best part is that GDS live and work in Nowra and support the Shoalhaven community.

Air Affairs Australia is another local Nowra business based in Albatross Aviation Technology Park. Air Affairs has been providing specialist airborne and engineering services to defence, government and multinational companies around the world for 25 years. It was fascinating to hear how these two local companies are creating job opportunities, training local people and supporting Defence, all on the South Coast. My electorate has the highest unemployment rate in New South Wales, and there are so many opportunities available when government, defence and small business work together. Tactical surveillance products are becoming more and more important as time goes by. During the bushfires, Air Affairs’ Firescan was put to great use, mapping the fireground and providing important imagery in very difficult conditions. This was logistically critical in supporting our firefighting crews on the ground, and again I thank them for this great work.

There is really no better place for small business to integrate with defence than the New South Wales South Coast. Being close to HMAS *Albatross* and HMAS *Creswell* is just one reason. The Shoalhaven Defence Industry Group is working to encourage businesses to start their defence journeys on our beautiful coast. Albatross Aviation Technology Park has been designed specifically to support defence and aviation industries, boosting local aviation, defence support and advanced manufacturing industries, creating and supporting local jobs.

The possibilities for small business and defence partnerships in my electorate are endless, and we need to make sure that we are taking advantage of these opportunities. The recent bushfires have had a tremendous impact. We have a long road to recovery, but I am excited to see the possibilities that defence and small business can achieve when they work together.

**Mrs McINTOSH** (Lindsay) (11:57): The Minister for Defence Industry and I are both committed to supporting the local defence industry in Western Sydney. I know that, by creating jobs in defence, we're not only...
building our economy but building the capacity of our Defence Force and keeping us all safe. Last year in Orchard Hills I was proud to represent the minister in announcing $95 million in investment into the delivery of the Naval Guided Weapons Maintenance Facilities Project. This new facility will enhance maintenance components for the Navy's guided weapon systems, which will directly support the operations of the Australian Defence Force. This includes working accommodation for 30 personnel, seat and dispatch areas, a maintenance workshop and specialised electronic testing facilities. I was taken on a tour of these facilities and I am very proud of the hard work our defence industry does in our local area. It is important work that keeps all Australians safe.

Western Sydney will be at the forefront of defence technology and advanced manufacturing through investment in sensing technology for satellite based sensing systems at Western Sydney University. This is another project unlocking opportunities for our community. At home we will be driving technology that will be used across the country by our Australian Defence Force. Watpac, a national construction company, has committed to sourcing 95 per cent of its subcontract work from local industry at the Orchard Hills facility. Local jobs are so important to me and my community, and this is a win for Western Sydney jobs.

We're not only seeing this investment in areas like Lindsay; Australia's growing defence industry will deliver multiple projects across the country. The offshore patrol vessel project is worth up to $4 billion. The OPV plays an integral role in Operation Sovereign Borders and our ongoing commitment to keeping our borders safe and secure for all Australians. We are also supporting Australian steel manufacturers and shipyards creating jobs right here in Australia.

Families and small businesses across the country are benefitting from the record investment by the Morrison government into our defence industry. Currently, there are over 30,000 Australians employed in our defence industry and nearly 3,500 local, small and family businesses that are contributing to keeping us safe and secure in creating new jobs.

The Army's Land 400 project will create 1,450 jobs throughout Australia, and many communities will be benefiting across our country. Over 211 combat reconnaissance vehicles for the Australian Defence Force will be purchased to keep our Defence personnel safe. We are also taking advantage of the opportunities in global supply chains for the Joint Strike Fighter program. There are over 50 companies in Australia, employing over 2,400 people involved in this program, worth $1.3 billion in production contracts. This ensures our major Defence projects are prioritising Australian businesses. Over time, this will increase to over $2 billion and 5,000 jobs in Australia by 2023. We need to continue to support the 3,500 small businesses contributing to our defence industry, including in my electorate of Lindsay, so they can maximise the opportunities created from our $200 billion investment in Australia's defence capability.

Our Local Industry Capability Plan provides greater opportunities for our local tradies, small businesses and suppliers to secure work for Defence infrastructure projects. In the last 12 months, over 900 subcontractors have worked on projects, contributing over $1.7 billion into communities across Australia. This is expected to increase, which is fantastic news for our local businesses and our Australian economy. We're also ensuring small businesses can access grants through the Centre for Defence Industry Capability, with over 98 grants, worth $3.4 million, awarded to small and medium Australian businesses so far.

With the Morrison government's leadership, the Australian Defence Force has certainty. We're investing $200 billion in our defence capability, and we're delivering the largest regeneration of the Navy since the Second World War, with a $90 billion plan for 57 new vessels. By backing Australian businesses we'll ensure that we have the capacity to keep us safe. And we know that, when we invest in Defence infrastructure projects, it directly benefits our local communities. In Lindsay, we know that that will create even more jobs.

**Mr DICK** (Oxley) (12:02): I want to thank the member for Herbert for putting forward this motion so that members from both sides of the House have an opportunity to place on record our support for our Defence Force industries and small business in this country. I note the contributions from the member for Gilmore and, following me today, the member for Macquarie, who are both committed to ensuring that our defence capabilities continue to grow and that they are connected to small businesses right across this country. While we may not agree on most things with the government, you can be assured that, when it comes to supporting our Defence Forces and small businesses, both sides of the chamber are fully committed to ensuring both thrive.

I wanted to speak on this motion particularly today for a number of reasons. The first is that I come from a military family myself; my father served in World War II as a signalman aboard the HMAS *Ararat* in New Guinea. Whilst my dad didn't speak too often about his experiences in the Navy for many years after completing his services, in later years he told our family more and more about what his role had been and what he had seen, and that made me appreciate even more the great sacrifices our Defence Forces men and women make to serve our country, protect our values and keep us safe. I know from participating in the Australian parliamentary ADF
program and from visiting our troops in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other places just how important it is that this parliament recognises and continues to support our Defence Forces and the industry underpinning it.

We know that there is a tremendous amount of hard work and perseverance in making a small business a success. In my electorate—and there are 10,386 small businesses throughout the local Oxley community—many have strong links to the Defence Force. RAAF Base Amberley is on our doorstep in the electorate of Blair, and there's a whole range of Defence Force industries which are just starting to pick up the pace in the south-west of Brisbane. I've witnessed this firsthand when I've visited industrial workplaces throughout the local community, some of which have been supplying products and support to our defence forces for decades, and some of which are new to the field and are providing state-of-the-art technological advances so that our troops are some of the safest in the world.

I want to highlight to the chamber today that some of these small businesses are also part of important supply chains to larger defence companies, include Boeing Defence Australia, with the capability of improving small-business connectivity in the south-west of Brisbane. I recently had the opportunity to tour Boeing Defence Australia's new facility in Redbank, at their official opening, with the shadow minister for defence and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Richard Marles. This facility now plays an instrumental role in delivering Project Currawong, the Integrated - Battlefield Telecommunications Network, to the Army and Air Force. As part of this, Boeing will engage some 200 Australian businesses, many of which are Queensland based, for the production and supply of components and parts.

There is another project I want to highlight to the House. I'm a strong supporter of it and I know our local small business community continues to look forward to delivering it. Rheinmetall Defence Australia recently established its Australia-New Zealand headquarters and Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence, also in Redbank, in the electorate of Oxley. Rheinmetall was the successful tenderer for the Australian government's Land 400 phase 2 contract, which will deliver a program of continuous design, build and support for up to 5,000 military vehicles throughout Australia and the Asia-Pacific.

I commend the Queensland Palaszczuk government for its vision of a 10,000-person strong, $7 billion defence industry sector by 2028, driven by a newly released plan which underpins $15 million in industry development programs, led by the Premier and the minister for state development, the Hon. Cameron Dick. This plan, with a range of initiatives, could see the creation of 3½ thousand new jobs on top of the more than 6½ thousand people who are already employed in the defence force sector in Queensland. Our state is home to 27 per cent of Australian Defence Force personnel, with 14 significant defence facilities. These figures show the importance of the industry for our Queensland economy.

Finally I want to thank our dedicated men and women in the defence forces, who are the best in the world at what they do. I look forward to playing a constructive role in ensuring our small-business sector continues to support them.

Dr McVEIGH (Groom) (12:07): I join with other members of the House in supporting this motion moved by the member for Herbert in relation to the importance of small business and its integral role in our defence industry right across the nation. Those of us from regional Australia, particularly, recognise the industry's potential for significant growth across regional Australia and applaud efforts to maximise the participation of Australian small business, in particular, in defence industry procurement and other activities as our defence plan is rolled out across the country. It's all about ensuring that we have a robust, resilient and of course internationally competitive Australian defence industry.

I'm thrilled that these efforts are underpinned by the government's 10-year Defence Industry Capability Plan that is rolling out across the country. In building a strong and sustainable Australian defence industry, the government recognises the need for local businesses, particularly small businesses, to have an opportunity to be involved in all aspects of defence activities across the nation. That means construction, project management, capital equipment acquisition and, most definitely, sustainment of such equipment. I'm thrilled that our tenders require that these projects demonstrate how they will maximise Australian industry capability and involvement in such projects over their lifetime.

Like so many others in this House, I celebrate the fact that I enjoy the company of defence bases in my electorate. Swartz Barracks at Oakey, in Groom electorate, is home to the Army Aviation Centre, which accommodates primarily Army pilot and aircrew training activities. Logistic support functions for the Black Hawk and Kiowa helicopters have been a big part of the history at Oakey as well. We also acknowledge the presence of a Republic of Singapore Air Force helicopter squadron. My wife, Anita, and I are very much looking forward to attending, this Friday night, the Rotary Wing Aircraft Maintenance School dine-in night at the Australian Army Flying Museum. We will talk about their activities, no doubt, and what they mean to the local Oakey community.
The case is the same for Borneo Barracks at Cabarlah, which has the Army's deployable electronic warfare unit and its electronic warfare operator training unit. It's just north of Toowoomba. Significant capital works continue at both these bases. Earlier last week I spent a day at the Army Aviation Centre at Oakey, as I mentioned, looking at significant airfield capital upgrades—pavement maintenance and aeronautical ground lighting. The Joint Health Command improvements will commence very soon for the new health centre at Oakey. And, of course, there is the Air Traffic Control Complex Infrastructure Project, which is being replicated across the country.

Our local business community recognises the potential for further engagement and further business development in and around the activities at both Oakey and Cabarlah. That's what the government's Defence Industrial Capability Plan is all about. I particularly acknowledge the efforts of one of our local chambers of commerce, the Highfields and District Business Connections group, which has led the charge. I acknowledge that they have a town centre, a greenfields development opportunity, that could certainly house jobs of the future. They predict, over the next 20 years, in collaboration with defence industry development, potentially some 20,000-plus jobs. That's in coordination with the Wellcamp Business Park, which houses our fantastic and international-capable airport. And, of course, there's the FKG Technology Park just west of Toowoomba, which includes Australia's first tier III Uptime-certified regional data centre. So we have the smarts and we can build the 21st-century jobs around this in our region.

USQ, the University of Southern Queensland, led in this respect by the Executive Director of the Queensland Institute for Advanced Engineering and Space Sciences, Peter Schubel, is also getting on board with defence industry development—in this case, research around fibre composites and other materials that can be used in defence equipment going forward. Interestingly, that will have a space industry application as well.

So we're seeing government working with the small-business sector, certainly with the education sector and, most particularly, with our community to realise defence industry development potential.

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (12:12): I am very pleased to support this motion from the member for Herbert looking at the importance of defence industries for small business, particularly in my electorate of Macquarie.

The recent bushfire crisis has more than demonstrated how pivotal RAAF Base Richmond is for emergency operations in our area and up the eastern seaboard. The New South Wales Rural Fire Service has permanently based a large aerial tanker and spotter aircraft at the base. Coulson Aviation Australia, which is an American company, is one of the suppliers of equipment, aircraft technology and logistics to the RFS. There is now a 10-year deal to provide flight and maintenance personnel for a Boeing 737 Fireliner and two lead-and-intelligence aircraft based at Richmond.

Members would be aware that the Coulson Aviation crew which died, tragically, on 23 January while helping to fight the fires had flown out of our RAAF Base Richmond. On 30 January, the base hosted an emotional farewell for the three personnel, Captain Ian McBeth, First Officer Paul Clyde Hudson and Flight Engineer Rick A DeMorgan Jr. Yesterday, of course, they were fittingly honoured at the memorial service in Sydney, along with the 22 others who lost their lives in the New South Wales fires.

The establishment of the RFS aerial firefighting resources at Richmond is really good for our community and complements the existing defence industry that takes place there. It is the perfect place for these industries to be, and we'd like to see them expanded because our local economy in the Hawkesbury—and, to a lesser extent, the economy that feeds off RAAF Base Glenbrook—has a really heavy dependence on this RAAF base and all the associated operations, including the RFS operations.

In the Hawkesbury, the RAAF base employs just under 10 per cent of people in the whole local government area. The Richmond base has been an integral part of the Hawkesbury community for more than a century. Richmond RAAF was the first base to be established in New South Wales, and as early as 1916 a school of aviation was operating on that site on Ham Common to train aviators for military flying. That became the Richmond aerodrome when it was taken over by the federal government in 1923, with the first squadron being formed in 1925. So we have a very long and proud history in the area with the RAAF and now the Army on the site.

According to data from Regional Development Australia, defence is by far the largest employment sector inside the base, with about 1,500 people, but other significant sectors include aircraft manufacturing and repair services, with more than 350 jobs, and there are other automotive repair and maintenance and engineering design and consulting services, which employ dozens of people. The presence of the private sector means there are more high-skilled jobs for a whole lot of people from aircraft maintenance engineers and computer technicians through to support services. It means more people are likely to live and work in our region, and that also has a vital flow on to our local economy We value that. This defence industry component is really crucial.
Labor has always been committed to ensuring local economic outcomes are a key objective of defence procurement. We want to see greater engagement by local small businesses in the defence industries and as suppliers to the Defence Force, we want to see Australian manufacturing businesses in the defence industry supply chain, we want to see Australian technologies, and we want to see Australian workers working for Australian companies. I like the principle of Australian self-reliance, a self-sustaining Australian defence industry which allows us to maintain and sustain the ADF and all of its equipment without reliance on outside sources. It allows us to build technological capability and workforce skills and has really positive consequences for other industries and innovation. Defence innovation has led to so many things like the internet, drones, weather radar, microwave ovens, digital cameras and the EpiPen. We'd like to see more of that happening in the Hawkesbury. I want to see this engagement with businesses in my region. The defence industry at Richmond is long term, but of course there is the threat that the all new and shiny aerotropolis which is planned next to Western Sydney Airport at Badgers Creek will tempt these industries away from Richmond. I'm very pleased to work with Hawkesbury council, our chamber of commerce and Western Sydney University to make sure we have a thriving industry, and whatever incentives are being given to businesses to establish near the new airport should also apply to Richmond. It is one of the best things the government could do for our regional economy.

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (12:17): I rise in the chamber today to speak in support of the Morrison government's commitment to building a strong and sustainable defence industry and ensuring Australian small businesses play an integral role in the future of our national and economic security. With a $200 billion investment in Australia's defence capability, we need to emphasise and encourage the involvement of Australian defence industry businesses to help create jobs for working Australians and boost the local economy in electorates like Bonner in South-East Queensland.

Currently, around 3,500 local Australian businesses are working to keep Australians safe and are creating new jobs through defence industry investment. In my electorate of Bonner, such investment is having a significant impact on local jobs, with total defence contributions surpassing $16 million. It's not only the manufacturing and construction industries that are benefiting from this spend but exciting new technological advancements, which are changing the way we look at keeping our country safe.

Late last year I visited a local business in my electorate called Skyborne Technologies, which had received a grant for defence industry capability. Skyborne Technologies used that grant to develop Cerberus, a lightweight multishot grenade launcher designed for use on drones and remote vehicles. This local business uses a combination of artificial intelligence and lightweight weaponised drone engineering to develop this device with capabilities for pinpoint precision strikes that drastically reduce collateral damage. This device provides air-force-level support and closes the margin of error to help defence drone operators make accurate decisions under pressure in the line of duty.

Another business in Bonner creating jobs and supporting defence industry is Teledyne Technologies. Thanks to a science and technology defence grant, this local business has developed vehicle mounted systems to combat improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, to help keep our defence personnel safe. At the moment the only way to detect these explosives requires soldiers to scan the environment on foot, which is very dangerous. Once finalised, this new device will attach to military vehicles to detect roadside IEDs using cutting-edge technology. This is a tremendous achievement and I'm so proud to share with the Chamber how local businesses in Bonner are developing new technologies to better protect our troops, who put their lives on the line for our country.

There are a number of other businesses in Bonner that have received defence industry grants to assist in the construction and management of services and the manufacturing of sophisticated radar and electronic warfare systems, as well as other military equipment. I've always encouraged businesses in my electorate to seek out these defence grants to help keep our country safe while also creating more jobs in the region. Next month we have the Land 400 phase 3, mounted close combat capability, roadshow in Brisbane, for local industry to pitch its capabilities to tenders to construct the Land 400 armoured vehicles. It is yet another exciting opportunity for local manufacturing and technology based businesses to get involved and to benefit from the Morrison government's investment in our defence industry.

The Morrison government's message to small businesses is that the Australian defence industry is clear: we need to support you. I'm very pleased to say that we have and we will continue to support these small businesses.

Dr HAINES (Indi) (12:21): I commend the member for Herbert on his motion on small business and the defence sector, and I rise to highlight the major role and growth potential of the defence sector in my electorate of Indi. Firstly, I'll talk about Indi's small and medium-sized businesses and the role they play in supporting the defence industry and the local economy. Secondly, I'll speak to some concerns from those very businesses that measures intended to support Australian companies in defence procurement are not transparent enough and that
this lack of transparency is leading to wasted time on bids, preventing businesses from being as efficient as they could be.

So what's at stake here? The Hume region, of which Indi makes up a significant part, is host to the largest Australian Defence Force presence in Victoria. In my electorate the Albury Wodonga Military Area consists of five sites and hosts the Joint Logistics Unit (Victoria) and the Army Logistic Training Centre. Therefore, many prominent defence industry businesses conduct major operations in the area. A recently released report, commissioned by the Hume Regional Development Australia Committee, quantified the current value, challenges and projected growth of the defence sector in the Hume region. This report found that the defence sector and relevant industries provided 5,600 jobs and $185 million per annum in spending for the Hume region. This spend is expected to increase to $266 million by 2021—an $81 million increase.

In the Hume region, prime contractors, vendors or original equipment manufacturers whose main business is defence contribute more than 1,300 jobs and $52 million in spending to the economy. Notable businesses include Thales Australia—who operate Australian Munitions in Benalla—BAE Systems, Hide-Away Safe Securities, Milspec Manufacturing and Scientific Management Associates. Another key group are contractors, service providers and vendors who conduct substantial business with Defence. This includes businesses such as Australian Textile Mills and Red Baron ALSE. This potential growth of $81 million for defence and industry showcases the economic and industrial potential of the Hume region. It's so important to us. However, this growth will be highly dependent on government effectively maximising the participation of Australian companies in defence procurement.

In December last year, as part of a quarterly meeting of the Hume region defence sector roundtable, I visited Milspec Manufacturing in Albury. Milspec specialises in electrical subsystems for defence and industry, with clients including Thales, BAE Systems, Rheinmetall, Boeing, V/Line and Metro Trains. They employ 75 people, including tradespersons, apprentices and engineers, and have a turnover of between $10 million and $20 million per year. They're located in Albury, but half of their employees come from the Victorian side of the border in my electorate. Wherever possible, they buy materials from local suppliers, putting an estimated $10 million into the local economy. On this site visit, Milspec spoke to me of their concerns regarding the Australian Industry Capability Program. Milspec told me this program is not transparent enough, depriving them of the ability to realistically plan their future business. The AIC program requires businesses bidding for defence contracts to describe how their proposed supply chain will enhance Australian defence industry capability.

Milspec are not alone in these concerns—that the AIC program lacks sufficient transparency for the Australian industry. During the last parliamentary sitting week, Minister Price herself launched a new defence business advocacy group, Industry Voice. Industry Voice have around 30 members, and they're calling for a measurable and enforceable AIC policy to ensure Australian businesses have the best chance to secure defence contracts. Industry Voice members, such as Milspec, are concerned that the current program leaves smaller Australian suppliers with little to no certainty when preparing bids. For example, Milspec prepared a bid with another Australian company for an element of a large defence company's project for 18 months. It involved trips overseas and intense research and development, but, at the last minute, they were told this element of the project was now closed to Australian bidding. This was because the Australian component required by the plan had already been met in the time it took Milspec to prepare their bid. There was no realistic way for Milspec to see that coming, and clearly this is not a level playing field.

There's great growth potential in Indi for businesses involved in defence, and the predicted $81 million in growth for my region is vital as it will underpin not only the defence industry but the wider local economy. But we need a level playing field.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird): The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Chile: Human Rights

Mr KHALIL (Wills) (12:27): I 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.

I rise today to speak in solidarity with so many Chilean Australians in moving a motion on this issue. The instability that has been occurring in Chile since October last year, initially over a rise in metro fares, has since spiralled out of control over the decision to call in riot police and the national army in response. As independent observers, we've seen violent and repressive responses to peaceful protests by Chileans standing up for something as basic as public transport fares, standing up for the right for all Chileans to fair wages, standing up for the right to a pension, standing up for the right to make basic cost of living, standing up for the fundamentally fair and more equal distribution of their nation's economic wealth.

Since I was first elected in 2016 as the member for Wills, I've spoken in this place in support of many fundamental rights—human rights and democratic freedoms—for many different peoples across the globe, whether it be the Rohingyas, the Kurds, the Somalis, the Uyghurs more recently and the Bahais. It was heartbreaking to hear the distressing accounts of police crackdowns on protesters in Chile, many of whom have family and friends here in Australia, who've relayed their concerns to me. These protesters are on the streets because it costs a third of their wage to catch a bus, and wages aren't going anywhere. It's not right in a wealthy country like Chile that the government would turn to a violent response to peaceful protest. It is a fundamental right to have peaceful protest, and that should never be violated by a violent response. We need to call that out, and that's why I decided to move this motion.

I know that, for many Chilean Australians and many Chileans, what's happening in Chile right now must be a very terrifying reminder of the violence that they themselves or their parents and grandparents fled from during the Pinochet regime. I'm here in solidarity with them. In the past, former Labor governments—under Prime Minister Gough Whitlam through to Prime Minister Hawke—have supported refugees who fled the Pinochet and other regimes in Latin America throughout the 1970s and 1980s. We're here in parliament to say we support our Chilean Australian brothers and sisters. And I'm here to say we'll speak for them in solidarity with them. As a democracy and country that values human rights, and as a Labor Party that fights for those rights, we have a responsibility, as good international citizens, to speak out against violent actions, to hold governments to account and to play a positive role on the global stage. If we don't, who will?

If you look at the situation in Chile, the protesters have every right to go out there and speak their minds about the injustice they're facing. One per cent of Chileans who are the richest have 33 per cent of the wealth. We recognise with concern that this peaceful protest, driven by the rise in economic inequality, is being met with ongoing violence and political repression. This is a country that has had steady economic growth of something like five per cent, on average, for two decades. But most of that wealth hasn't gone down to the people. It hasn't been distributed fairly at all. It has been concentrated amongst the one per cent, the wealthiest.

We are here to condemn the fact that peaceful protesters in Chile are being subject to detention, persecution, torture and killings. We emphasise the importance of peaceful protest in any democracy around the world and condemn those actions by the government in using violence and aggression to repress the right of Chilean citizens to express themselves through freedom of association and freedom of their own speech. I ask as well that the Australian government call on the Chilean government to include all parties, including civil society, unions, Indigenous peoples and business leaders, in the process which is being undertaken for the new constitution. I encourage the work of the Chilean National Human Rights Institute and of authorities investigating human rights abuses and holding those responsible to account.

The many Australian companies that do business in Chile—there are over 100—have a role to play as well. They should be held to account and should play a part in the solution for the future of Chile. It's also very important that we remain resilient and strong for our brothers and sisters who remain in Chile and that we stand in solidarity with Chilean Australians.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird): I thank the member. Is the motion seconded?

Mr HILL (Bruce) (12:32): I second the motion. I thank the member for Wills for bringing this motion to the House. I have a friend. Let's call him Jose. He's Australian Chilean. I had a beer with him in January to catch up. We ended up talking for ages about the situation in Chile. I'd heard of some unrest—you know, you read the papers—but I hadn't really focused on it or thought much about it. I thought it might be some ratbag protesters or a political issue. The headline was about protesting against a rise of, I think, 30 pesos, which is four cents, in the public transport fees in Santiago. Jose said, 'Yes, in a narrow sense it started as that.' But he explained to me that it's much deeper than one issue or just one city and that these protests have now spread like wildfire across the whole country. The Australian Chilean community, many of whom I've now spoken to, believe that it will not

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stop until the people force major systemic change upon Chile, that the unrest will spread across Latin America and that there are lessons for the rest of the world that we must heed.

Jose explained to me that, in many key respects, the neoliberal system began in Chile under the brutal, murderous Pinochet dictatorship in the 1970s. I didn't know this history. It is a history of privileging private interests and extreme wealth over welfare and the common good of people, and they embedded it in the constitution of Chile. It's a system which has, since then, unduly constrained democratically elected progressive governments from implementing real reform. They actually can't do it, because they're hemmed in by the constitution that protects vested interests. This has led to massive, entrenched inequality, which has become a cancer on the whole society and now threatens the political stability of a country that has been largely stable for decades, since the military dictatorship fell.

It's funny, of course, that there are no members of the government, no Libs, who want to come up and talk about inequality and what it does to a country when it gets out of control. But it is a paradox for those who watch the economic statistics. It's confusing because, to much of the global community, Chile, with it's economic orthodoxy, is the poster child of Latin America. It has the highest growth rate in Latin America. It's the country that has joined the OECD. It's now a developed country, and you think, 'That's okay.' They've implemented decades of market based reforms and privatisations. It has the highest GDP per capita in Latin America. So, on paper, Chile is the miracle child of Latin America and is the country that everyone is supposed to aspire to: 'Be like Chile. Look at what they've done.' It's evidence of what's possible, apparently. To numerous visitors to Santiago the place looks prosperous—First World modern.

I am embarrassed to say I was one of those people in 2015, when I went there on a work trip in my previous role. I was in Santiago for a week, with universities and TAFEs, building education and research partnerships. I stayed in a lovely hotel and went jogging in the mornings, and it looked great. But I realise now that I never crossed Italy Plaza. I never ventured to the other Santiago, where most people live, where there are slums and shanty towns, where people are barely able to exist. For millions of Chileans the entire system is rigged and has been rigged for decades. Despite the headline growth statistics, they don't see the benefits of this rise in national income and wealth. The reason for this is the profoundly entrenched and unsustainable inequality. Chile is one of the most unequal countries in Latin America. I want to read into Hansard three paragraphs from a recent New York Times editorial:

The distribution of income before taxes is highly unequal throughout the developed world; by that measure, Chile sits roughly in the middle of the 36 developed democracies that constitute the membership of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. What makes Chile an outlier among those 36 nations is that the government does less than nearly any other developed nation to reduce economic inequality through taxes and transfers. As a result, Chile has the highest level of post-tax income inequality among O.E.C.D. members.

... ... ...

Chile is not suffering from a lack of resources but instead from an unsustainably narrow conception of its obligations to its citizens. The military dictatorship that ruled the country from 1973 to 1990 rewrote the nation's laws and economic policies and reshaped its institutions to encourage free-market competition and to minimize the role of government. Its legacy endures. Even after increases in recent years, the Chilean government still spends a smaller share of total economic output than every other nation in the O.E.C.D.

Correlation is, of course, not causation, but no-one can believe it is a coincidence that, in the most unequal country in the OECD, the world has witnessed an outbreak of civil unrest. There are lessons from that for Latin American countries, but also for other developed nations that, as inequality rises and gets out of control, this is what can happen. Governance will break down and civil unrest will emerge.

I hope that things are resolved. I hope that the constitution imposed by the military dictatorship is rewritten from scratch by the people, and that ordinary people can peacefully take back their country from the oligarchs without even more serious violent unrest. I stand with the Australian Chileans in wishing that for their country.

Debate adjourned.

**Vocational Education and Training**

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this House:

(1) notes the:

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

(b) strong commitment of the Government to reform the vocational education and training sector to better meet the demands of the modern Australian economy; and
(c) leadership of the Government in November 2018 to commission the Joyce Review, a comprehensive expert review of the Australian vocational education and training system which was delivered in March 2019; and
(2) welcomes the implementation of the Skills Package, a $525 million suite of measures that includes:
   (a) a National Careers Institute and the appointment of a National Careers Ambassador;
   (b) the Foundation Skills for Your Future program—an initiative which will support workers by improving literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy;
   (c) a streamlined Incentives for Australian Apprenticeships program, which will encourage employers to take on apprentices and trainees;
   (d) additional incentives to both employers and apprentices in areas affected by skills shortages under the Additional Identified Skills Shortage Payment measure;
   (e) establishing ten industry training hubs in areas of high unemployment;
   (f) further addressing youth unemployment in regional areas by funding 400 Commonwealth Scholarships for Young Australians;
   (g) a National Skills Commission and pilot skills organisations that will promote a nation-wide approach to skills development and enhance the role of industry in designing training courses;
   (h) an extension of the National Rugby League’s VET Apprenticeship Awareness Program; and
   (i) Energising Tasmania—a partnership between the Commonwealth and the Tasmanian Government to train a skilled workforce for jobs in the future in pumped hydro and energy infrastructure; and
(3) welcomes the prospect of creating a further 80,000 apprenticeships in occupations with skills shortages over the coming five years.

Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (12:37): I am very grateful to the member for Braddon for this motion. We desperately need more of our young people in vocational education. We need to fill the skills gaps in our economy, which in some trades are reaching crisis levels. I am grateful to him for laying out in his motion a great deal of the practical, targeted support that the Morrison government is providing those who want to take up a trade. The government should certainly be commended for their pragmatic approach and commitment to this pressing issue. Like the government, I want to do what I can in my electorate of Fisher to provide practical, real-world support for young people to help prepare them for the workforce. That is why I have developed and will shortly be launching my own new concept in Fisher: my Ready, Set, Go bursary program.

My Fisher Ready, Set, Go program will deliver a bursary up to $1,000 to one student in my electorate three times a year. I intend the make the bursary available to students living in my electorate who are in their final year of education and preparing to enter the world of work. That might be a school leaver in year 12, it might be a younger school student who is preparing to leave for an apprenticeship or it might be a university or TAFE student in their last year of study.

I will ask eligible students to make an application to me online, explaining why they need support to prepare for the workplace and what they would put the bursary toward. I believe that programs designed to support union jobseekers should be highly adaptable to individual needs, so I will not be providing a prescriptive list that lays out what these bursaries can and can’t be used for. I am keen, however, to hear from students about what their needs are and what support would make the biggest difference for them in entering the workplace. From my discussions with students so far, I expect that I’ll receive applications for bursaries for tools of trade; interview essentials, like a suit; training programs; support to attend a conference or an employment expo; and many other things. I’ve decided to run three rounds of the program—in April, August and November—and intend to open the very first round for applications as soon as my Fisher Community Awards are complete. Local students in Fisher who are interested in applying should contact my office for more details.

I intend to create, alongside my new Ready, Set, Go program, a vocational education, training and apprenticeships expo in Fisher. I look forward to setting the date very soon with the assistant minister, who has generously committed to coming along and opening it. The expo will bring together local Sunshine Coast employers offering trade roles and apprenticeships, training and vocational education providers, recruiters, employment service providers, Centrelink and others from the Sunshine Coast. It will provide a tremendous opportunity for local employers and recruiters to attract the coast’s best talent while helping many of our jobseekers identify the right opportunities for them in our region.

I believe my new programs will be of significant practical benefit to employers and young jobseekers, but I believe they’ll also serve a greater purpose in helping more of our region’s young people to continue to live on the Sunshine Coast. I know that many of Fisher’s young people love their beachside home and want to be close to their families, but too many feel they have to leave our community in order to fulfil their professional ambitions. With innovative, high-tech companies like HeliMods, Praesidium Global and Eniquest, financial service success
stories like Youi and Huddle, and online and digital experts like IDCARE now operating in our region, the Sunshine Coast today can offer to ambitious young local people so much more than ever before. Fisher is fast becoming the place to be, not only for education and retirement but also for employment. I hope my new programs, combined with the terrific support from the Morrison government outlined by the member for Braddon, will show that in 2020 a person leaving education on the Sunshine Coast doesn't need to go anywhere else to build the career of their dreams or start a business that will take the world by storm. They can do it right on the Sunshine Coast, in the community that they call home. I know that their parents would rather they be close than move to the likes of Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane.

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (12:42): This motion, bizarrely, congratulates the government on its reforms in the vocational education sector. On any objective analysis, these reforms have been an abject failure. The facts point to it. Every Australian knows that this government has decimated the TAFE vocational education and training system in this country and, in concert with Liberal state governments, increased fees for people looking to go to TAFE. The results speak for themselves, and the results are quite shocking. How can those opposite say that the government should be congratulated on these policies and that the policies have been a success when there are 150,000 fewer apprentices and trainees in Australia than when they came to government? There are now 150,000 fewer apprentices in this country than when those opposite came to government in 2013. How can they claim that as a success? It's an abject failure by any person's standard.

As a result, we now have skills shortages in a number of occupations throughout the country. Employers struggling to find workers to fill those skills shortages are instead importing workers from overseas. We're bringing in workers from overseas to fill the skills shortages that exist in Australia at the moment because this government decimated the TAFE system, which resulted in 150,000 fewer apprenticeships and traineeships. Fewer people have been graduating with the necessary trade qualifications to fill those jobs, with skills shortages as the result, yet those opposite want to congratulate each other.

In the TAFE sector those opposite have decimated the once world-leading technical and further education system we had here in Australia in our TAFE colleges. They've massively increased the fees. I put it to them that it's Liberal governments at the state level that have been doing this. In some cases, there have been 300 or 400 per cent increases in the fees for going to TAFE to do an apprenticeship or traineeship. Is it any wonder there are 150,000 fewer apprentices in the country, when they're doing things like that? They've also cut funding for TAFE. They've cut billions of dollars of funding from vocational education and training, predominantly from TAFE colleges. That's resulted in teachers leaving, courses closing and courses being basically contracted out to the private sector. Private sector providers are now coming in and taking over where TAFE was running good, solid public education courses for people in Australia.

We've got a nationwide skills shortage in a broad range of occupations. We're talking about occupations like plumbing, carpentry, hairdressing, motor mechanics. This government doesn't have a plan to fix it. We have a nationwide shortage of skills, without a plan to fix it. It means reinvesting in our TAFEs and our training facilities. It means employers working with TAFE, with other employers and with unions to make sure we're training Australians for the jobs that we need. Our national vocational system doesn't just need tweaks; it's crying out for genuine reform and genuine commitment from this government to invest in TAFE and ensure that we are producing the apprentices and the trainees who can fill these occupations into the future. Yet this government refuses to deliver a genuine reform package that overhauls the training sector in Australia.

If the Liberals don't do something to fix this skills shortage and this crisis that they've created in vocational training in Australia, we could be in a situation where productivity continues to fall in Australia, where we don't get growth in particular jobs in this country, where we are forced to import more workers into the country because of the skills shortages and where our economy starts to go backwards. This Liberal government doesn't care enough or have the capacity to work hard to build a better post-school education system. Labor has been very critical of the role that this government has played in undermining TAFE and the value that TAFE had in promoting vocational education and training in our community. The effect of overzealous application of competition policy and privatisation in this sector has left it chronically underfunded, with devastating effects on the sector and, as I mentioned, 150,000 fewer apprentices. Fewer people taking on trades—that's their legacy in vocational training.

Dr WEBSTER (Mallee) (12:47): I rise to support the government's commitment to strengthening the vocational education and training sector and the goal of creating up to 80,000 apprenticeships in the next five years. In particular, I support the implementation of the Delivering Skills for Today and Tomorrow package, which lays the building blocks for reforms identified in the comprehensive review of Australia's vocational education and training system, the Joyce review, as well as the improvement of the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network.
This investment in the vocational education and training sector is desperately needed, especially in regional towns across Australia, where employment opportunities are limited when compared to metropolitan centres. In my electorate of Mallee, many young people are leaving towns like Charlton, Wycheproof and Donald to pursue employment opportunities elsewhere. These towns are located in Buloke Shire, which has been identified as an area of focus for education and vocational training. In response to the desperate need for action in this shire, I facilitated a think tank forum between industry, education and government representatives, to discuss the issues facing the region and determine solutions to these challenges. It included representatives from the Local Learning Employment Networks, SuniTAFE and RTOs, along with employers such as Bernie Casey, who instigated this think tank, Troy Hendy and Meredith Taskers—26 people in all. Key concerns raised at the forum related to the complexity of the vocational education and training system, the desire to see more comprehensive career advice for students and, particularly, parents regarding apprenticeships, and the need to further incentivise employers to take on apprentices.

A number of the measures contained in the skills package work towards addressing the issues raised at the Charlton think tank forum, including the establishment of a national careers institute, the appointment of a nationals skills ambassador and additional and streamlined incentives for both employers and apprentices. The National Careers Institute aims to improve the overall quality of career development in Australia, with a specific focus on raising the status of vocational education and training. The appointment of Scott Cam as the first National Careers Ambassador re-enforces this focus.

From 1 July 2020 the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program will be streamlined and simplified, making it easier for employers to understand and claim incentives. This is particularly important for my electorate because of the additional incentives available to employers in regional and rural areas. These include the Australian Apprentice Wage Subsidy, which will support up to 3,260 eligible employers of apprentices in occupations experiencing national skills shortage, as well as the Rural and Regional Skills Shortage incentive, which provides $1,000 to all eligible employers.

Beyond the skills package, other government initiatives are making it easier for employers to recruit apprentices. The Australian Apprenticeship Support Network is a key component of the government's investment in vocational training, education and apprenticeships, and acts as the first point of contact for all apprenticeship inquiries. The support network provides personalised advise and support services to employers and apprentices, from precommencement of an apprenticeship to completion. A new contract for providers under this network has been developed, which will ensure that information is delivered clearly and efficiently. The support network can provide advice as to which financial incentives employers and apprentices may be eligible for. Through the improved Apprenticeship Support Network, employers and apprentices will be more able to navigate the system and get the most out of the apprenticeship. I support this motion because I want to see the vocational, education and training sector strengthened, I want to create more opportunities for young people in my electorate and I want to assist employers find and train workers for the future prosperity of their business.

With that being said, I don't doubt there is more work to be done in this space. A key challenge for vocational education and training is the provision of tertiary services. If apprentices can't access these services, they can't obtain their qualification. For areas like Buloke Shire, more service providers are needed. I recently met with Geoff Dea of Sunraysia Institute of TAFE. Geoff is keen to expand his organisation's reach into Buloke Shire but has been unable to do so due to shortfalls in funding. There is no substitute for local training, which is why we need to support local training providers like SuniTAFE to deliver these services.

Dr HAINES (Indi) (12:52): I've spoken before in this place about my discomfort with these motions, which simply congratulate the government for its work. I worry about the value to Australian democracy. Members of the government stand and offer uncritical self-congratulations; members of the opposition stand and deliver unrelenting criticism. I don't know who benefits from it, but I hope that, somehow, in doing this we improve public Australian policy. When I stood for election I promised the people of Indi that I would try to do politics differently. From that perspective, I recognise the good work where it happens and try to offer practical solutions to improve what we are doing. I think that speaks to a question of integrity, and I believe all of us want that and all of our constituents expect it.

So when I consider the motion put forward by the member for Braddon I look at the good work that's been done, and I do congratulate the government for that. But there is more work to be done, especially in regional Australia. This motion celebrates the government's policies on skills and training, but those same policies are in many ways failing to deliver adequately for regional Australia. Let's look at a snapshot of education opportunity outside the cities. The government's own Napthine review found that high school completion rates are 80 per cent in metropolitan areas and around 65 per cent in regional areas. It found that people who grow up in regional Australia are 40 per cent less likely to get at least a cert IV and 50 per cent less likely to gain a bachelor degree or
above than their city peers. Even VET enrolments are increasing faster in metropolitan areas than in regional areas. This lack of training opportunities is holding us back. The unemployment rate for people with a cert III or above is 3.9 per cent compared to 7.9 per cent for those without one.

With more skills and training opportunities, we could start to tackle pockets of high unemployment across regional Australia, in places like the north-west of Tasmania, the member for Braddon's electorate, where youth unemployment sits at 15 per cent. The government's analysis indicates that if we halve the skills gap between metro and rural people it would increase GDP by 0.6 per cent or $11 billion every year.

There is a massive opportunity in regional skills that could be unlocked with the right policies. The Naphthine review found that the most important thing was increasing access to training for regional Australia. We need to create training opportunities in regional areas for regional areas. The government estimates that the planned expansion of the NDIS will be required to find another 90,000 disability workers—double the size of the current workforce—and much of this will be needed in regional areas. The 2019 national mental health report shows there is a critical shortage of qualified mental health workers in regional areas. For those of us who live here, that is abundantly clear.

As Australia inevitably shifts to being run by renewable power stations across regional Australia, we will need thousands of skilled technicians, electricians and construction workers to drive a multibillion-dollar industry. We need to do more to create training opportunities for these industries, which could underpin our regional economy, by investing smartly in regional people. That is why I am thrilled that my own electorate is showing the way forward on this.

After the 'black summer' fires devastated much of the upper Murray, Wodonga TAFE is proposing a program called 'Recover, rebuild and sustain', to support the bushfire recovery through the development of the local skills base, to meet community needs now and into the future. The program would work with the National Bushfire Recovery Agency to identify local skills and needs—like chainsaw operation and fence building—and support participants to obtain relevant qualifications through short courses and match them with local businesses needing those skills. Beyond the physical rebuild, the focus will turn to longer term needs, like mental health support, aged care, disability care and small business skills.

The member for Braddon's motion celebrates the importance of reforming the vocational education and training sector to better meet the demands of the modern Australian economy. While these are our needs—aged care, disability care, renewables, sustainable agriculture—we need to do more to support training for these industries. If we are to grasp these opportunities, the nation needs to invest, and I'll be advocating for the Wodonga TAFE Recover, rebuild and sustain program to receive funding as part of our region's bushfire recovery. I will continue to work with the minister for education to give regional Australia the best chance to thrive with the right training and education opportunities for a 21st century regional economy.

Ms HAMMOND (Curtin) (12:57): I thank the member for Braddon for moving this very important motion and I congratulate him for his advocacy for VET as a career pathway for young people in his electorate and more broadly. The member has raised a number of very important issues, but there are two aspects of his motion that I want focus on: the National Careers Institute and the National Skills Commission. I have said it before in this place, but it deserves repeating: Australia's capacity to grow, compete and thrive in an increasingly global economy is dependent upon employers and all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances, being able to access and use the right skills at the right time. A strong VET sector, sitting alongside and hand in hand with a strong higher education sector, is critical to our economy and to helping prepare Australians for the workforce opportunities of today and the future.

We need our VET sector to be adaptable. We need an accessible, high-quality VET sector that is innovative, robust and responsive to industry needs and ever-emerging gaps. To be able to do that, we need excellent quality and timely research into our skills needs and our skills gaps and the best way of addressing them.

The National Careers Institute was established on 1 July 2019 as part of the 2019-20 federal budget Delivering Skills for Today and Tomorrow. The institute lays the foundation for the Australian government's commitment to strengthening and modernising the skills and career sectors and was a response to the independent Joyce review which examined ways to deliver skilled workers for a stronger economy.

The institute specifically focuses on a number of vital activities that are strengthening our VET sector. These are designed with the overarching principle of enabling all Australians to make more informed career decisions at all stages of their lifelong learning.

The activities of the institute include research and stakeholder engagement. The institute is undertaking extensive research and stakeholder engagement on the state of the Australian and international careers sector. This allows the institute to map careers advice and services in Australia, with the aim of identifying gaps and overlaps.
It's reviewing international best practice and it's also identifying governance models for career development agencies. To this end, the institute is consulting widely with governments, agencies and, most importantly, with industry, employers and education providers.

The second part of the activities of the institute is in relation to grants. The Australian government is setting up a $10 million competitive grant program to boost partnerships between industry, employers, schools and tertiary providers. Grants of up to $350,000 per year will support education providers, employment providers, industry and local government to work collaboratively to establish initiatives with a strong focus on filling and/or enhancing information and service gaps.

And, finally, the institute is also implementing the VET Information Strategy, which promotes VET as an equal-choice education option leading to successful careers. The strategy promotes a key message for the VET sector: real skills for real careers.

The second part of the motion which I wish to speak about directly is the National Skills Commission. This commission has been established to provide national leadership to the VET system. The commission will oversee the Australian government's investment in VET, and drive long-term improvements to the VET sector. It will undertake research and analysis of future skill needs across industry to ensure that government funding addresses national labour market priorities, including those arising from developing technologies. The commission's role and functions will be refined to ensure that the commission complements and enhances the VET system; improves coordination coherency and efficiency; and enables local and regional solutions.

There are over 1,600 people undertaking VET qualifications in my electorate of Curtin, and over four million nationally. It is therefore crucial that we have a strong VET sector that is responsive to the needs of people who are looking to upskill, to reskill or to adapt to changing times in a modern workplace. We are committed and excited about the future of VET in Australia. Our government has a clear plan for providing people with a strong foundation for their careers and for keeping our VET sector strong.

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (13:02): I rise to speak about policy measures that the government claims as evidence of its success in the employment, education and training space.

The numbers in this motion sound like impressive achievements. Without any context, they sound convincing. They are easily tweetable, shareable and likeable, and—if they're read in isolation—they are misleading. Some of the key points read as follows: 1.2 million jobs created since the government was elected; $525 million for a skills ambassador and other measures; 140,000 young Australians securing employment since the election; and, finally, the government welcoming the prospect of creating a further 80,000 apprenticeships over the coming five years.

Maybe that's like the 100 dams that the current coalition government was going to build. But—wait a minute—how many dams have been built? I think it's none! I, for one, welcome the prospect of the government solving the skills crisis that is of its own making. But my welcoming of that remote prospect won't make it happen. What's needed is serious and sustained funding, not pious wishes.

The magical effect of these context-free figures and these remote prospects evaporates when we put them against another set of cold, hard facts that don't appear in this motion. We have two million unemployed or underemployed people; we have 140,000 fewer apprentices than we did when the coalition took government in 2013; and we know that the Liberals have failed to spend $919 million of their own TAFE and training budget over the past five years, which is criminal, and that's on top of the over $3 billion—that's with a 'b'—ripped out of the overall system. So forgive my incredulity at reading the government's self-congratulatory motion about its wonderful achievements.

To spend even a fraction of the $525 million for a skills ambassador and other marketing measures to sell the message and to frame the narrative when underfunding TAFE by over $3 billion is an absolute dereliction of duty. It is a failure of leadership. I might say it's a bit typical of a government that loves the marketing and the politics whilst our kids haven't got the opportunities provided by VET. When it is so underfunded, it is very difficult to reconcile the previous speaker's words with the reality on the ground.

Let's have a look at the broader context, which is missing from the government's portrayal of reality in the motion. For more than seven years the Liberal government has left Australia facing a crisis in skills and vocation training. It has neglected our TAFE and training system for seven years. It has spent seven years ignoring the vital role that TAFE plays in the growth of our young people—young Australians—and the vital role it plays in the growth of our economy. It has spent seven years cutting that $3 billion while also underspending the meagre amount it did promise the sector. Over the past five years, we know that the government has actively decided not to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on TAFE and training that it had allocated. It's a bit like the NDIS: underspending which makes Australians worse off, whether it's people with a disability or our young kids trying to get a trade. Don't take this just on my authority. These facts weren't produced by Labor; they're from the federal
education department's own data. It's important that we have the context around which the government is trumpeting $525 million for its so-called skills package.

I am concerned that the federal government is keener on spinning and deflecting, bringing in marketing teams and celebrity ambassadors to distract Australians from the real issue: the underfunding of the VET sector by this coalition government. It must stop.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rick Wilson): There being no further speakers, the debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Backbone Youth Arts

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (13:07): I move:

That this House:

(1) notes:
(a) the importance of grassroots youth arts organisations, including Backbone, based in the electoral division of Griffith;
(b) that for thirty years Backbone has helped young people find purpose, develop skills and contribute to our nation's culture; and
(c) that despite Backbone's success, the Government has cut its funding, and the organisation now faces closure; and

(2) calls on the Government to urgently commit to restore funding to Backbone.

One of Queensland's only youth arts organisations, Backbone, has had its funding slashed by the federal government despite its success. Backbone is a much-loved youth arts organisation based on the south side in Brisbane, and for 30 years it's been helping people find purpose, develop skills and contribute to our nation's culture. Eighty per cent of the young people that go through Backbone's doors move into employment. It's an incredibly successful organisation in helping younger people find employment. But despite this success the Liberal National government has slashed all the federal funding to Backbone and, as a result, the organisation for the past several weeks has been fighting for its survival. Backbone has relied upon federal arts funding, receiving $100,000 each year, but their recent application was rejected.

Sadly, under the Liberals and Nationals it's situation normal for Queenslanders to miss out on their fair share of federal arts funding. Queenslanders make up approximately 20 per cent of the nation's population, but we receive only around 13 per cent of the Australia Council arts funding and even less of the former communication and arts department grants. Only 2.82 per cent of those grants went to Queensland in 2018. The Morrison government should step up, cancel these cuts and fund this important community service. The Morrison government should not cost-shift this service onto other spheres of government. But the Liberals and Nationals have rarely seen arts funding that they didn't want to cut. No wonder people were mortified when the government decided to get rid of the arts department and diminish the standing of arts in the Commonwealth government. I'm grateful to the shadow minister for the arts for standing up for small-to-medium organisations. The shadow minister has acknowledged that Backbone plays an important role in the local community and has provided a great service to local kids. I thank him for calling on the Morrison Liberal-National government to reverse their decision to cut Backbone's funding.

Backbone's Artistic Director and CEO, Katherine Quigley, has been an absolute champion for her organisation and its track record throughout this very trying time. She has told me that Backbone is one of the few remaining youth arts organisations of what was once a thriving sector in Queensland. It delivers vital employment, capacity building and training to young people and creates safe spaces for those who are experiencing difficult times. She says the organisation is a vital stepping stone and that it has been so for many artists and cultural leaders now working across Australia. She says:

What we do is preventative mental health, it is creating opportunities for kids to get busy, to be creative and to find likeminded peers to create extraordinary experiences for their communities.

In the six years I have worked at Backbone, I have seen a rapid increase in the number of young people who report debilitating mental health, but through participation in our programs that connect them to accepting and non-judgemental communities, we literally turn their life around.

Having a place to call home and feeling connection to a greater purpose and community literally saves lives and creates not just jobs, but lasting and successful careers.

Isn't that the truth? At a time when there is less community cohesion it seems than ever before—when there is so much disconnection, so much alienation and so much isolation amongst young people—people are crying out for opportunities to participate, and to be able to participate in culture, in something that's engaging and that's fascinating, brings people together. It brings them into the public square and gets them out of their homes and into a community setting. You can tell from the success rate alone—80 per cent of kids that go through this
organisation's doors end up in employment—it's reminiscent of Youth Connections. It's reminiscent of those great programs of the past through which people found ways through following their own interests and their own fascinations to become connected in the community. That then gives them confidence, it gives them connection and it gives them capacity. That's what this organisation does.

That's why I call on the Morrison Liberal-National government to reverse these cuts and fund Backbone in full—not year to year but on an ongoing basis. This is an organisation that contributes to the arts, that is Queensland based and that has a track record of success. It shouldn't have to be writing grants every year just to make sure its very limited operations are able to continue. I call on the government to give Queensland its fair share of arts funding, both at the elite and the grassroots levels, and I call on the government to recognise that Queensland's young people desperately need opportunities like those that this organisation provides.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rick Wilson): Is there a seconder for the motion?

Ms Owens: I second the motion.

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (13:12): I'd like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to arts organisations in my electorate, particularly to the community theatre groups. Community theatre is the engine room for the performing arts. Community theatre prepares future performers for their career in helping local people access the arts and in helping us connect with ideas and themes in a way that only the arts can do. I think for example of a young person discovering Shakespeare in a book who sees a play brought to life locally, discovers the humour or the tragedy of the play and is moved by it in a way they otherwise wouldn't have been. I'm lucky to have many community theatre groups in my electorate. Some groups have been established entirely for young people; others have casts of all ages working together to put on productions.

Hornsby Gang Show is an example of one of these which is entirely cast by young people in our community. Since beginning 47 years ago, Hornsby Gang Show has trained hundreds of scouts and guides in all aspects of stagecraft, acting, singing, dancing and behind the scenes skills such as lighting and prop building. The theme for this year's show is 'Wonderstruck!'. People who are key to making the productions a success each year include Rebecca Canty, Lauren Webb, Julia Raiton, Taylor Herbertson, Erin Whyley, Kathleen Walker, Ellen Hopkins, Steph Vorreiter, Nikki Pearsall, Georgia Muxlow, Ben Adam, Cam Hose, Simon Gray, Yvonne Barton-Leach, and, of course, my friend Penny Becchio.

Sydney Youth Musical Theatre is another community theatre group based in my area that has been set up to give young people the opportunity to explore and develop skills in theatre and to develop the desire and ability to achieve the highest standard of excellence in musical theatre. They have been producing shows since 1979 and draw in young people from right across the Sydney region. This year Sydney Youth Musical Theatre's senior show will be Kinky Boots in July with Tom Kelly and Dominic Lee-Lindsay in the lead roles.

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 13:15 to 13:25

Mr LEESER: The show will be directed by James Tolhurst, with Callum Close as the musical director and Cameron Beart as the choreographer. The Sydney Youth Musical Theatre was founded by Jan Knight OAM. Its leadership includes Chrissy Stimson, Bruce Bartle, Sarah Dolan, Belinda Escott, Paul Harmon, Adam Haynes, Evan Jones, Grant Leslie, Craig Pinkerton, Karen Smith and Jeremy Zalewski.

The Dural Musical Society is led by Eddie Bruce and attracts actors of all ages. Its more experienced actors invest their lives in teaching and mentoring younger generations in the performing arts. This year they have Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves lined up for their audiences. It's a traditional pantomime which will feature puppetry, slapstick humour, singing, dancing and mime. Some of the people who make the Dural Musical Society such a special institution include John Nawotka, Judy Clarke, Julie Scargill, Laura Murdocca, Camilla Bellstedt, Hugh Humphreys, Julian Floriano, Julie Bruce and the Rowe and Koorey families.

The Normanhurst Uniting Church Musical Society has been entertaining crowds for over 40 years. It was established not only to entertain the local community but also to raise money for the church and for local charities. Donations to local charities over the years have amounted to over $50,000, with donations to groups like Hornsby Lifeline, Fusion, the local church and local Christian education associations. I want to acknowledge Lyn Drabsch, Trevor Sharpam, Kent Blackmore, Ian Baker, Ian Wesley, Chloe Long, Mel Hogan, Ed Corbett and Rich Ferraro. In June this year the NUCMS will be performing She Loves Me, a musical about the manager of a perfumery in Europe looking for love. John Hogan will play the role of bachelor Georg and Jess Ferrero will play the character of Alamia Balash.

The Hornsby Musical Society was founded in 1958 and is one of the oldest musical societies in the electorate. In April this year their performance of Beautiful: The Carole King Musical will open. The show is being directed
by Jordan Anderson, with Koren Beale as the musical director and Lauren MacKinnon as the choreographer. The title role of Carole King will be played by Elisa Vitagliani. In October their second show for the year, Holiday Inn, will be performed. It will be directed by Lauren Oxenham, with Brendan Flanagan as the orchestra director and Ben Gibiec as the vocal director.

The Berowra Musical Society was formed in 1986. The society attracts membership from all parts of Sydney. They put on shows in May and October and present a Christmas pantomime every year. In late May they are going to perform Camp Rock: The Musical at the Berowra Community Centre and will have performers from age eight and up. The show is being directed by Kelly Horrigan, with Michael Howell as the musical director and Monique Harris and Samantha Lee as the choreographers.

Finally, there is Brooklyn Theatre in the Park, in my electorate, founded in 1999 by Ray Bontoft and Peter Hughes. People like Gary Robertson, Ian Allan and Di Bowles help make Brooklyn Theatre in the Park sing for one night in November every year. It is a genuine community theatre organisation that involves everyone in Brooklyn.

I say to all the community theatre organisations in my electorate: thank you for your service, and ‘break a leg’ for your next productions.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rick Wilson): The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Sitting suspended from 13:29 to 16:00

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

National Integrity Commission

Dr HAINES (Indi) (16:00): Last Tuesday, 200 people from across Indi packed Beechworth Courthouse to launch the Beechworth Principles. The Beechworth Principles call on the government to introduce an integrity commission with broad jurisdiction to investigate the people it needs to, common rules so that everyone is held to the same standard of behaviour, appropriate powers so that it can actually do its job, fair hearings so that investigations are done openly when it's in the public interest, and accountability to the people so that the commission answers to the public, not political interests. These five principles give shape to what I’ve been hearing loud and clear from across Indi since the day I ran for parliament: we need a proper and robust federal integrity commission in this country.

The government has missed its own deadlines to introduce this bill. Instead of an integrity commission, it has given us bountiful examples of why we need one. These principles stand not as an ultimatum but as an invitation. When Indigo Walker-Stelling, a young man from Beechworth Secondary College, read out the Beechworth declaration last week, the packed courthouse broke into several minutes of deafening applause. The truth is Australians are not quiet about this; the truth is our leaders are not listening; and the truth is the Beechworth Principles are a call to listen and a call to act.

Sandringham Primary School

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (16:01): I'm sad to report that a fortnight ago the grounds of Sandringham Primary School were set ablaze, leaving one of the most historic campuses beyond repair. It was tragic news for local residents, generations of whom have attended the school they love for over 150 years. But, from the ashes of destruction and despair, we have witnessed the strength of Goldstein's wonderful social fabric as the community banded together to help displaced students. People have donated goods, and aided and assisted where they can. I was very proud to be among some 250 people who showed up the following day to Sandy secondary college to help move furniture so that we could accommodate students at Sandringham East Primary School, which will host some of those left without a classroom.

I'd like to extend an enormous thankyou to staff at both schools, who have shown incredible leadership in the wake of this disaster. Thank you to the Sandy East principal, Laureen Walton, and the Sandringham College Principal, Amy Porter, for their ongoing efforts. Thank you to the parents and friends who have rallied, setting the fundraising wheels in motion. In addition to there being a silent auction, a group of school dads battled it out in a charity cricket match organised by Graham Widger and Nick Waterhouse at RG Chisholm Reserve. While we mourn the loss of local infrastructure, we are given hope and inspiration from the collaboration and the resourcefulness on display among the local kids and our community.

Footscray RSL Sub-Branch

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (16:03): I rise in this place to acknowledge the recent centenary of Footscray RSL. Established in 1920, two years after the end of the First World War, the sub-branch absorbed some of the 160,000
Australian men who returned gassed, maimed and mentally traumatised. While nearly 10 per cent of the Australian population enlisted in the First World War, there were no Commonwealth programs for the welfare of injured veterans. For some of the traumatised population, the Footscray sub-branch, like the others, offered care and camaraderie. They've been doing this for 100 years now, extending that care and camaraderie to veterans' families also.

In the 1920s, the Footscray sub-branch of the RSL was distinguished by its size and activity, its political voice and its actions on behalf of its members. They were the first sub-branch to honour their dead comrades with a monument funded by themselves, with no public funding. A hundred years later, the Footscray sub-branch today is distinguished in a different way. Today, the majority of the members of Footscray RSL Sub-Branch are South Vietnamese armed forces veterans, members who served beside Aussie diggers in that conflict before making Australia their home after the war.

I'd like to acknowledge former President of the Footscray RSL Clem Davis and, in particular, the current President, Long Viet Nguyen, who did so much to renew Footscray RSL after falling membership threatened its existence a decade ago. Under the leadership of Long Viet Nguyen and his committee members, the reinvigorated Footscray not only has been able to continue a century-long legacy but also is a model for how Australian multiculturalism makes our nation stronger.

**Longman Electorate: Horizons College of Learning and Enrichment**

**Mr YOUNG** (Longman) (16:04): According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, at this very moment there are more than 25 million people living in Australia. Every single one of these Australians are at different stages in their lives and they are embarking on diverse journeys. They all have different hopes, goals, needs, talents, abilities and dreams that make them who they are. We are all unique. We all see the world and life in a completely different light to the next person. Some people see the world in colour, and others see it in black and white. Having views different to other people does not mean we are any less of a person; it just means we need to find our dreams and goals down another path. Life doesn't end just because you don't get into university, because you struggle to study at school or because you don't get your dream job on the first try. It just means you have to forge another path to achieve your goals.

Children are finding their place in the world, learning that you don't have to conform to what society thinks you should be or what others think you should be. All you need to be yourself and happiness will come. Not every kid fits into a mainstream school. That's why it is important to have schools that cater to the needs of their students and their families. I was fortunate enough to visit Horizons College in my electorate of Longman this year. Horizons College of Learning and Enrichment is an independent special assistance school based in Caboolture. It is committed to assisting young people for whom mainstream education is not meaningful. The Horizons College commenced in 2014 and now caters for students across years 7 to 12. I commend Horizons College for their work.

**Wilyuka, Mr Kunmanara**

**Mr SNOWDON** (Lingiari) (16:06): Last Thursday I travelled to the small community of Titjikala on the edge of the Simpson Desert to attend the funeral of Kunmanara Wilyuka. The old man was someone I knew well. He was a teacher, builder, pastor and former stockman, but most of all he was a leader with the skill of bringing people together. He had a wonderful sense of humour and he was a master communicator, fluent in at least Yankunytjatjara, Pitjan tjatjara, Eastern Arrernte, Western Arrernte and English. Kunmanara was a tireless leader and advocate. He was an outspoken critic of the Howard government intervention in the Northern Territory. He had been elected as a councillor on MacDonnell Regional Council. He was a longstanding member and Chair of the Central Land Council in 2012-13. In 2016-17 he was an elected member of the Aboriginals Benefit Account Advisory Committee. In 2016 he was appointed chair of the Aboriginal Area Protection Authority.

He was a strong advocate for the Central Land Council's Community Development Program—Aboriginal people directing their own resources towards strengthening capacity to participate in mainstream Australia through improving health, education and employment outcomes. He was inclusive, politically savvy and a persuasive leader. At the Uluru Statement from the Heart meeting, he took to the stage and calmly laid out in front of the 350 delegates his cultural perspective on the contested concept of sovereignty. After the unanimous endorsement of the agreed statement he said: 'You have come here and supported us in the NT with the declaration we put up here for all of us. We have some ups and downs at this forum, but as a Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara man I feel so happy today that our brothers and sisters from all states and territories have come together as one'. Rest in peace, Kunmanara Wilyuka.

**Moore Electorate: Ocean Reef Marina**

**Mr GOODENOUGH** (Moore) (16:08): I am pleased to inform the parliament that preliminary infrastructure works are due to commence in order to progress the Ocean Reef Marina redevelopment. Construction works for
the long-anticipated project are scheduled to start later this year, pending the requisite environmental and planning approvals. Approval was sought to clear 6.35 hectares of bushland in order to facilitate the extension of Hodges Drive to provide access to the site, with further road upgrades required at the boat harbour quays entry road and the diversion of the coastal shared-use path. A clearing permit is also required for a further 3.9 hectares for geotechnical investigations.

The Ocean Reef Marina project covers approximately 55 hectares of development land and is projected to have a gross development value in excess of $1 billion dollars. Attracting private sector investment will boost economic activity within the wider city of Joondalup, giving local businesses much-needed economic stimulus. Our local community will benefit from the increased amenity from the new residential and commercial development, contemporary hospitality venues and recreational and tourism opportunities. This landmark project will generate hundreds of local jobs during the construction phase and ongoing permanent employment for many years to come in Perth's northern suburbs.

**Scullin Electorate: Greek Cypriot Community**

**Scullin Electorate: Al Siraat College**

Mr GILES (Scullin) (16:09): The Greek Cypriot community has made an enormous contribution to Australia as a migrant community, in particular to the northern suburbs of Melbourne. I was thrilled to be able to greet a high profile delegation from the Republic of Cyprus, led by Demetris Syllouris, the President of the republic's house of assembly, to Epping, in particular to show them a wonderful aged-care facility, Grace of Mary. It was a really significant event for the local Greek Cypriot community in Melbourne and showed the importance of the ongoing ties. I was pleased later, when the parliament recently sat, to welcome the delegation here in parliament and to start working through how we can build on the great people-to-people links we enjoy to a stronger relationship between our countries. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to acknowledge that in this place and put on the record my deep appreciation of Mr Syllouris for his deep engagement with the diaspora community here. I know how much it means to them.

I am also very pleased to have welcomed to the parliament today a group of students from a wonderful school, Al Siraat College, an Islamic college in my electorate. This school is relatively new, but it is doing great things and has really built a strong community around it. It was a real privilege to engage with some young students today to share with them my privilege in working in this place and to try to answer their probing questions about what we do and how we might do it better. I am very pleased to give a shout-out to those wonderful students, who I hope we'll see back here soon.

**Bennelong Electorate: Australia Day Honours**

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (16:11): I would like to continue celebrating great Australians from Bennelong who have received awards as part of the Australia Day honours list. One recent recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia is Mr Phillip Wai-Shing Ng, who has been awarded for his services to Chinese language education and to the community. In 1982 Mr Ng founded the Dundas Chinese School, and he has remained its principal ever since. He has educated hundreds, if not thousands, of pupils over the years. In addition, he has served on the New South Wales Chinese Language Education Council as an executive board member and has helped organise the National Chinese Eisteddfod since 1989. His contributions to the large Chinese community in Bennelong and New South Wales have been invaluable.

I would also like to acknowledge Mr Robert Selinger, who has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community and to education. Mr Selinger has an extensive history with the Rotary Club of Chatswood, having served most recently as the treasurer between 2015-19 but also previously on three occasions as its president. In his professional career Mr Selinger has a long career as a teacher, serving as the principal of Chatswood High School, Drummoyne Boys High School and Ashfield Boys High School over a career that has spanned more than 50 years. I would like to thank him for his service.

The people I have spoken about today are just a couple of the wonderful members of our community who have done so much. (*Time expired*)

**Domestic and Family Violence**

Ms WELLS (Lilley) (16:12): Today in this place we mourn the loss of Hannah Clark, an active and dedicated citizen of Brisbane, and her three children, Aaliyah, Laianah and Trey, all of whom were slain at the hands of a monster who should have known better. Today news has broken in Brisbane that an 11-month-old baby girl has died at the hands of a male known to her—again, someone who should have been protected when she was at her most vulnerable. The things that are happening on our streets are everyone's nightmare and it is everyone's business to fix it. It falls on us in this place and on our neighbours to join together and say that marriage is not
ownership, a wife is not a possession and our children are not pawns who can be weaponised or slain in adult games. We cannot tolerate this anymore.

On the day of the murders last week I called out Fox News when they said that this evil murderer had died alongside his three children. Many have called out Bettina Arndt for enabling these toxic and dangerous attitudes to continue with her 20 years of horrific work and her particularly abhorrent comments over the weekend. This government has no books two reports with over 90 recommendations to act for survivors of family violence. They could act today. These could be the Hannah Clark amendments. I call on them to do that because this is everybody's nightmare playing out in our streets and it is everybody's business to fix it.

Higgins Electorate: Australia Day Awards

Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (16:14): I rise to honour the recipients of Australia Day honours in 2020—in particular, the women in my electorate. This year, across Australia, 43 per cent of those who received Australia Day honours were women—a record number. I'm pleased to inform the House that in my electorate of Higgins that number was 63 per cent. I'm proud to celebrate the achievements of so many women in Higgins. Last week I spoke of three women involved in health, science and education who live in my electorate. This week I will take the House's indulgence to speak of three more women who are contributing greatly to the cultural, arts and social spheres of Australia.

Jane Hansen AO received an honour 'for distinguished service to the community, to education and cultural institutions, and through philanthropic support for charitable foundations'. Among a myriad of different achievements, Jane began the First Peoples Young Artists Program, which gives Aboriginal children an opportunity to start a career in the performing arts. Seri Renkin OAM received her award 'for service to the community through charitable organisations'. Seri has achieved amazing work with the Ten20 Foundation, which works to solve some of society's biggest issues for disadvantaged families and to support and advocate for vulnerable children. Rose Lew AM has received her honour 'for significant service to the community, and to philanthropy'. I thank all three women for their service to Higgins and to Australia.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Dr FREELANDER (Macarthur) (16:15): I rise to talk once again about the state of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the level of support that we provide to those most in need. Last week I had the privilege of hosting a roundtable alongside my friend the member for Werriwa, Anne Stanley MP. We were fortunate to be joined by our friends the member for Maribyrnong and the member for Dobell in their capacities as shadow minister for the NDIS and shadow assistant minister for carers. On the day we met many brave, loving and caring individuals who either are participants in the NDIS or care for someone who is. Unfortunately, we heard some truly harrowing stories about the difficulties people are having in accessing support through the NDIA and the constant hurdles they are made to jump through when navigating a complicated and uncaring bureaucracy.

The NDIS, a life-changing scheme initiated by former Prime Minister Julia Gillard, was designed to lift people up and provide essential support to those most in need. It sent a clear message to Australians living with a disability that we're all Australians and that Australians support one another. Shamefully, the present government is mismanaging the NDIS. The NDIA has become an organisation that says no more than it says yes. We must act to address the systemic problems in the NDIS to ensure it operates and supports people to achieve their full potential. We must cease putting up barriers that prevent people from getting access and stop making participants jump through hurdles every 12 months just to keep their packages. It's shameful what's happening, and we must stop it.

Environment

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (16:17): The northern beaches of Sydney are home to some of the most pristine and beautiful waterways in the country. From the sandy shores of Avalon Beach to the creeks of Bantry Bay, we are very fortunate to live where we do. With that fortune comes a great responsibility. We are responsible for protecting and preserving these waterways and the flora and fauna that call them home. It is our responsibility to preserve them for future generations.

It is estimated that between one and 2½ million tonnes of plastic are entering the ocean each year from our waterways. More than half of this plastic is less dense than the water it is entering, which means it will float on the surface. You may have heard of the great Pacific garbage patch. This is a collection of marine debris which the currents have pulled together in the northern Pacific ocean between California and Japan. This garbage patch is largely made up of microplastics and is three times the size of France. It is the result of poor management of our waste, and it is what we should be working hard to avoid.
Australia generates around 67 million tonnes of waste each year, of which 37 million tonnes is recycled. Only 12 per cent of the 103 kilograms of plastic waste generated per person in Australia each year is recycled, and most of this recycling happens overseas. The government is taking this problem seriously. Let me commend the Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management, Trevor Evans, who is leading the government down the path of smarter waste management. *Time expired*

**Parliamentary Book Club**

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (16:19): We made history in this building a couple of weeks ago when we held the first meeting of the Parliamentary Book Club. I’m told it is the only one of its kind in the world. While the Parliamentary Book Club is a book club just like those many other Australians participate in, it is different in one very important respect: the books to be read by this book club are chosen by the Australian public. Every Australian had the opportunity last year to choose the first book we read, and the majority of Australians who participated in the nomination process voted for Bruce Pascoe’s *Dark Emu*. We were very privileged to have Bruce Pascoe speak at our first meeting, discussing and answering questions about his revelatory book.

Personally, Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu* made my deep love for Australia even more profound. Through the prism of more than 60,000 years of carefully laid out history of our First Nations people, I rediscovered the essence of a home that I thought I knew well beforehand. Now, I just know it better and even more proudly.

Looking forward, the call has now gone out to all Australians to vote for the next book, so check your MP or senator's social media, or contact them directly and let them know what book you want the Parliamentary Book Club to read next. It must be an Australian author and the book must have been written in the last five years. I can't wait to see what books are nominated for us to read, and also to help in the process of selecting the winning book and making sure that the author and publisher come along to this parliament.

**McCartie, Ms Cheryl**

Mrs ARCHER (Bass) (16:20): Living in a rural community can be very challenging and isolating at times, but there are some wonderful people who step up to help. Australia Day provides a terrific opportunity for local councils to recognise the quiet but diligent work performed in their communities. I’d like to highlight one in particular today: Dorset Council’s Citizen of the Year, Cheryl McCartie. A dairy farmer from the north-east town of Ringarooma, Cheryl has made her mark on the area after moving from New Zealand over 20 years ago. She has been recognised for her tireless work in the rural community, including her role as chair of the Dorset Suicide Prevention Network. This is an open group of community members and health service providers raising awareness about mental health and wellbeing, and the factors that lead to suicide. Through contact with families and young people in the region, the network advocates for the support that the community needs. Cheryl played a key role in revitalising the organisation after a hiatus, and has led key fundraising and awareness initiatives to reduce the suicide rates in the area. These include the Out and About program, a joint partnership with Dorset Community House, that supports families and young people in the region experiencing social isolation.

Further devoting her time to the mental health of the rural community, Cheryl also sits on the board of Farm Feast, an organisation focused on raising funds for mental health organisations, and she has been a long-time member of and contributor to Women in Agriculture. Congratulations, Cheryl, on your well-deserved recognition.

**Wollongong City Council: Australia Day Awards**

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (16:22): Each year, Wollongong City Council provides awards for the citizens of the year for Australia Day. I don't envy them the task, because the nominations are all amazing and my congratulations go to all of them. But I would like to acknowledge the major award winners.

The Citizen of the Year for 2020 is Geoff Phillips. Geoff has marked 50 years working in media and radio. He is a well-known face on our local TV, but he has also done so much work with the Steelers, the Hawks and in supporting local charities. He was very moved by the award.

The amazing Val Fell, 91, is the Senior Citizen of the Year. She has worked tirelessly as a dementia advocate and she volunteers with the City of Wollongong Eisteddfod, the Illawarra Performing Arts Centre and the Council on the Ageing. That is a very well-deserved award. And Ian Steven Muhayimana was the Young Citizen of the Year. Ian uses music to raise awareness of men's mental health, and that is very well received.

I also acknowledge that there were many other recipients of a wide range of awards, all of whom have contributed enormously to our community. I'm sorry I can't name them all, but I offer my sincere congratulations. As I said, I don't envy the committee choosing the Wollongong citizens of the year because the amazing efforts made by so many community members across our city make it very, very difficult. The three recipients I have mentioned today are entirely worthy winners of those awards.
Ms BELL (Moncrieff) (16:23): The Gold Coast is an amazing multicultural city, and it's enriched by the presence of migrant groups who bring a wealth of diversity. This was on display just a couple of weeks ago when I joined our city's mayor and Gold Coast MPs to welcome 3,000 new Australian citizens from 95 nations, the largest ceremony in our history.

Recently, I welcomed the Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs, Jason Wood, to Moncrieff, to showcase the various community groups that assist those coming from diverse backgrounds. We attended the official opening of the new Gold Coast Multicultural Hub in Southport, a one-stop shop to assist migrants and refugees with integration into our community. The hub is equipped for new Australians to meet at one location, to help with language, job training and cross-cultural training. Congratulations to the 'queen', as she likes to be called, Cornelia Babbage, the director of Multicultural Families Organisation on a most successful launch. The Migrant Centre, also in Southport, is a shining example of a team who go above and beyond to assist migrants with employment. Jobs empower people, as we all know, which is why the work they're doing is so important. Congratulations to executive manager Anna Zubac and her team on their success to date. The Multicultural Communities Council Gold Coast supports those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with access to services, to ensure they have a high quality of life and independence. They also have an incredible program called CURA, which is devoted to seniors and people with a disability who need support to remain in their own home. I'm proud of the multicultural city that is today's Gold Coast. (Time expired)

Defence Facilities: Chemical Contamination

Ms SWANSON (Paterson) (16:25): Over the weekend, the Prime Minister visited a Northern Territory defence base to spruik a billion-dollar investment. The community he was in was Katherine, and they're living in a PFAS-contaminated town. Their town water is contaminated. When he was asked about the PFAS issue, he said: … previous governments have just kicked that down the road. Our government hasn't, we've stepped up …

I'd like to remind the Prime Minister that the previous governments he is referring to are Liberal governments. They are the Abbott and Turnbull governments—coalition governments, to be specific. The Prime Minister has 'stepped up' so considerably that residents in Williamtown in my electorate—along with residents in Katherine, Northern Territory, and Oakey, Queensland—have been forced to take court action against their own government, which they elected to serve them. After it failed last year, mediation in the class action commences tomorrow. So they're back mediating tomorrow to try and come up with a solution. I am pleading with this government to sort this out. They need to get into that mediation room tomorrow and face our communities in good faith. Be model litigants. Do the right thing. Stop the hell that these people are being dragged through by their very own government, Prime Minister. Do something. Show your big heart.

Aged Care

Mr BROADBENT (Monash) (16:26): ACAT teams—they have another name as well—across Australia do the assessment for people who are about to go into aged care. I've been through it myself, with my own father. Members of our audience today will know our responsibility to the older people of Australia. I've read the Legislated review of aged care 2017 report in regard to the ACAT teams. Recommendation 27 is 'That the government integrate the RAS and ACAT assessment workforces'. The report goes on to make other remarks around that. It doesn't say that this area should be contracted out. I've been in situations, in things that I did in my past life, where areas have been contracted out, and there is a great loss of experience that is extended to people. So I'd have to question whether this report, or the royal commission or any other report, actually asks the government to contract out this particular system. We'd be losing an enormous amount of experience if that were the case and might find ourselves down the track with only one provider to provide the service and contract out that service. I'm looking very closely at this. I would expect that there will be further discussions with government and with those around us regarding the expertise that the ACAT teams provide to aged care today.

Werriwa Electorate: Thomas Hassall Anglican College

Ms STANLEY (Werriwa—Opposition Whip) (16:28): I was very pleased to be able to attend and take part in the thanksgiving service for the 20th anniversary of Thomas Hassall Anglican College. The service was attended by local church ministers and representatives from Liverpool City Council. Also present were two very important people to the school: Dr Bryan Cowling, foundation principal; and Archdeacon Dr Geoff Huard, the foundation council chair. Thomas Hassall is the 12th-largest school in New South Wales. It was established in 2000, with just 150 students and 12 staff. With limited resources, it grew to 1,000 students in 2007, when the current principal, Ross Whelan, took over the leadership of the school. There are now over 1,750 students, from preparatory to year 12. They are supported by 250 staff, wonderful parents and many volunteers.
The service was supported by musical performances that showcased the talents of the students, including the national anthem, school song and hymns. In addition to Mr Whelan, the assembly was addressed by Bishop Peter Lin. Thomas Hassall took its name from the Reverend Thomas Hassall, who in May 1813 established the first Sunday school in Australia. He was also the first home-grown Anglican minister here. I applaud this school; the principal, Ross Whelan; and all of the staff on the anniversary. I am very proudly wearing the 20th anniversary pin that I received on the day.

North Queensland: Infrastructure

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson) (16:29): About a year ago I stood with Ash Dodd and other representatives of the traditional owner company Shine Energy to support their vision for a high tech coal-fired power station at Collinsville. It's a vision that will get no love from Labor, who will not only deny North Queensland a potential source of reliable and affordable power but also deny these traditional owners an opportunity to provide jobs and a future for their people. These are proud Birri people who want to build North Queensland's first HELE coal-fired power plant on their country, on Birri land, at Collinsville. They want to build the Dhalgan Energy Park project; Dhalgan means 'sun and energy' in Birri language.

On Friday we again heard the Leader of the Labor Party rubbing their plan, calling the project 'pathetic' and saying that it doesn't make sense. I can assure Labor that the people of Central and North Queensland, the farmers and manufacturers who are paying too much for electricity and the workers in the coal industry, are listening—listening to their hopes being called 'pathetic'. There were no words of support. They were listening for any words of support for their industry, their jobs and their future, just like they listened at the last election to another Labor leader—another each-way man. Instead they saw squirming, ducking and weaving and watched the Labor candidates run rather than answer the question, 'Do you support coal?' What they hear today is crazy policies on capping coal exports and zero emissions that would destroy local jobs. What they hear today is that nothing has changed. Labor does not support them.

Macnamara Electorate: Centrelink

Mr BURNS (Macnamara) (16:31): I know the Liberals and Nationals like to wake up in the morning and think about what government services they can cut and save a penny from. This government hasn't met a vulnerable Australian it doesn't want to squeeze every last dollar out of. The Prime Minister and Minister Robert have presided over the illegal robodebt scheme. They ripped $4.6 billion out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. They continue to refuse to raise the woefully inadequate rate of Newstart, and they are pushing countless Australians off the very baseline of support and Newstart as well.

But that's not all. We have revealed that there is a government plan to shut down local Centrelink offices. People in Macnamara have been absolutely shocked to hear that their South Melbourne Centrelink office, on York Street, is one of the ones under the gun of those opposite. Shutting down local offices hurts vulnerable people. Shutting down local Centrelink offices hurts vulnerable older Australians—people who may not be as tech savvy as others—and this government doesn't care.

Mr Byrne: And no internet access.

Mr BURNS: And no internet access, as the member for Holt points out. They don't care about vulnerable Australians. They want to shut down Centrelink offices. In Macnamara we will fight for our South Melbourne office every day.

Lindsay, Mr Thomas

Mr CONAGHAN (Cowper) (16:33): I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Thomas Lindsay, who received the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to the road industry and to the community. Mr Lindsay, the co-founder of Lindsay Brothers Transport in 1953, has served the transport community for almost 70 years, forging transport to what we see today. Already highly recognised, Thomas was inducted into the National Road Transport Hall of Fame in 2003, the Queensland Road Transport Legends Hall of Fame in 2013 and the National Road Transport Hall of Fame as an industry icon in 2019. This is not to mention the tens of thousands of locals employed during those decades. If that's not enough, Thomas Lindsay has also been a member of the Rotary Club of Coffs Harbour since 1970, having served as a director and president during those years and received the Paul Harris Fellow award.

It is people like Thomas Lindsay who not only develop industry with dedication and drive but also create and sustain regional and rural communities. I thank you for your commitment to our community, Mr Lindsay, and I congratulate you on this well-deserved recognition.
Dunkley Electorate: Infrastructure

Ms MURPHY (Dunkley) (16:34): Australians woke up over the weekend to news that the government is engaged not just in sports rorts but in the nuclear rorting that has been going on with the infrastructure fund. The people of Dunkley want to know where is the money, the so-called budgeted money, that was promised to Dunkley when it was a Liberal held seat. We heard the former member for Dunkley talking about $225 million worth of funding for the extension of the Metro line to Baxter. They called and called for the release of a business case. It was provided to the federal government in October last year. Three weeks ago I wrote to the minister and asked him to release the business case to the community and to me, but he has not responded. We had the former member for Dunkley talking about there being $38.5 million in budgeted funding for car parking at Frankston, Kananook and Seaford, apparently for 800 spaces. We have seen nothing. What do we know? There was no consultation with the community, the council or the state government, just an announcement out of the air. What are they going to do? Are they going to build a car park at Seaford at the site of the RSL? Who would know, because they have been completely silent on it. Where is the $30 million that they announced for doing up the intersections on Ballarto Road? We want the business case released, we want the parking station at Frankston to be started as soon as possible and we want a commitment in this year's federal budget that all the money promised for Dunkley is going to stay there. We are a Labor seat now and we're going to make sure that we get the money that was promised to us.

Stirling electorate: Mens Sheds

Mr CONNELLY (Stirling) (16:36): So often people live struggles that are unknown to others. That's why I was so thrilled last week to spend some more time at Karrinyup Community Men's Shed, along with Richard, Jim, Frank, Norm and others, having a look at the new dust extraction system that's been put in place, with thanks to a Stronger Communities Program grant. This program allows MPs to get out into their communities, see what needs there are, have an independent panel assess those needs and then make the funding commitments. These are small on a financial scale but massive in terms of human impact. Richard shared with me stories of men who had come to the shed emotionally dark and who are now bounding with joy and full of life. Richard was very clear with me, though. He said there are men who would not be alive today if it were not for the community that they have found at the shed. Some additional men were unable to work in the shed due to respiratory issues caused by dust, and with the new dust extraction system these gentlemen are back on deck. To meet the growing demand, planning is now underway to install another demountable building, thanks to a further $20,000 in grant funding. This will allow the shed more room to enable even more people in our local community to overcome some of those personal struggles and to thrive together along with their new mates.

Holt Electorate: Mental Health

Mr BYRNE (Holt) (16:37): I'd like to talk about the mental health of young people in the south-eastern region. Young people have been pretty badly affected, particularly in the past, with some challenges relating to a cohort of young people in 2011 and 2012 who took their own lives. It was a very traumatic period of time for our community, and I'd like to thank Professor Patrick McGorry for the work that he did with me and others and stakeholders in the region to try and address that epidemic, if you want to use that term. At that period of time there was some discussion about the suicide rate coming down—that clearly has not been the case; the suicide rate is actually going up—given that we have headspace clinics in our region, including headspace Dandenong and, particularly, headspace Narre Warren. We have a massive growth corridor and we have a lot of young people who want to access the service, but they need another headspace clinic, and that headspace clinic needs to be put in Cranbourne. I can't go into the figures, but headspace Narre Warren has a huge number of young people who want to see them for complex needs. They need additional services. What I am doing here today, particularly given the work that we've done and the discussions that we've had with headspace stakeholders in that region, is calling for a headspace clinic in Cranbourne. We're going to lobby for this, because this is a service that our young people deserve and need.

Rail Infrastructure

Mr DRUM (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (16:39): I will add my voice to a growing band of stakeholders that are really concerned about the Labor government in Victoria. The Labor government is attempting to walk away from the Melbourne airport rail-link tunnel. When former Prime Minister Turnbull and Premier Andrews agreed on a Melbourne airport rail link in 2018, it was widely understood that the link would involve its own designated tunnel to Sunshine. As it has turned out, only one of the four options that were looked at can have a tunnel with a designated opportunity for the prospect of fast-rail commuter trains running all the way out through the congested suburban services.
Subsequent analysis published in the Stronger, Together fast regional rail strategy 2019 shows that a tunnel can host required airport services plus high service levels of fast high-capacity electrified trains to Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Shepparton plus other places that could accommodate interstate fast services into the future. But since August 2018 the Premier has lost control of the state budget with the West Gate Tunnel project, the Melbourne metro, the North East Link, outer suburban metro rail loop all costing billions and billions over and above what it was originally planned for. They are trying hard to convince the federal government to walk away from the only design that can actually transform regional rail services and it is my job to make sure that the Victorian government doesn't walk away from that project.

Dobson, Mr Barry Robert
Hayden, Mrs Dallas

Mr DICK (Oxley) (16:40): I rise to congratulate Mr Barry Dobson on receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia for his invaluable service to the community. Barry is a retired builder from the great suburb of Inala and he was nominated by his sister, Andrea Thompson, after a lifetime spent volunteering as a athletics official. Barry has always been a keen marathon runner and, whilst he pursued his dreams on the field, he also dedicated much of his spare time in a voluntary capacity assisting in roles as a track umpire and timekeeper, coach and numerous club positions to help others pursue their sporting dreams. How lucky we are that Barry and Irene chose to call our community home. I am very proud to thank Barry on behalf of the community for his passion and drive that he's shown both on and off the field. Being awarded an OAM is no small thing and not only is this a great personal achievement for Barry, it is a great reflection of a talent that we have in our mighty community if Inala. Well done, Barry.

I would like to bring to the attention of the House another living treasure in our suburbs Mrs Dallas Hayden AM for her Australia Day Award for her significant contribution to the Australian community. Mrs Hayden is a much-loved figure in the Oxley community and of course is the wife of former Governor-General Bill Hayden. I note the Haydens will be celebrating 60 years of marriage this year. Mrs Hayden is still widely regarded when I visit the community, with people reminding me of her great work when she was married to Bill Hayden, when he was the federal member for Oxley. I congratulate Mrs Hayden for all of her achievements and particularly for her Order of Australia.

Leichhardt Electorate: Far North Queensland Cairns Medical and Skin Cancer Centre

Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt) (16:42): I officially opened the $1 million expansion of the Far North Queensland Cairns Medical and Skin Cancer Centre. The expansion includes a dedicated surgery space with a view to being accredited as a bulk-billing day hospital. In fact, the centre is the only bulk-billing skin cancer centre in our region offering anything from skin checks, biopsies, skin cancer surgery and all of the follow-up care. Owners Dr Vin and Tarlija Rajeswaran have overseen a growth in their business in the last few years from a humble beginning some 3½ years ago, when I actually opened the centre with one doctor and 200 patients. The centre now has more than 42,000 patients from as far away as Weipa and the lower Gulf. The centre employs 40-odd staff now with 10 full-time doctors. It is a national training centre for the SunDoctors, which means doctors from across the nation are coming to Cairns to train. Melanoma is to the fourth most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia, with about 15½ thousand people diagnosed each year. Sadly of those 15½ thousand people, over 1,700 will die each year despite melanoma being largely a preventable cancer. The Rajeswarans are extremely dedicated and passionate about their work and—put simply—their work is saving lives and, for that, they should be acknowledged in the highest possible way.

Fenner Electorate

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (16:43): It is festival season in Australia's greatest city, and over the weekend around 200,000 Canberraans came to the National Multicultural Festival, enjoying Korean deep fried chicken with cheese, Croatian cevapi, Tibetan momos, South Indian puri, North Indian butter chicken, debating the critical question as to whether the German or the Serbian stall produced the better sausage and enjoying some 220 kilograms of potatoes prepared by the Czech association.

This weekend it continues with the Canberra Show coming up. Around 50,000 people attended last year and, with this being the first year that Canberraans can take light rail to the Canberra Show, hopefully that record will be broken. We have a host of exciting activities coming up. Past entertainment has included car soccer, freestyle motocross and precision driving as well as thousands of horses, cattle and sheep. Given the tragic bushfires in the region, this will be a moment for Canberraans to celebrate our local region and the bush capital.
There is also the Enlighten Festival on this weekend, which includes a cruise along Lake Burley Griffin. There is Questacon's illuminated igloo garden and there is Enlightening Elections at the National Electoral Education Centre at the Museum of Australian Democracy. There is no question; this is the greatest city in Australia.

**Menzies Electorate: Community Services**

**Mr ANDREWS** (Menzies) (16:45): I mentioned in this place on many occasions before the wonderful work that the various seniors groups in my electorate do. I wanted to list a number of these groups that provide such magnificent social and supportive community environments. These include the Australian Coptic Senior Citizens Club, the Bulleen and Templestowe Senior Citizens Club, the Combined Pensioners Association of Bulleen and Templestowe, the Doncaster Senior Citizens Centre, the Greek Senior Citizens Club of Manningham, the Iranian Senior Citizens Club of Manningham, the Italian Senior Citizens Club, the St Haralambos church Greek senior citizens, the Warrandyte Senior Citizens Club, the National Seniors Australia Doncaster branch and the Eltham Elderly Citizens Club. Together these clubs provide the glue of our community, particularly for senior members. They provide that social environment. They provide a supportive environment. They enhance the physical and mental health of so many people in the community. I have spoken before about other groups such as the Chinese Senior Citizens Club, one of the biggest in Australia, and of course the Macedonian Senior Citizens Club as well. The combined work of these groups, voluntarily provided by so many people, provides a real sense of worth, of dignity and of place for many of the elderly people of Manningham.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** In accordance with standing order 43, the time for member's statements has concluded.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**Aged Care**

**Ms CLAYDON** (Newcastle) (16:47): I move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT) are teams of medical professionals which run clinical and psychological checks on older Australians who have applied for home or residential aged care;

(b) based in hospitals across the country, ACAT are ultimately responsible for assessing which older Australians should receive government-funded care;

(c) teams usually include a nurse, plus another healthcare worker such as a physiotherapist, occupational therapist or social worker;

(d) the Government has announced that it will privatise the ACAT workforce from April 2021, when a tender will be put out for organisations to deliver this vital assessment; and

(e) on 14 January 2020 the Chair of the Royal Commission into Aged Care, Mr Gaetano Pagone QC, issued a statement saying the Royal Commission's interim report 'did not endorse the Government's stated position' on privatising the ACAT;

(2) supports the retention of ACAT as a publicly provided service;

(3) commends the Health Services Union, United Workers Unions and Australian Nurses and Midwifery Federation for their continued advocacy on behalf of working people in healthcare across Australia, and particularly in the aged care sector; and

(4) condemns the Government for its continued failings across aged care policy.

At the end of last year, the deeply troubling interim report of the aged-care royal commission was delivered and the Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Senator Colbeck, announced the government's plan to privatise aged-care assessments. At the time, the minister claimed this plan was supported by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. Of course, this isn't true. Indeed, we heard the member for Monash earlier calling out this lie in this chamber. It led to a humiliating rebuke of the government in the form of an official statement from the commission chair, the Hon. Mr Pagone QC. The statement read:

Public concern has been expressed about statements made by the Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians that we had decided to support the privatisation of the Aged Care Assessment Teams in our Interim Report. I take this opportunity to make clear that the Interim Report did not endorse the Government's stated position …

This is, quite frankly, an extraordinary move for the commissioner to make. It indicates how misleading the minister's claim was and how questionable his proposal is.

Aged-care assessment teams are a core feature of aged care in this country. They are the first interaction that older Australians have with the aged-care system and a critical first step in getting a home care package or moving into residential aged care. They are the ultimate arbiters of what older Australians need and they are responsible for determining what sort of government-funded care is available.
There are many arguments that the process could be improved. Sure, we can streamline the process and improve the assessments, but this in no way supports privatisation. There are important roles which are filled by qualified people who know what they're doing. Why would private companies be able to do it better, especially given that they have to make a profit as well as deliver a service?

When the two conflict, as they inevitably will, can we be sure that service standards and older Australians' interests will prevail? It is no secret that the Liberals are obsessed with privatisation. There is not a public enterprise they wouldn't sell off if they thought there was a buyer. It's equally common knowledge that privatisation has not delivered. Aged care is far too important to entrust to this sort of experiment.

I commend the Health Services Union, the United Workers Union and the Australian Nurses and Midwifery Federation for their continued advocacy on behalf of people working in healthcare across Australia and particularly the aged-care sector. I know there are many people in these unions who are gravely concerned about what this will mean for the workforce and for the quality of services. Indeed, I have met with some in my own electorate. They told me that no private provider would be capable of offering the breadth of skills to assess the complex needs of hundreds of thousands of older Australians. They shared their fears that the more expensive parts of the service would be shut down or indeed pushed back onto governments. They warned of the very legitimate risk of conflict of interest if companies that are running the nursing homes are also given permission to conduct the assessments.

Who can blame them for questioning this government and its plans, given its track record on aged care so far? The Liberals have mismanaged and underfunded aged care for six years. We've seen four different ministers and billions of dollars ripped off the system. We've seen appalling cases of abuse and neglect. Most distressingly, we've seen 30,000 older Australians pass away whilst waiting for a home care package in just the last two years. Make no mistake: our aged care system is in crisis. But the answer is not to privatise ACAT. Even the New South Wales health minister, Minister Brad Hazzard, has called out this half-baked plan, saying:

It seems pre-emptive and unreasonable to be effectively privatising health aged-care services while the royal commission into aged care is still under way. Australia already has a network of experienced, qualified and highly trained workers delivering aged-care assessments across the country. The government should focus on fixing the diabolical problems in aged care, not selling off these vital services to the highest bidder.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace):** Is there a seconder for the motion?

**Ms Collins:** I second motion and reserve my right to speak.

**Mr CONNELLY (Stirling) (16:52):** I rise to speak on the motion regarding aged care and I welcome this opportunity to correct the record. The motion states in subparagraph (1)(d):

> the Government has announced that it will privatise the ACAT workforce from April 2021, when a tender will be put out for organisations to deliver this vital assessment;

This government has consistently refuted the proposition that our intention is to privatise the assessment process for aged care. That assessment is incorrect—period. The intention is to undertake a tender, and this intention has been public for more than a year, with state and territory officials consulted on a number of occasions. Importantly, states and territories will be able to tender to provide the integrated assessment services.

The Commonwealth does not directly provide assessments. It has always managed assessments through various forms of contracts or agreements with either the states and territories or community based organisations. So what is actually changing? New aged-care assessment arrangements will provide streamlined consumer assessments for access to aged-care services from April 2021. Improved processes will mean that older Australians can get the care they need sooner. The new arrangement will address the current problem of too many people waiting too long for an aged-care assessment. As at 31 December last year, 591 people had waited over 75 days. Under the new arrangements, a single assessment workforce and a network of assessment organisations will assess eligibility for access to all government funded aged-care services. The new single assessment workforce will replace the two current assessment workforce: the Regional Assessment Service, or RAS; and the Aged Care Assessment Teams, or ACATs.

The new arrangements will provide a simpler, more convenient pathway to My Aged Care and a greater focus on reablement and linking support. These integrations are direct responses to recommendations that members on both sides of this House should be well aware of—namely, recommendation 27 of the Tune review, which was that government integrate RAS and ACAT, and the royal commission interim report, which said that this integration needs to be progressed urgently. Far from the privatisation of a public service, this plan streamlines the delivery of government services to senior Australians as recommended by expert reviews. Assertions to the
contrary are false, plain and simple, and pair exceptionally well with the Labor Party's unbridled hypocrisy on this issue.

Despite Labor's plans for $387 billion in new taxes at the last election, including a retirees tax, Labor provided neither additional funding in their costings for home care places nor any additional funding for aged-care quality, workforce or mainstream residential aged care. The opposition would have senior Australians believe that our response to the interim report of the royal commission is, in some way, cold and callous. As always, the truth is quite the opposite. I would like to read a few of the things that the Prime Minister said when he was handed the interim report:

Today we have been handed the Interim Report. As warned, it's shocking, disturbing & heartbreaking.

We must establish a new culture of respect for senior Australians.

There is much to do both immediately & for the longer term. There are no easy solutions & we will apply ourselves totally.

This is all about the people we love & cherish. All older Australians should get the same care, support & dignity we would expect for our own families.

What you say matters, and the culture of fear and intimidation spread by the opposition through to our senior Australians is not lost on any of us. Labor's deceit shows they really don't understand the aged-care sector and want to score political points rather than implement genuine solutions. As Liberals and Nationals, we understand, and we understood, that more was needed. We launched the royal commission, and we are delivering better serves and reforms based on a deep care and respect for older Australians. I commend the government for its actions thus far and also extend my appreciation to the former Minister for Aged Care, the Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP, who instituted this commission in the first place.

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (16:57): I obviously rise in support of this motion, but I am astounded by the contribution of the member who just spoke. What a load of rot. Seriously! All it was was more and more spin from a government that is not doing anything to fix the aged-care crisis in Australia today. The truth of the matter is they only called a royal commission because they thought Labor was going to call one in the lead up to the election and because of the ABC Four Corners stories. Prior to that, the minister said it was elder abuse to suggest that a royal commission was necessary. That is the truth of what actually occurred around the calling of the royal commission.

If the government is so proud of the ACAT services, why did it just pop them up on its website on 23 December saying, 'New aged-care assessment arrangements will provide streamlined consumer assessment for access to aged-care services from April 2021'? That was actually the government's announcement: a little statement from the Department of Health on 23 December. The reason the government didn't want to crow about this is they know that the over a thousand workers around the country who are currently delivering ACAT services, the aged-care assessment services, are highly trained, well-qualified people who know what they're doing when it comes to having these assessments of older Australians. They also know that the states and territories have these ACAT teams sometimes based in hospitals to ensure that older Australians who are in hospital can get an assessment to try and get them some services so that they can actually leave the hospital. That's what the hospital based Aged Care Assessment Teams do.

This decision by the government has been criticised by everybody. We heard from the previous speaker and we heard from the minister this touting out that the royal commission interim report said that this is what the government should do and/or that David Tune, in the Tune report, the legislated review, said that this is what the government should do. That is simply not true. It is absolutely not true. David Tune called for a streamlining of the Regional Assessment Service and the ACAT service. The government can do that without privatising the ACAT teams.

There was no discussion with the states and territories who deliver the ACAT services prior to the government putting this little statement up on its website. It's an absolute disgrace. The workers and the trained, qualified people who are delivering these services today deserve better. Older Australians, their families and their loved ones deserve better than this government putting up that little note a few days before Christmas and trying to pretend that somehow it was a recommendation, when it clearly was not. Indeed, the royal commissioners had to slap down the minister when he tried to make this claim.

The workers who deliver these services—we're talking about registered nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists—are trained people, highly skilled, doing these assessments. If they are streamlined and outsourced, what guarantee do we have that people will have the appropriate qualifications to do these assessments? Are they going to be based on the current Regional Assessment Service, the RAS? The qualification for making those assessments, because they are for the entry-level Commonwealth Home Support Program, is just
a certificate II in aged care. There's a big difference between a certificate II and an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist or a registered nurse—a very big difference in qualification and skill mix.

The government needs to come clean on why it is doing this. It needs to guarantee that the qualifications of the service are still there. It should abandon its privatisation plans altogether, in our view. If not, it needs to guarantee that these workers, the qualified workers who are currently doing these assessments, are able to remain in these positions, because the states and territories need them where they are to do these assessments, to get older Australians who are currently in hospital out of hospital and going home with appropriate care. They need these services to ensure that older Australians get the assessments they need, when they need them.

We already know this government has said, 'We can't do all this stuff till after the royal commission.' But apparently they can privatise the ACAT. They can't fix all the other things like the over 100,000 people waiting for home care. They can't fix bringing together the Commonwealth Home Support Program and the home care packages. They can't do a whole range of things, they claim, until they get the recommendations of the royal commission, due in November. But they can do this, even though the royal commission has said, 'Don't do this, because we'll make a recommendation about what we think the government should do in relation to aged-care assessment teams.' The government should abandon its plans to privatise the ACAT and wait for the royal commission.

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (17:02): I'm pleased to stand here today to speak on this motion because it gives me a chance not only to dispel the total furphy that the member for Newcastle seeks to spread in this place, and that the previous Labor speakers sought to spread, but to talk about our genuine, certain, costed plan to improve the aged-care sector. I want to cut through, once again, what was just plain posturing from the Labor members and what we just heard from the Labor member opposite—politics before people. We see it time and time again from the Labor members opposite.

An opposition member interjecting—

Mr SIMMONDS: They laugh because, to them, it's all just a game. For the Labor members, it's all just a political game. But we are about making sure that our aged Australians are getting the care that they need. Improving aged care and ensuring senior Australians are cared for with dignity and respect is what this side of the chamber is all about. One of the first decisions of the Prime Minister was to establish the royal commission into aged care. He knew that we would be confronted by some very difficult stories, but, without having a full and complete understanding of the issues, we would have run the risk that previous governments have run, where they offer only a bandaid fix and not the significant change that this government is undertaking. Off the back of the royal commission, we have continued to make improvements in relation to aged care, including a new independent Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, and we have implemented new consumer focused quality standards and introduced a new single Charter of Aged Care Rights.

On this issue of the ACAT assessments, Labor and their union mates have deliberately sought to misrepresent the facts of this matter. I wish I were surprised. Unfortunately it is the case over and over again with Labor members. The government have never stated that we are privatising aged care assessments. This is a total falsehood. The facts are that the government supports the recommendations from various independent reviews to create a single integrated ACAT and RAS assessment workforce in aged care. This will mean a single assessment workforce that will assess eligibility for access to all aged-care services. It will remove duplication, meaning older Australians can get more timely, consistent and high-quality assessments.

On this side of the House, we are about finding genuine solutions for our aged-care sector that improve the lives of older Australians. We are delivering a record investment across the aged-care system, from $13.3 billion in 2012-13, growing to $21.4 billion in 2019-20, up to an estimated $25.4 billion in 2022-23. That is a costed real investment that will improve the lives of older Australians.

We know that senior Australians want to live in their own homes for longer. We have listened, and we are supporting them to do so. In the 2018-19 budget, the government has invested in providing 44,000 new home-care packages, at a cost of $2.7 billion. Again, we are not posturing; it is not the debating club that the Labor members opposite are trying to foster; it is real outcomes for Australians on the ground. We are delivering a record investment in aged care, more home-care packages, new aged-care quality standards and a more streamlined assessment process, creating a better overall experience.

The hypocrisy of Labor in suggesting that this government is failing older Australians is absolutely baffling. It was only prior to the last election that Labor had no additional funding for home-care places, zero—not a single home-care place did Labor go to the election to fund. Labor standing here criticising this government, which is delivering more home-care places for older Australians, just goes to show that the hypocrisy of those opposite simply knows no bounds. The Labor Party went to the last election committing to no additional funding to
improve aged-care quality. Instead, they wanted to slug older Australians with $387 billion worth of new taxes, including the famous retiree tax. They were happy to reach into the pockets of older Australians who had already made investment decisions for their retirement but weren't willing to reinvest it in the home care of our older Australians. Sadly, this is what we expect from the Labor members opposite. That's why this government is committed to making sure we have better outcomes for our ageing Australians.

Ms KEARNEY (Cooper) (17:08): I rise to speak on the motion put forward by the member for Newcastle. I thank her for drawing attention to this issue. We have heard the same tired old speaking notes from those on the other side of the room forever, and they must be getting so embarrassed having to repeat them over and over again. Why don't they use this one: how good is ruining the one part of the aged-care system that is working well? How good is it? The decision to privatisate the Aged Care Assessment Team is a decision no-one asked for and no-one wants. And it is actually open to the private sector. The member for Franklin just showed me a direct quote from the minister himself.

The government's obsession with privatisation means they are blinded by the effect this will have on the health system. Experts argue that no private providers can offer the expertise to adequately assess the complex needs of hundreds of thousands of elderly Australians. In an article published in The Saturday Paper on 2 November 2019, a senior member of ACAT said they have 'no confidence a lesser skilled privatised workforce will deliver the quality in assessments required'. Does the government expect us to believe that for-profit companies won't prioritise profit over quality assessments? They won't result in poorly trained assessors who inadequately assess complex needs?

The state-employed ACAT workers are exactly the right people to be doing clinical assessments. This government does not care that their move to privatise may see 1,000 dedicated ACAT workers lose their jobs. Labor will always back our nurses, doctors and social workers. The same cannot be said for those who sit opposite.

I also want to give a big shout-out to the Health Services Union, the United Workers Union and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation for their continued advocacy on behalf of working people in health care across Australia, particularly in the aged-care sector.

As the shadow assistant minister for aged care, I hear many stories of how broken our aged-care system is, and the shadow minister for ageing and seniors has told us time and time again that ACAT is the only part of the aged-care system that is not broken. In fact, ACAT has been demonstrably successful. The first interaction the elderly have with the aged-care system is through an aged-care assessment team, an ACAT. The assessment takes place following a decline in health due to ageing. A well-qualified and well-trained, employed workforce of nurses, allied health workers and geriatricians provides an assessment and ensures the appropriate level of support. It's the first step to getting a home care package or entering a residential aged-care facility. Each year more than 170,000 older Australians and their families access the care they need, and most report it to be a professional process that provides guidance and care during a very hard time.

So why is the Morrison government hell-bent on privatising a good service? It's certainly not because the royal commission suggested it. In fact, like his boss, who is loose with the truth, the aged-care minister, Senator Colbeck, falsely claimed that the aged care royal commission supported the privatisation of aged-care assessment services. The royal commission had to issue a firm rebuke, noting the commission's interim report did not endorse the government's stated position. Is it because the states thought that ACAT might work better if it were privatised; is that why he's doing it? Absolutely not. Embarrassingly for the Morrison government, the Liberal health minister in New South Wales has come out and said:

NSW has major concerns … It seems pre-emptive and unreasonable to be effectively privatising health aged-care services while the royal commission into aged care is still under way.

So why is the Morrison government doing this? There are some clues in Rick Morton's article in The Saturday Paper, which suggests that by privatising the assessment process the government can manipulate waiting lists for aged-care services and reduce the level of care offered to people in their homes. The article says:

A senior doctor and member of a current ACAT service told The Saturday Paper the new arrangements are likely to be an "accounting trick" that can "magic the numbers". The doctor believed the government would put fewer people in the high-care category …

It is one of the most sinister things I have ever seen a government do. We know this government has a huge problem with waiting lists for home care packages, with 110,000 people waiting. But, rather than funding more packages, they're going to change the eligibility for aged-care support to put downward pressure on their waiting lists. More people will go without care; it's just that they won't be counted on a list. It's sinister. It's dodgy. It's so typical of this government, which thinks it can spin its way out of everything. I'm truly gobsmacked at how awful
they are. Let me say to those who sit opposite: any gloss and sheen you had from the election has worn off. Australians are seeing you for what you really are: sneaky, mean and arrogant.

Mr SHARMA ( Wentworth) ( 17:13): My father turned 92 years old yesterday. I went and celebrated his birthday with him. He's actually in Wolper hospital at the moment, which is in my electorate. Like many, he has been a beneficiary of our aged-care system, and, like many of us here, I suspect, I'm familiar with the system through my interactions in looking after an ageing parent.

Truly, I think a measure of our decency as a society is how we look after our elderly and ensure they can continue to live lives of meaning, dignity and purpose, even when physical and mental frailties take hold. In Australia we have about 1.3 million people accessing some form of aged care, and this number is only going to increase over time. This is why improving aged care for senior Australians is a very high priority for this government, as it should be. It's why one of the first acts of Scott Morrison as Prime Minister was to call a royal commission into aged care quality and safety. This royal commission has uncovered some troubling concerns in this sector, which it highlighted in its October 2019 interim report, including the management of dementia patients, the prevalence of young people in inappropriate residential aged-care facilities, the use of chemical and physical restraints, and the shortage of home care packages. The royal commission's interim report is clear: as a country, we—the government, the aged-care sector and the entire Australian community—can and must do better in providing improved support for our older Australians.

In response to the royal commission's interim report, the government announced a $537 million funding package across the three priority areas, including investing almost $500 million for an additional 10,000 home-care packages. The additional 10,000 home-care packages will be focused on the royal commission's identified areas of need and are strongly weighted towards level 3 and level 4 packages, which provide a high level of care. These additional 10,000 packages have been rolled out since December last year. Since the 2018-19 budget, the government has invested $2.7 billion in 44,000 new home-care packages. We've more than doubled the number of home-care packages available to a record 150,000 this financial year. Undoubtedly there is still more work to be done to ensure older Australians have the choice to stay in their homes for longer, but these are important steps.

Part of the challenge is to ensure a better and less traumatic experience for older Australians entering aged care, and it is for this reason that we are seeking to create a single assessment workforce that will assess eligibility for access to all aged-care services. David Tune said in his review:

…to create a seamless aged care system that is responsive to consumer needs and enable the government to fully understand demand, it should be a priority to combine the RAS and ACAT— or regional assessment service and aged care assessment team— assessment workforces and systems into an integrated assessment workforce.

The royal commission noted in its interim report: 'The royal commission considers that this integration needs to be progressed urgently.' The government intends to implement this recommendation and integrate the two assessment workforces. This was announced in the 2018-19 budget. The new system will support greater flexibility in the assessment process by avoiding the need to schedule second assessments and by providing simpler and more-convenient options for clients to enter My Aged Care, including through GP referral and online self-service. This will help people to be connected to care sooner, reduce duplication and inefficiencies and stop a revolving door of assessments where vulnerable older people get sent to multiple organisations, depending on the programs for which they are eligible.

The intention to undertake a tender has been public for more than a year, with state and territory officials consulted on a number of occasions. States and territories will be able to tender and provide the integrated assessment services, just as they do now. As you would know, Deputy Speaker Gillespie, the Commonwealth does not directly provide assessments. It has always managed assessments through various forms of contracts or agreements with the states, territories or community based organisations.

What all this is about is improving the experience and lessening the stress and trauma for older Australians and helping to ensure older Australians can access the services they need sooner. This should be a goal that we can all get behind.

Ms McBRIDE (Dobell) ( 17:17): There is a well-known saying: if it ain't broke don't fix it. So what is this government doing? It's taking one of the few parts of the aged-care system that is working and was not the subject of adverse findings by the royal commission and is 'fixing it' by privatising it. This plan to privatise ACAT assessment services is not supported by the aged-care sector, by state health ministers or by the royal commissioner. ACAT is a professional workforce of almost a thousand people across Australia—registered nurses, occupational therapists, social workers, physiotherapists, geriatricians—who are qualified and experienced
and capable of doing proper assessments of the type of care older Australians need. What are those opposite going to do? They're going to privatise these assessments. What could possibly go wrong?

This proposal will only hurt older Australians, their families and those who love them. Rather than improving the process, it is more likely to cause disruption, anxiety and more delays. Rather than improving the process, it is more likely to result in a tick-and-flick approach to assessments that require experienced, capable and professional people. These are assessments that need time, experience and empathy to understand the person, their circumstances and their particular needs. We will not sit by while this government tries to privatise a workforce of at least a thousand qualified and experienced professionals such as the many people I worked with when I worked at Wyong hospital for almost 10 years.

The ACAT model is well respected across the health and aged-care sectors and, most importantly, it is trusted by older Australians, their families and those who love them. These are people like Therese, of Wyong. Therese's husband, Peter, lived with Parkinson's disease for 27 years. She was his full-time carer for over 15 years. Sadly, Peter passed away six months ago. Therese told me:

ACAT was a great support and helped to give Peter access to the best of care including occupational therapy and hydrotherapy. ACAT also assisted to get him a wheelchair.

Therese believes that ACAT would be ruined if it fell into the hands of private operators, and these concerns are shared by many. When the federal was minister was questioned about the privatisation of ACAT, he said, 'The royal commission supports us.' But this just isn't true. The aged-care royal commissioner had to intervene and say: 'The royal commission has not at all considered what should happen to the Aged Care Assessment Teams.' The minister was not telling the truth. The government says that they can't do anything about aged care because of the royal commission and then, at the same time, they try to privatisate the Aged Care Assessment Teams.

This decision has been questioned by the states and territories. New South Wales health minister Brad Hazzard said the decision was not raised with him at a meeting of state ministers and nor by federal health minister Greg Hunt or by aged-care minister Richard Colbeck. This is what Minister Hazzard had to say:

New South Wales has major concerns. It seems pre-emptive and unreasonable to be effectively privatising health aged-care services while the royal commission into aged care is still underway. Not a lot of logic there.

The Aged Care Assessment Teams, as I and others have mentioned, are one part of the aged-care system that hasn't been widely criticised during the royal commission.

So what's this government's great plan to address the urgent problems within aged care and to restore confidence and certainty for older Australians and their families? 'We'll privatise that bit. We'll try to save a bit of money over here.' Not only that, who is going to provide these assessments? Will they be the organisations that do the assessments? Will they then go out and provide the care, or tender for the care? Brad Hazzard, the minister, said:

It would worry me if a private company had accountability that went beyond the pure interest of the elderly person.

Who would that private company be accountable to? To their shareholders and to their bottom line—not to the vulnerable older person and their family who need care.

The government needs to act on aged care and the government needs to do something today, particularly about home care. The interim report of the royal commission highlighted urgent actions the government could and should take rather than privatising ACAT. The government could provide more home care packages to decrease the waiting list. Shockingly, we heard that 30,000 people have died while waiting for home care and more than 25,000 older Australians ended up in residential care sooner than they wanted to. On the coast, the number of people waiting grows year on year. Either this government doesn't get it or it just doesn't care.

**Ms LIU (Chisholm)** (17:22): I welcome any opportunity to rise and speak about this government's record of delivering for senior Australians. Improving aged care for all senior Australians has been and will continue to be one of the government's key priorities. This is why one of Prime Minister Morrison's first acts as Prime Minister was to call the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. This government's ongoing commitment to older Australians is exactly why we are delivering record investment across the aged-care system from $13.3 billion in 2012-13 growing to $21.4 billion in 2019-20 and up to an estimated $25.4 billion in 2022-23.

As a government, we want to see senior Australians living in their own homes longer. The coalition government will provide the necessary support to make this happen. We will increase home care packages from $60,308 under Labor in 2012-13 to $158,030 in 2022-23. This is an increase of over 160 per cent. Unlike Labor, the coalition government knows how to manage the economy, and we all know that without strong economic management none of these funding increases would be possible. The government continues to make key reforms as the royal commission progresses, as we said we would, including establishing a new independent Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, and a new single charter of aged care rights is now in place.
Senior Australians know that, when it comes to aged care, Labor cannot be trusted. Labor went to the last election promising $387 billion in new taxes. This included the retiree tax, designed to hurt senior Australians. What is worse is that, with all these new taxes, Labor provided no additional funding in their costings for home-care places or indeed any additional funding for aged-care quality or for the workforce of mainstream residential aged care. This just shows the hypocrisy of Labor when it comes to aged care. The only time Labor cares about our older Australians is when they are trying to reach into their wallets and slug them with new taxes.

Labor have some serious questions to answer because as a party they have failed. They have failed to provide a single aged-care policy alternative. Labor's policy on aged care is missing. They keep telling us they will release something later. Senior Australians are an afterthought to the Australian Labor Party. The coalition is interested in making a difference, while our opponents want to play cheap political games.

The coalition government has much to be proud of when it comes to looking after senior Australians. This government announced a funding package of $537 million, which it began rolling out December last year. This package includes $496.3 million for an additional 10,000 home-care packages for those with the highest needs. This government's actions will reduce wait times and connect people to care sooner. The Morrison government is committed to creating a better experience for senior Australians entering aged care. That is our focus. We will deliver on streamlining assessments to make sure senior Australians get the care they need. It is the coalition government that looks after senior Australians, not Labor.

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (17:27): Aged care assessment teams are known as ACATs and they are teams of medical professionals who work alongside the Regional Assessment Service. They work out of our hospitals and they expertly assess the level of care required by individual elderly Australians. These teams are ultimately responsible for assessing who should receive government funded care and at what level. There are 80 of these care teams across Australia. They are physiotherapists, nurses, psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists.

But in late December last year the government quietly announced it will amalgamate the ACAT and RAS workforce from April 2021, with a tender to be put out for organisations to deliver the combined assessment service rather than state health professionals and that should be an issue that should concern every single Australian.

This decision appears to have caught the state health ministers unaware, with the Victorian and Queensland ministers expressing concern at the rushed privatisation, while the New South Wales health minister, a Liberal, Mr Brad Hazzard, went so far as to say that it lacked logic. Meanwhile the chair of the royal commission into aged care, Mr Pagone QC, took the unusual step of issuing a statement on behalf of the royal commission to confirm that the interim report did not endorse the government's stated position on privatising the aged care assessment teams.

I would like to say that we have heard from government that they can't move on aged care until we actually have the findings of the royal commission but privatisation—don't worry about what the commission says; don't even worry about waiting for the commission to finish; let's go gung-ho and privatise—is a detrimental step. Health experts have argued that private providers are unable to offer the expertise to adequately assess the complexities of hundreds of thousands of elderly Australians. For example, Dr John Maddison, President of the Australian and New Zealand Society for Geriatric Medicine, gave evidence to the royal commission that the changes proposed by government represented a potential threat to the availability of expertise in assessing aged-care recipients, and suggested that moving the assessment model in-house would likely remove any meaningful consultation with geriatricians during the assessment process.

So what is behind the government's proposed reform of the home care sector? It's been reported by Rick Morton, a well-known journalist from The Saturday Paper, that this is little more than an accounting trick designed to improve the figures, at least on paper, for the national prioritisation system. The national waitlist right now is 112,000 people. They are still waiting for a package, and that is a national shame. The government's report on Home Care Packages Program data for the most recent quarter provided an estimated wait time of 12 months plus for level 4 packages. However, a more accurate picture can be gleaned from the Productivity Commission's 2020 Report on government services, which shows the wait time for a level 4 package is more likely to be closer to three years. It is unclear how, if at all, the proposed ACAT system would reduce wait times or improve the quality of care for those lucky enough to receive their package in a timely manner.

Last Friday the royal commission was in Adelaide for a hearing. During the hearing, senior counsel assisting the commission Mr Rozen QC put forward a number of recommendations for consideration by the commission to address the shortage of appropriately skilled workers in the sector. In making the recommendations, Mr Rozen QC suggested the government lacked real leadership and instead had employed:
… an approach at the highest levels of the aged care bureaucracy that is timid. It’s risk averse, more worried about political risk than making a contribution to the … vital issue of aged-care reform.

It is galling that the focus of reforming aged care is a path down privatisation of the ACAT model rather than adequately funding all of those on the waitlist and supporting the ACAT model as it currently exists. This is a shame. We are letting older Australians down. We are doing the wrong thing by older Australians. It is no wonder that they are fearful in their home waiting for a package. It is no wonder they are fearful about going into an aged-care facility. This government must do better. This government can do better. We need to do better for all Australians on this.

Ms BELL (Moncrieff) (17:32): I welcome the opportunity to speak on this very important issue that the member for Newcastle has raised, because improving aged care for senior Australians continues to be the government’s key priority. As the member for Chisholm just outlined, that’s why Scott Morrison, as Prime Minister, called the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, and I commend him for his leadership.

The findings of the interim report into Australia’s aged-care system demonstrated that aged care in this country needs significant change to ensure our older Australians receive the best possible care in their most vulnerable years. We do not shy away from our responsibility as a government to ensure our elderly are looked after and respected. In its swift response to the interim report, the government announced a funding package of $537 million. This response particularly focuses on three areas. The first is more home care packages to reduce wait times and connect people to care sooner. The second is to better manage medicine and physical restraint. The third is to help with the transition of young people out of residential care. We have set an ambitious target to stop younger people entering aged care by 2022.

It’s important to highlight that these measures are not the end of the discussion on how our aged-care sector can be reformed. There’s no doubt that more will need to be done; the government acknowledges that. We continue to step up and do everything we possibly can. That’s why this royal commission is so important. The substance of the government’s response must adequately deliver to it.

I do not support this motion, and I do not support the ongoing lies from those opposite with regard to government policy in aged care. Let’s be clear: this government has delivered record investment in aged care. This government supports older Australians with more choice and better access to quality care, particularly in my electorate of Moncrieff on the Gold Coast where we have a growing and ageing population. Our record speaks for itself. Since the election, the coalition government have delivered increased investment across the aged-care system. We will deliver $5 billion in funding boosts in the forward years to 2022-23. The government remains committed to supporting senior Australians to live in their own homes longer. Since the 2018-19 budget, the Morrison government has invested in 44,000 new home care packages, at a cost of $2.7 billion.

The ongoing representation, which we see in the media and from the Labor Party, of the government as privatising aged-care assessments is false. The only people talking about privatisation here are the Labor Party members, with their union mates, who haven’t yet ruled out a new universal tax on aged care of up to $40 billion. Labor can’t be trusted when it comes to aged care. Labor can’t be trusted with senior Australians, and they know it. Despite Labor’s plan for $387 billion in new taxes at the election, including their retirees tax, which would have hurt over 6,000 seniors in my electorate alone, Labor provided no additional funding in their costings for home care places, aged-care quality, the aged-care workforce or mainstream residential aged care. This is a clear example of Labor’s blatant hypocrisy on aged care.

Labor’s inability to offer a single aged-care policy alternative raises many questions. They refuse to rule out a union-led, Medicare style universal levy of up to $40 billion on taxpayers before the royal commission releases its final report. All Labor can say on aged care is that they will reveal their policies closer to the election. What about the last election? Where were their policies? Where were their packages? Labor’s deceit shows that they don’t understand the aged-care sector and, as usual, are more interested in political spin than in genuine solutions to an important issue for Australians and their loved ones.

I want to acknowledge that, in spite of the findings from the royal commission, there are some very good home care providers out there today, right now, who do a great job. I recently visited most of the aged-care facilities in my electorate to speak with the aged-care providers and our senior Australians themselves. Caring for the elderly can be a rewarding experience, although at times it’s challenging. I’ve been humbled by the care and compassion that aged-care workers have wrapped around our senior Gold Coasters in their golden years of life.

To close, I wish to underline an important fact: the government is focused on guaranteeing essential services for older Australians to ensure they have more choice, be that in aged care, staying at home longer or gaining access to the support they need. Every Australian has the right to age well and with dignity. Our older generations
have fought to defend our democracy and worked hard to build the Australia we see today. They contribute an immeasurable amount to their communities. It's up to this generation and our government to ensure older Australians are well cared for and live out their days comfortably.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Gillespie): The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Black Spot Program

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this House:

(1) notes the important, practical contribution the Black Spot Program makes in addressing the nation's road toll under the National Road Safety Action Plan 2018-2020;

(2) recognises the need for the Government to continue to invest in the Black Spot Program to improve road safety and reduce the death toll;

(3) commends the Government for putting road safety at the forefront of infrastructure investment, with further commitments to providing an additional $50 million per year from 2019-20 to 2022-23 to the Black Spot Program; and

(4) acknowledges the Government's Black Spot Program reduces on average at the treated sites, death and serious injury from crashes by 30 per cent according to data from the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics.

Ms CATHERINE KING (Ballarat) (17:38): I'm pleased to speak to this motion. We all know we need to do more to make our roads safer. That's why the Black Spot Program has bipartisan support. This program was first introduced under the Hawke government, and for three decades now governments of all stripes have extended and invested in this important program to make our roads safer. But, sadly, this program alone has not been enough to drive down our national road toll. We are now in our seventh year of coalition government, and for seven years progress on road safety has stalled. Australia is now in the final year of the National Road Safety Strategy. This plan, launched by Labor when in government in 2011, was intended to guide Australia towards a future of safer roads, fewer injuries and, most importantly, fewer fatalities. Tragically, however, the road toll for 2019 was higher than it was five years ago. Last year, 1,194 Australians died on our roads. This is a national tragedy that is being felt by families in communities in all corners of the country.

Every death on Australia's roads is one death too many, yet the government is simply not providing the national leadership Australians deserve and demand when it comes to road safety. We know from analysis by the AAA that only nine of the 33 indicators from the National Road Safety Strategy will be met and that eight of the targets, including one of the headline targets—to reduce serious injuries by 30 per cent—still cannot be measured. The work to make sure we can measure that target has not been done.

I note that after the election last year the government established the Joint Select Committee on Road Safety. This committee was formed with the mandate to inquire and report on steps that could be taken to reduce Australia's road accident rates, trauma and deaths on our roads. This is an important task, and it should lead to real action. Instead, the committee did not even meet with Labor members lost patience, frankly, with the government's inaction and called a meeting themselves last parliamentary week. And, over the weekend, we saw revelations that the government is more concerned with using this committee to deliver political favours than it is to find a way to actually lower the road toll.

Earlier this month was the Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, held in Stockholm. Despite it being a ministerial conference, the Morrison government did not send the Deputy Prime Minister or the assistant minister for road safety. Instead, representing the parliament at this global conference was a first-term backbencher from the National Party, the member for Cowper. If you're asking why the member for Cowper attended this global ministerial conference then you're not on your own. The Weekend Australian gave us a hint of what might be the real reason for why the member for Cowper was sent on a trip to Stockholm: he voted against the member for New England's party room assault on the Deputy Prime Minister. In the lead-up to the recent Nationals leadership spill, the member for Cowper was considered to be a supporter of the former Leader of the National Party Barnaby Joyce, but on the eve of the vote he changed his mind. Why? It couldn't have something to do with the committee chairmanship or a tax funded Scandinavian trip I'm sure!

Road safety should be above political gains. But, despite the government's claim that the member for Cowper attended the Swedish conference representing the parliament of Australia, it would appear that no non-government MP who was invited was invited to attend as part of a parliamentary delegation. Global conferences should be an important opportunity for cooperation with policy formulation, not a prize to be handed out in return for party room votes. If the government truly took the issue of road safety seriously, there is no doubt that a minister would have attended this conference. In fact, you would have thought the minister for road safety would have been a good idea. That the government's two ministers skipped the conference, that the head of the Office of
Road Safety was usurped on the program by a departmental deputy secretary, and that the parliament was represented by a first-term backbencher send a very, very powerful message as to what this government actually thinks of road safety.

It is good that the government points to the three decades of success of the Black Spot Program because there isn’t a lot of good in other aspects of its road safety policies. Labor will always support the Black Spot Program and any other policy that drives down our nation's road tolls and saves Australian lives. This government has been asleep at the wheel when it comes to the National Road Safety Strategy. There has been a distinct lack of national leadership on national road safety. We are seeing the road toll continue to rise, and that is not something the government should be proud of. We will continue to be ready to work with the government on any substantial policies that they come up with to improve road safety, and we certainly hope that they actually manage to do so.

**Dr WEBSTER (Mallee) (17:43):** I rise to support this motion and the government's commitment to reducing the nation's road toll. Considering the importance of roads and transport for all facets of our daily lives and economy, road safety is rightly a national priority for this government. This priority is re-enforced in the National Road Safety Action Plan 2018–2020, which outlines the practical steps being taken to make our roads safer at all levels of government.

Over the past 10 years more than 12,000 people have lost their lives on roads in Australia, including over 2,500 in my home state of Victoria. These deaths were avoidable and can be mitigated through the implementation of effective policies, including educational programs, traffic control and monitoring, vehicle regulations and infrastructure improvements. The Black Spot Program is a key infrastructure project that supports the priorities outlined in the National Road Safety Action Plan. It has been an incredibly important program to safely deliver for our drivers in accident prone areas. In the 2019-20 program year, 273 projects were approved, bringing the total number of approved projects to 2,371 since the program began in 2013.

I support this program because it is estimated that over a 10-year period the 2,371 approved projects will prevent approximately 14,460 crashes and save around 280 lives. I support this program because, for every dollar invested in the program, the cost of road trauma to the community is reduced by six times over the long term. I support this program because it reduces fatal and casualty crashes by 30 per cent. To ensure that this program continues to deliver safer roads for our communities, the government will provide a total of $1 billion to the Black Spot Program for the 10 years from 2013 to 2023, with an ongoing commitment of $110 million each year following.

The continuation and expansion of this program will be particularly important for regional and rural areas, including my electorate of Mallee. Since the start of the program, 13 projects have been approved in my electorate—a total investment of over $6 million to our region. Significant projects include the improvement of Polkemmet Road in Vectis and McCallum Street in Swan Hill, as well as the construction of a number of roundabouts in Mildura. I also look forward to the completion of upgrades to the Charlton-Swan Hill Road, which are scheduled to begin in March this year. The shoulders of this road will be sealed, tactile edge lines will be installed and hazards will be removed to improve visibility along the road.

The government's commitment to building better, safer roads is indicated not only through the Black Spot Program but also through the Roads to Recovery Program. This program has made and will continue to make significant contributions to the safety of our roads: $6.2 billion will continue to be provided through this program to 2024. Furthermore, the 128 local government areas across Australia that are affected by severe drought will receive an additional $138.9 million in the 2020 calendar year through this program.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to highlight other works that desperately need to be completed to ensure that Victorian roads are safer for drivers. I speak of the ill-fated Murray Basin Rail Project, a $440 million project that has been mismanaged by the Victorian state Labor government after a $240 million investment from the federal government. The incomplete project has delivered a substandard rail system in Victoria, resulting in producers who are increasingly opting to freight their produce by truck. While I support our road transport industry and accept that there will always be a need for it, Mallee roads are experiencing accelerated degradation and increased safety increases due to the number of trucks using them daily. We can reduce these outcomes by getting more freight onto rail, and we will get more freight onto rail if the Murray Basin Rail Project is completed. I call on the Victorian Labor government to complete this project in good faith and to work with federal government to achieve this end.

I commend the government, and in particular the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, Michael McCormack, for the work achieved so far and for the commitment to continue delivery of the Black Spot Program, which facilitates greater access for Australians and improves safety and efficiency for all in my electorate of Mallee.
Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (17:49): No-one doubts for a moment the importance of having programs like the Black Spot Program that identify areas where accidents have occurred—either accidents where people haven't experienced massive injury or, in those very unfortunate cases, where there has been either injury or death. We don't want people to have to go through that. We don't want the economy to go through the impact of $27 billion of costs attached as a result of road accidents.

We should use public funds wisely to improve public safety. But there are problems with the management of these programs. This government has sponged up taxpayer dollars and made decisions that the public expect to be fairly made. It's completely broken. No-one can trust this government, with the political corruption that has gone on in the grant programs. There is no better evidence of that than what happened with the sports rorts. Money was deliberately siphoned off to help the political interests of the government.

Now we find that it is in road funding too, in an area that is supposed to have an impact on reducing congestion in some of our most congested cities in the country. We find that 83 per cent of road funding was assigned by this government in a politically corrupt way to benefit people in marginal seats or others being targeted. This is not something new. And it was reported in *The Australian*—of all places! This is a media outlet the government would expect more than usual political comfort from. But they put on their front page the electorates that will benefit the most from road funding—and this particular road funding is designed to improve either safety or congestion—and it is government electorate after government electorate that has been handed funding. You can see how government areas benefited way more than anyone else.

In the electorate that I represent we need investment in the new major motorway going next to us and in decongesting rail lines to improve people movement in my part of Western Sydney. We need investment to help remove black spots like the Francis Road bottleneck in Rooty Hill. But no funding has been provided to the Chifley electorate. But the electorate next door was targeted by the Liberals, with $180 million worth of promises splashed in one electorate alone. This government has given up on having even a semblance of impartiality, fairness or balance. They basically pick up taxpayer funds, turn them into a political levy, and then apply for their mates in their areas. This is simply wrong. It is corrupt. It is breaking the trust in the way that governments make decisions, and it has to end.

The Urban Congestion Fund is just another instance of this money getting picked up and thrown around. Eighty-three per cent of the funding decisions went to government. This is wrong. It is wrong, and people should be held accountable for it. We are sick of the minister for population, who I have dubbed the 'minister for roundabouts', getting up and saying that his big contribution to decongestion and better people movement is that he's funded a roundabout here or there in, obviously, key marginals that the government wants to hold on to. It is not good enough. The Australian people and particularly Australian taxpayers deserve better. We should get to a system where these types of decisions are made much more independently. It is why Labor has called for ages for Infrastructure Australia to be given that independent mandate to make those decisions, instead of what we have seen here, which is basically cronyism, corruption and political campaigns being buttressed by taxpayer dollars. It is an absolute disgrace.

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson) (17:54): It is very sad that, on a motion regarding black spots and road safety, all we have heard from speakers opposite is politics—politics around which electorate got sent from what committee to where, politics around which electorates might be getting funding and which aren't. What we are not hearing is some empathy for this issue, the serious issue of road safety. This is an issue where people lose their lives. It is an issue where the government, I have to say, is acting and has been acting for some time on a range of measures—the Black Spot program being one of them. We heard this churlish argument against roundabouts, calling a minister 'Minister for Roundabouts' because he's funding them. Roundabouts are a very important part of the mix in sorting out road safety issues. It just shows the kind of politics that are at play here.

In my electorate of Dawson there are quite a number of road safety projects along with the blackspot program, fixing up intersections such as Milton and George Streets. It is going to be a signalised intersection there where there have been quite a few accidents in the past. That is something that practically is happening. There is also another problem intersection in Bowen that is being fixed, and that's on the back of two other intersections in Bowen where there have been accidents and that have been fixed through this program as well.

Bigger funding is going towards major road infrastructure projects which also are going to improve road safety. We have the Mackay ring road. It's going to take the heavy vehicles out of Nebo Road. A few years ago we a driver who had a fit in a sugar truck. He crossed the lane and ran into one of the motels we've got on Nebo Road in Mackay. He hit the gas canisters on the side of the motel, and it blew up with a huge explosion. Luckily, in that event no-one actually lost their life. We on this side have acted after many years, including under the Labor side of government, with the council and the community calling for funding for the Mackay ring road. Not only have
we funded stage 1 of that Mackay ring road, which fixes up the heavy vehicle issues in Nebo Road and the Mackay urban area; we have also have funded stage 2, which is all about freight efficiency.

Along with that, an issue I have been pushing for a long time—back before I was a member of parliament, when I was a local government councillor in Mackay and represented the area of Walkerston, which now Michelle Landry represents as a federal member—is the Walkerston bypass. When I got into this job, that was one of the things that I wanted to see funded as well. Along with the member for Capricornia, I pushed long and hard for that. At the moment, we've got the Peak Downs Highway, which runs through the small town of Walkerston. You've got these fuel tankers heading out to the mines. They go past a very tight little village and pass two schools—a state school and the Catholic school—and the main shopping area, where a whole heap of pedestrians are. These trucks roar through there every hour of every day. It's a completely state controlled road, by the way.

I went to the state minister, Mark Bailey, saying to him that, if we could come up with 50 per cent of the funds, would they fund it. 'Yes' was the response. When we came up with the funds, they still wouldn't do it, even though it was a completely state controlled road and it should have been done at state expense. We came up with 80 per cent of the funds, and suddenly they are doing it. So we have the track record. We are doing these sort of projects in regions, not just Mackay. We've also got the Haughton River bridge up in the Burdekin, near Townsville. We've got the Townsville ring road. Stage 4 of that is being built. A lot of it has already being built. We've had road safety projects all over Queensland and all over Australia. They will continue because of the massive investment that this side of politics, managing the budget better, has been able to put into infrastructure—particularly road infrastructure—across this country.

That side would leave it all up to the bureaucrats to determine. If Infrastructure Australia made every single choice that there was to make, regional Australia would get nothing. That's what we'll look forward to under a Labor government: bureaucrats who neglect regional Australia making all of the decisions.

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (17:59): Black spot funding and Roads to Recovery funding are supported by both sides of the chamber. During the 12 years I have been here, Labor governments have invested in black spot funding and coalition governments have invested in black spot funding. I can think of intersections in my electorate, for example, Cemetery Road and Whitehill Road in Eastern Heights, Ripley Road at Flinders View or, indeed, a bend of a road in Lobb Street in Churchill where black spot funding has made a difference. I remember speaking on numerous occasions to the various mayors and councils in South-East Queensland that I have had the honour of representing—the Scenic Rim, Somerset, Ipswich and the Lockyer Valley—in the last 12 years about how Roads to Recovery has made a difference.

But this government has taken cronism and corruption on road funding to an art form. It reminds me of a conversation I had with now passed on Don Livingstone, the former Labor member for Ipswich West, who told me that when he was elected on 2 December 1989, he could find no significant road-funding projects in Ipswich West in the long history of the Bjelke-Petersen regime in Queensland. When I looked at this motion today, I thought of Don, who passed away five years ago, tragically—a great man who did a lot of good in our local area. We have a bridge named after him at One Mile. This government, when it comes to major projects and road funding, has favoured coalition governments in an extraordinary way. They must think, for example, traffic congestion finishes at the intersection of a federal Labor electorate and a federal coalition electorate.

The Urban Congestion Fund, for example, has been rorted extraordinarily by this government, with 83 per cent of the $3 billion going to 144 projects located in coalition seats and marginal seats they hope to win off the Labor Party. This is the sports rorts on steroids. There wasn't a specific project in Blair that was funded under this fund. When I think of areas in my electorate, I think of things like the Cunningham Highway, which is outside the RAAF base at Amberley. Federal governments, from Howard's day all the way through, have spent $1.3 billion on the RAAF base at Amberley but have not fixed up the Cunningham Highway from Ebenezer Creek to Yamanto. And this government seems not much interested at all in dealing with the Queensland government to fix up one of the worst black spots in Ipswich. People have lost their lives, cars have been damaged and lives have been changed for the worse. There are traffic jams galore in the morning and in the evening.

Every time I talk to the 8,500 people who work on the RAAF base at Amberley, whether they are serving military personnel or those working in the aerospace area, they always talk about this issue. Why aren't the government fixing this? Why aren't they dealing with the Queensland government to make sure this upgrade is absolutely necessary?

At the last federal election, the Labor Party took to the campaign a commitment to put another $500 million into the Darra to Rocklea section of the Ipswich Motorway, not matched by the coalition. It took the election of a Labor government in 2007 for the Dinmore to Darra section of the motorway to be upgraded—designed, built and
completed under a Labor government. This Liberal government was eventually shamed in 2016 into putting $200 million towards the upgrade of the Darra to Rocklea section of the Ipswich Motorway, but didn't match this.

And of course there is the Oxley roundabout. We have close to 100,000 vehicles a day going through that roundabout. There is a final section that goes towards what we used to call the Centenary Interchange that needs to be done. We talk about black spots and areas that will help road safety, talk about saving lives and damage to vehicles and about helping communities.

This government should have a good look at themselves because they're not doing the right thing. Sure, they might be doing the right thing on black spot funding and on Roads to Recovery funding but there is so much more they could do. They're not doing it in my electorate and it is affecting the personnel on the RAAF base at Amberley and the people who live around that base, the whole of Ipswich and the whole of Somerset. They should do a whole lot better than they're currently doing.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Climate Change

Mr BANDT (Melbourne—Leader of the Australian Greens) (18:04): I move:

That this House:

(1) declares an environment and climate emergency;
(2) recognises that:
(a) the recent report of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5C, indicates that we are facing a climate emergency, and as a result, meaningful action on climate change is urgent, at home and internationally;
(b) this IPCC report has found that the world is not on track to limit global warming to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius;
(c) at a national level, England, France, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and Canada have all declared a climate emergency; and
(d) extreme weather events will devastate large parts of Australia and radically impact food production, water availability, public health, infrastructure, the community and the financial system;
(3) notes that the Government has acknowledged urgent action is required to address climate change; and
(4) calls on the Government to take urgent action consistent with the internationally accepted science.

Over three degrees of global warming is what we are currently on track for—3.4 to be precise. We were told at the global summit—which the Prime Minister snubbed in favour of meeting Donald Trump and a Liberal Party donor—that over three degrees of global warming is what the government has us on track for. We have just lived through catastrophic fires that have happened at one degree of global warming. That is what has happened at one degree. We have been told that we could hit 1½ degrees of global warming as soon as 2030. We are no longer talking about our kids' lifetimes or our grandkids' lifetimes; we are talking about our lifetime. We could tip over dangerous global warming tipping points of 1½ degrees as soon as 2030. This is an emergency and it is time to tell it like it is.

The Prime Minister says, 'It's okay; I'm taking action on global warming and I've got it under control.' He does not have the climate crisis under control and he has no plan to get it under control. The more that the Prime Minister says we can talk about action in the future and keep putting it off to the never-never and putting it off and putting it off, the more he puts us all at risk and fails in his first duty, which is to keep people safe. The answer has to be to start telling it like it is, and that begins with declaring a climate emergency which is why I am moving this motion.

In my first media conference after becoming Greens leader, I said we should refuse a future in which our children are wearing gas masks because their cities are full of smoke. But that is what we have just experienced over this summer and that is what is in store for us unless we get this under control. I also spoke about the people that I meet who are angry and anxious and desperately looking for leadership. Now is the time to face up to the reality of the powers we face if we are to save the planet and save the future.

The last time there was as much carbon dioxide in the air as there is at the moment was at least 2.6 million years ago, before humans existed. Back then, temperatures were more than three degrees warmer, there were trees in Antarctica and sea levels were 25 metres higher. If we keep polluting at the current rate, we could be at 1,000 parts per million by the end of the century. Last time that happened, dinosaurs roamed the earth. Like them, we face an existential crisis brought on by a rapid shift in the climate system, but this time it has been created by us. This world, as former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said just a couple of days ago, is an uninhabitable world. If we are on track for up to four degrees—we are talking about a world that might happen during my kids' lifetime—the carrying capacity of the population of the world will be reduced to a billion people or less.
I have an unwavering belief that nothing will stop the clean energy revolution. Nothing will stop the scientists and engineers from solving these problems. We will get there eventually, but the problem is that we don't have until eventually. We have to act now. If we reach net zero by 2050 or 2060 or 2070, we will confront disaster without science based targets now, and that means urgent action now. That's why the government and the whole of society must recognise that we are in an emergency and take action at emergency speed, devoting all the resources we need to stop a threat that simply may become overwhelming.

Next week I will introduce to the Commonwealth parliament the Climate Emergency Declaration Bill. This bill will declare a climate emergency, require every government department to be guided by the declaration and mandate the establishment of what was called in the past a war cabinet to guide the country through rapid society-wide and economy-wide mobilisation to decarbonise the economy. This bill and this motion reflect the scale of the crisis we face and the scale of action we need.

Winston Churchill was a flawed man and a flawed Prime Minister, but in his greatest hours he reached across the aisle during World War II and formed a grand coalition with the Labour Party and others. I know it seems incomprehensible in today's political context that this could happen, but it's what should happen and it's what we need to keep fighting for, because the time for appeasement is over. We need climate change Churchills, not climate change Chamberlains like we have on the government benches.

It is time for a green new deal. A green new deal is a government led plan of investment and action to build a clean economy and a caring society, a plan where we can fight the climate crisis and inequality at the same time, but right here, today, we have no choice but to tell the truth about the crisis we face and what is needed. The time for half measures is over because time is running out, and that is why parliament should pass this declaration.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): Is there a seconder for the motion?

Ms Steggall: Yes. I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (18:10): This is such an incredibly important issue, and it's just such a shame, frankly, that what we have consistently seen from the Greens is media stunts, panic rhetoric and posturing. The Greens are the party of protest over policy and the party of disruption over real debate. The Greens are the party that will unapologetically herald protesters who break the law, shut down our economy and prevent you from getting to work and to your families. The Greens are the party that will bully small business with baseless boycotts that hurt Australian families. The Greens are a total sham. They are the political equivalent of a con.

The government, however, is absolutely committed to taking action on climate change, but it will do it in a way that does not take a wrecking ball to our economy. Action will be despite the Greens, not because of them. The Morrison government is committed to reducing Australia's emissions as per our climate policy and our global targets while ensuring that both the Australian people and the Australian economy benefit. We will reduce emissions while we maintain our strong economy, and we will do it through technology, not taxes.

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 18:11 to 18:21

Mr SIMMONDS: The Greens like to make comparisons when it comes to Australia and the rest of the world, so let's do that now. Australia is a world leader when it comes to renewables. In 2019, Australia's investment per capita in renewable energy was greater than that of the United States of America, Japan and the UK, and more than triple the per capita investment of Germany, China, France and Denmark. We are committed to practical change driven by science and technology and we are doing some great work in this space.

I particularly want to commend my electorate of Ryan, which is home to the Pullenvale CSIRO facility in Brisbane and has been at the forefront of developing the technology needed to make hydrogen power a reality for Australia. Hydrogen represents a low-carbon—in some cases no-carbon—renewable power source with the capacity to power homes, businesses and heavy vehicles more efficiently than other renewable energy sources. By growing a strong domestic hydrogen industry, Australia will be able to see the practical benefits of hydrogen at home with cheaper power bills and improved power reliability. By growing our export pipeline—something we are also working on at the CSIRO facility in Ryan—we can help other nations reduce their emissions globally as well.

Hydrogen has the potential to benefit Australian businesses across sectors as diverse as transport, agriculture and electricity generation. That is just one example. We have already invested $8.9 billion in more than 670 projects, including a charging infrastructure for electric vehicles, large-scale solar and the world's largest battery, in South Australia. We have a $2 billion climate solutions fund that supports practical projects, like capturing methane from landfill and storing carbon. Instead of making placards, like the Greens do, we are making changes. We are reducing emissions.
Australia's emissions are lower than in 2013, when we came into government. Emissions per capita are at the lowest level in 29 years. They have been reduced by 41 per cent since 1990. We have set a 2030 target—the Paris target—and accounted for how that will be achieved, down to the last tonne. We have accounted for the cost of achieving that target. We have accounted for it to the Australian people; that is something that many other nations that have signed up to the Paris agreement and are lecturing us now won't be able to say.

This is a very important point, because in the last few days we've seen the exact opposite from Labor. We've had an announcement from the Labor Party—well, notwithstanding the rebel members who attended the Otis group dinner—that they will reach net zero emissions by 2050. How? That's a good question. That's what everyone else is asking as well. Nobody knows—not the Leader of the Opposition, not the media, not the Australian people. All the Leader of the Opposition can do, as some kind of meek assurance, is say that he will consult—whatever that means. We don't even know what on.

The Prime Minister has been very clear when it comes to this government's position on targets. We won't set new targets without being able to look Australians in the eye and tell them how much it will cost and how we will achieve it. We will meet and beat our Paris target—(Time expired)

Mr BURNS (Macnamara) (18:25): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Melbourne. We are in a climate emergency. The motion that the member for Melbourne put on the Notice Paper is obviously a further motion to those a number of people, including the member for Hindmarsh, have attempted to put forward in this place. The member for Hindmarsh put forward a motion last year that, of course, didn't make it to the floor of the House of Representatives for debate, because those on that side of the House are afraid of what that debate would look like. That side of the House is full of people, like the member for Hughes, who are climate change deniers. I'm sure that when the member for Hughes gets up here and has his five minutes of glory, we will hear and see the true colours of those opposite.

We are in a climate emergency. Before I touch on some of the contributions in this debate from members of the government, I reiterate the commitment made by the Australian Labor Party of net zero emissions by 2050 as part of our efforts to tackle climate change. This is not controversial, this is not extreme; this is in line with the science. It is in line with the recommendations of the IPCC and in line with the commitments made by Germany, by France, by Sweden, by New Zealand, by Denmark—by 70 other countries around the world. It is in line with the commitments being made by all of the states and territories in Australia, including those being governed by Liberal governments. I know this might be an inconvenient truth for the dinosaurs in the opposite party—

Mr Brian Mitchell: That's you, Craig.

Mr BURNS: I appreciate the assistance of my colleague here—but we need to set a direction; we need to start lowering our emissions. Of course, the only time that we have done that effectively was when Labor was last in government and we had emission reductions of what we have seen on 2005 levels. They have plateaued under the governance of the Prime Minister and on the watch of the Liberal Party, but we must take action.

Let's go through some of the reasons why we haven't seen any climate action from this government. The first comes from the member for New England. The member for New England is a big reason why this government is not taking action on climate change. The member for New England spent the summer videoing himself in fields talking to clouds, saying climate change had all sorts of other reasons behind it—but he refused to take action on climate change. Senator Molan went on Q+A and admitted that his views on climate change had nothing to do with evidence, because apparently evidence isn't something that we need to consult on or think about when tackling climate change. Senator McMahon said that we are all going to go back to living in huts before the days of electricity because of our net zero emission targets. And the member sitting over here, the member for Hughes, only recently was supporting a campaign in schools, as reported in the Fairfax papers, that said that climate change is a hoax. That's what the member for Hughes wants in our classrooms. The member for Hughes wants to say to our students, who are worried, who are anxious about the future, who want hope and who want leadership in this place, that climate change is a hoax. It is a disgrace. It is no wonder that this government is not interested in listening to the science, it is no wonder that this government is not interested in tackling climate change and it is no wonder that we have become an international embarrassment under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

Our targets are in line with the science. We are emitting greenhouse gases right across the economy, across the country, and we must take action to reduce them. It is difficult and I acknowledge that it is difficult. I acknowledge the fact that to lower our emissions means changing the way in which we're doing it, but I remember that when the Labor Party first set our 2020 renewable energy target people scoffed at us. People said it couldn't be done.

Mr Craig Kelly: It had to be wound back, remember?
Mr Burns: I didn't quite catch the interjection from the member for Hughes. But all they are interested in is tackling Labor. They are not interested in tackling climate change. They are not interested in providing hope. They are not interested in listening to the science. They are not interested in responding to the calls of the international community. We are on the front line of climate change as Australians, and this government is taking a back seat and is ignoring the signs. We must change that now.

Mr Craig Kelly (Hughes) (18:30): In the five minutes allowed for this debate I will quickly go through the science and the data to show that the facts are the exact opposite of the hysteria, the scaremongering and the antiscientific voodoo we have just heard from the members opposite. Firstly, whenever we have a debate on the climate, it's very important to make the acknowledgement, as I do here, that 'Great changes have taken place in the climate of Australia, all testimonies satisfactorily prove.' That is my belief. I didn't make those words up. Those words actually come from The Maitland Mercury on 11 March 1846, 174 years ago.

Let's look at this through the assertion that there is a climate emergency. Around 700 or 800 scientists and professionals have signed this declaration saying there is no climate emergency. Who signed this? Nobel Laureates, emeritus professors, geologists, meteorologists, medical doctors—

Mr Burns: Name them.

Mr Craig Kelly: There are 800 of them. If those opposite agree to an extension of time, I would be prepared to read out the whole list of 800 names. But let's continue.

Let's not just take the word of hundreds of scientists that there is no climate emergency. Let's look at the evidence and let's look at the facts. Where do we start? I suggest we start with the Insurance Information Institute. Let's see how 2019 stacked up. If there is a climate emergency, things should be getting worse in 2019. In 2019, the number of events classified as natural catastrophes was down 3.5 per cent of 2018. The overall losses worldwide from natural catastrophes was also down 19.3 per cent.

Despite the deceptive claims from the insurance industry, who are trying to soften people up for premium increases, 2019 was actually a great year for the insurance industry. Their own data shows that insurance losses from natural catastrophes was down 39.5 per cent, $34 billion less in 2019 than in 2018.

Mr Burns interjecting—

Mr Craig Kelly: I will take the interjection. Some may say that is only 2019 against 2018. It's only one year. Let's look at the long-term data and see what that says. There is a peer-reviewed, published paper on global climate related losses. I quote exactly from the peer-reviewed science.

Mr Burns interjecting—

Mr Craig Kelly: We hear the interjections. They don't want to know what the peer review says. It says, 'since 1990 both overall and weather/climate losses have decreased as proportion of global GDP'. Here is this nice, cute little graph which shows the decline in the loss.

An honourable member interjecting—

Mr Craig Kelly: I'm happy to table it later. We'll see whether they want to know or live in ignorance. It will be very interesting.

Let's go on. We also look at the figures from the International Disasters Database. It shows that, this century, the number of weather-related losses has been declining. Most importantly, they show that today we are 98 per cent safer from extreme weather events than our grandparents or our great-grandparents were. So while you are wandering around saying 'climate emergency, climate emergency', the numbers show that we are 98 per cent safer today than we were back in the twenties and thirties. So while we have people brainwashed and gluing themselves to the roads, claiming a climate emergency, just remember: on extreme weather, children today are living in the safest time in human history.

What about the sea-level-rise emergency? I go back to the 24 September 1988 issue of The Canberra Times: Male, Maldives: A gradual rise in average sea level is threatening to completely cover this Indian Ocean nation … within the next 30 years …

according to United Nations authorities. So the Maldives should have been underwater by 2018. With the aid of modern technology, I have here a live cam. This is Kuredu Island Resort—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Wallace): Order! Member for Hughes, I hope you are not seeking to tender that iPad.

Mr Craig Kelly: No, I am showing a picture. Right now, as we speak—

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.
Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this House:

(1) recognises the imperative of improving waste management, reducing unnecessary packaging and boosting recycling in Australia;

(2) acknowledges that:

(a) Australians generate about 67 million tonnes of waste each year, of which 37 million tonnes is recycled;

(b) only 12 per cent of the 103 kilograms of plastic waste generated per person in Australia each year is recycled, mostly overseas;

(c) for every 10,000 tonnes of waste recycled, more than 9 jobs are created; and

(d) waste related activities add $6.9 billion to the economy annually;

(3) welcomes the Government's recent $20 million commitment for innovative projects under round 8 of the Cooperative Research Centres Projects grants to grow our domestic plastics recycling industry; and

(4) notes that this is part of the Government's Australian Recycling Investment Plan, a package of initiatives totalling $167 million designed to grow and strengthen Australia's domestic recycling industry, and to support industry and community initiatives to lift recycling rates in Australia.

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (18:37): Now, after that, we are going to get into something exciting! We are going to talk about the Northern Beaches of Sydney, home to some of the most pristine and beautiful waterways in the country. From the sandy shores of Avalon Beach to the creeks of Bantry Bay, we are very fortunate to live where we do. With this fortune comes a great responsibility: we are responsible for protecting and preserving these waterways and the flora and fauna of which we call them home. It is our responsibility to preserve them for future generations.

It is estimated that between one and 2½ million tonnes of plastic are entering the ocean each year from our waterways. More than half of this plastic is less dense than the water it is entering, which means it will float on the surface. You may have heard of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. This is a collection of marine debris which the currents have pulled together in the north Pacific Ocean, between California and Japan. This garbage patch is largely made up of microplastics and is three times the size of France. It is the result of poor management of our waste and is what we should be working hard to avoid.

Australia generates around 67 million tonnes of waste each year, of which 37 million tonnes is recycled. Only 12 per cent of the 103 kilograms of plastic waste generated per person in Australia each year is recycled, and most of this recycling happens overseas. The government is taking this problem seriously. Let me commend the minister for waste reduction and recycling, Trevor Evans, who is leading the government down the path of smarter waste management.

The Liberal government is building Australia's first domestic recycling capability through its $167 million Australian Recycling Investment Plan. This plan will increase Australia's recycling rates, tackle plastic waste as well as accelerate work on a new battery recycling scheme and halve food waste by 2030. Microbeads are also being phased out, and 94 per cent of cosmetic and personal care products in Australia are already microbead free. Crucially, we are banning the exporting of wasted plastic, paper, glass and tiles. No more will Australia produce plastic waste and then call it someone else's problem. The roughly 67 million tonnes of waste that we produce will be managed here in Australia under strong environmental conditions. This is a priority, as scientist estimates that in just 30 years a time, the weight of plastic in our oceans will exceed the weight of the fish.

Recycling is not only beneficial to our environment but is also a job creator. For every 10,000 tonnes of recycled waste, more than nine jobs are created. Waste management jobs add $6.9 billion to the economy annually. The Liberal government is also encouraging business to come on board and do their bit through its $20
million commitment for innovative projects under round 8 of the Cooperative Research Centres Projects Grants to
grow our domestic plastic recycling industry.

Recently, I visited the Mona Vale Woolworths in my electorate where I spoke to Rachel and Lee about how they
are reducing their waste and ensuring they do their bit to protect the local environment. Firstly, they have
switched their lights to eco-friendly LEDs, which not only use less power but also help to preserve the fresh
produce for longer, as they produce less heat. The older lights would cause the fruit and vegetables to wilt faster,
thereby also creating more food waste. They also told me that they don’t actually turn the lights off, because they
undertook a study where they found that reducing the lights at night by 50 per cent uses less electricity than
turning the lights on and off. They were also encouraging the use of recyclable paper bags, and the phase-out of
plastic bags has proven very successful with their overall plastic use declining year after year. People who buy
non-plastic bags have that money donated to local Landcare groups.

Improving waste management and reducing unnecessary packaging while increasing recycling rates is
everyone’s business. We owe it to the next generation to ensure we provide them with the same pristine, beautiful
waterways which we were provided with. (Time expired)

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (18:42): I rise to support this motion. As a proud South Australian, our state has led
the way on waste management for several decades, with the first container deposit scheme in the country starting
way back in 1977. The first plastic bag ban in the country started in 2009. Our state government is continuing this
good, bipartisan work and is currently exploring how to further expand both of those schemes. The recycling
crisis now facing Australia creates both risks and opportunities. South Australia is well positioned to capitalise on
those opportunities, and they predominantly involve energy generation and creating circular economy products.
South Australia has also had the capacity to work on packaging design, better collection and sorting infrastructure
that produces high-quality sorted recyclable materials and the development of Australia’s re-manufacturing
capacity as well as the end of market for clean material.

Three South Australian councils, the City of Onkaparinga, the City of Marion and the City of Holdfast Bay,
have combined to put forward a major proposal located at Seafor Heights that directly addresses the need for
local governments to have certainty and greater control over their waste and recycling needs. The group has
created the Southern Region Waste Resource Authority and their proposal is to develop and operate a materials
recovery facility that manages the domestic kerbside recyclables collections from three councils, but also with a
view to service other councils and waste authorities. Key materials would include cardboard, newspapers, mixed
paper, glass, steel, aluminium and plastic deposit containers. However, the facility is envisaged to be more than
just another big recycling depot. The facility will be one of the first to be developed in Australia since the global
changes that resulted from China banning waste imports, and so has been designed to produce recycled material
that meets the quality needs of both Australian and international markets.

The vision is to support the co-location of remanufacturing businesses to turn recyclable material into
marketable products and to actively engage with research entities and the business sector to fully develop the
circular economy south of Adelaide. This includes research into the economics, reverse logistics, manufacturing
and material sciences. The hope is that the development will include a start-up incubator and accelerator that will
draw together this vision and turn it into practical action. A part of the vision of the three councils is that they can
develop a stronger circular economy model that can aspire to replicating in other locations across Australia.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the city of Onkaparinga for working so actively on this issue with me
and my office. I also would like to acknowledge Trevor Evans, the Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and
Environmental Management, for being so considerate and constructive in his engagement with me, the councils
and state government. I want to thank my office for being very passionate and keen on this. They have been
working with the minister to investigate the project and its great potential. Governments at all three levels have a
tremendous opportunity to work together to manage the waste and recycling crisis. We can look at it as an
opportunity, not as a crisis. I hope that these early shoots of collaboration on the Southern Region Waste Resource
Authority are a model of how we can meet this challenge together as a community. Thank you.

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie—Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community
Services) (18:46): I rise to support this motion moved by Dr Allen, the member for Higgins. The
motion states:

That this House:

(1) recognises the imperative of improving waste management, reducing unnecessary packaging and boosting recycling in
Australia;

(2) acknowledges that:

(a) Australians generate about 67 million tonnes of waste each year, of which 37 million tonnes is recycled;

FEDERATION CHAMBER
(b) only 12 per cent of the 103 kilograms of plastic waste generated per person in Australia each year is recycled, mostly overseas;
(c) for every 10,000 tonnes of waste recycled, more than 9 jobs are created; and
(d) waste related activities add $6.9 billion to the economy annually;

(3) welcomes the Government's recent $20 million commitment for innovative projects under round 8 of the Cooperative Research Centres Projects grants to grow our domestic plastics recycling industry; and

(4) notes that this is part of the Government's Australian Recycling Investment Plan, a package of initiatives totalling $167 million designed to grow and strengthen Australia's domestic recycling industry, and to support industry and community initiatives to lift recycling rates in Australia.

I support that. While this is an issue that has always been prominent in my mind—as someone who loves the Australian environment—it was brought back to the forefront when I recently met with one of my constituents, Mr Les Barkla. Les is a fundamental part of the 'Pristine peninsula' community group and a very vocal constituent on one of the more important issues affecting Petrie, Australia and the world.

We must not forget that Australia is a large contributor to worldwide waste. Our share of the global waste almost doubles our share of the global population, and a large contributing factor to this is problematic single-use packaging. As someone who loves the environment, freshwater ecosystems and our native reptiles, too often I see this in freshwater creeks and in saltwater creeks. These are items that have such minimal use in our day-to-day lives. They are quickly disposed of, either picked up by volunteers that populate Les's group—there are a number of them and they do a great job—or they end up getting washing into Moreton Bay when my community next has heavy rain. They flow unobstructed through our waterways and into Moreton Bay, with devastating effects on our marine environment.

Some direction can be taken from the 2018-19 Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index report. We saw some promising changes, with beaches, parks and residential sites all exhibiting decreases in litter, specifically cigarettes, takeaway containers and paper litter.

However, increases at industrial sites, highways and shopping centres show that there is more work to do. According to the National waste report of 2019, Australia as a nation produces 64 million tonnes of waste each year, which equates to 2.7 tonnes of annual waste per person.

Our government has committed to getting recycling done locally. That's very important to me. We have implemented a comprehensive $167 million Australian Recycling Investment Plan to increase Australia's recycling rates, tackle plastic waste and litter, and accelerate work on new recycling schemes. We will ban the export of waste, plastic, paper, glass and tyres, beginning next year; significantly increase the use of recycled content by governments and industry; and reduce the total waste generated in Australia by 10 per cent per person.

All of this is important. We also looked forward to the future last year, with Australia's ambitious but achievable target of making 100 per cent of Australian packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025 or earlier. That was something that Les raised with me. He would love to see it brought forward earlier.

We have also got great environment initiatives in Moreton Bay. In the Scarborough Marina we soon will have two new sea bins going in to collect waste. They collect a lot of waste, including 90,000 plastic bags per sea bin. We also have environmental projects rolling out in native creeks. We also have a few other things, but I am out of time. It's a very important issue and I'll keep fighting for it.

Mr GEORGANAS (Adelaide) (18:51): It gives me great pleasure to speak about this motion on recycling, especially because South Australia, my home state, has shown the way on recycling. As the member for Mayo said, in South Australia we started a deposit scheme with bottles way back in 1977. It was meant to be a controversial thing, but it has worked smoothly for many, many years. We also led in 2009 with plastic and cartons. So for South Australia, this is not a new thing; we have been recycling for many years in our state.

I know that waste management and waste is going to be one of the toughest things to tackle over the coming decade as we see rapid growth in this area, where we use plastics and timbers and a whole range of things, and we use more and more, whether it be batteries, mobile phones, electrical wiring—you name it. There is so much that we use that gets dumped into landfills. We are finding that we have just about seen the end of being able to ship it off, as we have done in the past, and say, 'Waste out of sight, out of mind.' I think those days are soon going to be behind us. We have to be sensible about reducing our carbon footprint and properly focus on our recycling efforts. This is a task for every single citizen and every Australian.

As I said, I am proud to say that South Australia has been doing well in this area and in this space for many, many years. The United Nations reports that less than 10 per cent of all the world's plastic is recycled. South Australia, my home state, diverts more than 80 per cent of its waste from landfill to be reused in the recyclable
economy. This economy, driven by renewable flows of energy, is an adjacent model to the linear economy and aims to regenerate a product of material at its end of life, largely thanks to work started under the former Labor state government.

But it is not just up to governments and individuals. Workplaces, offices and factories need to ensure that they are also focused. There is a great organisation in my electorate called Advanced Plastic Recycling, based in Regency Park. Advanced Plastic Recycling has transformed discarded materials into furniture and other alternatives. They have been doing this for the last 16 years. The company converts melted high-density plastic pellets into a wood plastic composite—they use a little bit of wood as well—for private infrastructure pieces. From this material, they make everything from bollards to benches and boardwalks—and many more things. It's a great initiative by Advanced Plastic Recycling, in my electorate, in Regency Park. I congratulate them for having the innovative insight to do this.

Of course, in South Australia, as I said, we've had the container deposit scheme for a very long time, and it's led the nation with a 77 per cent rate of return of containers. While this may be controversial in other states where they are trying to implement it, in South Australia we've been doing it for a long time without a blink of an eye, and 77 per cent is a big return rate of containers. It was just last year that I met with a French delegation that was here in our parliament. They were very interested in the container deposit scheme that we have in South Australia. When they had their talks in South Australia with the government and others, they discussed it to learn ways to turn their minds to waste management and the recycling schemes.

We produce a lot of waste in Australia on a per capita basis, and we don't reuse or recycle nearly enough of it, only a miniscule amount of it. It would be good for the government and everyone involved to take a more national approach to recycling and waste management, like France is saying they're going to do. Just like climate change, we need leadership on this issue. We can't afford to play chicken with our planet any longer. We know that, for example, $6.9 billion is added to the economy from recycling, and, for every 10,000 tonnes of recycled material, nine jobs are created. So there are all positives in this; there are no negatives—we clean up our environment, we create jobs, we add to the economy and we ensure that we don't just dump things in landfills.

Mr CONAGHAN (Cowper) (18:56): I rise to speak to the motion by the member for Higgins. With today's fast paced life and the way we're living with everything being disposable, the amount of waste and plastic Australians generate has increased significantly. Growing up, there was no such thing as going down to the shop and buying a bottle of water. You either took a container with you or you drank out of the hose in someone's front yard, if you could find one. We need to consider the cans and plastic drink containers we see on the side of the road, thrown out of car windows as rubbish rather than treated like the resource they could be. It's also a travesty that many of the recycled products, or supposedly recycled products, that go into our yellow bins are often not actually recycled.

I'm part of a government that recognises more needs to be done in waste management and recycling in Australia. I'm also someone who looks at waste and recycling as an opportunity. This industry already adds $6.9 billion to our economy and provides nine jobs for every 10 tonnes of waste recycled, so we need to harness this opportunity and build incentives, like our government's Australian recycling investment plan. We need to provide jobs in this sector and carbon abatement measures and do more to educate our citizens better so that plastic and recycled waste is seen as an asset and not as rubbish. And this is precisely what the Australian Recycling Investment Fund has done. This fund has supported projects that increase our recycling rates, turn our waste back into valuable products and encourage innovation so that resources are not lost to landfill or end up in our waterways or our oceans.

One program boosting the amount of plastic recycled in my region is Round 8 of the Australian government's Cooperative Research Centres Projects. This program has just provided $2.5 million to a Coffs Harbour based company, Plastic Collective, to develop recycling machines that turn waste plastics into money or useable products. I've seen the prototype of this machine and it is fantastic. It will change the way we deal with recycling not just in Australia but around the world—and, more importantly, in developing nations and remote communities. The Shruder, as the Plastic Collective's machine is known, shreds hard and soft waste plastic into small flakes. These flakes can either be on-sold for money or heated through the machine's extruder and turned into filament and other moulded plastic products. Countries such as Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand have already expressed interest in buying the recycling stations.

Plastic Collective CEO, Louise Hardman, says she's already had international companies line up to buy the plastic recycled flakes for reuse in products like sunglasses and make-up bags. They already have orders to fill 50,000 tonnes of shredded material and this is just one small company in Coffs Harbour. While the Shruder recycling stations are still in the development phase, they already support 50 local people who work on part-time jobs on the project. In the future, should demand for the product grow, and I'm sure it will, I am told that a
medium-sized manufacturing facility would be required in Coffs Harbour to build the Shruder recycling stations, creating up to 50 jobs.

There are several other innovative projects happening in Cowper that I would like to mention. One of my favourites is also the Otta-Seed road trials happening in Nambucca and Bellingen. Councils have been trialling the use of the Otta-Seed bitumen road product that is made up of three to 15 per cent recycled truck tyres. For the road aggregate, they are using non-specified quarry products which wouldn't ordinarily be used. A major road project that will start early construction work later this year is the Coffs Harbour bypass, and I am looking forward to examining how recycled products may be used in it.

Improving waste management and boosting recycling hold great possibilities for our nation. We are a large nation with a relatively small population, so it makes sense to use our recycled waste in our roads and in a whole lot of other things.

**Macquarie Electorate: Waste Management**

**Ms TEMPLEMAN** (Macquarie) (19:01): There are few better examples of waste management and waste reduction than what's occurring in restaurants and cafes in the beautiful Blue Mountains. Leura and its amazing cafes, which I urge everyone in this place to visit, are combining to become the first village in Australia to eliminate restaurant food waste going to landfill. Take the award-winning Leura Garage as an example. The owner, James Howarth, has taken great care to reduce the restaurant's carbon footprint and now composes all the business's organic waste using closed loop organics. Microbial technology reduces waste volumes by up to 90 per cent in 24 hours and that means lower disposal costs and it also creates a nutrient-rich reusable product. The compost then heads to the Big Fix in Blackheath where it is combined with soil and used to grow produce. This is a business that takes its waste seriously but it is just one example of how residents living in the Blue Mountains World Heritage area are trying to reduce waste and shrink their carbon footprint.

The most up-to-date data available shows mountains residents diverted 55 per cent of household waste from landfill. This was particularly impressive given that the figure just five years earlier was 19 per cent. A key environmental challenge for places like the Blue Mountains and neighbouring Hawkesbury, which make up Macquarie, my electorate, is to reduce waste generation rates so that we improve the health and lifespan of the limited landfill. Bushfires and other natural disasters pose a real risk to the life of the landfill because they generate huge amounts of waste, with the potential to fill landfill years faster than projected under the business-as-usual generation rates—yet another cost you add up if you do nothing to reduce the impacts of climate change.

Hawkesbury residents are also following this lead, diverting about 30 per cent of waste from landfill. The message has reached our schools and a great example was Windsor High School, which last year won a Hawkesbury City Council award for its environmental program, which focused on rubbish reduction, recycling and created the Cash Cage project which is used to separate different recyclable items. The student community decided that money earned from the return-and-earn program would be used to buy compost bins, so they are doing even more to reduce waste and improve the soil quality on the school grounds and in its agricultural plot.

Recently, Hawkesbury Remakery was opened, a not-for-profit organisation working as a self-sustaining social enterprise business. The Remakery in historic Windsor Mall features a wide variety of makers and their products from crocheters and sewers to upcyclers and traditional artists. Boomerang Bags will be set up permanently in the co-making space, creating reusable bags from old fabric to replace plastic bags. And they'll make possum socks to be used by WIRES volunteers for native wildlife. It's all done from things that have been recycled and reused. You can get sewing repair kits, which I urge everyone in this place to visit, are combining to become the first village in Australia to eliminate restaurant food waste going to landfill. Take the award-winning Leura Garage as an example. The owner, James Howarth, has taken great care to reduce the restaurant's carbon footprint and now composes all the business's organic waste using closed loop organics. Microbial technology reduces waste volumes by up to 90 per cent in 24 hours and that means lower disposal costs and it also creates a nutrient-rich reusable product. The compost then heads to the Big Fix in Blackheath where it is combined with soil and used to grow produce. This is a business that takes its waste seriously but it is just one example of how residents living in the Blue Mountains World Heritage area are trying to reduce waste and shrink their carbon footprint.

I think we've all seen in our own electorates that people are really embracing a huge range of recycling and are reusing things in order to reduce waste at a local level. We have men's sheds and we have the tool libraries, like Tooloo in Katoomba. We have worm farms, the scraps going to the chooks and the composting that happens in backyards right around my region. But we have to remember that even after diverting more than half of their waste, households in one half of my electorate still sent 7,806 tonnes to landfill in a six-month period. That's heavier than the wrought iron used in the Eiffel Tower. That's a lot of waste! That's why funding for initiatives to help reduce waste and to recycle more is always welcome, and research by the CRCs into how we do that better is crucial. Technology can help us, and I'm pleased to hear those opposite saying that they do need to listen to the science on this.

We also need to help our neighbours so we can clean up the Pacific, which is littered with plastic waste. Australia's coasts and marine species are already profoundly affected by the scourge of microplastic and plastic not breaking down, ending up in turtles' stomachs. My colleague the shadow minister for the environment and water pointed out late last year that the bulk of the coalition's $167 million so-called Australian Recycling
Investment Fund is actually $100 million rebadged from the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, so let's be transparent about this. As a nation, we recycle less than 12 per cent of our plastic waste. We need to be really genuine about our commitment to reducing it. *(Time expired)*

**Ms FLINT** (Boothby—Government Whip) *(19:06)*: Local residents in my electorate of Boothby care very deeply about our local environment. We have the best of South Australia's—and indeed Australia's—natural environment in Boothby, from the foothills, including Australia's second-oldest national park, the Belair National Park, through to Adelaide's best stretch of coastline, from Marino in the south to Glenelg North in the north. So many local volunteers take great care of our coastal dunes, vegetation and beaches, and the many parks and reserves throughout our suburbs and our hills. It's no surprise, then, that because so many residents care about our local environment they're also very interested in recycling.

Today I want to recognise some local leaders in recycling and talk about what the Morrison government is doing to support and increase recycling efforts across Boothby, the state and our nation. So many of my local schools are leading the way with recycling initiatives. At St Leonards Primary School in Glenelg North, under the leadership of Principal Dave Henty-Smith and with the assistance of a Commonwealth Local Schools Community Fund grant, the school community is implementing a whole-school waste management plan that will reduce, reuse and recycle all the school's waste. I can't wait to visit St Leonards primary as the project progresses to get updates as to their innovative work, which I hope we'll be able to share with other local schools.

At Mitcham Primary School, as part of their commitment to a more sustainable future, Principal Scott Greenshields and the local school community have begun eating inside and recycling soft plastic waste and food scraps. Parents are encouraged to minimise the amount of disposable wrappers they send to school in lunchboxes and to accept food scraps from the school for their compost bins at home.

In terms of my local business community, Jetty Road in Brighton is leading the way and leading the state by reducing waste and increasing recycling, and by working towards banning single-use plastics. I was delighted to be able to take the Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management, the Hon. Trevor Evans, to visit Jetty Road recently. Minister Evans is passionate about our environment and reducing waste, and we met with the South Australian Minister for the Environment, the Hon. David Speirs MP, and local business The Seller Door, where owner Tom Roger showed us the different products here now it uses instead of plastics for all aspects of his cafe. Of particular note are the cornstarch straws, which are literally indistinguishable from plastic straws. They're a great product which patrons love almost as much as they love the wonderful food and excellent coffee. Just around the corner, the Brighton Surf Lifesaving Club is also working towards banning single-use plastics. This is a big task, given the huge events they hold each year, including the Brighton Jetty Classic and their sculptures by the sea, which are visited by literally tens of thousands of people.

Local government is also doing its part with the cities of Holdfast Bay and Marion partnering with Onkaparinga to build a new recycling facility in Adelaide's southern suburbs to minimise the use of landfill and improve recycling. I have regularly met with the Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management to express my support for this innovative project that aims to reuse recycled products and materials locally and that will create up to 37 jobs and process about 60,000 tonnes of waste product each year. The City of Mitcham has a great recycling project already in action with the resurfaced car park at the Kenilworth footy club at St Marys, which uses porous bitumen that includes 50 per cent recycled tyres and provides much better drainage and watering for trees and plants. The permeable pavement used four tonnes of tyre derived aggregates, the equivalent of diverting 500 passenger tyres from the waste stream.

Federally, we are doing our part too. The federal government has provided $133 million over 10 years for the Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre, which targets food waste to help secure the sustainability of Australia's food industry. The home of the CRC is right in the heart of Boothby at the University of Adelaide Waite Campus. I recently visited there to chat to them about their excellent work. Our $167 million Australian Recycling Investment plan will increase Australia's recycling rates, tackle plastic waste and litter and accelerate work on a new battery recycling scheme in the years to come. Working with the states, we have banned the export of plastic waste, paper, glass and tyres. We have also phased out microbeads, and I note that 94 per cent of cosmetic and personal care products in Australia are now microbead free. These measures illustrate just some of the innovative ways we are all tackling waste, and they are further enhanced by our $100 million Environment Restoration Fund, which will support practical action on waste and recycling, the protection of rivers, waterways and coasts, and provide further support for our threatened native species.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** *(Mr Llew O'Brien)*: There being no further speakers, the debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.
Captioned Telephone Handsets

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this House:

(1) notes that:
   (a) the captioned telephone handset, CapTel, is a popular service amongst the Australian deaf and hard of hearing community;
   (b) according to the Department of Communications there are approximately 4,000 CapTel handset users in Australia;
   (c) the average age of people using the service is 80; and
   (d) with an increasing ageing population, it can be expected more and more Australians will need to rely on this service to communicate;

(2) acknowledges the distress and loss that CapTel users and their families are experiencing due to the planned discontinuation of the CapTel service in February 2020;

(3) condemns the Government for its decision to:
   (a) remove the CapTel service without any consultation with its users; and
   (b) purchase an inferior, outdated, and less user-friendly product, forcing often elderly users to learn a new piece of technology or lose the ability to communicate; and

(4) encourages CapTel users and their families to contact their federal member of parliament to explain to them the importance of the CapTel service for the deaf and hard of hearing community of Australia.

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (19:12): Imagine you're facing a heatwave and your city has just experienced the worst air quality in the world. Now imagine you're facing those threats while living alone. Now imagine that your only way of communicating is about to be cut off. That was the situation that Canberra woman Jentelle Outhwaite faced last month when she learned the CapTel service that she relies on was going to be axed by the Morrison government. Like thousands of Australians, Ms Outhwaite has hearing difficulties and relies on this vital service for everyday communications. I visited her in her Florey home with the shadow minister for communications, Michelle Rowland, and Senator Anne Urquhart. Ms Outhwaite showed us how easy it was for her to use her CapTel machine to make calls and receive calls. She said she was devastated to learn that the Prime Minister and his government were going to cut access to this vital service without even consulting users like her. Ms Outhwaite said, 'I am dependent on it.' She added that without the service she wouldn't be able to call anyone, saying, 'I think I'd be down and out.'

Jentelle Outhwaite is not the only CapTel user affected in my electorate. An aged pensioner in Fenner recently wrote to me about his CapTel phone. He called it a 'lifesaver'. He said it is 'far superior to the government's proposed replacement system', which he said was 'very much slower, difficult to use, significantly more complicated and discriminatory'. He described it as a '40-year-old system which is confusing and significantly slower to operate than the CapTel system it's supposed to replace'.

These are just two of the 3,500 people who use the CapTel service—3,500 people who use that technology to work and to stay in touch with friends and family. They rely on it to have a sense of safety and security. Were they consulted by the Morrison government? No, they weren't. They asked the minister to change his mind, but he wouldn't. In the end, it was the CapTel founder, Ultratec CEO Robert Engelke, who had to step in and provide an interim service to users. He said:

I believe that access to the telephone is a right, not a privilege.

Mr Engelke went on:

I have been genuinely moved by the outpouring of heartfelt messages from Australians who are clearly distressed and frightened about living without CapTel. CapTel has been available for over ten years in Australia and I believe it is not acceptable to leave CapTel users without access to family, friends, employment, emergency services and the myriad ways that all of us use the telephone.

Let's be clear about what this means. This is an American CEO, based in Madison, Wisconsin, who is showing more compassion for hearing impaired Australians than is the Morrison government. As he described it, Australians who've been using CapTel were 'distressed and frightened'. That's because CapTel is a straightforward service which uses transcribers to turn a conversation into text; to make it possible for hearing impaired people to immediately, in real time, see in text format a conversation which those without a hearing impairment would simply listen to. Jenelle Outhwaite demonstrated the service to us, and anyone who's seen it can immediately recognise what a valuable service this is.

The average age of a CapTel user is 82, and many of them are not immediately able to just pick up and run with the next technology. Older Australians deserve better than they've been getting from the Morrison government.
They deserve better than the excuses and the blame game. They deserve better than attempts to blame the Public Service, the previous provider of the National Relay Service, the US technology licensee and even the former Labor government. Hearing impaired older Australians need a government that will take responsibility. We've seen this failure to accept responsibility in the case of the bushfires, in the case of the Australian economy and in the case of climate change. Those opposite aren't willing to do the right thing. They're not willing to swallow their pride and admit when they've made a mistake.

I commend the member for Perth, Patrick Gorman, for bringing forward this important motion today. I commend the work that the shadow minister for communications, Michelle Rowland, and Senator Anne Urquhart have done in highlighting this vital issue for my constituents and 3,500 other Australians.

Mr STEVENS (Sturt) (19:17): It's pretty low to want to spread fear and misinformation to some of the most vulnerable people in our society with motions such as this on captioned telephone handsets and contributions in the debate on this motion which are completely inaccurate and just spread fear and uncertainty to the most vulnerable in our society—people with hearing issues and people with speech issues. These people have had in place from this government a service that, unequivocally, is continuing into the future fully funded at $22 million a year. Instead, we've got the Labor Party prosecuting a matter which has nothing to do with the Commonwealth government's power. It's to do with a particular proprietary telephony product that is owned by an American company that they choose to license exclusively to another company that will no longer be continuing to provide a service because a better service has been selected by the government, through a free-market tender process, to provide enhanced outcomes for the most vulnerable people in our society.

The National Relay Service provides a vital support to people that need that kind of support in communication. As I mentioned, it's relied on by people with hearing issues and people with speech issues. There are a whole range of different ways in which the NRS supports people to communicate and have the kind of interaction that they deserve to have support from government for in our society. The reality is that we quite rightly went out to the market and put this tender into the market place so that the existing provider could appropriately be held to account against other potential providers that might in fact offer an enhanced service or a service that provided better value for money to the taxpayer. What has happened is that the existing provider was not successful because we went with a new provider that better met the requirements for this service going forward. The government makes no apology for that. We had a situation between 2015-16 and 2018-19 where the cost of the NRS service blew out by 45 per cent over that three-year period. That just means that we don't have the same quality of service that we can support to all the people that those services.

What this motion suggests is that a particular proprietary product, CapTel, which as I say is owned by an American company, yes, is being used by a number of people in our society. It was sold to those people by the previous provider, and they happen to have the exclusive right to that technology in this country. There's nothing that the Commonwealth can do about that. We have been seeking with that company—I know the minister has been corresponding with the company—whether or not there are ways in which they would be prepared to let existing holders of that product continue to use it and to licence that product to the new provider that's been selected by the Commonwealth. It is from an American company. I don't know what the contractual situation they have with the previous Australian supplier is, but the reality is that at this stage there isn't an avenue forward for them to transfer the right to use that service across to the new provider. That is unfortunate, but it doesn't change the fact that we have got to make decisions in the best interests of taxpayer funds and providing the best service for the people that need it.

This is one particular piece of technology. Tomorrow Apple could choose not to sell the iPhone in Australia anymore, and that would be regrettable, but that's at the end of the day a decision of that company. There are other providers around that provide all kinds of technologies that are comparable. We've been working very effectively with all the users of this technology because of the situation that is created by a relationship between two companies It has nothing to do with the Australian government. There are competitor technologies that can be embraced. Technological innovation is exciting. It is always improving into the future, and the fact that this one particular handset won't be useable into the future because of a proprietary relationship between an American company and an Australian company should not prevent the government from making sure that we're making decisions in the best interests of taxpayer funds and service provision to the most vulnerable people, who need those services.

The scope of the tender that went out ensured that, and we made a decision to go with a new provider. It will be the best outcome for the people that we are servicing and will ensure we get best full value for the service that we are all paying for.

Ms WELLS (Lilley) (19:22): The strength of a government can be determined by how it treats its weakest and most vulnerable members of the community. The Morrison government is devoid of empathy and of compassion...
and treats those who require extra assistance or a hand up with contempt. This is the government that refuses to raise the rate of Newstart for people who are doing it tough, trying to find work, because that money would apparently 'go straight into the pockets of drug dealers'. This is the government claiming to owe no duty of care or recompense to people they sent illegal robodebt notices. This is the government that ignored advice from the Department of Health to fund more home care packages while 16,000 senior Australians died on the waitlist for their approved package. Now this is the government that has cut funding to CapTel services at the expense of deaf and hearing impaired Australians.

I have had constituents from Aspley, Deagon and Chermside reach out to me after receiving a letter from this heartless government advising that they had decided to cut funding and withdraw CapTel from the National Relay Service. The CapTel handset is a critical tool that gives deaf and hearing impaired Australians the independence and freedom to make and receive calls by transcribing a caption of the conversation. The average age of a CapTel user is 80 years old. Here is a picture of the CapTel handset. As you can see, it has a big screen to help older Australians read the text. Here is the 1980s-style teletypewriter that the Morrison government now expects hearing impaired Australians to use instead of the CapTel handset. Look how small the screen is. How is a person in their 80s supposed to read this screen?

The big question is: what was the huge cost blowout that forced the Morrison government's hand to cut the funding? How heavy was the drain of funding for the CapTel handset on their precious surplus? It was $10 million a year. The Morrison government has stopped funding CapTel handsets to save $10 million a year. This is a government that is so devoid of empathy that they are not even willing to preserve the ability of senior deaf Australians to access modern telecommunications technology for the cost of $10 million a year. In Senate estimates we were told there had been a blowout on the cost of operating the NRS which led to a capped tender of $22 million a year instead of approximately $32 million a year. As the shadow minister for communications previously pointed out, there has been no cost blowout. Australia's ageing population and increasing longevity has driven the increased need for relay services.

I wrote to the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts on behalf of my constituents and urged him to reconsider the government's decision. I told him about one of my constituents, Teresa, and how the CapTel handset has changed her life. Teresa is an 80-year-old pensioner who lives independently in public housing in Chermside. She was very reliant on CapTel to get in touch with her daughter and her doctors and with community service programs like the Burnie Brae Centre, St. John Ambulance and Lifeline. Teresa has never used any other service to help her use her phone. Like a lot of older Australians, she does not have a mobile; she doesn't know how to use it. Before getting a CapTel handset, Teresa had to catch the bus to the doctor to make an appointment in person because she couldn't use a regular phone. She couldn't call her family and she had to wait for her daughter to come and visit or send her a letter. She spent a lot of time alone and she was confined to her house. She reached out to me because she was terrified that without her CapTel handset she would become isolated and lonely, like she was before. She was scared about how she would call for help if she fell over again. She said she felt like a dog that needed to be put down.

In response to my correspondence to the minister for communications, I received a weak and disappointing letter that restated the government's decision to cut funding without concern for her or any of the thousands of hearing-impaired Australians that use CapTel handsets. The letter did not address any of the issues I'd raised about the TTY system, like the fact it transcribes 85 fewer words per minute; it doesn't use a controlled network; and it doesn't automatically loop in a transcriber, meaning users have to call the relay service to arrange their call. The response I received was typically arrogant, cold and matter of fact. The decision is final, there is no turning back. No wonder they have engaged an empathy consultant! But clearly he can't help everybody all of the time.

Thankfully, in January of this year, a US provider of CapTel services stepped up and announced they will temporarily keep the CapTel handset running for Australia's deaf community despite the Morrison government's cutting its deal with them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien): The member's time has expired. There being no further speakers, 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 19:27
QUESTIONS IN WRITING  
Department: Tender  
(Question No. 44)

Mr Fitzgibbon asked the Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management in writing, on 3 July 2019:

In respect of the Request for Tender for the Provision of Targeted External Scientific Reviewer Services (ESR) - RFT No. 1819-102 which was advertised on 4 June 2019 and closed on 30 June 2019:

a. how many additional ESR panel providers are being sought to be added to the existing ESR panel providers
b. what is the estimated cost of the additional ESR panel providers
c. what is the average cost associated to purchased services from any panel member during the term of the deed

Mr Littleproud: In reply to Question No.44, Hansard of 9 September 2019, pages 2245-2246. The number of ESR providers has varied between approximately 40 and 120 for the period 2011/12 to 2018/19 should read as listed below. The figure for 2018/19: $1.66 million listed as expenditure on ESR providers should read as 2018/19: $1.90 million.

a. There is no predetermined target.
b. There is no additional cost. The cost of ESR providers depends on the number and type of applications assessed by the providers, not on the number of providers on the panel.
c. The average cost is not known because RFT No. 1819-102 has not been finalised.
d. The number of ESR providers has varied between approximately 40 and 120 for the period 2011/12 to 2018/19.

Expenditure on ESR providers is provided below:

2011/12: $4.56 million
2012/13: $4.00 million
2013/14: $4.16 million
2014/15: $5.06 million
2015/16: $5.07 million
2016/17: $2.51 million
2017/18: $1.63 million
2018/19: $1.90 million

Roads  
(Question No. 271)

Ms Sharkie asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, in writing, on 4 December 2019:

In respect of the recently released, Princes Highway Corridor Strategy:

1. What are the expected works for Mount Barker to Callington under: (a) Initiative 7; and (b) Initiative 8.
2. If the works under initiatives 7 and 8 are not yet known, in which month and year is it expected that each of these works will become known.
3. Can the Minister provide any additional detail on the expected progression of the strategy as it applies to the South Eastern Freeway: (a) between Mount Barker and Callington; and (b) the broader electorate of Mayo.

Mr McCormack: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

1. Under Initiative 8, priority locations for rehabilitation and resealing works along the South Eastern Freeway between Mount Barker and Callington have been identified with approximately 11.5 kilometres of rehabilitation works expected to commence by the end of March 2020. Expected works on Initiative 7 are not yet known.
2. The Australian Government is working with the South Australian Government to progress Initiative 7 and planning works are being undertaken to determine the priority works and delivery schedule for this Initiative.
3. The South Australian Government is undertaking additional planning on the South Eastern Freeway between Mount Barker and Callington to identify if further works are required on this section. The remaining sections of the South Eastern Freeway located in the Federal Division of Mayo are not part of the scope of the Princes Highway Corridor Strategy.
Ms Sharkie asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 10 February 2020:
Further to the answer to question in writing No. 154 (House Hansard, 14 October 2019, page 4068), can the Minister provide an update to his response.

Mr Frydenberg: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:

In its recent audit report, Government Advertising: June 2015 to April 2019, the Australian National Audit Office directed a number of audit recommendations to the Department of Finance (Finance).

Finance has responded to Recommendation 3 of the report, by making changes to the content of its 2018-19 report on campaign advertising, to provide consolidated expenditure detail at a whole of government level.

The remainder of the recommendations directed to Finance relate to matters of policy. The Government is considering advice on those policy matters and will respond in due course.