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FORTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FOURTH PERIOD

Governor-General
Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, Companion of the Order of Australia

House of Representatives Office holders
Speaker—Mr Harry Alfred Jenkins MP
Deputy Speaker—Hon. Peter Neil Slipper MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Hon. Bruce Craig Scott MP

Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Ms Anna Elizabeth Burke MP, Hon. Dick Godfrey Harry Adams MP, Ms Sharon Leah Bird MP, Mrs Yvette Maree D’Ath MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Ms Kirsten Fiona Livermore MP, Mr John Paul Murphy MP, Mr Peter Sid Sidebottom MP, Mr Kelvin John Thomson MP, Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP

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Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Stephen Francis Smith MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Christopher Maurice Pyne MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP

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Australian Labor Party
   Leader—Hon. Julia Eileen Gillard MP
   Deputy Leader—Hon. Wayne Maxwell Swan MP
   Chief Government Whip—Hon. Joel Andrew Fitzgibbon MP
   Government Whips—Ms Jill Griffiths Hall MP and Mr Ed Husic MP

Liberal Party of Australia
   Leader—Hon. Anthony John Abbott MP
   Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
   Chief Opposition Whip—Hon. Warren George Entsch MP
   Opposition Whips—Mr Patrick Damien Secker MP and Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP

The Nationals
   Leader—Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP
   Chief Whip—Mr Mark Maclean Coulton MP
   Whip—Mr Paul Christopher Neville MP

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<td>Washer, Malcom James</td>
<td>Moore, WA</td>
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<td>Wilkie, Andrew Damien</td>
<td>Denison, TAS</td>
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<td>Windsor, Anthony Harold Curties</td>
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<td>Wyatt, Kenneth George</td>
<td>Hasluck, WA</td>
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<td>Zappia, Tony</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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PARTY ABBREVIATIONS
ALP—Australian Labor Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; LNP—Liberal National Party;
CLP—Country Liberal Party; Nats—The Nationals; NWA—The Nationals WA; Ind—Independent;
AG—Australian Greens

Heads of Parliamentary Departments
Clerk of the Senate—R Laing
Clerk of the House of Representatives—B Wright
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—A Thompson
GILLARD MINISTRY

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister, Treasurer
Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government
Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations and Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth Education and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Trade
Minister for Defence and Deputy Leader of the House
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and Leader of the House
Minister for Health and Ageing
Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
Minister for Finance and Deregulation
Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
Attorney-General and Vice President of the Executive Council
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Manager of Government Business in the Senate
Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism
Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency

Hon. Julia Gillard MP
Hon. Wayne Swan MP
Hon. Simon Crean MP
Senator Hon. Chris Evans
Hon. Peter Garrett AM, MP
Senator Hon. Stephen Conroy
Hon. Kevin Rudd MP
Hon. Dr Craig Emerson MP
Hon. Stephen Smith MP
Hon. Chris Bowen MP
Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Hon. Nicola Roxon MP
Hon. Jenny Macklin MP
Hon. Tony Burke MP
Senator Hon. Penny Wong
Senator Hon. Kim Carr
Hon. Robert McClelland MP
Senator Hon. Joe Ludwig
Hon. Martin Ferguson AM, MP
Hon. Greg Combet AM, MP

[The above ministers constitute the cabinet]
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<td>Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation</td>
<td>Hon. Bill Shorten MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Employment Participation and Childcare</td>
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<td>Minister for Defence Materiel</td>
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<td>Minister for Indigenous Health</td>
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<td>Minister for Mental Health and Ageing and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Mental Health Reform</td>
<td>Hon. Mark Butler MP</td>
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<td>Minister for the Status of Women</td>
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<td>Hon. Gary Gray AO, MP</td>
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<td>Special Minister of State</td>
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<td>Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Justice</td>
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<td>Minister for Human Services</td>
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<td>Cabinet Secretary</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for School Education and Workplace Relations</td>
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<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Trade</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Transport and</td>
<td>Hon. Catherine King MP</td>
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<td>Minister Assisting on Deregulation and Public Sector Superannuation</td>
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<td>Minister Assisting the Attorney-General on Queensland Floods Recovery</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Joe Ludwig</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</td>
<td>Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM, MP</td>
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<td>Minister Assisting the Minister for Tourism</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency</td>
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SHADOW MINISTRY

Leader of the Opposition
Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Shadow Minister for Trade
Leader of the Nationals and Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Attorney-General and Shadow Minister for the Arts
Shadow Treasurer
Shadow Minister for Education, Apprenticeships and Training and Manager of Opposition Business in the House
Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Deputy Leader of the Nationals
Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Water and Leader of the Nationals in the Senate
Shadow Minister for Finance, Deregulation and Debt Reduction and Chairman, Coalition Policy Development Committee
Shadow Minister for Energy and Resources
Shadow Minister for Defence
Shadow Minister for Communications and Broadband
Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing
Shadow Minister for Families, Housing and Human Services
Shadow Minister for Climate Action, Environment and Heritage
Shadow Minister for Productivity and Population and Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry and Science
Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Food Security
Shadow Minister for Small Business, Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs

Hon. Tony Abbott MP
Hon. Julie Bishop MP
Hon. Warren Truss MP
Senator Hon. Eric Abetz
Senator Hon. George Brandis SC
Hon. Joe Hockey MP
Hon. Christopher Pyne MP
Senator Hon. Nigel Scullion
Senator Barnaby Joyce
Hon. Andrew Robb AO, MP
Hon. Ian Macfarlane MP
Senator Hon. David Johnston
Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP
Hon. Peter Dutton MP
Hon. Kevin Andrews MP
Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Mr Scott Morrison MP
Mrs Sophie Mirabella MP
Hon. John Cobb MP
Hon. Bruce Billson MP

[The above constitute the shadow cabinet]
Shadow Minister for Employment Participation
Hon. Sussan Ley MP

Shadow Minister for Justice, Customs and Border Protection Services and Superannuation
Mr Michael Keenan MP

Shadow Assistant Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Financial
Senator Mathias Cormann

Shadow Minister for Childcare and Early Childhood Learning
Hon. Sussan Ley MP

Shadow Minister for Universities and Research
Senator Hon. Brett Mason

Shadow Minister for Youth and Sport and Deputy Manager of
Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP

Opposition Business in the House

Shadow Minister for Indigenous Development and Employment
Senator Marise Payne

Shadow Minister for Regional Development
Hon. Bob Baldwin MP

Shadow Special Minister of State
Hon. Bronwyn Bishop MP

Shadow Minister for COAG
Senator Marise Payne

Shadow Minister for Tourism
Hon. Bob Baldwin MP

Shadow Minister for Defence Science, Technology and
Mr Stuart Robert MP

Personnel

Shadow Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and Shadow Minister
Senator Hon. Michael Ronaldson

Assisting the Leader of the Opposition on the Centenary of

ANZAC

Shadow Minister for Regional Communications
Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP

Shadow Minister for Ageing and Shadow Minister for Mental
Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells

Health

Shadow Minister for Seniors
Hon. Bronwyn Bishop MP

Shadow Minister for Disabilities, Carers and the Voluntary
Senator Mitch Fifield

Sector and Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate

Shadow Minister for Housing
Senator Marise Payne

Chairman, Scrutiny of Government Waste Committee
Mr Jamie Briggs MP

Shadow Cabinet Secretary
Hon. Philip Ruddock MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Leader of the
Senator Cory Bernardi

Opposition

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for International Development
Hon. Teresa Gambaro MP

Assistant

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Roads and Regional
Mr Darren Chester MP

Transport

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Shadow Attorney-
Senator Gary Humphries

General

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Tax Reform and Deputy
Hon. Tony Smith MP

Chairman, Coalition Policy Development Committee

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Education
Senator Fiona Nash

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern and Remote
Senator Hon. Ian Macdonald

Australia

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government
Mr Don Randall MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Murray-Darling Basin
Senator Simon Birmingham

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Materiel
Senator Gary Humphries

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Defence Force and
Senator Hon. Ian Macdonald

Defence Support
SHADOW MINISTRY—continued

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Primary Healthcare
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Health Services and Indigenous Health
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Supporting Families
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Status of Women
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Environment
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Citizenship and Settlement
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation, Industry, and Science
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Forestry
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Fair Competition

Dr Andrew Southcott MP
Mr Andrew Laming MP
Senator Cory Bernardi
Senator Michaelia Cash
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ADJOURNMENT—
Thursday, 15 September 2011

The SPEAKER (Mr Harry Jenkins) took the chair at 09:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

BILLS

Banking Amendment (Covered Bonds) Bill 2011

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Swan.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr SWAN (Lilley—Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer) (09:01): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today I introduce a bill which goes to the core of the government’s agenda to secure our financial system for the future.

Exactly three years ago today, the collapse of Lehman Brothers pushed the global financial system to the very brink of collapse.

The government’s swift actions helped Australia avoid recession, and secured the strength and competitive foundations of our banking system.

We have continued to build on the strength of our financial system in the last three years, working with our regulators and industry.

The government has worked closely with industry and our regulators since early last year on a framework for covered bonds in Australia.

We released exposure draft legislation for consultation in March this year, followed by a second round of targeted consultation in July.

There could not be a more appropriate day than today—exactly three years on from the collapse of Lehman Brothers—for the parliament to now consider this key element of our plan for a strong and sustainable financial system.

Today I will outline the substantial economic benefits flowing from the introduction of covered bonds in Australia.

But first, I will provide an update on just some of the reforms we have already put in place to build up competition in the banking system.

Just nine months ago, I announced new reforms to build a competitive and sustainable banking system to give every Australian a fairer go in the banking system.

We are introducing three broad streams of reform to empower consumers, support smaller lenders, and secure the flow of credit to our economy.

We have already delivered over half of these reforms, and we are firmly on track to deliver the rest working closely with industry and consumers.

The government has already banned mortgage exit fees from 1 July this year so consumers can now walk down the road and get a better deal.

We have legislated the introduction of a simple, standardised, one-page fact sheet for consumers to compare loans from 1 January next year.

We have passed historic reforms through the parliament to crack down on unfair treatment of Australians with credit cards and this will certainly save many families some them money.

I also recently announced a new 'tick and flick' service to give Australians the freedom
to switch deposit accounts with the stroke of a pen.

The Gillard government has also put in place important measures to help smaller lenders compete with the major banks.

In April this year, I directed the AOFM to boost the government’s investment in high-quality, AAA-rated RMBS by a further $4 billion.

The government’s now $20 billion investment since late 2008 has been absolutely critical in helping smaller lenders secure cheaper funding.

This important program has allowed smaller Australian lenders to continue offering competitive loans to families and small businesses.

We are also taking action to build a fifth pillar in our banking system from the combined competitive power of our mutual sector.

We have already seen several mutual lenders out there leveraging our reforms to help them use the new term ‘mutual bank’ in the branding.

In addition, the government has already kicked off its community awareness and education campaign which I announced last December.

We have put credit unions, building societies and our regional and other smaller banks right at the centre of this awareness campaign.

It is all about informing consumers of the many safe and competitive alternatives to the major banks when it comes to loans and deposits.

It is fantastic to see our reforms have helped trigger a new breakout of competition in the banking sector to the benefit of consumers.

We have seen the major banks scrapping their exit fees, offering cash to swipe customers from their competitors and cutting other fees too.

Just recently we have seen them slashing their home loan fixed interest rates and one major bank promising to match its competitors on price.

The big winner here is the everyday Australian family who now knows the power is in their hands when it comes to shopping for a better deal.

**Sustainable funding**

Last December, I also announced further reforms to secure the long-term safety and sustainability of Australia’s financial system.

These reforms are critical to ensuring our banking sector can keep providing reasonably priced credit to households and small businesses.

I announced measures to develop a deep and liquid corporate bond market to further reduce our reliance on offshore wholesale funding.

We are well advanced in our delivery of these reforms which include trading Commonwealth government securities on a securities exchange.

The government is also making strong progress in finalising reforms to reduce red tape for corporate bonds issuance to retail investors.

We will continue to work with corporate issuers and investors to build a deep and liquid Australian corporate bond market.

On top of this, we continue to work on ways to make the RMBS market more sustainable and diverse for smaller lenders in the years to come. In December, I asked Treasury to accelerate its work on promoting smaller lender issuance of alternative-style RMBS ‘bullet securities’.
These securities are more like 'regular bonds' than traditional RMBS and are therefore more attractive to superannuation fund investors.

The Treasury is making strong progress in working with the industry and our regulators to develop the market for a smaller lender bullet RMBS.

The bill I introduce today is all about taking the next logical step to strengthen the funding options available to our banking system—and nothing could be more important, given events that we have been seeing in international markets over recent weeks.

This bill makes amendments to the Banking Act to allow Australian banks, credit unions and building societies to issue covered bonds.

This is a critical economic reform to strengthen and diversify the Australian financial system’s access to cheaper, more stable and longer term funding in domestic and offshore wholesale capital markets.

Treasury estimates the government’s framework will allow Australian institutions to issue $130 billion of covered bonds in coming years.

Covered bonds will assist our banks in meeting the new Basel III liquidity reforms, which require a transition to longer term sustainable funding.

Of course, a deep and liquid covered bond market will also help to channel Australia’s national superannuation savings through the financial system into productive investment in all sectors of our economy.

We have already seen banks from Canada and Norway coming to Australia to issue covered bonds and take our savings home with them.

It defies logic that our own banks cannot issue the same covered bonds themselves to our local superannuation funds for Australian investors.

Allowing our institutions another string in their bow—to compete for funding with banks around the world—is an absolute no-brainer.

Covered bonds are already well established overseas and were one of the most resilient funding markets during the global financial crisis.

So the bill I present today will strengthen the long-term funding capacity of all major and regional banks, credit unions and building societies.

In fact, the bill includes an express framework which allows smaller lenders to pool together and jointly issue covered bonds.

This further builds on the measures I have outlined today which the government has already taken to diversify funding for smaller lenders.

The government’s covered bonds framework ensures the absolute security of depositors' savings and protection of taxpayer funds.

Australian depositors will continue to have absolute certainty over their deposits under the Financial Claims Scheme.

On Sunday, I announced a new, permanent cap of $250,000 per person per institution to be introduced from 1 February 2012 to protect the savings held in around 99 per cent of Australian deposit accounts in full.

The scheme was developed over the period leading up to the global financial crisis by our financial regulators.

The government accelerated its introduction to secure confidence after the severe dislocation of global funding markets following the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008.
The timely introduction of the scheme, combined with the wholesale funding guarantee, helped ensure the stability of our banking system at the height of the global financial crisis.

These decisive actions maintained the continued flow of credit—the lifeblood of any modern economy—to Australian households and businesses during a very difficult period in the global economy.

Together with both fiscal and monetary policy stimulus, this action saw Australia as virtually the only developed country to avoid recession.

At that time, the government committed to review the settings of the scheme after three years.

Australia's credit unions, building societies and banks are highly capitalised, well rated and have benefited from years of tough supervision by our world-class regulators.

Our institutions are soundly managed by international standards, having developed strong practices of responsible lending and risk management.

They are very well funded for the period ahead, having done a lot of heavy lifting to reduce the amount of funds they borrow offshore as they move to more stable, longer term funding.

The Council of Financial Regulators has advised that the cap should be set at a new, permanent level to reflect the almost unparalleled strength of the Australian banking system.

In the extremely unlikely event of the scheme being activated, the government would step in and swiftly give depositors their money.

The government would then sell the assets of the institution to recover taxpayers' money and in the extremely unlikely event that there was not enough the government would levy the whole banking system to recover any shortfall.

So Australian household depositors and taxpayers are always protected.

As an additional protection, this bill also includes a regulatory cap on the amount of covered bonds an institution can issue.

This regulatory cap ensures that only a small proportion of an institution's assets in Australia are ever used as security for issuing covered bonds.

Specifically, the pool of assets used to secure covered bond issuance can be no greater than eight per cent of an institution's assets in Australia.

This further reduces the likelihood that a levy on the banking industry would ever be required under the scheme, as the sale of an institution's assets would almost certainly recover taxpayers' funds.

Conclusion

The Gillard government is working hard to build a more competitive and sustainable banking system for all Australians.

We worked hard through the global financial crisis to secure our financial system, and to preserve the competitive foundations of our banking sector.

In December last year, I announced a further reform package to help build up competition again in the banking system for all Australians.

We have now seen these reforms deliver great results for consumers, with the major banks now having to compete very hard for their business.

The challenge now is to ensure that our banks, credit unions and building societies have the capacity to safely lend for decades to come.
The bill I present today is the next logical step in that process. I commend this bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

BUSINESS

Days and Hours of Meeting

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) (09:15): I move:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent the time and order of business for Tuesday, 20 September 2011, being as follows:

(1) the House shall meet at 9 a.m.;
(2) Government Business shall have priority from 9am until 2 p.m.;
(3) during the period from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m., any division on a question called for in the House, other than on a motion moved by a Minister during this period, shall stand deferred until the conclusion of the discussion of a Matter of Public Importance; and
(4) any variation to this arrangement to be made only by a motion moved by a Minister.

For the benefit of members I will outline what is proposed—that is, next Tuesday, the House would meet at 9 am, and government business would have priority from 9 am until 2 pm. During the period from 9 am until 2 pm any division on a question called for in the House, other than on a motion moved by a minister during this period, shall stand deferred until the conclusion of the discussion of a matter of public importance and any variation to this arrangement be made only by a motion moved by a minister.

We had some considerable discussion on Tuesday about what the process would be for the consideration of the clean energy bills package, and the House determined a process which will allow for proper consideration of this legislation: a joint parliamentary committee that will report to the parliament on 7 October. The government showed its willingness to be flexible by accepting an amendment that was moved by the opposition to alter the date of reporting from 4 October, which is what the government originally proposed. We also accommodated the opposition by expanding the membership of the committee to include an additional opposition member as well as an additional government member, once again showing in our amendment to the amendment moved by the Manager of Opposition Business that this is a government that is prepared to put in place mechanisms to facilitate appropriate consideration of this critical legislation. This, of course, differentiates us from the actions of the previous government, where on issues like Work Choices, for example, we had eight days for the entire consideration. Now, one month is more than eight days. I know that the member for Mackellar has had problems with calendars in the past, but eight days is not as much as a calendar month. That is why we have put in place these mechanisms.

Some concern has been expressed by the opposition about the amount of time that would be permitted for discussion, so one of the things that we are prepared to do—and which I indicated from the outset—is to allow for additional time so that people have the opportunity to contribute to the debate. This resolution today would add five hours at a time that is convenient to members, it being from 9 am to 2 pm. Of course, party room meetings occur at that time. There are a number of members in this parliament who do not have to go to party meetings, but, for those of us who do, the clause in the resolution I am moving about no divisions will ensure that those party processes, which are important to the functioning of both government and opposition, can take place in an orderly way. It is also convenient for the staff, and in that case I am referring not just to the personal staff of members of the
House of Representatives, ministers and shadow ministers but, importantly, to the fine men and women who work to keep this parliament functioning in such an effective way: the Hansard reporters, the clerks, the advisory staff of the House of Representatives and, indeed, the fine people who work in your office, Mr Speaker. So, in terms of the functioning of the parliament, this is an appropriate way; this is certainly preferable, for example, to extending the parliament by five hours at the end of Tuesday, which would take us into the early hours of the morning.

The government indicated very early on, I must say—more than a week ago—to the Manager of Opposition Business that this was the government’s intention. I foreshadow to you, Mr Speaker, that if additional time is required we will also be proposing to sit on the following Tuesday in a similar manner to add an additional five hours. I also indicate that we are prepared to sit later next week, be it on Wednesday or Thursday, when parliament usually rises at 8 pm and 5 pm respectively, because we want to make sure that everyone who wants to make a contribution to this debate is able to do so. We are doing so in a transparent way. As you are aware, there are various methods available to the government to facilitate this sort of process in a less consultative way through measures which are available to ministers such as the negation of adjournments, for example. We are not doing that. We are attempting, through a consultative process, to get an appropriate vehicle forward.

I suspect that the Manager of Opposition Business has seen a bit of sense in past days and reflected on the contradictions in his remarks when he said that on the one hand we need extra time but that on the other hand he would oppose extra time being made available. I suspect what will occur here is that the Manager of Opposition Business will speak against this motion but will not vote against it, because he knows the absurdity of that position and that contradiction. I commend the resolution to the House, and I look forward to listening to the contributions of members to this important legislation, and indeed reading the contributions of members I am not able to listen to in real time. It is now time to act on dangerous climate change. We have had 35—and with the joint parliamentary committee it is 36—parliamentary inquiries. We have had the Shergold report, we have had the Garnaut report, we have had the work that was done by the emissions trading section of the department of the environment that was established and then abolished by the former government. We have had the work that was done in the lead-up to the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, when agreement was reached across the major political parties in this House before the Liberals changed their mind and they combined with the Greens to defeat the legislation in the parliament. Had that legislation been carried we would have a price on carbon and we would have a structure in place. As the member for Wentworth said yesterday, there is a great deal of similarity between the two schemes.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr ALBANESE: Those opposite do not want to hear about the issue of climate change. The fact is that we are determined to act on climate change. We are prepared also to ensure that there is an appropriate method of participation in this debate. I wonder whether their opposition to the extended hours for this debate is framed around trying to stop the member for Wentworth making a contribution. He appeared on the list yesterday, but he took himself off—we still don’t know who put him on that list, but we know it was not the member for Wentworth—and today I note he did not
appear on the list either. Today he has been deleted completely.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Leader of the House should confine his remarks to the debate that is before the House, which is about extending sitting hours next Tuesday. He has been ranging very widely over many subjects, and we have ignored him, but quite frankly he needs to bring himself back to the debate.

The Speaker: The Leader of the House had linked his remarks to the motion and in totality he has been directly relevant to the motion.

Mr ALBANESE: It is extraordinary that those opposite would suggest that a debate about suspending standing orders between 9 am and 2 pm next Tuesday is not related to clean energy bills and to taking action against climate change. What I am indicating clearly to the opposition, as I always have done in a transparent way, is what we will do with the additional hours. I am doing that in a way which puts it on the record so that there can be no doubt that government business—we are going to move some other resolution or list some other bills or do some other change—is about facilitating the debate about climate change. I understand their concern about debating a clean energy future because they are embarrassed by their own position. I understand them wanting to stop the member for Wentworth making a contribution to this debate because they put him on the list and then he took himself off and now he is off completely. We are going to make sure that if he wishes to make a contribution to the debate, then we will certainly facilitate that.

This is a common sense resolution. I indicate to the House that I foreshadow that, if need be, we are prepared to sit even more hours to make sure that people can make a contribution to this discussion, which stands in stark contrast to what the House has done in the past over Work Choices, over the Tampa legislation, over going to war in Iraq and over a range of other issues where people were stopped from making a contribution. I commend the resolution to the House.

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Manager of Opposition Business) (09:26): The Leader of the House has made a paltry argument for why we should extend sitting hours, but what he has underlined is the government's mishandling of the debate management of the carbon tax bills from start to finish. In their desperation to ram these bills through the House, on Tuesday the parliament passed, at the recommendation of the Leader of the House, a guillotine motion to cut off debate in the next sitting fortnight so that the government could ram these bills through the parliament. At the same time the government established a joint select committee to look into the clean energy legislation, the carbon tax package of bills—19 bills of over 1,000 pages—and has given each member one minute per bill in order to be able to debate the biggest structural change to our economy since Federation.

Now the government comes into the House, having applied the gag, and decides to extend sitting hours. Obviously the opposition welcomes the opportunity to debate the carbon tax bills at greater length. Of course we do. We want to scrutinise the carbon tax legislation, but how absurd to be extending sitting hours next Tuesday morning when the committee that has been established by the House is not reporting until 7 October. If the government was genuine about scrutiny, accountability and transparency and if the Greens and the crossbenchers genuinely believed that this government needed to be held to account, that they were interested in honesty, open government and transparency, why on earth
would we be extending sitting hours before the inquiry into these bills is handed down on 7 October. Surely, if the government was genuine about transparency and scrutiny they would extend the sitting hours after the committee hands down its report and remove the gag motion they passed on Tuesday in order to give the parliament as much time as we, the elected members, want in order to be able to scrutinise this legislation.

Just to underline how rank this government is in terms of its treatment of the parliament and the contempt in which it holds Australian democracy, the consideration-in-detail stage on 19 pieces of legislation, of over 1,000 pages, is three hours. Three hours in two weeks. For three hours the entire parliament will get the opportunity to question the minister about the detail involved in this legislation in 19 separate bills of over 1,000 pages. That does not include the explanatory memorandums to the bills. The government clearly with their alliance partners, the Greens and the crossbenchers, have decided to force through this legislation and, in order to create a fig leaf of respectability and a pretence that they take the parliament seriously, they plan to extend sitting hours by a few hours next Tuesday morning.

The most important point to make is that this legislation has no mandate in any event. This is an illegitimate piece of legislation that has not been through an election. The government have never sought a mandate for it. In fact, the very opposite occurred in the last election. They got a non-mandate.

**Mr Tony Smith:** They got a mandate not to introduce it.

**Mr PYNE:** They got a mandate not to introduce a carbon tax, as the member for Casey so rightly says. They received a mandate not to introduce a carbon tax because the Prime Minister promised six days before the election that there would be no carbon tax under any government she led. A few days before the election the Treasurer insisted that the opposition was being ludicrous and that the government would never introduce a carbon tax and the Prime Minister the day before the election said, 'I rule it out,' in answer to a question about whether she would introduce a carbon tax.

The government went to the election and received a mandate not to introduce a carbon tax and the Australian people in their goodwill and infinite goodness took them on their word that they would not introduce a carbon tax. Yet here we are in mid-September debating the introduction of a carbon tax. The Australian people have every reason to feel utterly lied to and short-changed by a government that deceived them during the election campaign.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke):** The member for Sturt knows—

**Mr PYNE:** I apologise, Madam Deputy Speaker. I withdraw the word 'lied'.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**Mr PYNE:** They were obviously deliberately deceived and the government will receive its punishment in full measure on election day, which will hopefully be sooner rather than later, so that people can get the opportunity to have the vote on a carbon tax that they did not have at the last election. The next election will be a referendum on the carbon tax. I look forward to the election day, which will hopefully be this year or next year and not in 2013, because I do not think the public can tolerate this government much longer. I look forward to giving the public the opportunity in full measure to wreak their punishment on this bad government, which is introducing a carbon tax in spite of the promises it made before the last election.
This motion to extend sitting hours to debate the government's broken promise has no legitimacy. They have applied a gag on the debate and yet they have said they need more time to debate it. Just contemplate the illogicality of that position. Apparently they have to gag this debate but they need more time to debate it, so they need to have extra sitting hours to debate it which are not in the schedule in spite of the fact that they are still gagging the debate. Obviously, the opposition welcomes the sitting of the parliament, but let's just take the parliament through this process from the beginning. The government decided to truncate the selection committee process. They trashed parliamentary procedures. They decided not to allow the Selection Committee to refer these bills to the five specialist committees in the House of Representatives that could be looking into each of these pieces of legislation. Instead they established a joint select committee. The only purpose of this joint select committee—

Mr Bandt interjecting—

Mr PYNE: The only purpose, Member for Melbourne, of the joint select committee is to get around the Selection Committee process and to not refer these bills to the five specialist committees in the House of Representatives.

Mr Bandt interjecting—

Mr PYNE: Do not worry, Member for Melbourne, you will get your punishment too on election day—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Sturt!

Mr PYNE: You will not have to wait, you will be—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Sturt!

Mr PYNE: If you come back here that will be an amazement. Now that the public have found out about the Greens' policies you will be struggling, do not worry about that. Madam Deputy Speaker, I was responding to the provocation by the member for Melbourne.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Sturt knows—

Mr PYNE: The member for Melbourne should be counselled.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: full well that he should not respond to interjections. He is a longstanding member of this place and he should know the rules.

Mr PYNE: Some say too long, but the good burghers of the east and the north-eastern suburbs of Adelaide do not think so. The whole purpose of the joint select committee was to get around the Selection Committee process. Then, in the most extraordinary act, the government referred the Leader of the Opposition's wild rivers legislation to a second committee. Not content with having one committee on the wild rivers legislation they then referred the Leader of the Opposition's wild rivers bill to a second committee and yet they would not allow the Selection Committee to refer 19 pieces of legislation on the carbon tax—the most significant change to our economy in 111 years—to the House specialist committees.

The proper process of this House, as followed by the Howard government and the Hawke, Keating and Fraser governments before it, is that when legislation of such importance is introduced into the parliament it sits on the table for at least a week. Members of the House get the opportunity to consider it, to study it, to draft their speeches, to seek advice, to do research and to come into the House and give a considered speech. Then, when those speeches begin, if an inquiry is recommended, an inquiry is held and the
legislation sits on the table again until the inquiry has met, considered all the evidence put before it and come up with recommendations. As a consequence the parliament gets the best measure of the skills available in this parliament to scrutinise legislation.

If I were the government, I would be welcoming the opportunity for someone to go over my work to make sure I do not make all the same mistakes that they have made time and time again in their sloppy administration of government programs and legislation. I do not want to be not relevant to the debate, but let us not forget with Building the Education Revolution, home insulation or live cattle exports. How much better it would have been if the parliament had taken the time to get it right the first time rather than wasting taxpayers' money. And here we are again debating rushed legislation as if the government, this group of incompetents, could possibly get 19 pieces of legislation of over 1,000 pages right the first time. That is why this chamber needs to have maximum time to scrutinise legislation. It needs to have five specialist committees investigating these bills. The bills need to sit on the table until those inquiries are completed and then we should have the second reading debate. And then, if we need more time to sit, we should sit. But we should not be gagging this debate. We should not be truncating the selection committee process and we should not be needing extra sitting hours because the government suddenly realises they will need more time for this debate because they gagged the debate in mid-September.

I put that to the House. The opposition will not be opposing this motion from the Leader of the House, but the point needs to be made this is an incompetent government mismanaging another suite of legislation. The opposition looks forward to the day when the Australian people get the opportunity to clean this government out and start again with a group of people who know what they are doing.

Question agreed to.

COMMITEES

Public Works Committee

Approval of Work

Mr GARRETT (Kingsford Smith—Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth) (09:38): On behalf of the Minister for Home Affairs, I move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, the following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report: Construction of a new Australian embassy complex including chancery and head of mission residence in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade proposes to construct a new purpose-built embassy complex including a chancery and head of mission residence in Bangkok, Thailand, at an estimated cost of $190.8 million. Following the terrorist bomb attack at the Australian embassy in Jakarta in 2004 and a global review of physical security at Australia's overseas missions, the government approved the relocation of the Bangkok embassy complex on security grounds. The new site will enable appropriate setbacks for the chancery and head of mission residence buildings for blast mitigation while the buildings themselves will be designed to mitigate blast. The Australian government constructed of the existing buildings in 1979 for use as a chancery and head of mission residence.

The new development proposal is driven by the imperative to provide more secure accommodation. The new embassy complex will be on leased land adjacent to the embassy of Japan in the Pathum Wan district.
of Bangkok, which is in the same general
district as the current embassy. As well as providing appropriate physical security, the project will deliver a modern, functional chancery building to accommodate tenant agencies as well as provision of a new official residence for the ambassador, family members and high-level visitors.

As a major overseas mission, the Bangkok embassy is significant in representational terms as well as acting as a hub for other Australian missions in the region. The new facilities will be capable of catering for the large range of representational functions that will be undertaken at the chancery. Through the use of public spaces, conference rooms and outdoor areas as well as the official representational areas of the head of mission residence, the buildings will accommodate events such as official receptions, exhibitions and trade displays, meetings, lectures and business missions. Subject to parliamentary approval, construction of the major works package could commence in October 2013 with practical completion in late March 2016 followed by security and furniture fit-out with occupation of the complex scheduled for around June 2016. I commend the motion to the House.

Question agreed to.

Clean Energy Future Legislation Committee

Membership

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott) (09:42): Mr Speaker has received a message from the Senate informing the House that in accordance with the resolution agreed to by both houses, Senators Birmingham, Cormann, Milne, Pratt, Urquhart have been appointed members of the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Clean Energy Future Legislation.

BILLS

Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Registration Fees) Amendment Bill 2011

Offshore Petroleum (Royalty) Amendment Bill 2011

Offshore Resources Legislation Amendment (Personal Property Securities) Bill 2011


Returned from Senate

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

Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment (National Regulator) Bill 2011

Consideration of Senate Message

Bill returned from the Senate with an amendment.

Ordered that the amendment be considered immediately.

Schedule of the amendment made by the Senate

(1) Schedule 2, page 83 (after line 21), after item 427, insert:

427A Paragraph 656(1)(b)

Omit "4 or 6", substitute "at least 5, and not more than 7, ."

Mr GARRETT (Kingsford Smith—Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth) (09:43): I move:

That the amendment be agreed to.

This legislation establishes a new regime for regulating petroleum activities in Commonwealth waters. In particular it increases the responsibilities and changes the
name of NOPSA to the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority—NOPSEMA. The amendment passed by the Senate will increase the number of NOPSEMA board members and would allow environmental expertise to be added to the board. The government has supported this amendment and commends the bill to the House. I would also take this opportunity to advise the House that the Minister for Resources and Energy, the Hon. Martin Ferguson, and the Western Australian Minister for Mines and Petroleum, the Hon. Norman Moore, have recently finalised their negotiations and have now executed a memorandum of understanding on cooperative working arrangements between the proposed Commonwealth regulators and the Western Australian Department of Mines and Petroleum. The ministers have also exchanged correspondence outlining their agreement on how the new regulatory arrangements will proceed. These agreements have removed the Western Australian government's opposition to the national regulator bills. The government commends Minister Moore for his constructive contribution to the development of these arrangements. I seek leave of the House to table this memorandum of understanding and related correspondence. The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Leave granted.

Mr GARRETT: by leave—I move:
That Mr Windsor be appointed a member of the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Clean Energy Future Legislation.
Question agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): The question is that the amendment be agreed to.
Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES
Clean Energy Future Legislation Committee
Membership
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Mr Speaker has received advice from Mr Windsor nominating himself to be a member of the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Clean Energy Future Legislation.
Mr GARRETT: by leave—I move:
That Mr Windsor be appointed a member of the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Clean Energy Future Legislation.
Question agreed to.

BILLS
Clean Energy Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Income Tax Rates Amendments) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Household Assistance Amendments) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Tax Laws Amendments) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Fuel Tax Legislation Amendment) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Customs Tariff Amendment) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Excise Tariff Legislation Amendment) Bill 2011
Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas (Import Levy) Amendment Bill 2011
Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas (Manufacture Levy) Amendment Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Unit Shortfall Charge—General) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Unit Issue Charge—Auctions) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Unit Issue Charge—Fixed Charge) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (International Unit Surrender Charge) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Charges—Customs) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Charges—Excise) Bill 2011
Clean Energy Regulator Bill 2011
Climate Change Authority Bill 2011
Steel Transformation Plan Bill 2011
Second Reading
Debate resumed on the motion:
That these bills be now read a second time.

Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP (Mackellar) (09:46): I might say at the outset of resuming my remarks that, of course, even the title of the Clean Energy Bill 2011 is dishonest, talking about a clean energy bill when it is actually a tax bill. As I explained in my opening remarks last evening, this is a cascading and compounding tax which will get into the nooks and crannies of everybody's life. I made the point—or I began to make the point—that it impacts on seniors in particular, because these are the people who are most likely to be on fixed incomes either as self-funded retirees, as people who are on pensions or as people who are partly self-funded retirees and partly pensioners. In every way this tax will impact on their life, whether it is on the cost of switching on the light, attempting to turn on heating in the winter or air conditioning in the summer—which they very often cannot afford—catching a train, utilising the sewerage system, obeying traffic lights or street lighting to keep them safe at night. Every aspect of their lives and the lives of the rest of us is impacted by the cost of the electricity, which this government is deliberately forcing up. It has nothing to do with the environment; it has everything to do with raising a new tax. The reason for that, as I outlined last night, is that it is in the government's DNA to tax and spend. But this time they spent all the reserves that the previous government left, and now they are taxing to make up for the expenditure which they have already plunged us into debt with.

When we talk about the impact of increasing the cost of essentials of life for people on fixed incomes, that then compresses the amount of disposable income that they have. That disposable income is what keeps retail shops going. It is what keeps so much of the expected increase in growth in so many industries alive and well. But, when that disposable income is so constricted, it is not surprising that we see large firms coming in with poor results in the retail sector and that we see closing shops. A stroll through any shopping centre shows you closed stores and shoppers without bags in their hands from having made a purchase. This also restricts opportunity for seniors to find employment in the retail industry sector, as they frequently do in a post-retirement period. The question of job creation for people who have skills and wish to remain in the paid workforce is a very important issue.

The tax itself, of course, is being brought in by the Prime Minister, who, as we all know, said on 16 August, 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.' Then, on 20 August, she repeated, 'I rule out a carbon tax.' Mr Swan came into the act and said on 15 August:

Well certainly what we rejected is this hysterical allegation that somehow we are moving towards a carbon tax from the Liberals in their advertising. We certainly reject that.

So at every point it was designed to mislead the Australian people—including the
member for Deakin, who is sitting over there and is about to vote in favour of this; he sits in a marginal seat, so it could be the end of him. It means that the Labor Party, in every aspect, misled the Australian people. But despite that it still was not elected. I have said time and time again that this government is an illegitimate government. It is one that merely stitched up a deal in order to confirm with the Governor-General that it could have the appropriations bills passed and therefore have a commission to form a government. Well, it is not a government's bootlace. In every aspect this legislation is set out to punish the people.

We have said, and we mean it very certainly, that we will try to prevent this legislation passing through the parliament, which is difficult because it simply relies on Mr Oakeshott and Mr Windsor; they are the two people who were elected by conservative electorates and have chosen to be the pillars of this government, so if it passes then it will be on their heads. In the Senate, of course, now the Greens are in control and the Greens get their way. Whether it is the latest media inquiry or whatever it is they want, the government caves in to them, because they have the power over passing this legislation. But, to put this in its firmest context, we have said that, should this legislation pass and should we be elected to government, we will rescind this legislation, just as the Labor Party rescinded Work Choices. That was the commitment they made; this is the commitment we made.

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (09:53): I rise to support the bills before the House today. I have watched some of the discussion and debate as it has progressed so far through the House, when I have been able to, and I just want to make the point that when the opposition outline their concerns about these bills—why they will oppose them and their worries about the impacts on prices for families, small businesses and so forth—I am yet to hear any analysis of their own policy and the impacts that that will have on prices and the cost of living for families, small businesses and all these people they claim to
be so concerned about. There has been absolutely no reference to that that I have seen in any of the contributions from those opposite. It is as if their own policy does not exist, 'Let's not mention it—maybe nobody will notice that we actually have a policy that will have a far greater impact on the cost of living for families, pensioners and small businesses'.

Indeed, I would suggest to many of those listening to the debate that they have a look at the opposition leader's contribution, which I think had about one minute at the end of his entire contribution that addressed his own policy but which, of course, did not outline what the costs of that would be for all the people they purport to be so concerned about. I reject the basis of their argument to start with; it is quite clear that the impacts of our proposed scheme will actually be significantly smaller, for example, than the introduction of the GST was. We do not hear them talk about the GST impacts and the flow-through in the economy either—strangely enough in this debate.

Our scheme is designed so that the money from those who pay it—the big polluters—is then directed back to those who face those cost increases to enable them to manage that transition in our economy. So it is a scheme that actually addresses the very issues that they are claiming are the basis of their opposition to this bill, while their own scheme addresses none of those issues. I think there is an inherent and significant deception in the way that they present their arguments. In particular, if they want to turn up in workplaces and in communities like mine in the Illawarra then they had better come prepared to answer what their own scheme is and what it will cost. Indeed, when Senator Fierravanti-Wells and Senator Joyce attended a rally in Wollongong the community made it quite clear that they expected a better standard of debate than what they were willing to contribute with their scaremongering.

In my contribution I want to canvass briefly the issues in terms of what is contained in the bills, the context within which they sit in our plan and just reflect on some of the local implications. I have spoken about these on the many occasions in this House where we have debated the introduction of a price on carbon—indeed, in debates that we had when those on the other side were boasting that they were the first people to think of putting a carbon price in place. How long ago those days may seem to some except, perhaps, to the member for Wentworth.

The 19 bills that are in consideration jointly put in place the legislation required to give effect to the government's commitment to create a carbon-pricing mechanism in line with the plan announced on 11 July 2011, Securing a clean energy future: the Australian government's climate change plan. The Clean Energy Bill 2011 creates the carbon price mechanism and the Clean Energy Regulator Bill 2011 sets up the regulator as a statutory authority to administer the mechanism and to enforce the law. The Climate Change Authority Bill 2011 sets up the authority as an independent body that will provide the government with expert advice on key aspects of the mechanism and the government's climate change mitigation initiatives. There is the Clean Energy (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2011 and a variety of separate bills related to those elements of the mechanism which oblige a person to pay money. Additionally, other bills are included which cover further elements of the plan—specifically the Clean Energy (Excise Tariff Legislation Amendment) Bill 2011 and the Clean Energy (Customs Tariff) Amendment Bill 2011, which impose an effective carbon price on aviation and non-transport gaseous
fuels through exercises and customs tariffs, and the Clean Energy (Household Assistance Amendments) Bill 2011, the Clean Energy (Tax Laws Amendments) Bill 2011 and the Clean Energy (Income Tax Rates Amendments) Bill 2011, which implement the household assistance measures which I will discuss a bit more in my contribution about the local implications of these.

The time to act is now. It is clear that scientists have advised that the world is warming and that the high levels of carbon pollution risk environmental and economic damage. No responsible government can ignore this advice, and when those opposite were in government they did not ignore it. The CSIRO, the Bureau of Meteorology and the academies of science from around the world have all advised that the world is warming, and high levels of carbon pollution risk environmental and economic damage. In Australia and across the globe 2001 to 2010 was the warmest decade on record. Each decade in Australia since the 1940s has been warmer than the last. Australia as a nation faces significant environmental and economic costs in a warmer, more unstable climate. Climate scientists advise that extreme weather events such as droughts, heatwaves and bushfires are likely to become more frequent and severe. These threaten our homes, businesses, communities and industries. For example, the recent Climate Change Risks to Australia’s Coast report found that as many as 247,000 existing residential buildings, with a value up to $63 billion, are potentially at risk from a 1.1-metre sea-level rise.

Countries around the world are already taking action on climate change—89 countries, representing 80 per cent of global emissions and 90 per cent of the world’s economy, have already pledged to take action on climate change. Globally, more money is now invested in new renewable power than in conventional high-pollution energy generation. China is now the world’s largest manufacturer of both solar panels and wind turbines.

In this context, this government's plan for a clean energy future will, firstly, dramatically cut pollution. The government’s clean energy plan will cut pollution by at least five per cent, compared with 2000 levels, by 2020, which will require cutting net expected pollution by at least 23 per cent in 2020. I should indicate that those opposite also have the same target. This is equivalent to taking over 45 million cars off the road. The government is committing to, by 2050, cut pollution to 80 per cent below 2000 levels.

Secondly, the plan will unleash innovation and investment in renewable energy worth billions of dollars. This is the opportunity in the plan. Large-scale renewable electricity generation, including hydro, is projected to be 18 times its current size by 2050. Total renewable generation, including hydro, will comprise around 40 per cent of electricity generation by 2050. Thirdly, the plan aims to transform our energy sector away from high-polluting sources like brown coal. The government will negotiate to close down 2,000 megawatts of high-polluting coal fired power generation, creating space for new clean energy supplies. Fourthly, it will store millions of tonnes of carbon in the land through better land and waste management.

Putting a price on carbon is the most environmentally effective and cheapest way to cut pollution. This is a fact that is well recognised by economists from around the world and by respected institutions such as the OECD and the Productivity Commission. Currently, releasing carbon pollution is free despite the fact that it is harming our environment. A carbon price changes this. It puts a price on the carbon pollution that
Australia's largest polluters produce. This creates a powerful incentive for all businesses to cut their pollution by investing in clean technology or finding more efficient ways of operating. It encourages businesses across all industries to find the cheapest, most effective way of reducing carbon pollution rather than relying on more costly approaches such as government regulation. Under this scheme the big polluters, not ordinary Australians, pay.

I want to refer to my own electorate in terms of the household assistance package encompassed in the bills that I referred to at the beginning of my contribution. In Cunningham, more than 25,500 pensioners will receive extra in their pension payments—$338 per year for singles and up to $510 per year for couples combined. More than 9,900 families in Cunningham will receive household assistance for their family assistance payments. More than 1,900 self-funded retirees in Cunningham will also receive extra assistance—$338 per year for singles and up to $510 per year for couples combined.

More than 4,000 job seekers in Cunningham will get extra in their payments—$218 per year for singles and $390 for couples combined. More than 1,900 single parents in Cunningham will get an extra $289 per year. Importantly, more than 3,200 students in Cunningham will get an extra $177 per year—of course, the amount depends on their rate and type of payment. In total, more than 45,000 people in Cunningham will receive household assistance through the transfer system. On top of this, taxpayers in Cunningham with an annual income of under $80,000 will get a tax cut, with most receiving at least $300 per year.

This is a household assistance package which underpins the support for students, pensioners and families to transition through the move towards a lower carbon economy, and I would point out that none of that assistance is available under the opposition's plan, despite the fact that they will have an impost on carbon polluters and that that impost, as they claim in ours, will be passed through. They provide no assistance for families, pensioners, students, or single parents to manage that in their scheme. But you will not hear them talk about that.

I also want to refer to the claims, which the opposition leader repeated in his second reading speech on these bills, that I and the member for Throsby should stand up for local jobs. I can assure him that we do that each and every day, and I guarantee that we have been doing it for a lot longer than he has ever been aware of in the Illawarra.

I ask him, if he is so concerned, to immediately give a commitment to supporting the Steel Transformation Plan Bill 2011 when it comes before this House. That would be a nice start if he really was worried about the future of people's jobs. Scaring people about their jobs and then refusing to take action to protect those very same jobs is about as low as you can get in political debate. I would hope that he will very quickly give a confirmation that he will be supporting that bill.

The opposition leader's argument also ignores the new and emerging job opportunities that arise from a lower carbon future. I only have a short amount of time left, but I would particularly point the opposition leader to extensive comments that have been made by the Manufacturing Workers Union, which has indicated and identified some real growth opportunities in the manufacturing sector through this new regime and the importance for us as a nation maximising our opportunity.
The Prime Minister visited the Illawarra only the other week with Minister Carr, and we turned the first sod for a new building that was a result of an investment by this government, a $25 million Sustainable Buildings Research Centre for the Illawarra. This is a new facility at the University of Wollongong that will help us move towards a low-carbon future. It will create jobs in the construction industry as well as the education sector. It is a laboratory set up for prototyping and testing new techniques for converting existing buildings to make them more energy efficient. It is being done in partnership with TAFE New South Wales Illawarra, the Yallah Campus, and with BlueScope Steel. So investment in research, development and innovation in the Illawarra is creating new forms of jobs, particularly in the construction sector, to enable us to move towards a more energy efficient, cleaner future. These sorts of initiatives will create long-term, quality jobs in the future in our manufacturing sector.

The member for Throsby and I understand our regions and we understand their needs, but you do not have to take our word for it. A couple of days after we announced our energy package the Illawarra Mercury editorialised on it. Under the heading 'Gong is not ruled by its hip pocket' it states: Just who is winning the carbon tax debate is anyone's guess.

At one end of the country, Prime Minister Julia Gillard is being screamed at by an irate opponent of the tax in a Brisbane shopping centre.
In Wollongong, it's the brawl in the mall as Liberal Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells and the Federal Opposition spokesman for regional development, local government and water Barnaby Joyce are involved in an angry, heated lunchtime rally.

Meantime, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott, hard hat and safety glasses at the ready, continues to leave his own sizeable carbon footprint as he sweeps around the country falsely declaring that the coal industry is dead and the sky will fall in if the tax is legislated later this year. The shock jocks are going ballistic, whipping up a frenzy and demanding a fresh election, newspaper letters' editors are being run off their feet and the Economic Society of Australia says the move to put a price on carbon is sound economic policy.
It's all highly emotive, scary stuff.
But if you ask the people of Wollongong, the city dubbed carbon central … the scary stuff is not the carbon tax, it's climate change regardless of whether it is caused by humans or natural means. 

(Time expired)

Ms LEY (Farrer) (10:09): It is a delight to speak in parliament today on the government's Clean Energy Bill 2011 and the associated 18 individual pieces of legislation. As we know, carbon and global warming are global issues. I want to start with commentary from the global news agency Reuters that was released the day after the announcement here in this place. It states:

Coal miners, steel firms and airlines were sold off on Monday a day after Australia's unpopular government introduced a carbon tax scheme …

Australian stocks were heading for their biggest fall in nearly a month … dropping 1.5 percent, with coal miners, steel and transport firms such as Macarthur Coal, BlueScope Steel sharply down as investors digested the impact of the tax.

Australian airline shares also tumbled. Qantas said the carbon tax will cost it an estimated A$110 million to A$115 million, while Virgin Australia said it was likely to face a cost impact of A$45 million in fiscal year 2013.

Both airlines said they would pass on the cost to passengers.

I wanted to start with that reaction to underline an important point both for the country and for my local rural electorate of
Farrer. In the industries of mining, transport and aviation we are going to be severely hit by the Prime Minister's unpopular carbon tax. It is going to make a difference to the lives of the people I represent. I am not sure it is going to be in the national interest either.

I am tired of the government accusing those on this side of the House in this debate of being climate change sceptics. I am happy to go on the record yet again to say that I am not a climate change sceptic. I believe the earth is warming and that humans are contributing to that warming and that we as citizens of the planet should be taking action. That is a statement I freely make here and in my electorate. Some people who correspond with me on a regular basis are climate change sceptics and they very vigorously oppose Australia taking any action at all. I say we should be doing something, but not this and not now.

We should cast our minds back to 2009 when Kevin Rudd led I think 114 people to Copenhagen. Expectation was high around the world that there was going to be a global agreement at that meeting, and there was not. From that point on UN sponsored climate change talks have largely stalled. When the government continually talk about why we should be supporting their bad legislation they do not mention what they are doing about a global agreement on climate change. I often ask people: when is the next meeting to follow from Copenhagen on this subject, where is it going to be held and what are we doing? Many people do not know that is going to be in Durban in South Africa I think at the end of November, because the government never talk about it. They have quietly said that I think they are sending 40 people, a much more modest representation of bureaucrats. There is very little expectation, I understand, that any agreement will be reached at that meeting.

There was a delightful cameo by our Minister for Foreign Affairs in yesterday's Sydney Morning Herald. Along the lines of Where's Wally?, there was a 'Where's Kevin?' He has been popping up in all corners of the globe, but I do not know he has popped up anywhere encouraging the rest of the world to reach a global agreement on climate change. There was a meeting in New Zealand recently, and New Zealand's top climate negotiator said that a global deal on a pact is still within reach but certainly will not be struck this year. Some progress has been made, but a gulf still remains between developed and developing countries about who should shoulder the burden of reducing emissions et cetera. So things are proceeding, but barely. What the government wants to do is bring in this deeply unpopular tax that is going to add an impost and a cost to every household budget of my constituents, that is going to drive manufacturing offshore, that is going to permanently skew our competitive advantage in many of the things that we do and that is going to be an absolute kick in the guts to mining, aviation and, I should also add because I represent farmers, agriculture. The Prime Minister often says, 'Oh, but agriculture is not included and farmers are therefore outside the scope of the tax.' Of course, that is not true, because if you consider the main inputs into every farming operation, they are fuel, fertiliser and electricity. The cost of all of those is certainly going to increase, and nobody is denying that fact.

We have to consider, as local members in this place, what our constituents want us to take to this parliament, what their feelings are and what their responses are in this matter. I have heard from many of my constituents on this, as we all have, and I want to mention a few of those individual people and their businesses here in the
parliament today. Peter Baxter runs a refrigeration business in Broken Hill, and he cannot understand why he is being charged more for a refrigerant that charges up air conditioners or fridges with a gas that is not even discharged into the atmosphere. A carbon tax, even at just $23 a tonne, will double his costs for refrigerant. That will then be passed on to the customer, adding about 10 per cent to the purchase price of refrigerators and air conditioners due to a gas that is not even discharged into the atmosphere. He can already see the effect on his small business.

I visited Craig Waldron, who is at the IGA supermarket in Corowa. He employs 60 full- and part-time staff. We should not underestimate the effect this has on supermarkets, and they are major employers in regional Australia. He said that he is going to need to upgrade the storage freezers, which is a capital expense of nearly $500,000. How can a small business just conjure that sort of money up out of the air? How can you just go to the bank for another $500,000 when your margins are very tight as it is, with the rising costs of living and the fact that people are watching their pennies much more carefully when they come into your shop? Not only has he got to invest $500,000; his power bill is going to go up by $1,500 a month. He is saying to me, ‘I have got to find that money from somewhere.’ He is also saying that he hears the Prime Minister prattle on about compensation in household budgets and how everyone is going to be looked after but there is actually nothing for him at all. He is a small business, he has a family and he employs 60 people, and he has to find $500,000 and $1,500 a month for the increase in electricity costs. The irony is that this carbon tax is not going to sell any more groceries for him. In fact, as he said to me, ‘I am already selling less’.

I visited Watson Drilling in Deniliquin. They sell drilling rigs to the mining industry. They could not believe that this tax was going ahead. It is a small business in a small town which is actually not agricultural. We need that business to survive. It is not based on farming; it is not based on water. It makes and delivers drilling rigs to the mining industry across Australia. I am really uncertain what he will be facing in this new era.

I can mention Colin Glassborow of Albury Building Supplies. He corresponds with me regularly, and he says that he has worked out that under the carbon tax the cost of his building materials, products and assemblies will increase progressively as they pass through the various production phases, some faster than others.

I also know that the brick manufacturing industry is going to be hit extremely hard. The cost of buying a new home, already getting out of reach for many, will only rise further. Do we really want Australian homes to be built out of prefabricated materials that are imported into Australia? Do we really want an Australian economy where we cannot afford to make bricks for our own houses?

I started by talking about aviation. It is a subject that is very dear to my heart. Regional Express, an airline that exclusively services regional Australia, is on the record as saying that this carbon tax will add $2 million initially in the first year to their bottom line. That is $2 million that has to be added to the price of tickets because these costs are going to be passed on. They are not going to be able to be absorbed. The perplexing thing to Regional Express is that if the ultimate desire of the carbon tax should be that they modify their behaviour—in other words, that they emit less greenhouse
gases—the only way they can do that is to actually not fly as much.

The other problem that I have with the Prime Minister's carbon tax is the way that the compensation message is being delivered to people. It is: don't worry; you will be compensated. There is not really a message in this to change your behaviour. There is no message to the airlines to fly less; there is no message to householders to use less electricity. Householders are continually being reassured that their payments will increase and that there will be tax benefits as well. They are all sort of dressed up and are a bit of a trojan horse, in my view. There is no instruction and there is no encouragement.

I say that the Australian people would take on the challenge of using less fossil fuels. They would say, 'Look, everybody turn out the lights, not just because our electricity bills are going up but because we as a nation need to use less fossil fuel.' But there is no message to do that in this carbon tax. It is just such a distorted mess of movement of tax, of benefits to households, of charges on emitters, of people who are and are not affected and of costs that are going to be passed on that you cannot actually untangle the economic messages or the messages that households should be taking on.

Mining is very important to the electorate of Farrer and iron ore mining is certainly picking up in the far-west of New South Wales. Carpentaria Exploration are looking at mining leases along the New South Wales-South Australian border, and there is not a week that goes past that we do not see some new mining initiative talked about in the Barrier Daily Truth. This is certainly a great thing for the region. It is going to support its economic activity for years to come. But if we are mining iron ore, particularly magnetite, we should if possible be doing the downstream processing of that iron ore in Australia. We should not be exporting the raw material to Asia for further processing there. I challenge anyone in this parliament to say that that would be a good thing to do, but Australia's largest magnetite producer is expecting to be out of pocket by $11 million by this government's carbon tax and diesel fuel rebate. They are on the record as saying that as magnetite producers that process the mineral in Australia rather than offshore they will, of course, be unfairly penalised and they will get canned in Australia because we do the value-add here, whereas if they export it overseas the same value-add process is not subject to a carbon tax. So why would they not do that? We cannot overlook the effect that this tax will have on the mining industry and on the resources sector in Australia.

Airlines are critical to our way of life here. I refer to remarks by Alan Joyce from Qantas. He said, in October last year:

... that regions or individual countries introducing carbon tax or emissions trading scheme would distort the aviation industry.

The International Civil Aviation Organisation has set a goal of capping emissions from international aviation beginning in 2020 while gradually improving fuel efficiency. That is the way to go, not this way. Mr Joyce said:

Having regions or individual countries imposing an emissions trading scheme or a carbon tax can cause distortions for the industry and will cause distortions to the industry and they have a negative impact.

It needs to be a global approach.

Of course it does. When asked if a carbon tax would have a negative effect, Mr Joyce said:

Of course it will—we’re one of the biggest users of fuel.

He also said:
Qantas alone spends $3 billion on aviation fuel, which could easily transfer over to sustainable fuels.

This is an area we need to encourage people to move on—not just putting in a tax, but helping people that have made a commitment to get there with the right investment. Australia has the land mass, technology and expertise to create an alternative to aviation fuel. Qantas has already positively tested algae based and ethanol based technology.

Why would we not apply our efforts to sustainable fuel and the direct action policy that we in the coalition are promoting? It is a policy we took to the last election and it is well known. It is straightforward, easy to understand and practical. It has created a lot of interest in my electorate, particularly around the area of soil carbon. The primary facet of our direct action policy is capturing carbon from the soil. The Garnaut review, the CSIRO and even my friends in the Wentworth group and various state governments have indicated the enormous CO₂ emissions reduction benefits of soil carbon for Australia.

There is a way to go on this. Some of the work that is being done and I have been briefed on is very exciting. It will make a big difference. Submissions to the coalition from farm groups support the potential for a minimum of 150 million tonnes of CO₂-equivalent per annum to be captured in soil carbon by 2020 and beyond with a payment to farmers of approximately $10 a tonne. There are some good news stories about taking action on climate change. Unfortunately the government's carbon tax is going to distort, destroy and negatively affect the Australian economy. (Time expired)

Mr BRADBURY (Lindsay—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (10:24): I rise to speak on the Clean Energy Bill 2011 and the 18 bills being debated concurrently. The scientific evidence that climate change is occurring is compelling. The last decade was the world's warmest on record. Each decade since the 1940s has been warmer than the previous one. The sea level is rising. Human health impacts are already evident, and many plant and animal species are under threat. Scientific evidence of the link between human activity, particularly through the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation, and these changes in our climate is also convincing.

In its report released earlier this year titled The Critical Decade, the Climate Commission concluded that it is now beyond reasonable doubt that human activities are triggering the changes we are witnessing in the global climate. The findings of this report have been accepted by all political parties represented in the parliament. These findings mirror the overwhelming weight of the world's scientific opinion. The world's top scientific agencies including NASA, the CSIRO and the UK's Royal Society all agree. Governments all around the world are receiving the same advice from expert scientific advisers. For all the discussion surrounding the failure of the Copenhagen summit, it should be remembered that the disagreement centred around the extent to which countries were prepared to sign up to binding targets, not whether climate change was real or caused by human activity.

For Australia, the impacts of climate change are real. We live on the hottest and driest continent. Climate change is a threat to our water security, our unique and natural ecosystems like the Great Barrier Reef, and many of our major industries like agriculture. Even if you are not convinced by the weight of scientific opinion, there are sound economic arguments for supporting measures to reduce our dependence upon fossil fuels. Australia has been blessed with a natural abundance of fossil fuels. As a result,
95 per cent of Australia's primary energy production is from non-renewable energy sources.

While our rich natural endowments of fossil fuels have given us access to cheap energy sources and have allowed us to generate considerable export income, this heavy reliance upon fossil fuels presents us with some significant challenges in the future. As fossil fuels are finite resources and will one day exhaust, we will not be able to rely upon them for our domestic energy production forever. Equally, as the world becomes more carbon constrained and countries begin to reduce their reliance upon fossil fuels, Australia will find that its export base will be affected. As a consequence, the transition to a low-carbon future presents enormous challenges to the Australian economy and our future living standards. This process of adjustment is best managed in a measured, balanced and gradual fashion. This is precisely why Australia should begin its journey on the path to a low-carbon future sooner rather than later. The sooner we commence this process, the more gradual and less painful the cost will be.

Australia faces these challenges against the backdrop of one of the biggest shifts in global economic power in centuries, which offers us a great opportunity. As the locus of global economic power shifts to the Asian region, Australia is located in the right place at the right time. With our populous Asian neighbours going through the process of industrialisation, we live in a world in which our fossil fuels are in high demand. While this demand is driving our record terms of trade and increased national income in the near future, this also presents Australia with the opportunity to begin transforming our economy so that we become less dependent upon fossil fuels for domestic energy production. As the rest of Asia industrialises, Australia must seize the opportunities this creates to begin building the post-industrial low-carbon economy of the future.

Climate change requires global action. No single country can reduce concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere on its own, but it stands to reason that we must all do our fair share. Already 89 countries have pledged to take action on climate change. Many countries have already introduced a carbon price, including 32 countries and 10 US states, and California, the world's eighth largest economy, will introduce an emissions trading scheme in 2012. Countries like the United Kingdom, led by conservative Prime Minister David Cameron, are leading the way with its target of reducing emissions by at least 80 per cent by 2050. China is now the world's largest manufacturer of both solar panels and wind turbines and has recently announced plans to trial an ETS in 2013. The climate change debate has been going on for the best part of the last two decades in this country. Indeed, in 2007 both major parties contested the federal election with a commitment to introduce a carbon price by establishing an ETS. It is ironic that had the former Prime Minister John Howard won the 2007 election we would already have a carbon price and ETS in this country. The consensus that had emerged by 2007 was based upon agreement that climate change is a product of market failure and can best be addressed with a market based solution by pricing carbon through an ETS. By pricing carbon we are able to bring a closer alignment of the commercial interests of companies seeking to maximise their profits with the environmental and community interests of reduced greenhouse gas emissions and improved environmental outcomes.

Market based solutions deliver abatement at the lowest cost by providing incentives for businesses to find the cheapest ways to reduce their emissions. A carbon price will
provide an incentive for firms to innovate and find new ways of operating to reduce their costs by reducing their emissions.

Unfortunately, the national consensus around the need to introduce a carbon price broke down when the member for Warringah ousted the member for Wentworth as the Leader of the Opposition. Since this time our nation has been subjected to one of the most vapid, opportunistic, deceitful and low-rent public policy campaigns in the history of the Federation. The government's plan to price carbon provides certainty for investors and a fair go for Australian households. Every cent raised from the carbon price will be used to assist households, support jobs in carbon intensive industries and invest in clean energy technologies and the jobs of the future.

Until now big businesses have been able to pollute our atmosphere for free with no incentive to lower their carbon pollution levels. Under the government's plan big polluters will pay for the greenhouse gases they emit, not Australian households. Around 500 of Australia's biggest polluters will pay for every tonne of emissions. The less they pollute, the less they will pay. But we understand that businesses may pass some of these costs on to consumers and that this will impact on the prices households will have to pay for goods and services. That is why over half of the money raised from the carbon price will be used to provide financial assistance to nine out of 10 Australian households. This assistance will be permanent and will increase.

Treasury modelling indicates that the impact of the carbon price on price increases will be modest. On average, prices are expected to rise by less than one per cent, which is much less than the 2½ per cent increases in prices that resulted from the GST. The average cost of the carbon price to households will be $9.90 a week, while the average assistance will be $10.10 per week.

In the Labor tradition, the government will support jobs and maintain the competitiveness of industries that will be affected by a carbon price. Our generous industry assistance package will provide $300 million to support jobs in the steel industry, $1.2 billion to support the manufacturing industry and $1.3 billion to support the coalmining industry.

Across the economy, jobs are expected to continue to grow, with an extra 1.6 million jobs to be created by 2020. In driving Australia towards a clean energy future, we will create the jobs of the future for our children and their children. The government will invest more than $10 billion in clean energy technologies like solar, gas, geothermal and wind. A further $3.2 billion will be invested in start-up grants and assistance projects that strengthen renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. This means more Australians in jobs today and in the future, creating the new energy sources that the world will demand.

After three years of a fixed carbon price we will transition to a market based mechanism and cap Australia's carbon pollution levels. This will ensure Australia's emission reduction targets are met and we will reduce our carbon pollution by 159 million tonnes each year, which is the equivalent of taking 45 million cars off the road.

There is bipartisan support for a five per cent emissions reduction target—on 2000 levels—by 2020, with both the government and the coalition committing to this target. The coalition plan to use taxpayer funds to subsidise the big polluters, without providing any assistance to households and small businesses. Their plan has been estimated to
cost every household $1,300 per year on average in extra costs.

The coalition's policy relies upon a centrally planned economic model—a model that is inconsistent with the Australian economic tradition, where the community has faith in markets operating within the parameters set by, and the supervision provided by, the state.

A report prepared for the Australian Industry Group by Ernst and Young assessing government and opposition climate policies, released on 1 July, says:

The general consensus among experts is that carbon pricing is likely to be the most cost-effective way of achieving low cost abatement, particularly in the long-term.

The credibility of the opposition's plan is also destroyed by the Leader of the Opposition's decision to deny Australian companies the flexibility to purchase international permits. Treasury modelling indicates that, if Australia is only allowed to achieve its reduction target with domestic-only reductions, the average cost per tonne will be $69 between now and 2020, compared with $29 a tonne under the government's plan. This means that the opposition's plan will cost at least twice as much as the government's plan to meet our five per cent emissions target by 2020.

When the Leader of the Opposition visits his next factory or workplace on his scare campaign he should look the workers and owners of these businesses in the eyes and explain that, under his plan, climate change action will cost at least twice as much as the government's plan, and this is without any compensation.

Throughout this debate, there has been much discussion about public support, opinion polls and the roles and responsibilities of members of parliament in a representative democracy. I understand that major and long-term reform is not easy. It never has been. I was inspired to enter public office by the reform achievements of the Hawke and Keating governments. They were Labor governments that made many of the big reforms that have secured much of the relative economic prosperity that our nation enjoys today.

I did not seek election to parliament simply to serve time. I entered public life to make a contribution, in the Labor tradition, tackle the big challenges and, where necessary, make the hard decisions that are needed to help build the great nation that we all know we can become. While I remain confident that a majority of my constituents believe that climate change is real and that action to reduce its causes and effects is necessary, I also acknowledge that many members of the community have been misled, deceived and scared by the campaign against this reform. The nature of this debate, inflamed by sometimes uninformed and often irresponsible interventions of many—not least of all the Leader of the Opposition—has made it difficult for a rational discussion of this significant but complex policy challenge.

In performing my role as an elected member in our representative democracy I am guided by the words of Edmund Burke, who in 1774 said of the relationship between a member and his or her constituents in a representative democracy:

Their [the constituents'] wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion high respect; their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions, to theirs; and, above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But, his unbiased opinion, his mature judgement, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice … Your Representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgement; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.
I have made a point of informing myself of the published literature on the climate science and I have read widely and considered the views of key economic thinkers and advisers, including the advice of the Commonwealth Treasury, about the best and most effective ways to tackle climate change. I have met with, discussed and listened with respect to the views of literally thousands of my constituents on this matter over the last four years and I have been presented with a range of views.

As the member for Lindsay I have offered and will continue to offer my constituents my diligence and my industry, but in considering the package before the House I must rely upon my judgment. It is my firm conviction that the interests of my electorate and the nation and the interests of future generations demand that we must price carbon so that we may begin our nation's journey down the most effective, lowest cost path towards tackling climate change.

I will not accept that my role as a member of parliament should be akin to the electronic worm that has become synonymous with election debates—merely mirroring every impulse and opinion of individual electors. I believe that we are elected to this House to make informed and considered decisions in the national interest, as difficult as that may be. This belief means that I must accept that my actions will be judged by both my electorate in the short term and by history in the long term. As a proud member of this government, I reaffirm my commitment to the task of making our case to the Australian people on the merits of this package—(Time expired)

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland) (10:39): Elections are like contracts. When you sign a contract you keep your side of the deal or there will be repercussions—and where I come from, a handshake is as good as a contract, particularly among men and women of good honour. In an election when you make a promise you keep your side of the deal or there will be repercussions. All the Australian people want from this Prime Minister is for her to keep her side of the deal, to honour her solemn contract with the Australian people that there will be no carbon tax under the government she leads. That is not much to ask of any normal Prime Minister or any normal government. But there is nothing normal about this Labor government; there is nothing honourable about this government either. There is nothing normal or honourable about a Labor government which is turning its back on the Australian workers just to make sure the Greens will continue to support that dysfunctional government.

There is also a lot of talk around this place about mandates. Prime Minister Gillard has a very clear mandate. Like almost every other member in this place, Prime Minister Gillard campaigned to not introduce a carbon tax. Does anyone in this place, or out there listening around Australia, really believe that she would be the Prime Minister if she had promised to introduce such a tax just a week out from the election?

Unlike the Prime Minister, I believe in honouring my contracts—and I have a clear mandate from the people of Gippsland to vote against this tax, which even the Prime Minister acknowledged in her own speech will do absolutely nothing for the environment. I invite members to take a very close look at the speech the Prime Minister made in this place earlier this week. There is not a single mention in that speech of a measurable environmental outcome as a result of this carbon tax.

They used to come into this place and wax lyrical about saving Kakadu and saving the Great Barrier Reef. Those were myths, but at
least they tried to pretend that their carbon tax would actually do something for the environment. In the Prime Minister's speech there is not one mention of a single environmental outcome that will be achieved from this carbon tax, and the people of Australia understand that. The people of Australia understand that Australia acting alone, with just 1.5 per cent of man-made global emissions, cannot do a single thing in terms of saving those Australian icons—if they even believe every single word of the doomsayers out there who are predicting such extraordinary environmental outcomes.

My contract, as I outlined in my first speech in this place, is that I will always ask myself: what is in the best interests of the people of Gippsland? What is in the best interests of the people who sent me here to represent them? The people in my community are at the absolute pointy end of this debate. For us, this is about our jobs; it is about our children's futures in our key industries like power generation, manufacturing, small business and all forms of agriculture. This is not some abstract debate about polar bears. It is about people in my community having a future in the Gippsland-Latrobe Valley region.

Unlike the government, I have given the people in my electorate a chance to have their say because I respect their opinions. Those opposite have been arrogant and dismissive. Anytime there has been a protest in this place, people have been harangued and bullied. We even had the undignified sight of the Leader of the House referring to protesters in this place as being of 'no consequence'. The arrogance in that statement will hang around this government's neck like a dead albatross until the next election. How dare a minister in this place describe people as being of no consequence.

The Prime Minister promised to wear out her shoe leather; she said she would go out there and consult on her carbon tax. Well, I have saved her a bit of time. I sent some postcards out to my electorate to give the people of the Latrobe Valley in particular the chance to have their say. I invited them to fill out a postcard and send Julia Gillard a message. I did not say what they had to put in their message; I just invited them to send Julia Gillard a message. It is interesting that I sent this postcard to the strongest Labor-voting parts of my electorate—Traralgon, Churchill and Morwell—and I have received, as you can see, Mr Deputy Speaker, almost 900 responses. The pile here on my right is the pile against the carbon tax and the pile on my left is the pile in favour of the carbon tax. For the sake of the *Hansard*, we can measure the piles. The pile on the right, against the carbon tax, is about 20 centimetres high; and the pile on the left—well, we will be generous and say it is 1½ centimetres high. Thirty-two people were in favour of the carbon tax and about 870 were against the tax.

These are some of the messages from the people the government describes as being of no consequence. This is what these people are saying to me. Natasha from Traralgon said: It means that my husband may lose his job at Hazelwood power station. We cannot provide to our children the simple things in life, like a good education, not good enough, Julia.

From Joanne in Tyers: Small business is the backbone of this country and Julia Gillard will destroy this with a carbon tax, especially in the Latrobe Valley. The Latrobe Valley is a great place to live but without jobs people will go elsewhere. The Greens and Labor are only interested in city people.

From Malcolm in Morwell:
With the global financial crisis possibly getting worse now is not the time to introduce a carbon tax, which will create great unemployment. We must put the welfare of Australians first. This tax will not change the climate.

There are some very intelligent people in my electorate, I must say. Ian in Traralgon said:
Don't do it. People are struggling to pay their bills now. The cost of everything we do and buy will go up. This will make no difference to our pollution output. It's just a grab for cash to pay for your mistakes.

From Mal in Morwell:
As a self-funded retiree will you compensate me for the potential loss of value in my home? Come clean and put it to the vote.

Another, from Shaun in Traralgon, said:
Dear Julia, I am a CFMEU member. I feel I was misled at the last election—
Join the club, Shaun. Shaun felt he was misled. He goes on:
I work for Australian Paper and can only see the negatives for our industry and the local community.

From Nola in Churchill:
As a pensioner I don't want your carbon tax. Even though you say we will be compensated it will not be enough to give pensioners a reasonable lifestyle with all rising costs due to this unwanted or needed tax that was not voted for by the public.

And from Neville in Traralgon:
Julia, if you believe the population needs a carbon tax, call an election and see where you stand. It's a tax grab and will do nothing for the environment.

I could go on. There are many more. Geoff from Churchill says:
How can you sell coal to countries with no carbon emissions tax and shut down our power industry as we know it? It is a death warrant to Australian manufacturing and a leg-up to China.

Finally, from the Rayners at Hiamdale:
… very worried about the increasing cost to our dairy farm, which most likely would make it unviable. Australians, the ones I know, don't want a carbon tax. We already pay so many taxes we are concerned about putting off investors. I don't think it will make any difference to the environment.

If time allowed, I could go on for about two or three hours reading these messages to the chamber, and it would be a lot better than what the Prime Minister has managed so far. This Prime Minister has refused to listen to the people in my community. To give her some credit, the Prime Minister actually visited once. She went to a meeting behind closed doors but did not hold a forum and did not talk to a single person on the street about how they feel about this carbon tax.

I invite members opposite who would like to read some of the messages to come to my office at any time they like. I would like them to come along and I will make the messages available at the front desk. They can read through the positive pile of messages and they can read through the negative pile, if they like. Quite frankly I do not expect to be knocked over in the rush, because members opposite have stopped listening. There seems to be a form of political deafness which has set in. They hear only what they want to hear and they bully, harangue and belittle any opposing views.

In her speech the Prime Minister tried to take some high moral ground, although how anyone can aspire to high moral ground after such a fundamental breach of trust is simply beyond me. The Prime Minister actually lectured this side of the House and told us that the reason we have a vote is so that every member in this place can be judged on the issues of great national debate. I say to those opposite, and to the Prime Minister: there is also a reason why we have elections. We have elections so people can be judged. We have them so that people can be judged on their performance in the past, on whether they have kept their
promises and on the policies they put forward in the future. I say to those opposite: judgment day is coming for you and this insidious carbon tax.

The Prime Minister also challenged those on this side of the House to be on the right side of history. I join with the Leader of the Opposition in calling on the Prime Minister to be on the right side of the truth. Prime Minister, you must deal with that fundamental breach of trust before you have any honour in the eyes of the Australian people. Unless you deal with that fundamental breach of trust, they will not believe a single word you tell them. The Australian people have simply stopped listening to a Prime Minister who refuses to apologise for such a fundamental breach of trust.

This carbon tax will go down in history with all those other great ideas that have come forward from this Prime Minister. We have had the home insulation debacle and the citizens assembly. What happened to the citizens assembly? Have I missed it? It must be coming soon. Then the Prime Minister promised no action on the carbon tax until she had built a lasting consensus. Well, I have a consensus; here is my consensus. These postcards show about 870 people against and 32 in favour. I have a consensus in Gippsland. Prime Minister, how is the consensus going? I ask you that very simple question.

What are some of the other great ideas from this Prime Minister? We have had the East Timor solution. Are there any progress reports on the East Timor solution? Hello, anyone on the other side; how is East Timor going? Then we have had the Malaysian people swap deal, which was thrown out by the High Court despite constant reassurances from the Prime Minister and her minister that their legal advice was sound. They were on very good legal grounds, they told us.

The Australian people are embarrassed that they have such an inept and incompetent Prime Minister who simply refuses to listen to their views. Instead of lecturing us, the Prime Minister should come into this place and apologise for the fundamental breach of trust and ask the Australian people for a mandate, before the next election, to introduce this tax. I have no problem with this government deciding to legislate this tax, but I have an enormous problem with this government deciding to do that without first seeking a mandate from the Australian people. That is the great folly of this tax and this government's approach to the Australian people. Time is very limited, but I would like to make a couple of other comments and briefly refer to this ridiculous proposition that somehow only 500 of these so-called biggest polluters will pay this tax. This tax will cascade through the Australian economy like a toxic waterfall and add costs to every Australian family. It will hurt small businesses, it will make Australian exporters less competitive and it will cost jobs. A classic example is the dairy farmers in my electorate. Dairy farmers are high energy users; they use a lot of power. It is estimated by the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria that it would be in the order of $5,000 extra per year for an average sized dairy farm. Dairy farmers are not going to get any compensation. Their competitors are not going to be hit with this tax. They sell into world export markets and they are going to have to wear that cost. And do you know how they will wear that cost, Mr Deputy Speaker? They will wear that cost by making sacrifices. Dairy farmers' families will find that the family holiday will not be on this year. That $5,000 will come straight off their household income. Then they will think, 'Perhaps we won't go shopping for runners at
the local sports store, we might have to go to Kmart; we might be buying cheaper shoes.' This will have an impact on everyday Australians every day of their lives and this government is lying to the Australian people when it claims that only the 500 so-called biggest polluters will pay the tax. Everyone will pay the tax every day.

The people in my electorate do not want the government's household assistance package. They do not want transition plans. They want the decency of a job. The people in my community keep asking: 'Why is it okay for Australia to export coal to China, India, Korea and Japan to burn in their coal-fired power stations?' Why is it okay for a powerstation worker using Australian coal in those countries to have a job, but it is not okay for a Latrobe Valley powerstation worker to have his job using brown coal, that great natural resource of the Latrobe Valley. The day the government can explain that to me, just maybe I will start to listen to their reassurances in relation to this carbon tax.

I say to those opposite: take up the Prime Minister's challenge, because here is your opportunity to make history. Those opposite have a very clear choice. They can stand up for the workers that they used to represent—that the Labor Party used to take great pride in representing—by crossing this chamber and voting down this tax. If only one of them had the courage of their convictions—if only one of them had the courage to stand up for the workers—they could walk over to this side and vote down this tax. So, they can stand up for the workers, they can walk across this side of the House and vote down this tax, or they can blindly follow this Prime Minister to her own political grave.

Mr ADAMS (Lyons) (10:54): What a dreadful contribution from somebody who has no idea of what the government is trying to achieve with these bills—that is, to tackle a major issue for the planet. Here is a political party engaging in the cheap political exercise of sending out postcards when we are trying to deal with a major issue that confronts the world and finding innovation that will take our nation forward to be a leader in this process. But, of course, they are just interested in playing a political game. I listened to the honourable member for Gippsland's account. It was just attacking the Prime Minister and the Labor Party and claiming that everybody would be paying more and more taxes. He did not deal with the issue; he did not say what his side of politics would do; he does not seem to think there is a problem; he evidently does not believe in the climate change science; he rejects all that and just thinks the world will go on as it is.

The world will not go on as it is and we need to tackle these issues. If we tackle them properly we will set our nation up for the future. That is where I believe this government is going. I do not believe that these clean energy and related bills should be treated as a political football, as the other side is doing. These are landmark pieces of legislation that will define the government in years to come. The legislation will help investment, allow greater development of renewable energy, assist in the cleaning up of our local environments, as well as the planet. It will help drive the innovation that those dairy farmers the member for Gippsland was talking about need. It will help drive the new energy that this country needs into the future. It will help us to meet the challenges we face. The Clean Energy Bill 2011 creates the carbon price mechanisms; it sets out the structure and the process for its introduction. It sets out the entities and emissions that are covered by the mechanism and the entities' obligations to surrender eligible emissions units. It limits the number of eligible emissions units that
will be issued and defines the nature of carbon units. It deals with many other related issues as well.

I want to deal with the issues raised by the member for Gippsland. I believe in farming and rural Australia. I believe Australia has always been an innovative nation and I believe these bills set us in that direction. For the rural sector the Carbon Farming Initiative will provide an opportunity to grow many more trees and to store carbon. It will help provide a store of timber into the future and put more wood into the market. Here I have a piece of horizontal scrub from the Tasmanian forest. It says on it 'Worth more than its weight in carbon'. It is a solid piece of wood that is full of carbon; it is storing carbon in its present state. Wood, of course, uses much less embedded energy than other substances and is made into objects which are useful for mankind. The opportunity to use trees to sequester carbon is a terrific approach and should be given full support.

The object of the mechanism that we have in these bills is to give effect to Australia's international obligations on addressing climate change under the climate change convention and the Kyoto protocol. They support the development of an effective global response to climate change consistent with Australia's national interest in ensuring that average global temperatures increase by no more than two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. It is a sensible and proper way to go. These bills take action directed towards meeting Australia's long-term target of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions to 80 per cent below 2000 levels by 2050 and take that action in a flexible and cost effective way.

We have always been good at coming to grips with challenges—maybe that is because of how this nation was first settled and how we came about. We had to be innovative; we had to meet the challenges. These are some of the new ways that we have. I was reading a publication called New technologies for your changing future. It is a government publication that talks about innovations in our future. There are a couple of very good quotes in it. One is:

'Tomorrow belongs to the people who are prepared for it today.' An African proverb.

It was a pretty good African who put that together. It also quotes the French philosopher Paul Valery, who said:

The trouble with our times is that the future is not what it used to be.

The honourable members opposite have no idea about the future. They do not seem to think that it is significant or important to think hard about this problem and to deal with it. In this innovation publication it says:

But we will need a culture of continued innovation to be able to respond more rapidly to rapid and unexpected changes to be able to continue to strive for a fairer, richer and more sustainable society.

That is quite right and that is what this government is endeavouring to do to meet our future needs.

Listening to the previous speaker and listening to the Leader of the Opposition yesterday, they did not deal with their policy position. The Leader of the Opposition, I think, spent a minute and a half on his policy—a very sad amount of time when it comes from a party that once would have said that it was at the leading edge in generating policies for the future.

These bills take action directed towards meeting Australia's long-term target and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as I said, to 80 per cent below 2000 levels by 2050 and take that action in a flexible and cost effective way. They put a price on greenhouse gas emissions in a way that encourages investment in clean energy,
support jobs and competitiveness in the economy and support Australia's economic growth while reducing pollution.

The carbon cycle, of course, is important to life on earth and we have good and bad gases in that process. Carbon dioxide is a minor one in all those other gases, but it is important as it is one of the gases that helps to keep our planet and us warm and helps us not to freeze to death. We need to understand that and make it work for us. That is what it is all about. Of course, there is a bad side to it. Too much carbon dioxide will cause the earth to heat up. It is this that is causing us to query the growing carbon content within our atmosphere and in the air around us, as it is said that the world has been growing warmer since man has discovered how to use materials to manufacture such things as steel and to process things into fuels.

To have some sort of control over the release of carbon dioxide, pricing carbon emissions has been identified by the Stern review, amongst many others, as a critical policy tool for achieving carbon reductions. Therefore, how carbon pricing is implemented is critical and will have a crucial effect on whether Australia meets these new carbon targets.

One way of coping with an unduly high level of carbon emissions is to examine how one can reduce their impact. One of the answers that we have in Tasmania is our timber industry. As I said, timber absorbs carbon and when you have a solid piece of timber you have a solid piece of carbon. We need to continue to produce many more trees. As I said, there are great opportunities in the future to grow trees. I believe that the farming communities of Australia will have a great opportunity to grow more wood, therefore also tapping in to the opportunity of storing carbon but also producing wood and all the other products that come out of it for the market. In the future there will be a lot more from things like biodiesel and there are many other things which are on the edge of coming into play. It is important to continue to open up and drive opportunities for innovation. The nation was built on innovation. We have solved so many problems. So many people in the early days of this country had to deal with issues and overcome them by being innovative and making things happen. These bills will help us do that in our energy sector. They will drive us towards a more effective, efficient and sustainable nation. I believe these bills are of great importance.

I am very disappointed that the other side cannot even come up with a decent policy position. It is a sad reflection on them to come in here and abuse the other side without really putting in place anything which could give an opportunity. Because there is possibly going to be an increase in the cost of living, people are going to be compensated. A total of about 38,900 people in my electorate of Lyons will receive household assistance through the transfer system, whether they be pensioners, families, self-funded retirees, job seekers, single parents or students. On top of this, taxpayers in Lyons with an annual income under $80,000 will all get a tax cut, with most receiving at least $300 per year.

We have the opportunity to make ready the threshold changes to our economy while helping to maintain a sustainable environment. We will offset costs by ensuring that those who pollute the most have to pay for that privilege, and this is the correct and proper way for us to go about it. We have been discussing the content of what is in these bills for four or five years. I heard one of my colleagues say that, if John Howard had won the 2007 election, we would have a carbon price in place now and, of course, we would. It is a nonsense for the
other side to argue otherwise. It is just a political process they have embarked upon, and I am sure people will see through that. History will judge them and judge them, I think, very badly. I support the bills.

Mr HARTSUYKER (Cowper) (11:10): It has been a long time since legislation before this House has aroused public passion as we are now seeing with the clean energy bills. I cannot recall scenes in the public areas of this House as we have seen this week. We should not be surprised because these bills, if passed, will affect every Australian family profoundly. So many of the assumptions underlying their provisions are dubious and the government's attempts to sell the measures are contentious, to say the least.

I believe the main reason behind this great swell of public opinion is that the bills that come before the House are the result of a broken promise, a broken promise by the Prime Minister of Australia. Her words on 16 August 2010 bear repeating: 'There will be no carbon tax under a government I lead.' Yet here we are today debating the Prime Minister's carbon tax. Whatever is said in this debate will not change one simple fact: this is a Prime Minister who has no mandate for this tax. Like her predecessor, who declared climate change was the greatest moral challenge of our time before deciding it was all too hard, she is flapping like a rag in the political winds of expediency. In her wake are a series of political disasters: the inefficient Building the Education Revolution scheme, the deadly Home Insulation Program and her shambolic immigration policy. She and her government clearly do not believe in what they are doing but see the carbon tax as the price for clinging to power with the help of the Greens. The Prime Minister is not competent to oversee such a policy. The Prime Minister has misled the people of Australia. These are sufficient reasons in themselves to dismiss the clean energy bills. But there are many more.

First, I turn to the way in which the debate has been conducted. One of the most insidious aspects of the carbon tax debate has been a deliberate branding as climate change deniers by the government and the Greens of anyone who opposes this carbon tax. The phrase 'climate change denier' carries a great moral load of baggage. It implies that you do not care about future generations. It implies you do not care about the environment. It implies you care more about your standard of living and personal convenience than you do for the future of the planet and the human race. Proponents of the carbon tax have made two false assumptions, quite deliberately, that opposition to carbon tax means you deny the existence of climate change and you therefore are some kind of moral monster. They make an immediate appeal to emotion, the last refuge of the logically bereft.

For the record, I accept that man-made climate change is occurring and, yes, I accept there is a need to act. But I do not accept the imposition of a carbon tax is the right course of action. That does not make me a climate change denier; it just makes me an opponent of the government and the Greens and a supporter of the coalition's simple direct and effective policy.

I turn now to some attempts to justify the carbon tax where again the debate has been fogged by phoney morality. Just why is it necessary for Australia to act in this way when no other country is doing so? One reason put forward is that Australia is the biggest per capita emitter of carbon pollution, emitting more than the United States, as the Prime Minister told this House on 1 March. This is the cornerstone of another insidious argument designed to make
individuals feel guilty and to make Australia appear some kind of international criminal. It is designed to fuel a desire for action, a desire to remove this stigma. We are told that the only possible course of action, according to the government and the Greens, though the Prime Minister ruled it out a year ago, is to impose a carbon tax. Of course it is not true. According to the latest United Nations international greenhouse gas emissions index for 2007, the United States emits more per capita than we do, some 19.54 tonnes compared to our 19 tonnes. Furthermore, our per capita emissions are in line with those of other resource-rich countries such as Canada and below other developed countries such as Luxembourg, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait.

Secondly, there are good reason why our per capita emissions are relatively high and will be so as long as we choose to live here: the climate, the sparsity of population, the need to travel long distances and the abundance of relatively cheap sources of energy. Thirdly, in global terms, while our per capita emissions are admittedly high, our overall emissions are a drop in the ocean. Government figures for 2012 for Australia's overall emissions are some 578 million tonnes, compared to the following figures from the UN index previously mentioned from two years earlier: China, 6,538 million tonnes; United States, 6,094 million tonnes; Russia, 1,579 million tonnes; India, 1,610 million tonnes; and so it goes.

Another argument used by the proponents of the carbon tax is that other countries are doing far more then Australia to reduce emissions. The Prime Minister said on the ABC's Q&A program on 14 March:

The rest of the world is acting and we with our high emissions economy can't afford to be left behind, stranded with a high pollution economy when the rest of the world has gone forward.

Again, on 7.30 on 8 March she said:

Already 32 countries have emissions trading schemes. 10 American states do as well. They haven't waited for action at the national level, they are acting themselves.

Again, this is just plain misleading, part of the Prime Minister's elaborate deception. No other country is planning to do, or has done, what the Gillard government is planning to do and introduce a punitive carbon tax. No other country has an economy-wide emissions trading scheme. China, the world's largest emitter, has been praised by the Prime Minister for closing down dirty coal-fired power stations at the rate of one every week or so. But they have been replaced, according to the China Daily of 20 October, 2010, with 24 large-scale coalmines and eight clusters of coal-fired power plants. China's emissions will grow by seven billion tonnes from 2005 to 2020. That is seven billion tonnes extra compared to our current annual output of 578 million tonnes. The Prime Minister has mentioned that India, another of the major emitters, is taking 'national action' on pricing carbon through a 'clean energy tax on coal.' But that tax is a princely $1 per tonne. The state royalty on Queensland coking coal alone is $20 per tonne, and the carbon tax will be $23 a tonne. In what sense is India leading the way? A carbon tax is not on the agenda in China or India, and the reality is that those two countries have a different priority: lifting millions of their citizens out of poverty. To do that, they need to increase industrial production. They may be more efficient in terms of energy use, but their emissions will continue to dwarf those of Australia.

As for Europe, the Minerals Council of Australia recently released research showing that over the first five years of the European Union Emission Trading Scheme it raised approximately $500 million per year. The Australian carbon tax, by comparison, will raise approximately $9 billion per year and
will be 18 times larger in dollar terms than the European scheme. In terms of its economic effects, Australia has a super-sized carbon tax. And it seems that in the European scheme fraud is rampant. The Australian Crime Commission found that the European Emission Trading Scheme was recently rorted to the tune of $5 billion. Europol recently reported that it had raided several hundred offices throughout Europe and had arrested more than 100 people in relation to crimes involving emissions trading. This included one operation in Italy where the police conducted raids on 150 companies in eight regions as part of an investigation into huge volumes of suspected fraudulent transactions. It also included raids in Norway, Switzerland, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Latvia, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic and Portugal—after which trading volumes in Europe dropped by 90 per cent. The entire European ETS was effectively shut down for over a week earlier this year following the theft of around €30 million worth of emissions allowances from the national registries of several European countries. A final word on the situation in Europe comes from President Sarkozy of France, who has shelved his country’s carbon tax because it:

… threatens our jobs, [and] it would be absurd to tax French companies while giving a competitive advantage to those in polluting countries.

It certainly would be absurd for this Prime Minister to do exactly the same thing. If this incompetent government could be duped by hordes of shonky pink batt installers, it is surely defenceless against the cunning of international criminal syndicates, one would have to say.

So these are the arguments and the case studies that are being used by the government to support its case. Never, even with the current government, has the gap between rhetoric and reality been wider. Yet it persists with this futile scheme, which, by its own admission, will see emissions continue to rise between now and 2020, from 578 to 621 million tonnes. The government estimates it will be spending $3.5 billion on carbon credits from abroad in 2020, rising to $57 billion, or 1.5 per cent of GDP, in 2050. So the carbon tax will not reduce emissions; it will see us spending billions of billions of dollars on carbon credits in overseas market where fraud is rampant; it will cripple Australian companies in international competition; and it will destroy Australian jobs. What a triumph—destroying jobs and costing Australia billions of dollars!

And what about the impacts on my constituents? We have seen projected rises in electricity prices, rises in gas prices and rises in the cost of living. We have a nation under very great financial strain; we see those increases in the cost of living only adding to that strain; and we see, certainly, substantial job losses as a result of this carbon tax.

I suggest that the government talk to Mr Erhard Dehmelt of Toormina, in my electorate, who contacted the office of the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency with some questions about his financial position under the carbon tax. This is what he said in an email to me:

I am writing to you to regarding the compensation package of the proposed carbon tax. The Prime Minister has made repeated claims that those in the community who can least afford the new tax will be compensated and will in fact be better off … I would like to alert you to the fact that this just isn’t so, as you will see from my situation which I have detailed below:

I am a single self-funded retiree, 59 years old, therefore not eligible for the age pension. Therefore pension increases will not apply to me.

I am not employed, and pay no income tax. Therefore tax cuts and increased thresholds will not apply to me.
My only income is from an allocated pension, and I do not have a Commonwealth Health-Care Card. Therefore compensation paid to self-funded retirees with a Commonwealth Health-Care Card does not apply to me.

The only possible compensation I could receive is the Low-Income Supplement of $300 per annum, but my income from the allocated pension is $31,200 per year, and the income limit for a single person is $30,000 per annum. I should point out that my income from the allocated pension consists of a taxed element of $18,466 and a tax-free component of $12,769, but information I have received from Greg Combet's office is that the income test is on gross income.

On an income of $31,200 a year, he will get precisely nothing in compensation.

We have a tax that is a fraud on the Australian people. We have a tax for which this government has no mandate. We have a tax that is going to drive up the cost of living and is going to cost jobs. History will certainly judge this Prime Minister. She will be judged as a Prime Minister who introduced a tax without authority and for no other reason than to cling to power. The members opposite do not support this tax. You can see that in their body language as they walk around this place. They do not support this tax. They do not want to drive up the cost of living for their constituents, but they are being dragged along, kicking and screaming, by this Prime Minister who does not have a mandate to introduce this tax.

This government is beholden to the Greens. It is beholden to a band of Independents who are not voting to support their constituents. They are voting for their own self-interest and to prop up this government rather than voting in the interests of the constituents who sent them to Canberra. History will certainly judge this Prime Minister. History will judge the Independents, as they have acted against the best interests of this country and their constituents. They will be acting to reduce our international competitiveness at a time when competition in international markets has never been fiercer and when those markets are in turmoil. We should have a government that supports local industry, families and pensioners but instead we have a government that is acting with a compass, driven by one thing, and that is political self-interest. It is acting in political self-interest over the interests of this country, over the people of Australia and over what is needed to drive Australia forward in the 21st century. This government has flip-flopped on so many issues and it has proved itself to be incompetent in administering the simplest of programs. How can we trust this government to administer one of the biggest changes to the Australian economy in Australia's history? The carbon tax will be a disaster for Australia and the coalition will oppose it every inch of the way.

Debate adjourned.

**BUSINESS**

**Orders of the Day**

Mr ALBANESE: I move:

That the following Main Committee orders of the day, private Members’ business, be returned to the House for further consideration:

No. 1—Auditor-General Amendment Bill 2011;
No. 6—Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder;
No. 11—New South Wales sugar industry; and
No. 13—Early childhood learning.

Question agreed to.

**Rearrangement**

Mr ALBANESE: by leave—I move:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent the following orders of the day, private Members’ business, to be called on, and considered immediately in the following order:
Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder—Order of the day;
New South Wales sugar industry—Order of the day;
Inquiry into bank note bribery allegations—Order of the day No. 14;
Auditor-General Amendment Bill 2011—Order of the day;
Early childhood learning—Order of the day;
Carbon Tax Plebiscite Bill 2011—Order of the day No. 13.
Question agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
Debate resumed on the motion:
That the House:
(1) notes that:
(a) Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is an overarching term used to describe a range of physical, mental, behavioural, learning and development disorders that can result from foetal exposure to alcohol; and
(b) FASD is reported to be the greatest cause of non-congenital, irreversible and permanent brain damage to new-borns in Australia; and
(2) calls upon the Australian:
(a) Parliament to continue to facilitate and support the development of a FASD national diagnostic tool for the use of medical professionals and other health service providers; and
(b) Government to:
(i) give FASD the status of a recognised disability in Australia;
(ii) institute a national awareness campaign to raise community awareness of the risks to the unborn child when alcohol is consumed in pregnancy and highlight the potential cognitive and developmental consequences for affected individuals as these pertain to service providers, law enforcement and justice, the community sector and education; and
(iii) give support to the development of models of care and helping strategies for families and individuals dealing with the impacts of FASD.

To which the following amendment was moved:
That the motion be amended to read—
That this House:
(1) notes that:
(a) Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is an overarching term used to describe a range of physical, mental, behavioural, learning and development disorders that can result from foetal exposure to alcohol; and
(b) FASD is reported to be the greatest cause of non-inherited, irreversible and permanent brain damage to new-borns in Australia; and
(2) calls upon the Australian:
(a) Parliament to continue to facilitate and support the development of a FASD national diagnostic tool for the use of medical professionals and other health service providers; and
(b) Government to:
(i) give those with FASD access to disability support funding and services, where appropriate;
(ii) institute a campaign to raise community awareness of the risks to the unborn child when alcohol is consumed in pregnancy and highlight the potential cognitive and developmental consequences for affected individuals as these pertain to service providers, law enforcement and justice, the community sector and education; and
(iii) give support to the development of models of care and helping strategies for families and individuals dealing with the impacts of FASD.

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

Question agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question now is that the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

Question agreed to.
Sugar Industry

Debate resumed on the motion:
That this House:
(1) notes:
(a) that the abnormally wet weather in late 2010 and early 2011 devastated the sugar industry on the NSW north coast; and
(b) the major impact of this weather on the sugar industry on the NSW north coast;
(2) acknowledges that many farmers planted crops twice but lost both as a result of the flood events of December 2010 and January 2011;
(3) recognises that as a result, there are currently 6000 hectares of sugar cane crops which remain unplanted in Northern NSW;
(4) notes the replanting proposal put forward by Canegrowers NSW; and
(5) calls on the:
(a) Commonwealth and NSW Governments to increase the level of assistance provided to farmers from $15 000 to $25 000, similar to the level of assistance provided to Queensland and Victorian farmers; and
(b) Government to respond to the proposal made by Canegrowers NSW as a matter of urgency.

Question agreed to.

Bank Note Bribery Allegations

Debate resumed on the motion by Mr Bandt:
That this House directs the Prime Minister to immediately establish a full and independent inquiry with:
(1) powers equivalent to a Royal Commission to investigate the bank note bribery scandal concerning the Reserve Bank of Australia, Securency and Note Printing Australia; and
(2) terms of reference that require it to investigate and report on at least the following matters:
(a) allegations of corruption in securing note printing contracts and payments to overseas agents into offshore tax havens;
(b) what the Reserve Bank of Australia, Austrade and the Australian Government each knew about the alleged behaviour, and when they knew it;
(c) what due diligence was applied and what investigations were conducted into the allegations;
(d) whether there has been appropriate governance by public institutions and companies;
(e) what action has been taken to prevent improper dealings occurring again and whether that action is sufficient;
(f) recommendations regarding future actions that should be taken by government and agencies to prevent similar problems in the future; and
(g) any related matters.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) (11:28): To be fair to the member for Melbourne, because I did say half past 11 and we are a few minutes early and he is the mover of the motion, I suggest that, while I am talking about my willingness to be fair to the member for Melbourne, because I did say half past 11 and we are a few minutes early and he is the mover of the motion, I suggest that, while I am talking about my willingness to be fair to the member for Melbourne, he might pass on to some of his colleagues in Grayndler that I occasionally can be fair to members of his political party. Today is the day that they should not expect any fairness from me because they give me none in return.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

A division having been called and the bells having been rung—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: As there are fewer than five members on the side for the ayes, I declare the question negatived in accordance with standing order 127. The names of those members who are in the minority will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

Question negatived, Mr Bandt, Mr Oakeshott, Mr Windsor and Mr Wilkie voting aye.
Thursday, 15 September 2011

BILLS

Auditor-General Amendment Bill 2011

Consideration in Detail

Debate resumed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke): The question now is that the amendments moved by the member for Mackellar be agreed to.

Question put.

The House divided. [11:40]

(The Speaker—Mr Harry Jenkins)

Ayes.................69
Noes...................71
Majority.............2

AYES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, BK
Briggs, JE
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M (teller)
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, JA
Griggs, NL
Hartsuyker, L
Hockey, JB
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
Mirabella, S
Neville, PC
O’Dwyer, KM
Pyne, CM
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Smith, ADH
Southcott, AJ
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Van Manen, AJ
Wyatt, KG

NOES

Adams, DGH
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Brodman, G
Burke, AS
Byrne, AM
Cheeseman, DL
Collins, JM
Crean, SF
D’Ath, YM
Elliot, MJ
Emerson, CA
Ferguson, MJ
Garrett, PR
Gibbons, SW
Grierson, SJ
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN (teller)
Kelly, MJ
Leigh, AK
Lyons, GR
Marles, RD
Melham, D
Murphy, JP
Oakeshott, RJM
O’Neill, DM
Parke, M
Plibersek, TJ
Rishworth, AL
Roxon, NL
Shorten, WR
Smyth, L
Swan, WM
Thomson, CR
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

AYES

Vasta, RX

PAIRS

Ciobo, SM
Gambaro, T
Moylan, JE
Washer, MJ

Conversation negatived.
The SPEAKER: The question now is that the amendment moved by the member for Petrie be agreed to.

Question put.

The House divided. [11:45]

(The Speaker—Mr Harry Jenkins)

Ayes......................71
Noes......................69
Majority...............2

AYES

Adams, DGH
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Brodtmann, G
Byrne, AM
Cheeseman, DL
Collins, JM
Creean, SF
D'Ath, YM
Elliot, MJ
Emerson, CA
Ferguson, MJ
Garrett, PR
Gibbons, SW
Grierson, SJ
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN (teller)
Kelly, MJ
Leigh, AK
Lyons, GR
Marles, RD
Melham, D
Murphy, JP
Oakeshott, RJM
O'Neill, DM
Parke, M
Piibersek, TJ
Rishworth, AL
Roxon, NL
Shorten, WR
Smyth, L
Swan, WM
Thomson, CR
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

NOES

Baldwin, RC
Bishop, BK
Briggs, JE
Bachholtz, S
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M (teller)
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, JA
Griggs, NL
Hartsuyker, L
Hockey, JB
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
Mirabella, S
Neville, PC
O'Dwyer, KM
Pyne, CM
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Smith, ADH
Southcott, AJ
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Van Manen, AJ
Wyatt, KG

NOES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL

PAIRS

Gray, G
Rudd, KM
Smith, SF
Thomson, KJ

Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The question now is that the bill, as amended, be agreed to.

Question put.

The House divided. [11:50]

(The Speaker—Mr Harry Jenkins)
Thursday, 15 September 2011  HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  10295

Ayes....................72
Noes....................69
Majority..............3

AYES

Adams, DGH
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burke, AS
Byrne, AM
Cheeseman, DL
Collins, JM
Crean, SF
D’Ath, YM
Elliot, MJ
Emerson, CA
Ferguson, MJ
Garrett, PR
Gibbons, SW
Grierson, SJ
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN (teller)
Katter, RC
King, CF
Livermore, KF
Macklin, JL
McClelland, RB
Mitchell, RG
Neumann, SK
O’Connor, BPJ
Owens, J
Perrett, GD
Ripoll, BF
Rowland, MA
Saffin, JA
Sidebottom, PS
Snowdon, WE
Symon, MS
Vamvakrou, M
Windsor, AHC

NOES

Griggs, NL
Hartsuyker, L
Hockey, JB
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
Mirabella, S
Neville, PC
O’Dwyer, KM
Pyne, CM
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Smith, ADH
Southcott, AJ
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Van Manen, AJ
Wyatt, KG

NOES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, BK
Briggs, JE
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M (teller)
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, JA

Haase, BW
Hawke, AG
Hunt, GA
Jensen, DG
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O’Dowd, KD
Prentice, J
Ramsey, RE
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Schultz, AJ
Secker, PD (teller)
Sliper, PN
Stone, SN
Truss, WE
Turnbull, MB
Vasta, RX

GRAY

Gambaro, T
Moylan, JE
Washer, MJ
Ciobo, SM

Question agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr OAKESHOTT: by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP (Mackellar) (11:52): I want to speak on the third reading of the Auditor-General Amendment Bill 2011 for the simple reason that the member for Lyne has negated the effect of his own bill. His bill originally covered three parts. Firstly, it would increase the power of the Auditor-General to chase down government grants to territories and states. Secondly, it would allow the Auditor-General to automatically audit government business enterprises. Thirdly, the most radical aspect was to allow the Auditor-General to audit the
private sector firms that do business with the Commonwealth.

If anything demonstrates the lack of independence of the member for Lyne, this bill does so. The member for Lyne has just accepted the government's amendments which negate the effect of his own bill, which was to give greater power to the Auditor-General to chase down grants and moneys given to states and territories and to automatically audit government business enterprises. The government, in the explanatory memorandum to its amendments, said the reason it did not want government business enterprises to be automatically audited by the Auditor-General—and he would have to seek permission which could always be blocked by the government—is that government business enterprises, unlike government agencies where there is an automatic right, were subject to competition. Yet the bill gives an automatic right to the Auditor-General to audit private sector firms, which was never part of his remit before.

We have the nonsensical position where the Auditor-General now has an automatic right to audit private sector firms that do business with the Commonwealth and yet he has no automatic right to audit government business enterprises. It is a ridiculous position that the member for Lyne has allowed. The basis for bringing in his bill in the first place was that a report had been brought down by the Joint Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Audit. The member for Lyne purported to use that as the reason for his bill. He has now gone against that report totally. One of the most important aspects of his bill, and the part that I strenuously supported, related to the automatic right to audit government business enterprises. The reason I argued strongly for that is I well remember when I first came into the parliament—

Mr Albanese: Madam Deputy Speaker Burke, I rise on a point of order. This is a third reading motion before the House. *House of Representatives Practice* provides for a very limited opportunity to make a contribution on the third reading. We have already dealt with the amendments and the amendments have been carried. The member for Mackellar is very restricted indeed, under *House of Representatives Practice*, in her contribution to this debate. Members on both sides of the House would surely concur with that view.

Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP: The point I am making is that the member for Lyne has allowed his own bill to be negated in two of the most important aspects that were the reason for his bringing the bill in the first place—that is, the Auditor-General's automatic right to audit government business enterprises. The reason I have always been so strong about that is I well remember when I first came into the parliament and this very building was being built. Some of those on the Joint Committee of Public Accounts, as it was then known, wished to audit the building of Parliament House and look into the rorts by trade unions ripping off the system and escalating costs. The government of the day successfully blocked that by using a legal opinion as to when the government had to give its authority and when the committee had to give its authority. The Auditor-General was held to have no automatic right to audit government business enterprises.

In speaking on the second reading of the member for Lyne's bill, I strongly supported the right of the Auditor-General to have this power and indicated why. The member for Lyne, who spoke forcefully in favour of it, has now succumbed, rolled over to the government and reverted to the position that was there before. He has shown once and for all that the idea that he is truly independent is just not true.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke): The member for Mackellar is now straying from the bill. It is the third reading debate and the member for Mackellar will refer to the bill.

Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP: It is a very sad day when the very essence of the importance of the bill and all the reasons that the mover put forward for the bill have been wiped out and principle has not been upheld. The one part of the bill that remains and is a huge change to the way that the Auditor-General has ever worked gives him a mandate to automatically audit private sector firms, which will place far greater costs upon private sector firms and, particularly for small businesses, inhibit their ability to seek and win government contracts. The business of the Auditor-General and the private sector audit function are totally different in nature. The Auditor-General's power—and he should have the power granted by this bill to audit government business enterprises—has been taken away, leaving us with the ridiculous position where the Auditor-General does not have an automatic right to audit government business enterprises, but he can automatically audit private sector businesses.

Mr Albanese: On a point of order, I refer to pages 374 and 375 of House of Representatives Practice. If the member for Mackellar has concluded her contribution, I will not go further with the point of order. But she might like to read House of Representatives Practice some time.

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop: I have read it.

Mr OAKESHOTT (Lyne) (11:59): The contribution from the member for Mackellar was wrong: all three aspects of this bill as originally intended are in place. The intention of the Auditor-General Amendment Bill 2011 was to allow the Auditor-General to work with state auditors to work on either collaborative audits or individual audits to follow the money trail. A lot of Commonwealth business is now done through the states. That is an important reform for the taxpayers of Australia in looking for efficiency for their taxpayers' dollars.

Likewise, the ability to access government business enterprise is still in place. The government amendments remove the minister's right of referral to the Auditor-General. The Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit can still do a referral to the Auditor-General for a look at government business enterprises—again, a really important reform for the taxpayers of Australia looking for efficiency for their dollars.

The third aspect with regard to contractors is an important reform when we look at the amount of business done by contractors in delivering programs in Australian public policy today. Defence contracting, for example, is not small business; it is big business. It should have an audit trail and we should know on behalf of taxpayers where that money is being spent, why it is being spent and that it is being spent efficiently. This is an important reform for Australian taxpayers and Australian public policy. I would urge the House to support it on the third reading.

Question put:
That this bill be now read a third time.
The House divided. [12:05]

(The Speaker—Mr Harry Jenkins)

A Yes .................... 72
Noes .................... 69
Majority .................... 3

AYES

Adams, DGH
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Brodmann, G

Albanese, AN
Bird, SL
Bradbury, DJ
Burke, AE

CHAMBER
AYES
Burke, AS
Byrne, AM
Cheeseman, DL
Collins, JM
Crean, SF
D’Ath, YM
Elliot, MJ
Emerson, CA
Ferguson, MJ
Garrett, PR
Gibbons, SW
Grierson, SJ
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN (teller)
Katter, RC
King, CF
Livermore, KF
Macklin, JE
McClelland, RB
Mitchell, RG
Neumann, SK
O’Connor, BPJ
Owens, J
Perrett, GD
Ripoll, BF
Rowland, MA
Saffin, JA
Sidebottom, PS
Snowdon, WE
Symon, MS
Vamvakinou, M
Windsor, AHC

NOES
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
Mirabella, S
Neville, PC
O’Dwyer, KM
Pyne, CM
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Smith, ADH
Southcott, AJ
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Van Manen, AJ
Wyatt, RG

NOES
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O’Dowd, KD
Prentice, J
Ramsey, RE
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Schultz, AJ
Secker, PD (teller)
Slipper, PN
Somlyay, AM
Stone, SN
Turnbull, MB
Vasta, RX

PAIRS
Gray, G
Gambaro, T
Rudd, KM
Moylan, JE
Smith, SF
Washer, MJ
Thomson, KJ
Ciobo, SM

Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS
Early Childhood Learning
Debate resumed on the motion:
That this House:
(1) affirms its strong support for all forms of early childhood learning and recognises the importance of pre-school on the development of children and as a foundation for their future education;
(2) notes that the Gillard Government has mandated that ‘four-year-old kindergartens’ provide at least 15 hours per week of instruction by a university-trained teacher by 2013 under its ‘Universal Access’ policy;
(3) notes that the Gillard Government has not considered the consequences of its ‘Universal Access’ policy on Victorian kindergartens where ‘three-year-old kindergarten’ is more commonly offered than by other jurisdictions;
(4) notes that the consequence of ‘Universal Access’ on Victoria’s kindergartens is that many will no longer be able to offer ‘three-year-old
kindergarten' programs because facilities are often shared between three and ‘four-year-old kindergarten' programs;

(5) acknowledges that this policy will effectively remove the choice for many Victorian parents of sending their three-year-old children to kindergarten;

(6) notes that some rural kindergartens could face the risk of closure because there is a shortage of qualified teachers in rural areas, and due to the increase in mandated hours, many rural kindergartens will no longer be able to share teachers;

(7) notes that warnings of this imminent crisis for Victoria's kindergartens have been given directly to the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth by the Municipal Association of Victoria, parent groups, kindergarten operators and parliamentarians; and

(8) calls on the Government to:

(a) provide flexibility for kindergarten operators to deliver kindergarten services according to the needs of their own communities and in line with local infrastructure and staffing capacity; or

(b) at the very least, provide flexibility on the start date for the implementation of 'Universal Access'.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (12:10): I move that the motion be amended in the terms as circulated to honourable members in the chamber. For the sake of clarity, this amendment reads as follows:

That paragraphs 3-8 be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:

(3) calls on the Federal Government and the Victorian Government to work together to ensure that:

(a) the principles of ‘Universal Access’ are fully implemented in Victoria; and

(b) each kindergarten in Victoria is sufficiently funded to meet its ‘Universal Access’ obligations without compromising its ability to offer 3 year old kindergarten.

The motion that has been moved by the member for Aston does refer to some very real issues. In Victoria, where three-year-old kindergartens are often co-located with four-year-old kindergartens, there are some real questions and some real concerns about what the effect of moving to universal access will be. But the answer to that is not to move away from the universal access policy. It is a very good policy that deserves support and the kindergarten parents I speak to want to make sure that not only is universal access implemented but that it has done in a way that allows three-year-old kindergarten to continue. It is on that basis that I move my amendment.

The SPEAKER: Is the amendment seconded?

Mr OAKESHOTT (Lyne) (12:12): I second the amendment, Mr Speaker.

Question negatived.

The SPEAKER: The question now is that the motion be agreed to.

Mr TEHAN (Wannon) (12:13): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to speak on the motion and to move three amendments.

The SPEAKER: The member for Wannon, on the basis that he has already spoken in the debate, is seeking leave to get the call. Is leave granted?

Mr Albanese: Mr Speaker, I seek some clarification. An amendment was circulated by the member for Wannon earlier on. After the debate had commenced I got handed to me in the House by the attendants another amendment of which I have had no notice whatsoever. The government has attempted to facilitate these discussions of private members' business but we cannot be expected to facilitate discussion of amendments moved in the House after they have been debated. If a member is seeking leave to move the amendment—

The SPEAKER: I will allow the member for Wannon to clarify what it is that he is
seeking leave to do. At the moment it is true that there are two amendments circulated.

Mr TEHAN: I am seeking leave to move three amendments.

Leave not granted. Question put:

That the motion (Mr Tudge's) be agreed to.

The House divided. [12:19]
(The Speaker—Mr Harry Jenkins)

Ayes....................... 72
Noes....................... 68
Majority............... 4

AYES
Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, BK
Briggs, JE
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M (teller)
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, JA
Griggs, NL
Hartson, L
Hockey, JB
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McComb, MF
Morrison, SJ
Oakeshott, RJM
O'Dwyer, KM
Pyne, CM
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Smith, ADH
Southcott, AJ
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Van Manen, AJ
Windsor, AHC

NOES
Adams, DGH
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Brodie, G
Burke, AS
Byrne, AM
Cheeseman, DL
Collins, JM
Crean, SF
D'Ath, YM
Elliot, MJ
Emerson, CA
Ferguson, MJ
Garrett, PR
Gibbons, SW
Grierson, SJ
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN (teller)
Kelly, MJ
Leigh, AK
Lyons, GR
Marles, RD
Melham, D
Murphy, JP
O' Connor, BPJ
Owens, J
Perrett, GD
Ripoll, BF
Rowland, MA
Saffin, JA
Sidebottom, PS
Snowdon, WE
Symon, MS
Vamvakou, M

Aye
Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Billson, BF
Bishop, JI
Broadbent, RE
Cobb, JK
Crock, AJ
Entsch, WG
Forrest, JA
Gash, J
Haase, BW
Hawke, AG
Hunt, GA
Jensen, DJ
Katter, RC
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
Mirabella, S
Neville, PC
O'Dowd, KD
Prentice, J
Ramsey, RE
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Schultz, AJ
Secker, PD (teller)
Slipper, PN
Somlyay, AM
Stone, SN
Truss, WE
Turnbull, MB
Vasta, RX
Wyatt, KG

Aye
Albanese, AN
Bird, SL
Bradbury, DJ
Burke, AE
Butler, MC
Champion, ND
Clare, JD
Combet, GI
Danby, M
Dreyfuss, MA
Ellis, KM
Ferguson, LTD
Fitzgibbon, JA
Georganas, S
Gillard, JE
Griffin, AP
Hayes, CP
Jones, SP
King, CF
Livermore, KF
Macklin, JL
McClelland, RB
Mitchell, RG
Neumann, SK
O'Neill, DM
Parke, M
Pilbrow, TJ
Risdon, AL
Roxon, NL
Shorten, WR
Smyth, L
Swan, WM
Thomson, CR
Zappia, A

PAIRS
Ciobo, SM
Gambaro, T
Moylan, JE
Washer, MJ

Question agreed to.

BILLS
Carbon Tax Plebiscite Bill 2011
Second Reading
Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.
Question put.
The House divided. [12:25]

(The Speaker—Mr Harry Jenkins)

Ayes.....................70
Noes.....................71
Majority..............1

AYES
Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, BK
Briggs, JE
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M (teller)
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, JA
Griggs, NL
Hartsuyker, L
Hockey, JB
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Prentice, J
Ramsey, RE
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Schultz, AJ
Secker, PD (teller)
Slipper, PN
Somlyay, AM
Stone, SN
Truss, WE
Turnbull, MB
Vasta, RX

NOES
D' Ath, YM
Elliot, MJ
Emerson, CA
Ferguson, MJ
Garrett, PR
Gibbons, SW
Grierson, SJ
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN (teller)
Kelly, MJ
Leigh, AK
Lyons, GR
Marles, RD
Melham, D
Murphy, JP
Oakeshott, RJM
O'Neill, DM
Parke, M
Plibersek, TJ
Rishworth, AL
Roxon, NL
Shorten, WR
Smyth, L
Swan, WM
Thomson, CR
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

D'Ath, YM
Elliot, MJ
Emerson, CA
Ferguson, MJ
Garrett, PR
Gibbons, SW
Grierson, SJ
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN (teller)
Kelly, MJ
Leigh, AK
Lyons, GR
Marles, RD
Melham, D
Murphy, JP
Oakeshott, RJM
O'Neill, DM
Parke, M
Plibersek, TJ
Rishworth, AL
Roxon, NL
Shorten, WR
Smyth, L
Swan, WM
Thomson, CR
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

Question negatived.

BILLS
Extradition and Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation
Amendment Bill 2011

Reference to Main Committee
Mr FITZGIBBON: I move:
That the bill be referred to the Main Committee for further consideration.

Question agreed to.
Clean Energy Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Income Tax Rates Amendments) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Household Assistance Amendments) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Tax Laws Amendments) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Fuel Tax Legislation Amendment) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Customs Tariff Amendment) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Excise Tariff Legislation Amendment) Bill 2011
Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas (Import Levy) Amendment Bill 2011
Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas (Manufacture Levy) Amendment Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Unit Shortfall Charge—General) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Unit Issue Charge—Auctions) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Unit Issue Charge—Fixed Charge) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (International Unit Surrender Charge) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Charges—Customs) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Charges—Excise) Bill 2011
Clean Energy Regulator Bill 2011
Climate Change Authority Bill 2011
Steel Transformation Plan Bill 2011
Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That these bills be now read a second time.

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (12:29): The Labor-Green government has no mandate to introduce the carbon tax legislation—I make that point very clearly. A number of days before the last election the Prime Minister said, ‘There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.’ She made a statement that was unequivocal, definite and deliberate. She should be held to account and held to that statement.

The coalition’s position on the Clean Energy Bill 2011 and associated bills is abundantly clear: we will vote against it. The next election will be a referendum on the carbon tax legislation. It will be a referendum for people to decide whether they want a carbon tax or not. If elected, we will rescind the legislation and scrap the carbon tax.

The carbon tax needs to be seen in context. We are talking about a $9 billion a year new tax that, prior to the last election, the Prime Minister said she would not have. We are talking about a 10 per cent increase in electricity prices alone, a nine per cent increase in gas prices in the first year, higher marginal tax rates for middle-income earners and, ironically, a hit to the budget bottom line of over $4 billion.

All this is on top of the current track record of the Labor government. As a statement of fact, since 2007, when Prime Minister Rudd’s government, and subsequently the Gillard-Greens government, came to power, electricity prices have increased by 51 per cent, gas prices have increased by 30 per cent, water and sewerage prices have increased by an average of 46 per cent, health costs have increased by 20 per cent, education costs have increased by 24 per cent and rent has increased by 20 per cent. These are simple
statements of fact about increased costs under this government.

What is even more disturbing is the fact that the Productivity Commission has clearly stated that no other country on the face of the globe is bringing in either an economy-wide carbon tax or an emissions trading scheme. The United States has completely and utterly abandoned the idea of a carbon tax. The European ETS is raising something like $500 million over about nine years; yet this carbon tax is looking to raise $9 billion in the first year alone. China's emissions growth of seven billion tonnes from 2005 to 2020 will be 100 times Australia's decrease of 70 million tonnes as predicated on the government's own numbers.

If indeed climate change is a global phenomenon and a global problem, it will need a global solution to deal with the 1.3 per cent of emissions which are apparently causing the change in climate. Unless there is a global agreement, our reducing emissions by 70 million tonnes while at the same time China increases its emissions by 100 times that amount will not make the slightest difference—no difference at all.

The EU have a population of over 500 million. Their scheme is raising about $1 per person per year. Australia's population is a little over 22 million, and the government's proposed scheme will raise $400 per person per year. In short, Australia's carbon tax is 400 times more imposing, more onerous and more taxing on a per capita basis than the European scheme.

India now accounts for 4.9 per cent of global emissions, and this figure is rising commensurate with their phenomenal economic growth. Projecting forward, the ANU has stated that Indian emissions from fuel combustion alone will rise between 75 per cent to 94 per cent from 2005 to 2020. The Prime Minister continued her campaign of distortion when she said that in India they are taking national action on pricing carbon through a clean energy tax on coal. Their coal tax is $1 a tonne, while, in my home state of Queensland, the state royalty on coal is $20 per tonne.

The bottom line is that the world is not acting. Yet Australia is now looking to act unilaterally—alone—apparently holding itself up as an example but in reality looking to destroy its own economy one step at a time. Be in no doubt: the government's scheme is all pain and there will be no gain. If climate change is a global problem, it requires global action. Our acting unilaterally will not achieve anything. The government's own modelling shows that emissions will not decrease in Australia. Indeed, from 2012 to 2020, emissions will increase from 578 million tonnes to 621 million tonnes. Our economy will go through massive pain for no environmental gain while by 2020 China increases its output by 100 times what it was in 2005. This begs the question: why is this government so fanatically walking down the path of wealth redistribution? It is interesting that $3.5 billion in carbon tax revenue will be spent on buying carbon credits from overseas. It is almost as if it is a get-rich-quick scheme for overseas carbon traders.

The coalition believes there is a better way. We believe that our direct action plan will protect the environment now and into the future and have direct, tangible, measurable environmental benefits. We are committed to addressing the risk of climate change and we are committed to reducing emissions by five per cent by 2020. The difference between us and the government is that the government believes that a massive tax and a massive spate of wealth distribution will achieve this objective while we believe that simple, tangible, direct environmental actions—incentives, rather
than hurting families and the economy—is the answer.

We believe we can clean up a range of power stations that are considered some of the dirtiest in the world. We believe that we can replenish soil carbon as well as increase the yield of crops. We believe that we can establish a green army to make tangible differences to our environment and land. We believe in simple things: we can plant 20 million more trees and invest in technology that leads to the greatest abatements at the lowest cost. Most importantly, we will fully fund all this out of savings—which, considering this government's waste and reckless spending, will frankly not be all that difficult. This will provide a great opportunity for our nation. Under Labor's scheme, $9 billion will be taxed and there is nothing companies can do in many areas to escape from it. A company in my own electorate, Digga, the largest exporter of commercial gearboxes in Australia and one of the largest producers in the world of drill bits, especially high-torque drill bits, a company which has done everything to reduce emissions and runs state-of-the-art manufacturing plants, uses a lot of power for heat treatment and uses heat treatment firms to provide support—there is nothing more this company can do to drive efficiencies and productivity. It has some of the finest electronic, digital and robotic cutting, welding and connecting gear of any manufacturing plant in the country. This company, Digga, will be hit by greater costs of electricity to the tens of thousands of dollars and there is nothing it can do because it has already invested substantial amounts of money in becoming the most efficient manufacturing company it can be. In this global export market, the high Australian dollar is hurting it. It is driven towards efficiency and productivity by virtue of competing in that space and by virtue of being a great Australian manufacturing firm.

All this carbon tax will do is to hurt manufacturing companies like Digga which are already doing it tough in a competitive market place where wages are exponentially higher, where the Australian dollar makes exporting exponentially more difficult and this carbon tax will make business exponentially harder. Companies like Digga may, perhaps, be faced with the only other way of dealing with productivity, which is laying off staff to deal with the extra cost impositions from this government.

Be under no doubt: this tax is designed to change the way our economy works and to make life difficult for families. The average starting cost per household under Labor's carbon tax is $515 in the first year alone, rapidly increasing over time to $37 a tonne in 2020—that will be a 60 per cent increase in the taxation rate. No wonder the Treasurer was forced to admit that they cannot guarantee that no-one will be worse off.

Beyond the cost to families, and using Digga as a further example, this tax will cost jobs, businesses and the economy. You cannot raise $27 million over three years without the economy taking a substantial hit. An Access Economics report highlighted the potential loss of 126,000 regional jobs under an earlier version of Labor's scheme. Australia's 750,000 small businesses will receive no direct compensation for the massive jump in electricity prices from the carbon tax. What do I say to my local drycleaner at Helensvale when their power bill goes up by $1,500? How does a local drycleaner use less electricity? How does a local drycleaner become more efficient under this punitive tax? Can someone please explain that to me? And how do they explain to their staff the changes they are required to
make because of what the government is bringing in?

What is particularly vexing about this tax is not just that it is punitive and based on an egregious lie made before the last election, with categorical statements such as, ‘There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead’—as if they were not vexing enough; what is particularly galling is that it will not make a difference to the climate. Our emissions will continue to rise. Tim Flannery, the Australian government’s Chief Commissioner of the Climate Commission, on MTR Radio on 25 March said it all:

I just need to clarify in terms of the climate context for you. If we cut emissions today, global temperatures are not likely to drop for about a thousand years.

All the pain today—and Professor Tim Flannery, who this government holds up as its guru on climate change, says it will not make a difference for a thousand years.

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

Mr ROBERT: But it will send emissions overseas, Member for Sydney. It will export emissions from industries like the cement industry, which cannot cut emissions and cannot become more efficient. As the steel industry closes down in Australia, companies will start up overseas to meet demand. Do you think they will have the same degree of environmental regulation overseas as companies do here? The perversity is that it will export emissions and actually make the situation worse.

Look at Labor’s great mantra in terms of compensation. Labor claims families will be compensated for the price impact of a carbon tax. They said initially that the entire proceeds of the carbon tax would be returned to individuals and households. This of course was changed by the government to 50 per cent of carbon tax revenues would go to households as compensation for families. If you have a family, you are a manufacturing worker in one of our factories and married to someone who works for the local drycleaner, you will be worse off. The Leader of the Opposition has used the example of a policeman married to a part-time nurse—they will be worse off. Those working in the small-business sector of the Gold Coast—the small-business heart of Australia with more small businesses per capita than any other commensurate city—will all be worse off.

Small business accounts for 47 per cent of our economy and they will be worse off. Fifty per cent of businesses employ no-one—they are aspirational mums and dads, having a go, and they will be worse off. Before the last election our erstwhile Treasurer, the member for Lilley said:

... certainly what we rejected is this hysterical allegation that somehow we are moving towards a carbon tax ... We certainly reject that.

Let me say to the Treasurer that the only thing hysterical currently within the parliament is a series of 18 to 19 bills that will seek to impose upon the economy, upon families, massive hikes and massive increases that will destroy jobs and will have no impact on the climate nor change temperatures for 1,000 years. That, Treasurer, is the only thing hysterical today.

Mr GIBBONS (Bendigo) (12:44): I rise today to speak in support of these bills, which give effect to important parts of the government’s Clean Energy Future plan. I would like to make four points about this plan. The first concerns the carbon price itself—who pays it, how it works and how the government will use every cent of the revenue raised to help households, support jobs and invest in clean energy programs.

The second is that we will be providing $13.2 billion for clean energy projects, including investing in renewable technologies, such as solar, wind, wave and
geothermal. The third is about the energy efficiency measures for small business, councils and community groups that will help them to become more sustainable and reduce the costs of essential services like power and water. The fourth is the agriculture and land sector package, which will bring economic benefits to farmers and other land users who reduce pollution or can store carbon on their properties.

But before I go any further on this it is worth remembering why we need to put a price on carbon in the first place. We know that most Australians accept that climate change is real, and that human beings are contributing. In May this year the Climate Commission released a report called The critical decade, which provided the strongest evidence yet of these facts. It showed these things. Global temperatures are rising faster than ever before, with the last decade being the hottest on record. In the last 50 years, the number of hot days in Australia has more than doubled. Sea levels have risen by 20 centimetres globally since the 1800s, affecting many coastal communities. Another 20-centimetre rise by 2050, which the scientists warn is likely, would more than double the risk of coastal flooding. The Great Barrier Reef has suffered from nine major bleaching events in the past 31 years, where previously it had experienced none. And it is now beyond reasonable doubt that excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere—caused mainly through the burning of fossil fuels—is triggering the changes we are seeing in the climate. Scientists also warn that a rise of more than two degrees Celsius in global temperatures will result in dangerous climate change and more intense weather events like droughts, floods and cyclones.

Of course, there is a strong economic argument too. Professor Ross Garnaut, who was commissioned by Commonwealth, state and territory governments, has advised that pricing carbon through a market based mechanism is the cheapest way to cut carbon pollution. It also is the most effective way to turbocharge Australia's renewable energy sector, creating new jobs and new business opportunities.

We have enormous potential to grow our solar, wind, wave and geothermal technologies because only about eight per cent of Australia's electricity is generated from renewable sources. This compares poorly to a country like Spain, which has similar amounts of wind and sunshine, where the figure is closer to 35 per cent. And just recently, China has announced a new feed-in tariff scheme designed to increase its solar generated energy ten-fold in the next five years. But, above all, a clean energy future is about protecting future generations of Australians—by ensuring we have a strong and competitive economy and a healthy environment in which our children and their children can live.

Currently, Australia produces more carbon pollution per person than any other country in the developed world. And while we are responsible for just 1.5 per cent of the global emissions in absolute terms, that still puts us in the top 20 highest carbon polluters in the world—with countries like the United Kingdom, Italy, France and New Zealand. We are also one of 89 countries, including China and the United States, that account for 80 per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions and which have pledged to cut emissions under the United Nations.

No country can do this alone; we all need to do our fair share. This is why British Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron recently congratulated our Prime Minister on the 'strong and clear signal' that our Clean Energy Future plan sends, saying it 'will add momentum to those, in both the developed
and developing world, who are serious about dealing with this urgent threat.

These are some of the reasons Australia needs to act now on climate change by putting a price on carbon. This is the most effective and cheapest way to cut greenhouse gas emissions. From 1 July next year about 500 of Australia's largest polluters will be have to pay for every tonne of carbon pollution they emit into the atmosphere. It is important to emphasise that this is a direct charge on polluters, not on individual households, small businesses or farmers. Therefore it is not a tax in the true sense of the word. Members opposite have been peddling this myth for months and months, but this is not a tax; it is a charge on the biggest polluters in the nation, who will be the only ones to pay.

The starting price will be $23.00 a tonne. This will rise by 2.5 per cent in real terms over the first three years before we move to an emissions trading scheme under which the market will set the price. Putting a price on carbon pollution sends a signal to these big polluters that they will no longer be able to pollute the atmosphere for free. And because these companies will want to find ways to reduce this new cost many will choose to invest in cleaner technologies, creating new jobs and business opportunities. So we will get less carbon pollution, a healthier environment and new jobs and investment in renewable and other clean energy industries.

The government has released Treasury modelling showing the average impact of a carbon price on everyday goods and services will be about $9.90 a week—a modest 0.7 per cent of CPI. By way of comparison, when the Howard government introduced the goods and services tax, CPI shot up by 2.5 per cent. A 0.7 per cent rise works out to be about 80 cents extra a week on the average grocery basket, and about $3.30 a week on the average electricity bill. And it is important to note that petrol for passenger and light commercial vehicles will not be subject to a carbon price.

Because we do not want low- and middle-income earners to bear the burden of these price impacts, we will be using more than half of the carbon price revenue to provide assistance to nine out of 10 Australian households—that is, to the people who need it most. This assistance works out on average to be about $10.10 a week, meaning almost six million Australian households will get help to meet any costs passed on by industry. This includes more than 50,200 people in my electorate of Bendigo who will receive assistance through income support payments, such as pensions, and family assistance payments, such as family tax benefit.

Almost 30,000 pensioners in Bendigo will receive an extra $338 in their pension payments per year if they are single, and up to $510 per year for couples combined. More than 1,700 self-funded retirees holding a Commonwealth seniors health card will receive the same as pensioners, and may also be eligible for tax cuts or the low-income supplement. More than 5,000 Bendigo jobseekers will get up to $218 extra a year and $390 a year for couples combined. More than 3,400 students will receive up to an extra $177 a year. More than 2,800 single parents will receive an extra $289 a year. And everyone earning up to $80,000 a year will receive a tax cut, including 47,000 people in Bendigo. Of these, 39,000 will receive a cut of at least $300 a year. We are also lifting the tax-free threshold from $6,000 to $18,200, meaning an additional one million people will not have to fill in a tax return after this financial year. When this is combined with the low-income tax offset, people will not have to pay any net tax until their income exceeds $20,542.
The rest of the revenue coming from the carbon price will be used to support jobs in high-polluting industries that are exposed to international competition and also to support clean energy programs. Many businesses and unions, including those in steel and aluminium manufacturing, have welcomed the $9.2 billion of help we are providing to trade exposed industries. We have reassured coal miners that their industry will continue to grow under a carbon price and we are supporting those gassy coal mines that emit much more carbon pollution than other operations with a $1.3 billion support package. This will provide the financial assistance necessary to help these industries transition to cleaner energy production.

The second element of the government’s plan is a significant investment in cleaner energy projects. We support a price on carbon because it is a market based mechanism that will change the behaviour of companies that currently rely on high-polluting energy production. When making investment decisions, companies will look to cleaner energy technologies to pollute less and get their operating costs down.

The government will also establish a new $10 billion Clean Energy Finance Corporation to drive private investment in clean energy technologies. This will operate in a similar way to the UK's Green Investment Bank by providing loans, guarantees and equity to help commercialise renewable and clean energy technologies. The corporation will be independent from government and be run on a commercial basis, with each project going through a rigorous assessment process.

An Australian Renewable Energy Agency will also manage another $3.2 billion in research and development of clean energy technologies such as solar and wind. This new agency will bring together programs and funding from several government departments and will help in making early-stage projects more commercially viable.

The government will also be calling for tenders to close 2,000 megawatts of high-polluting electricity generation, but, importantly, no generator will be turned off until alternatives are in place to ensure the continuation of power supply and the right support is in place for affected workers and regions.

The third element of our Clean Energy Future plan is about helping local communities cut their own pollution levels and reduce energy costs. Many households, businesses, local governments and community organisations in central Victoria are already doing great things to reduce their energy use. Under our plan, there will be $330 million for competitive grants for local councils and communities under the Low Carbon Communities program. It includes a Low Income Energy Efficiency program that will offer up to $100 million in grants to consortiums of local and state governments, community organisations, energy retailers and energy service companies to help low-income households reduce their energy costs, and a $30 million Household Energy and Financial Sustainability Scheme that will help about 100,000 low-income households better manage their energy consumption. Small businesses with turnovers of less than $2 million will also be able to get immediate tax deductions for new assets costing up to $6,500—up from the current amount of $5,000.

There will also be an additional $40 million of funding under the Remote Indigenous Energy Program. This will build on the successful Renewable Remote Power Generation Program by giving Indigenous communities access to cleaner, more affordable and reliable energy sources such
as solar, rather than the heavily polluting diesel operations on which they have been relying.

By adopting more energy efficiency measures, households will be able to cut their energy bills, which will also help reduce the impact of any price flow-on from energy retailers.

The fourth element of the Clean Energy Future plan is the agriculture and land sector package, which will bring significant benefits and opportunities to people living in rural and regional Australia. First, carbon emissions from farming have been excluded entirely from the carbon pricing scheme. This means farmers, forestry operators and other land managers will not pay a direct price for the carbon pollution their activities generate. Second, farmers and other landowners will be able to access commercial opportunities through the Carbon Farming Initiative—a new scheme that will provide economic rewards for those who cut pollution or can store carbon on their land.

This initiative will allow land managers to earn credits, from which they can generate income, for taking action such as reforestation and revegetation, reducing methane emissions from livestock, reducing fertiliser pollution, and native forest protection. A new biodiversity scheme worth almost $1 billion over the first six years will also be established for projects that protect the outcomes of carbon farming.

These, then, are the four primary elements of the government's plans to move Australia from an economy reliant on high-polluting energy production to one ready to embrace a clean energy future. And these plans are in stark contrast to those proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. Under the government's plans, big polluters will pay and individual householders will receive assistance. Under the opposition's plan, ordinary taxpayers will be asked to subsidise big polluters so they can buy credits to offset their pollution levels. This means the big polluters can keep on polluting.

Under the government's plan, around 160 million tonnes of carbon pollution be cut from the atmosphere by 2020—the equivalent of taking 45 million cars off the road. This means we will reach our five per cent reduction target. Under the opposition's plan, emission levels will be higher in 2020, meaning they will have no chance of meeting their reduction commitment.

If we are to see real action on climate change, if we are to be competitive in a low-carbon global economy, if we are to provide a future for our children and grandchildren that will enable them to prosper in a healthy environment and with a strong economy, then we need to pass this legislation. I strongly support this bill and urge every other member of the parliament to support it.

Mr KEENAN (Stirling) (12:58): Many members of this place would follow international affairs and they would have heard when they woke up this morning that overnight there has been an emergency teleconference between the Greek Prime Minister, the German Chancellor and the French President to talk about Greece defaulting on its debt obligations. At the same time there are banks in France exposed to Greek government debt that have had their credit ratings downgraded, and the President of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, has expressed grave concerns for the health of the global economy. The reaction to this of most governments around the world is to look at what they can do domestically to try and limit the impact of what could be a very severe second phase of a global economic downturn. European countries in particular are looking to slash government spending...
and looking at ways they can put their rather bloated budgets back in balance. Other countries around the world are looking at how they might take defensive measures to protect their populations from what could be a very torrid global economic environment. At the same time as this massive global uncertainty, at a time in Australia when business confidence has hit all-time lows, it is astonishing that we in this parliament are discussing a series of bills that are going to impose a great big new tax on everything and also impose a very substantial regulatory burden on business. These bills will touch every aspect of everybody's lives in Australia, yet the absurdity of us discussing this at a time of great global uncertainty does not seem to have occurred to members of what is a rapidly disintegrating Labor government.

I can understand that there is some reluctance for Labor members at the moment to leave their electorate offices and go out to talk to people within their communities, because, if they are getting the same sort of feedback as I have been getting as I move around my electorate of Stirling, then clearly it would be a deeply unpleasant experience for them. But they really need to do that to understand the enormous disconnection between what people are actually feeling in their communities and what we are discussing as a parliament here today. If they were to talk to any businesses in their electorates, whether they be small, medium or large, they would tell them, in most cases—not in all cases—that this is the worst business and trading environment that people have ever faced. Even in my home state of Western Australia, which people would rightly assume is doing better than many other parts of Australia, there is an enormous lack of confidence within the business community and, if you are dealing with sectors outside the mining industry, people will tell you that it is just the worst environment that they have ever seen. Yet the response of their federal government is to impose an economy wide tax that is going to touch every single aspect of our lives. This will be the world's biggest carbon tax, apparently because Australians are the world's largest polluters, something that I think is factually incorrect.

Many of the macro arguments against this tax have already been placed very firmly on the record by many of the previous speakers on this side of the House, so I want to talk directly about what this tax will mean for my constituents in Stirling and what it will mean to my home state of Western Australia. Every time I meet with constituents I am told more often than not that everyone is tightening their belts, that they are suffering under the increased cost of living pressures. The cost of living is something that can be very hard for federal governments to do something about, but surely a good rule for this parliament would be to do no harm—whereas this package of bills will deliberately and directly increase the costs of family budgets.

I want to give the parliament some examples of the businesses that I have been talking to in my electorate and some of the feedback that I have from small businesses, in particular, who are greatly concerned about what the carbon tax is going to mean for them. I recently did a small business survey and I want to give the House some of the feedback that I have. We contacted all these small businesses directly to confirm with them that they are happy to have their comments recorded in Hansard and to be part of this speech.

One of my officers spoke yesterday to Mr Rex Sajich from West-Side Automatics, who lives in Stirling. He has been working in the automotive industry for over 30 years. Mr
Sajich's business is experiencing a very tough year because his operating costs continue to rise. He faces losing an employee whom he might not be able to afford to replace. We rely on small businesses like Mr Sajich's to keep the economy afloat, yet he has asked why he should be on the receiving end of a bad tax that will kill small business. He has also asked why Australia's small businesses—some 750,000 of them—will receive no direct compensation for the massive jump in electricity prices that will be imposed by this carbon tax.

Mrs Francine Kapoulitas from Amelia Heights fish and chip shop works and raises her family in Stirling. Mrs Kapoulitas is already paying over $600 a month in electricity bills for a business that trades only 30 hours a week. After the introduction of the carbon tax, Mrs Kapoulitas does not know whether she will be able to keep the doors open. She asks why a family-run business such as hers should be forced to close up shop because of a bad tax that offers no compensation to the backbone of the Australian economy. Mr Derek Downie from Steenes Automotive in Balcatta cannot understand why the federal government is willing to compensate individual households for the increase in electricity costs but refuses to help small business cope with the significant increases in these costs.

Mr Martin Steere from Karinga Electrical Systems in Osborne Park is concerned about how the carbon tax is diminishing confidence levels in the business community. He believes that nobody within the business community understands the real costs of the new tax. He asked why the Labor government is not addressing the real concerns facing the Australian economy at present but, instead, introducing another tax that small business cannot afford to pay. In the same vein, Mr Tony Allender from Specialised Mechanical Services in Osborne Park simply said that this carbon tax will be the final straw that puts him out of business. He asked when the government will acknowledge the fact that small businesses are the ones that are failing as a result of Labor's new tax. Mr Allender pointed out that there is no point giving him a rebate on his household electricity bill when he cannot afford to pay that bill if his business goes bust.

Another Stirling business owner who will be affected by the carbon tax is Mr Brett Rice from Green Energy systems in Balcatta, who has rightfully pointed out that it is the job of the government to provide neutral trading conditions for business so that consumers should not be fearful to spend their money, but this Labor government cannot even do that. Mr Rice's biggest concern is what the real costs will be for his business once the Gillard government introduces its toxic carbon tax. Mike Maumill is concerned at what the carbon tax might mean for his business, Capri Technologies, and Mr King from the Dianella Poultry Shop noted, 'It's the big guys that may be able to absorb some of the passed down costs,' but he cannot afford to pass on costs of his small business to his customers.

All in one day my office spoke to these eight businesses, but there are many businesses in a very similar situation in Stirling. They have every right to be concerned about this carbon tax and what it might mean for them and their employees. If you ask the Prime Minister, she will say that they have no reason to express concern. This is of course absolute nonsense, because these people know they are going to be worse off if this bill passes this parliament. Of course, no-one sitting on the Labor side of the House has any understanding of how these small businesses might feel, because to them small business is a completely foreign land. They
have never lived it and they do not understand the unique pressures associated with it. They have never started, owned or run their own small businesses. I do not think there would be any demographic—

**Mr Dreyfus:** I ran one for more than 20 years before I came to this place.

**Mr KEENAN:** I am very happy for the parliamentary secretary to get up and correct the record about all his colleagues who have been involved in small business. If he had any understanding of small business, there is no way he would be supporting these bills. It is making their job so much harder.

Besides the effects on the people of Stirling, I want to talk quickly about the effect this tax is going to have on my home state of Western Australia. The Western Australian Treasury have done a preliminary assessment of the impact of the proposed carbon tax and it makes for pretty grim reading for all West Australian MPs. I certainly hope those West Australian MPs on the Labor side of the House avail themselves of this analysis and then think twice before they impose this enormous burden on their home state. I do not have time to go through all of the analysis, but I will highlight what I believe are the important points. Firstly, the Western Australian Treasury say in no uncertain terms that they believe the modelling that has been provided to date by the Commonwealth is nothing short of heroic. They say specifically that virtually all the modelling talks about purchasing permits from overseas, and that is a heroic assumption that there will be a fully functioning international emissions permit market from 2015-16. They say that appears very optimistic given that there is no global market for such permits and there is no prospect of one being created in the near term. They also directly address what the cost impacts are going to be in the first year alone for West Australian households.

I will go through some of those costs, because they have been detailed by the Treasurer, Christian Porter. He says in the first year alone West Australian households will pay at least $144 extra in household bills. To break that down, it will be an extra $111 per year in electricity charges, specifically because of the carbon tax; $19.50 extra in public transport fares, specifically because of the carbon tax; and $13.25 extra in water charges in the first year of the tax alone. The Treasury analysis also states that all Western Australian families should expect to pay higher electricity, water and public transport fees for every single year under this tax. The analysis also says that the $144 average increase in household bills next year would be the tip of the iceberg and that the Prime Minster's promise that two out of three households will be compensated is just not true in the case of Western Australia, where a full 52 per cent of households will be worse off under the carbon tax.

According to the Commonwealth's own analysis, the carbon tax is going to apply to 500 of what are called Australia's largest polluters—on this side of the House we call them Australia's most successful companies. At least 75 of these 500 companies operate solely in Western Australia and the analysis produced by the Western Australian Treasury firmly states that the carbon tax is going to impact Western Australia even more than other parts of the country.

The Western Australian Treasury modelling refers to the $70 billion that is going to be directly shifted offshore by 2050 under the government's plans. That is, $57 billion is going to be directly transferred from Australian taxpayers to people overseas. That amounts to over $1,600 for
every person in Australia. We are debating bills here today astonishingly that are going to transfer from every single Australian in today's dollars over $1,600 overseas. All of this is for an environmental result that means that Australia's domestic emissions will increase by 2020, and by 2050, by which time this $1,600 per person will have been transferred overseas, our domestic emissions will have fallen fully by two per cent. So we have all of this incredible pain for absolutely no environmental gain.

As time is running out—I might seek to table this analysis at the end of this speech—I just make a couple of other points made by the West Australian Treasury, because it is a very important analysis about the real world impact of this carbon tax. The Treasury have said that this significant outflow of income being transferred overseas will have implications for Australia's exchange rate and terms of trade. They go on to specifically list the impact on West Australian pensioners and single-income households. Their conclusion is that people will be significantly worse off at every level of society, which the government refuses to acknowledge and continues to ignore.

I just end on this note. We have a commitment from the opposition side of the House that if we get into government we will repeal this tax. As has been rightly pointed out, that is going to be significantly disruptive for business and consumers in our economy. It is not our position on the carbon tax that has ever changed. We have been 100 per cent clear from day one that we do not want a carbon tax. We promised not to do it at the last election and, of course, we have stuck to that commitment. It is the Labor side of the House that has changed its mind. The Prime Minister promised there would not be a carbon tax, yet she has reneged on that promise. If she believes that the Australian people will benefit from this tax, she must take it to the Australian people and get them to pass judgment on it, and I urge her to do so.

Ms COLLINS (Franklin—Parliamentary Secretary for Community Services) (13:13): What a privilege and pleasure it is to be able to stand up to support action on climate change, as I have twice before. I believe in climate change; I believe it is real. This parliament has been debating this issue for the whole time I have been a member of parliament. The opposition, as we have heard, have had many positions on climate change and we know why they have had so many positions. We know it is because some of them still do not believe climate change is real. We know a large group of them—in fact, at least half—support a market based mechanism to price carbon, because they had their leadership challenge on it. But, as we know and as we have seen, some of them are much more interested in short-term political gain and point-scoring rather than what is in this nation's best long-term interest. In fact, I have worked in and been around politics and campaigns for a very long time and this most recent debate has got to be one of the most deceitful, deceptive debates I have ever seen. It has not been about the facts or the science; it has been about politics and personal attacks and, in my view, it has been disgraceful.

The confusion generated by the scare campaign mounted by those opposite is so great that many people in my electorate and, I am sure, many Australians do not even realise that the opposition are supporting action on climate change and they actually have a policy. Why? It is because they never talk about it because they are so divided on the right course of action over there and they are blindly following their leader at the moment, when many of them actually believe in a market based mechanism to put a price on carbon. They are only doing that...
because of party politics, not because they have the best interests of the nation at heart.

What have we actually agreed on? We have agreed that climate change is real and happening—most of us have agreed, anyway; I know some of them over there look a bit doubtful. We have agreed on a five per cent reduction on 2000 levels by 2020. Of course, there is a disagreement on how we get there. We know what our policy is. It is here, it is clear and it is in the pages of the bills that we are debating, but the opposition never mention their plan, as I say. We have all seen their document with the carbon tax legislation talking points—34 pages of them—that they have been mounting their scare campaign on. On how many pages do you think they talk about their own policy? The answer is three. The policy gets three pages because they are so committed to it. Their leader even barely mentioned it when he spoke on these bills. Their speakers barely mention it. That is because all they want to do is say no to everything rather than put Australia's best interests first.

Let us lay some facts on the table and look at what these two policies do. We have the government policy over here, supported by the Multi-Party Climate Change Committee and supported by the majority of people in this House. It is a policy that will actually get the big polluters to pay. We are going to send a signal out there to the marketplace that pollution has a price on it. We are doing that. We are giving big polluters an incentive to reduce their carbon emissions. We know, given that they are businesses, that they will take that opportunity and they will indeed find ways to lower their costs by lowering their emissions.

In comparison, what do we have on the opposition side? We have the coalition using taxpayers' money to subsidise big polluters to continue to pollute. What a great policy. If it were that simple, why hadn't somebody thought of it before? Why have we been debating action on climate change for so long? Why are we in this chamber yet again talking about carbon pricing? It is because those on the opposition side do not care about the facts around what is actually happening. There is a plan that the economists have predicted will cost each Australian family $1,300. That is $1,300 that those opposite will have to raise in extra tax or cut current spending. We have all heard how much that might be—they might need to cut two years of the age pension. Where are they going to find money for this plan? It is on top of the $70 billion black hole that they have. It is not just me who is saying that there are problems with their policy. We have Matt Grudnoff, the senior economist at the Australia Institute, who, when he explained the coalition's direct action plan, said:

If we use the average cost of abatement for competitive grant schemes previously conducted in Australia then by 2020 the Fund would have to allocate around $100 billion. That is, on average, $11.1 billion every year to 2020, or ... $1,300 per household per year. This is far in excess of what the Coalition has budgeted for.

It is time that the coalition were held to account for their policy. It is time that they stopped this reckless scare campaigning and actually listened to the scientists, listened to the economists and debated this seriously. We are acting because we believe the scientists; we are acting because we believe the economists; we are acting because we know it is the right thing to do. From CSIRO to NASA, all the world's leading scientists agree that climate change is real and it is caused by human activity.

This is what the government is going to do. We are going to talk about the future. We are going to act now in the best interests of our children and our grandchildren. If our
best scientists are telling us that we have a problem, we are going to act because, as I said, it is the right thing to do. So what are we going to do? We are going to put a price on carbon and we are going to return the income generated by this price to support jobs, assist households and transform our economy into a cleaner one. We are going to start with a fixed price for carbon and we are going to move to an emissions trading scheme, a market based mechanism that we know at least half of the opposition support.

We know that jobs will grow in the renewable energy sector. We have a very comprehensive set of bills. We have the Jobs and Competitiveness Program to protect those emissions-intensive trade-exposed large companies. We have support for manufacturing jobs, including the $1.2 billion Clean Technology Program. We also have the Low Carbon Communities program to assist low-income households to make energy efficient changes to their homes so that they can reduce their power bills. Grants will be available to local councils, community groups and small businesses to improve their own energy efficiency. I have seen firsthand the start of that in my own electorate, where one of my councils has been one of the first in the country to change its light bulbs over with a loan from Low Carbon Australia to save money for its ratepayers and also to reduce its emissions. It is happening as we speak.

We are also going to provide the assistance for households which is so important. Nine in 10 households will receive assistance through tax cuts or increased payments. Almost 6,000,000 households will get tax cuts or increases in payments that will cover the entire average price impact of a carbon price. Over four million Australian households will get an extra buffer with assistance that covers 120 per cent of the average price impact of the carbon price. Over one million Australians will no longer need to lodge a tax return because of an increase in the tax-free threshold. In my own electorate of Franklin 36,000 taxpayers will receive a tax cut and 31,400 people will receive household assistance either through income support payments or family assistance payments. A large proportion of my electorate will receive assistance. I have been going around my electorate talking to people specifically about the assistance package and what it will mean to them. There is quite a clear understanding from many people in my electorate that they will be better off under the carbon price because of the assistance they will receive. One of the only few concerns that comes up is that tenants of public housing do not want their assistance to be clawed back by state governments in increased public housing rents. I take this opportunity to call on the Tasmanian state government to quarantine the carbon price assistance that we will be providing households in Tasmania from public housing rent increases.

My home state of Tasmania really has been at the forefront of renewable energy. We know at the moment only around eight per cent of Australia's electricity is generated from renewable sources. Around 86 per cent of Tasmania's energy is from renewable sources. The next best state is Queensland with only eight per cent. This shows that Tasmania really is in a unique position to take advantage of some of these changes. Tasmania opened its first hydro-electric power station in 1916 at Waddamana in Mr Deputy Speaker Adams's electorate of Lyons in central Tasmania. We currently have 27 hydro-electric power stations and a very significant wind farm. We have had jobs in the renewable energy sector in Tasmania for decades. The majority of our power stations and dams were built in the fifties, sixties and seventies. Thousands of Tasmanians have
been employed in the renewable energy sector for more than half a century. These are real jobs putting roofs over the heads of families and putting food on their tables.

We also know Tasmania will benefit from this price on carbon because our generator Hydro Tasmania, which is publicly owned, will not pay a price for carbon as it does not pollute. It will be able to return some of the benefit from not having to pay that price to the Tasmanian people. It will be able to reinvest in renewable energy and will also be able to give some of it directly back to Tasmanians, and that is certainly my wish. I again call on the Tasmanian state government to look at the dividend that will be returned to Hydro Tasmania to see how it can be best returned to the people of Tasmania who have invested in renewable energy over almost a century. I want to see Tasmania continue to be at the forefront of renewable energy research, development and generation for years to come. This policy will only assist in that.

In summary, it is really important for Australia's future that these bills are passed. It is important for my electorate of Franklin and it is important for Tasmania. There are two policies being debated out there in the public that deal with climate change. It is time for honesty in this debate and for the facts to be on the table. I think it is about time those on the other side are guided by their conscience about what is in the best interests of Australia and they make a decision to vote for what they know is right and what they know is in Australia's best interests. I call on them to come over here and vote with us for a market based mechanism, which so many of them believe in, to put a price on carbon. I commend these bills to the House.

Mr RANDALL (Canning) (13:25): I am very pleased to speak on these bills today, one of which has the Orwellian title of the Clean Energy Bill 2011. It really should be relabelled 'Destroying Australian Industry, Jobs and Income Bill 2011'. Why are we here today? We are here today because we were misled by the Prime Minister before the last election. On the front page of the Australian newspaper of 20 August 2010 is the Prime Minister glorifying herself at her desk saying, 'I rule out a carbon tax.' She goes on and says that, should she actually get involved in a tax, a 'carbon price would not be triggered until after the 2013 election'. Was that to seek a mandate or was that because she realised what a toxic tax this is?

The problem with this is that the Prime Minister got elected on a misleading statement to the Australian people, and that is why she has no authority on this issue. She certainly does not have a mandate. We are here because the Brown-Gillard government, which we know is led by Senator Brown of the Greens, has now forced this government into a position where, when you look across at the backbench members, they all mouth these platitudes on this issue—but they know they are wrong.

I have 15 minutes to speak on the 19 bills before us. I will not go over the issues I would like to on each bill, but what I will do is generally speak about how they are going to affect my electorate. Being a member from Western Australia, I certainly have some issues with these bills. For example, the Western Australian Treasury analysis shows that more than half of Western Australian households will be worse off under these bills. My constituents are not happy about that. In Western Australia we have mining and manufacturing jobs that will be lost. In fact, my electorate has the third-highest number of fly-in fly-out workers in Australia and they are not happy with this legislation. Their incomes will be lowered. Their standard of living will be
lowered as things become more expensive. This is a tax on everything. Global emissions will increase because we will export our pollution. I will refer to that later in my summation of these bills.

I want to give an example of a major business in my electorate and in the world. The company Alcoa receives 60 per cent of its global income from my electorate. Its two mines and two refineries, Pinjarra and Wagerup, produce almost 60 per cent of Alcoa’s global income. Their smelter is in Portland, Victoria. Interestingly, Australia has five smelters, including one at Bell Bay in the seat of Bass. It would be interesting for that member to hear what the people of his electorate think about how this tax is going to impact on their jobs. We also have Boyne Island, Kurri Kurri in the Hunter, Point Henry in Corio—another Labor seat—and Tomago in the seat of Newcastle. It would be interesting to know what the workers there are thinking. What is very interesting about Alcoa’s operations is that Alcoa makes an incredible contribution to Australia’s mining industry, obviously, but particularly to the alumina industry—bauxite mining, alumina refining and its smelting and rolling operations. It brings a lot of jobs, as I said, and adds value to Australian products—at both a state and local level—and to the national economy at every stage. The Gillard government thinks this tax will force people to change the way they are currently doing their business, but Alcoa is already doing that. It has, in fact, been involved in positive actions on the environment and its carbon footprint for a long time. Alcoa has already been reducing its footprint, as I said, and it does not need a tax to do so. Alcoa has already significantly reduced its emissions without a carbon tax. In fact, globally it has reduced its total direct emissions by more than 40 per cent from 1990 levels without a carbon tax. I repeat that: they have reduced emissions by 40 per cent on an international level. But let us get to Western Australia. In WA alone, Alcoa has reduced its emissions per tonne of product by more than 20 per cent from 1990 levels—again, without a carbon tax. Alcoa’s WA refineries have less than half the greenhouse footprint that its key competitors in Asia do—less than half of the emissions of its Asian competitors. Indonesia has a refinery at Kuala Tanjung, so in other words they are producing twice as many emissions as Alcoa does in my state of Western Australia—the electorate of Canning. This is quite incredible, because those figures on what Alcoa has done voluntarily, without a tax, show not only that we will export our pollution overseas to countries that do not have to comply and do not intend to comply but that we will export our jobs and our income nationally. Alcoa pays company tax, and there is the spin-off throughout the community of jobs in this industry.

It is very interesting to look at where these jobs could go overseas. As I said, Azerbaijan has a refinery, as do Egypt and Ghana. Will the jobs go there? Interestingly, India has seven smelters. Nigeria and Kazakhstan also have smelters. Interestingly, I turn three pages—as you might be noticing, Mr Deputy Speaker—because China has exactly 100 aluminium smelters. So that is where we are going to export our jobs, our pollution and our income, because of course that is where they are going to go if the government make us uncompetitive. This is a trade-exposed industry from both an energy point of view and an environmental point of view if this tax is to come on. So I am going to make sure all the Alcoa people in my electorate understand this. The unions will be trying to tell the workers, ’Don’t worry about it; we’ll look after you.’ That’d be right! If you do not have a job, they will not look after you. The workers might want to know the real facts
about Alcoa's record, which I have outlined today. I might conclude on the fact that Venezuela has two smelters. I can imagine Hugo Chavez paying a carbon tax and making his country uncompetitive so he cannot get a handle on it! So that is just how ridiculous it is. I am sure that the people whose electorates the mines, refineries and smelters are in know what this government is doing to them and their jobs.

This government has already said that it plans that this policy and this legislation will eventually see $3½ billion a year go straight out of Australian families' pockets and into those of foreign carbon traders—or should I call them foreign carpetbaggers? We know how fraud has been outlined in these trading schemes in Europe—for example, in Finland and Norway, where there are inquiries into these trading schemes. But no: as part of this, we are going to be paying offshore countries billions of dollars. In fact, I see here that it will be $57 billion by 2050. We are going to spend $57 billion overseas.

The amazing thing is: why would we pay somebody in, say, the Ivory Coast or Equatorial Guinea billions of dollars in carbon credits? The fact is that we know that in these sorts of countries they are not meant to cut down trees, but just look at what has happened in the Amazon Basin. Of course they will take the money and put the money in their pocket, but after they have put the money in their pocket they will still probably cut down the trees in any case, because we cannot trust them not to do it. We have seen it happen in the Amazon and elsewhere in the world. In fact, I saw it in Vanuatu when I was there. We are out there trying to help them protect their forests, and they are cutting them down as quick as they can. So this is just a farce, and people are going to see it for what it is worth.

Homebuyers in Western Australia will be affected. Ross North, one of the larger home builders, for example, has estimated that this carbon tax will increase the cost of a new home by $16,000. That is one of the most credible home builders in Western Australia, and those are the figures it has done internally. The mortgage delinquency rate in Western Australia is probably the same as in the rest of Australia, but the delinquency rate in my suburb of Armadale is 2.9 per cent, the sixth highest of any suburb in the country. In Mandurah, another locality, it is 2.7 per cent. The fact that rents will rise and people will be unable to afford to build a house because of the increased costs is something that is going to impact on families and first home buyers.

A survey from the Australian Retailers Association revealed that a massive 83 per cent of retailers expect consumers to spend less as a result of this carbon tax. Eighty-five per cent of those surveyed believe the carbon tax will have a negative impact on their profitability. The survey also found that one-third of retailers will pass the increases on and that jobs will be lost due to the carbon tax. Of course, the independent store owners in my electorate are also very, very concerned about the jobs and the discretionary spending in their supermarket. We know that it is already having an effect on businesses because there is a crisis of confidence in the retail industry, because they are worried about the fact that this government is heading towards a tax that they do not want. The amazing thing is: how many polls do you need to have to convince the other side that people do not want this tax? But it has been rammed down the throats of all Australians, because this government has decided that it is going to just give it to them because Bob Brown has made it do it. Under this toxic tax ratepayers will be paying more as well. When the
member for Hotham, Minister Simon Crean, was in my electorate recently he tried to come to an RDA forum to tell people in my electorate how good this tax was going to be for them. Can I say on behalf of the member for Hotham and Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government that it was a dismal failure? The headlines in the paper afterwards said that the minister could not answer the questions. When he stood up at these forums—and Alcoa was there—and was asked by local councils and local businesses he struggled with the answers. It was seen for what it was: he did not know the details.

For example, increased electricity charges are going to impact on local governments. Most of my local governments were at this forum and they understood—and this is a very good example of how it is going to impact—that they are going to be hit by something like an extra $200 million a year for tipping fees alone. The Western Australian Local Government Association president, Mayor Troy Pickard, has already indicated that increased costs of electricity cannot be absorbed by their councils. It is already out there, and this was brought up at the RDA forum where the minister was: who is going to pay for the lights to be left on at night when electricity costs go up? The councils say they cannot afford the extra electricity price and the state government says that they are not going to pay for the extra price, so will the lights go off late at night to save electricity? You can imagine the crime that will be pervasive through the community once the street lights go off. It is a crime, in fact, that this is going to be a flow-on effect of this carbon tax into the community. The impact of this on electricity prices will hit ratepayers because they are going to have to pay for the lights to be left on in their streets at night for security reasons. This is just disgraceful.

We are looking at the highest carbon tax of anywhere in the world at $23 a tonne. We know that Europe has 17 per cent and that so many exemptions exist that the whole trading scheme is not working. In fact, as I started by saying, we are here today because the Prime Minister misled us before the election and got herself elected illegitimately at the last election. In this article she said that there would be no carbon tax under the government she led. This is what she said on the front page of this newspaper, that there would be no carbon tax under the government she led. Now she has one, and at the end of the day everybody is going to pay for her misleading statements.

She was one of the gang of four that I understand convinced Kevin Rudd, the then Prime Minister, to walk away from his carbon trading scheme. She was one of the ones, along with the Treasurer, who convinced him that he should abandon his scheme. Then, going into an election she told us that she would not do that. Straight after the election not only has she dudded the Australian community she has dudded the former Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd. He should feel somewhat aggrieved, as I am sure he does, that he had been misled by his faithful deputy on this issue and that as a result his political assassination was complete.

This is a tax that is not needed, this is a tax that will hurt families, this is a tax that will hurt jobs and it will hurt all Australians because everyone will pay for this toxic tax.

Mr RIPOLL (Oxley) (13:40): I come to this debate on the premise of just three things: that climate change is real, that there is something we can do about it and that that is affordable.
It is happening now and it is also having a real impact right across the globe. There is something we can do and there is something that others can do; there are things that we are already doing now in this country, that we have been doing for a number of years, and there are things that are being done in other countries. The strange part about this debate is that while we are in here debating the issue of whether we should do anything about climate change both sides of politics—the government and the opposition—actually believe the same thing. There is no question that everyone actually believes that climate change is real. Every opposition member who stands in here repeats it ad nauseam, that they believe in climate change. In fact, it is so real that we both have the same targets. That is right; the government has a target of five per cent reduction by 2020 and so does the opposition. The only real point of contention and argument is our method—our system—versus yours. It is not a question really about climate change and all the arguments that you hear in this place from the other side. They rarely talk about anything else, but that is what we hear in here. We are really just debating what type of system it is going to be.

I think that a longstanding credible position that governments have taken in this country when they introduce policy or change is that you do things that are market based. You do things that are in the national interest, economically sound and which work on a range of fronts. You know that it is always difficult because in politics it is about compromise, it is about getting the balance right and it is about trying to do more than one thing at one time. It is the old saying: you have to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time.

But it appears that on the other side they are struggling with that basic premise: walk and chew gum. How are they possibly going to achieve this? On this side, in government, we believe that you can not only walk and chew gum but that you can breathe at the same time—that you can actually do something about climate change. It is real, yes, and we can do something about it, and that is affordable. We actually have bills in front of this House right now which address all of those three premises—the affordability issue about who should pay and who should be compensated.

We say that the 500 biggest polluters in this country should have a disincentive to pollute the environment and the air that we breathe for the first time. For the first time the big polluters should have to stump up and pay something. It reminds me of a debate that took place more than 100 years ago—an analogy of what is taking place today about cleaning up the environment and the air—with exactly the same thing about rivers.

You could cast your mind back to what people used to do with rivers. Rivers were seen as sewers. Every business and industry would set up on a river for one reason: the river was the sewer system. But we woke up to it one day that water was precious and so were our river systems, and we had to do something about it. What did we do? We started cleaning up our river systems so we could protect the environment and water quality, and that cost money. We forced industry to clean up. We still do today; industry is no longer allowed to pollute our river systems.

Guess what? The next cab off the rank is the air environment—pollution into the environment through the air. This carbon tax system, this price we are putting on pollution, actually puts in place for the first time a measure, a mark—a level somewhere where you can say, ‘There is now a
disincentive'. And who will pay that directly? It is clear: it will be the big polluters.

Mr Buchholz: Taxpayers! They won't be able to afford it!

Mr RIPOLL: I hear the arguments about lights going out and that councils will not be able to afford electricity and power and all the rest of it. That is just a garbage argument that we hear from the other side. The reality is that electricity prices have gone up 40 per cent in the last three years, but we have not had a carbon tax—so who has been paying the 40 per cent increase? When you actually look at the economics of this, we hear a lot of wind and a lot of hot air on the other side but not at lot of facts.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour, and the member will have leave to continue speaking when the debate is resumed.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Dementia Awareness Week

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong) (13:45): I rise to acknowledge Dementia Awareness Week, which starts tomorrow. Dementia is the third major cause of death in Australia after heart disease and stroke. It is estimated that today 269,000 Australians live with dementia, with that number to rise to close to one million by 2050. With 1,500 new cases of dementia every week in Australia, the burden on the families, friends and carers of those involved is escalating rapidly.

I heard the stories firsthand from carers at a meeting at Alzheimer's Australia, whose Victorian headquarters are in my electorate and for whom I am a dementia champion. The carers see the urgent need for more resources to tackle dementia and to meet the shortage of carers available. With an estimate that more than 150,000 paid and unpaid carers will be needed in the next 15 years, the need is critical. For example, in Kooyong, statistics indicate we have over 2,000 people living with dementia, with that number expected to more than double in the next 30 years.

When John Howard was in government he took positive steps to make dementia a health priority, including his $320 million dementia initiative in 2005, which broke new ground in funding arrangements for high care, counselling and support, and research into the causes of dementia. It is now high time that the Gillard government took John Howard's lead and met their responsibility to support new, real and substantial dementia initiatives to the benefit of all Australians.

(Time expired)

Learn Earn Legend! Program

Ms LIVERMORE (Capricornia) (13:46): It is great to finally get the call on statements by members because I wanted to introduce members to some great young Indigenous people, students from my electorate who were here in Parliament House this week as part of the Learn Earn Legend! work experience in government program. On Monday and Tuesday, Jocelyn Duncan, Rebecca Whyte, Peter Spanner, Angus Dorante and Jon Mau were here getting to know their way around Parliament House and seeing what life is like working with an MP or senator.

Earlier this week they began a placement within the federal government department of their choice as a way of introducing them to the opportunities that are there if they want to pursue a career in the Public Service. Jocelyn, Peter and Rebecca attend Rockhampton State High School and Jon and Angus, both Torres Strait Islanders, are boarders at St Brendan's College at Yeppoon. I know their schools are very proud to be represented by such fine young people in the
work experience program. These five students are among 100 from around Australia who were selected as future Indigenous leaders in their communities, and I know that the week has opened their eyes to the many opportunities that are out there if they continue the hard work and commitment to their studies they have shown so far.

There has been a lot for them to take in, meeting the Prime Minister and stars like Evonne Goolagong, Scott Prince from the Gold Coast Titans as well as fellow participants from around Australia. I look forward to catching up with Jocelyn, Peter, Rebecca, Jon and Angus back in Rockhampton to see how they enjoyed the week and where their educational and career goals might take them next.

Rugby World Cup 2011

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (13:48): The Rugby World Cup, which began last Friday, is the best showcase of the game they play in heaven. Last Sunday we saw a great start to the Wallabies campaign, with a convincing 32-to-six win against Italy. And here we sit, just six wins away from taking back the William Webb Ellis Trophy. The first time we secured 'Bill' was in 1991, when the Wallabies, under the courageous leadership of Nick Farr-Jones, won the second ever Rugby World Cup. I recall the passion at the time when the Sydney rugby community joined with them in their celebrations.

The quarterfinal of the 1991 cup was the moment that made the 'World Cup winning Wallabies', and is remembered as one of the most nail-biting games in Rugby history. With only minutes remaining, the Irish led our Wallabies by just three points. An amazing length-of-the-field try culminated in a desperate sprint to the line by open side flanker Gordon Hamilton—a moment still captured on the walls of pubs across the four proud provinces of Ireland. However, in the last phase of play, the Wallabies were awarded a centre field scrum on the 10-metre line. Knowing a try was needed—or else they would be out of the tournament—Michael Lynagh crossed in the corner, and the rest is history.

This Saturday the Wallabies will once again go head-to-head with the Irish in the World Cup. I look forward, with the rest of Australia, to gathering around the television with family and friends to cheer on our team. Go the Wallabies!

Early Childhood

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (13:49): Improving the life chances of young Australians is a key priority for this government, and I acknowledge the important work done particularly by the Minister for Employment Participation and Childcare and the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth. Under this government we have boosted the childcare rebate from 30 to 50 per cent. We have created the mychild.gov.au website. We first rolled out the Australian Early Development Index in 2009, and it will be coming again in 2012.

I would like to acknowledge the work of key peak researchers in this area: Frank Oberklaid, from the Centre for Community Child Health; Matthew Gray, from the Australian Institute of Family Studies; Lance Emerson, from Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth; and Pam Cahir, from Early Childhood Australia.

The Gillard government is committed to evidence based policy making. We know a lot about the importance of early years interventions but we still have much to learn. That is why I would like to pay particular tribute to the team that is running the Early Years Education Research Project: Nichola Coombs, Jeff Borland, Yi-Ping Tseng, Anne
Kennedy, Janet Williams-Smith, Dave Glazebrook and Brigid Jordan. This is Australia's first randomised trial of an early childhood program. It has received ethics approval and it is following in the footsteps of the great randomised early childhood evaluations: the Perry Preschool program, the Abecedarian Project and the Early Training Project. It will provide valuable lessons about what works in the early years. It will allow us to improve our policies and it will do it using the most rigorous evaluation methodology available. I wish the team all the best of luck.

Small Businesses

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn) (13:51): While Central Queensland is booming in the coal and gas industries, small business and local manufacturing companies are doing it very tough. Mobbs and Co. Steel Fabrication is the latest victim and have announced this week that they will close their operations in Biloela and Rockhampton. This year is shaping up to be a record one for business failures which is on a par with Eurozone countries.

As with Mobbs and Co. our industries must remain competitive on global terms and reduce the amount of government red tape that is hampering small business. The other problem facing small industry in our region is the ability to hold onto staff, with the tempting offers coming from the coal and gas companies, who can offer double or triple the normal wage. This is making it very difficult indeed for small business. If it wasn't for backpackers, 457 visa workers or Pacific Islanders, our meat abattoirs, citrus industries and many other smaller type industries would be left with no workers as we grapple with this two-tier economy that we are working in. I ask the government to seriously consider the plight of these regional communities and invest in regional infrastructure projects to help regional Australia in its time of greatest need. The last round of the RDA funding totally ignored the electorate of Flynn and for that the government should stand condemned.

Rahman, Sheikh Mujibur

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (13:52): On Saturday, 3 September I had the privilege of attending the Bangladesh National Mourning Day ceremony in Lakemba with the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities to commemorate the life of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of Bangladesh. Rahman, or Bangabandhu as he is known to the Bangladeshi people, was one of the great leaders of the last century, a man of conviction and principle whose beliefs were rooted in the virtues of democracy and equality. Motivated by the tragic plight of his people under colonial rule, Bangabandhu recognised the demand for national independence and he achieved it. Bangladesh's independence represents a people's triumph over an oppressive colonial ruler. It signifies a point in history where the desire for cultural freedom lead to national independence.

Despite continually calling for peaceful protests and using democratic methods to achieve reform, Bangabandhu spent most of his youth behind bars. His defining moment came in March 1971 when addressing a sea of people in Dhaka. Standing inside what was then a racecourse, Bangabandhu declared that the Bengali struggle is one of freedom and self-determination. His inspirational words motivated people to affect real change and eventually achieve independence.

Bangabandhu and his entire family were tragically assassinated in 1975. The National Mourning Day is a moment of great significance for all Bangaladeshis, including
some 300 Bangladeshi Australians living in my electorate of Greenway. I thank the Bangabandhu Society of Australia for their contribution to our community, especially Dr Nur and Dr Lovely Rahman, for all their hard work promoting Bangladeshi culture and interests in my local area.

**Australian Student Prize**

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins) (13:54): Today I rise to congratulate the 14 students in my electorate who were awarded the 2010 Australian Student Prize: Marc Bonaventura of Glen Iris, Rosemary Byth of Glen Iris, James Campbell of Malvern East, Edward Cliff of Hawthorn East, Nicholas Fabbri of Malvern East, Luke Frazzetto of Glen Iris, Dean Hayden of Hawthorn East, James Ingram of Hawthorn East, Alice Kennedy of Toorak, Antony Kennett of Toorak, Susan Lee of Glen Iris, Ruby Schwartz of Toorak, Alexandra Theng of Glen Iris and Charlie Wang of Malvern East. It is recognition of the hard work, commitment and dedication that these students have shown to their studies to be awarded the Australian Student Prize. This is awarded to the top 500 students in Australia. It is also recognition of the support and guidance they have received from their families and their teachers.

I remember well in 1994, three years after this award was first provided, the thrill I got receiving my certificate from my local member of parliament. Sadly, however, this year I was not able to present certificates to the students in my electorate for their achievements. The Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth did not inform coalition members of parliament to share in that honour. We should all be able to put aside partisan politics to join in the achievements of our young Australians.

**Football Queensland**

Mr RIPOLL (Oxley) (13:55): I want to respond to a Football Queensland press release this week as it refers to me. Football Queensland just do not get it. I have decided to make an issue of the Football Queensland team wear program because the program no longer delivers on any of its declared objectives and does not deliver value for money. That is bad for the game, bad for the clubs, bad for the players and bad for the mums and dads who pay too much for gear. I am not alone in this view. Do not worry about my views; go straight to the views and actions of the ACCC. The ACCC has made it clear in its process now to revoke the special exemption from prosecution granted to Football Queensland to run its licensing scheme for the team wear program.

According to its own charter, Football Queensland's team wear program categorically fails to do the things it is meant to do. It has failed to ensure a minimum standard of quality, it has failed in the timely supply of apparel and equipment and it has failed particularly in keeping costs low. It certainly may have promoted the image of the game and returned revenue to Football Queensland, but it has not done anything else.

Football Queensland should now focus all its energy and resources to meet its charter and responsibilities to football and the players. Football Queensland should provide also to the ACCC the financial data that it has been seeking for about three years. Today I want Football Queensland to do what I am doing, and that is focus on the code, the players and the teams. It should stop focusing on itself and its own importance. With special powers and exemptions from normal business practices of fair play and natural justice comes special responsibilities. To date Football Queensland has failed that test. The ball is now in its court. It is up to Football Queensland to address the concerns of the ACCC, to get its...
house in order and to do the right thing by the code and the players.

**Murray-Darling Basin**

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina) (13:57): Regional Australians are good, honest, hardworking people. They do their best to grow the food to ensure the nation and our near neighbours get fed. They pay their taxes and expect a fair share for country health, rural roads and infrastructure. They are worried about the economy. They are concerned about the high Australian dollar hurting our export markets and are fearful of a carbon tax which will do nothing for the environment but which will hit their hip pockets hard.

Deliberate leaks from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority two months out from the delayed release of its draft contained more drastic cuts to water entitlements, especially in the Murrumbidgee Valley. The government will use the excuse that the MDBA is an independent body. Drip-feeding any figures is like a soft crash landing. They are easing the numbers into the public, seeing the reaction and going from there. It is unfair. It is unacceptable. It will not be tolerated.

What we need now is transparency. The whole water issue has been mishandled by the federal Labor government. It is a bad process from a bad government and it is getting worse by the day. A triple bottom line is needed, as is some decency, honesty and openness with any figures.

The Independent member for New England has brought down an inquiry report. It has not been followed by the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. It needs to be, particularly recommendation (7), which says that there should be a cessation of non-strategic water buybacks. The Independent member for New England keeps this flimsy government in office. They need to follow his lead, follow the water inquiry and have some decency about the water debate.

**Indian Myna Bird**

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (13:58): I rise today to acknowledge the excellent work being done by the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group to tackle the problem of the Indian myna bird in Canberra. The introduced Indian myna bird has now become a major pest and a threat to Australia’s wildlife across the eastern states. It is a particular threat to hollow-nesting birds, such as parrots, and to endangered insects and small lizards. It is also disliked by many people because of its raucous calls, its fouling of backyard porches and its aggressive, in your face manner.

A local team of concerned Canberrans has pioneered a humane backyard trapping program. The group provides traps as well as a plan on the humane treatment of birds to interested members of the public. The program has been a great success. Over the last five years the Indian myna bird has been reduced from the third most common bird in Canberra to the 14th. At least 37,000 birds have been removed from the Canberra environment. This community action approach has also been adopted by other communities. Indeed, 26 other groups have now been formed, inspired by the Canberra group. I encourage members to contact the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group, which can be found online.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It being 2 pm, the time for members' statements has concluded.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Asylum Seekers**

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (13:59): My question is to the Prime Minister. With legislation as
Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:00): Firstly, to the Leader of the Opposition's question, I just remind that the government will not be seeking to legislate the arrangement with Malaysia. We will be seeking to introduce into the Migration Act general powers which will enable a government—this government or any government in the future—to implement offshore processing arrangements in nations as they see fit.

Obviously the government is committed to the arrangement with Malaysia and also putting a centre in PNG, and we have been in discussions with the government of PNG about that. The Leader of the Opposition has a different plan, and his different plan is about Nauru. That too, to be beyond legal doubt, would require legislative amendment and also to deal with some very complex matters involving unaccompanied minors.

The Leader of the Opposition asked me about discussions with other parliamentarians, including Senator Bob Brown. Senator Brown is, of course, aware of the government's plans. They have been very clearly canvassed in the media and the government will be bringing legislation to the parliament—

Mr Abbott: Mr Speaker, on a point of order, it was a very specific question. Has she discussed with Senator Brown—

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

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! Just before giving the call to the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government and Minister for the Arts, all I am seeking is less interjecting, less argument and less debate, and that will lead to less intervention from the Speaker and maybe will lead to a good-humoured chamber. I am not confident, but it might.

Mr Crean: Mr Speaker, my point of order is that the Prime Minister was clearly directly relevant to the question asked. The only point of order that the Leader of the Opposition could have been getting up on was relevance. He does it every time, not to make a point of order but to restate the question. I think that this pattern of behaviour needs to stop and you, Mr Speaker, need to take that action.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. First of all, to the point of order by the Leader of the Opposition. The Prime Minister is being directly relevant to the question. As I have said, that does not mean that I or any other occupant of the chair can actually dictate to the person responding what the nature of their response is.

On the point of order made by the minister for regional development, which I would characterise as a point of order on the basis of a belief that the original point of order was an interference in the proceedings, I am happy that the standing orders allow that there be one point of order on relevance during a question and I am then obliged to rule on that. I do suggest that it is the form of the points of order that perhaps the House or the Procedures Committee could look at where the standing order that the point of order is about should be the subject of the point of order without debating the point of order. It is the debating of the point of order that is the interference. The Prime Minister has the call. She has been relevant to the question and she has the call.
Ms GILLARD: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I was asked by the Leader of the Opposition about discussions with Senator Brown. What I was endeavouring to make clear is that the government's policies and plans are of course known to Senator Brown, as is already very clear to the Leader of the Opposition and, I would suspect, everybody else in this nation.

Senator Brown is opposed to the government's policies and plans because Senator Brown is opposed to the offshore processing of asylum seekers. I therefore anticipate, in accordance with Senator Brown's publicly stated view that he is opposed to offshore processing of asylum seekers, that he would vote against amendments to the Migration Act that facilitated offshore processing of asylum seekers.

So the question that will come before the parliament is a question about amending the Migration Act to enable government to have the power to have offshore processing. The question, really, that I would suggest the Leader of the Opposition direct his attention to is: when that legislation comes to the parliament, will he and Bob Brown be voting together?

Climate Change

Ms O’NEILL (Robertson) (14:07): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister outline how the government is taking action on climate change and the big issues facing the nation?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:07): I thank the member for Robertson for her question and her deep interest in representing her constituents in this parliament while also ensuring that her constituents can live in a nation where opportunity is shared and where we show appropriate care and concern for each other so we are not leaving people, industries or regions behind.

We live in a world of remarkable change. Our planet, our world, is changing with economic weight moving to our region of the world. This is great news for our country. The tyranny of distance that has held Australia back in many ways in past ages will be there no more. We are in the right place at the right time in history in the growing region of the world. We come to this change economically strong as a result of having ensured that our economy kept generating jobs and protecting jobs during the days of the global financial crisis. By acting we kept Australians in work, and there is nothing more important to Australian families than having a job.

In this phase of our economic transformation it is very important that we continue to reform and we continue to face up to the hard challenges that are necessary to ensure our continued prosperity. They include making sure that we are reforming our education system, because the skills and capacities of the Australian people are ultimately our best comparative advantage in the world. It is about making sure we invest in infrastructure including the infrastructure of the future, the National Broadband Network. It is about making sure that we are providing the services that Australians rely on in the most efficient way. Our health reform agreement is a major step forward in doing that. We are working through profound reform agendas as our society ages and we need to care for more older Australians and also in the area of disability to make sure that we are not leaving Australians behind because they have faced a life circumstance where they or a member of their family has a disability.

These are all major challenges, but we are also facing up to the big challenge of climate
change and to making sure that in the future economic growth and emissions growth are not one and the same, that we can decouple economic growth from growth in carbon pollution. This week we introduced to the parliament our plan to reduce carbon pollution and to create the clean energy jobs of the future. It is a plan where polluters pay and Australian families will receive tax cuts and increased family payments, and where pensioners will see increased payments. It is a plan to make sure that our nation innovates and that we see clean energy jobs in this country. It is a plan to ensure that we reach the national goals we have set ourselves, including the unconditional five per cent reduction in emissions.

I note that today the Australian Industry Greenhouse Network, composed of miners and manufacturers, has provided a costing of the Leader of the Opposition's plan and confirmed that it will cost Australian families $1,300 a year. That is a cost that Australians should not need to bear.

Mr Abbott: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: with great respect, under the new regime that was quite properly put in place yesterday where questions are not to contain arguments and inferences, answers should not contain gratuitous, unwarranted and baseless attacks on the opposition.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has resumed his seat. My desire is that there would be less debate and that there be concentration on the matters that are the subject of the question. The question did not go on to widely canvas other views. The Prime Minister will be conscious of that in her conclusion.

Ms GILLARD: In conclusion, I believe it is the responsibility of all members of this House as we legislate to put a price on carbon to do that in the cheapest possible way for Australian families and Australian businesses. That is exactly what the government is committed to doing.

Asylum Seekers

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Leader of The Nationals) (14:12): I am sorry his expectations are not going to be met, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I did not necessarily mean that they would either.

Mr TRUSS: My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to the fact that, based on the current rate of arrivals, the Malaysia people swap ceiling of 800 boat people will be reached before November. Has the government sought any advice from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship on what its policy should be after that?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:13): As I believe the parliament is now well aware, given the number of questions on this issue this week, the government has received and is relying on advice about the deterrence effect of the arrangement with Malaysia. That is the truth. It may be an uncomfortable truth for those opposite, but that is the truth. We have made that briefing and advice available to those opposite. I do not ask that the opposition therefore endorse the government's policies and plans, but I do believe that it is in the national interest that the government of this country, whether it is this government or a government five, 10, 15 years down the track, has the powers that it needs to process asylum seekers offshore and
to transfer them to other countries if it chooses to do so. Ultimately, the only proposition that will come before this parliament will not be the endorsement of the Malaysia arrangement; it will not be endorsement of the construction of a centre in PNG; it will not be endorsement of the construction of a centre in Nauru. It will be whether or not executive government should have the power to transfer asylum seekers to third countries. I am in favour of that.

**Mr Pyne:** I rise on a point of order. The Prime Minister is not being relevant to the question. The question asked was: what is plan B? That is the question she needs to answer.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Prime Minister is aware of the responsibilities she has under the standing orders. If she is responding, as I have said before, to the question in total, I am not empowered to dictate the way in which the question is answered. The Prime Minister is responding.

**Ms GILLARD:** As I was saying, the question for this parliament will not be about the endorsement of a particular plan, whether it be the Malaysia arrangement or some other plan. It will be a legal question—a legislative question—on whether a government should have the power to transfer asylum seekers to third countries, yes or no. The Leader of the Opposition has accepted an invitation to some further briefings on these matters tomorrow. I am very glad to see that. Hopefully—I do genuinely hope this—beyond those briefings the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition generally will see their way clear to agreeing with the government that executive government should have that power.

**Carbon Pricing**

**Ms BURKE** (Chisholm) (14:16): My question is to the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency. What are the facts and the economic benefits of the government's plan to put a price on carbon pollution?

**Mr COMBET** (Charlton—Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency) (14:16): I thank the member for Chisholm for her question. As I indicated to the House yesterday, the passage of the clean energy bills will unleash a lot of investment in clean energy generation and clean technology innovation. This is going to be critical to future growth in our productivity and our living standards. That is something that is well understood by economists around the world. However, there does appear to be some ignorance of the facts and of the economic benefits, by those opposite, about this. For example, on Monday, the Leader of the Opposition claimed the following:

There is no way on God's earth that you can have a solar powered steel mill, just as there is no way on this earth you can have a wind powered manufacturing plant and anyone who thinks otherwise is delusional.

That is what the Leader of the Opposition said. Unfortunately, this does ignore the facts and the evidence that these types of investments exist. For example, in Germany, BMW are currently building wind turbines at their Leipzig manufacturing plant that will provide the electricity to assemble hundreds of vehicles per day from 2013.

In the United Kingdom, Ford's diesel assembly plant is already completely wind powered—a manufacturing facility completely wind powered. Also in the United Kingdom, a Nissan auto plant currently has—

**Opposition members interjecting—**

**The SPEAKER:** Order! A question has been asked. The minister is responding. He should be heard in silence.

**Mr COMBET:** I was saying that also in the United Kingdom a Nissan auto plant
Greenhouse Network that does represent miners and manufacturers—a group not always on our side in many issues—confirmed that the opposition leader's plan, his so-called 'subsidies for polluters' direct action plan, would cost households $1,300 a year in 2020.

We know what the Leader of the Opposition does when someone does not agree with him. He has a go at them. Just have a look at the scientists and the economists.

Mr COMBET: The plebiscite bill went down today, too—it's another stunt. The carbon price is a key economic and fundamental environmental reform. I call upon all of those opposite who support action on climate change to support these bills. (Time expired)

Mr Abbott: Mr Speaker, I seek to ask a supplementary question of the minister.

Asylum Seekers

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (14:22): My question is to the Prime Minister. If the government's Malaysia people swap is going to stop the boats, as the Prime Minister claims, then why is she building a 1,500-bed detention centre in Darwin?

Mr Albanese: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order on standing order 64.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, on the point of order taken by the Leader of the House, standing order 64(a) is supposed to deal with
issues where people are being called by their first name or their last name or names altogether different to their electorate. It does not deal with the issues of 'he' or 'she'. That point of order was taken yesterday. It was trivial and silly then and it is trivial and silly now, and I would ask you not to uphold it.

The SPEAKER: This is something that I hear often, though not until now by way of point of order: a concern of this or similar ilk. I would simply invite members to look at questions in the past where—and this will get me into trouble over my English expression—the personal pronoun is used.

Ms Julie Bishop interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I will be corrected, whatever. The question was directed to the Prime Minister. In the context of the reference to the Prime Minister, every time the Prime Minister is mentioned in the question I am not expecting her to be referred to by the expression of her parliamentary title. I understand people's concerns in other contexts, but in the framing of this question I could not rule it out of order on that basis.

Mr Albanese: I certainly respect your ruling, Mr Speaker, and I would not have expected it to be ruled out of order. I was simply making the point about respect for the office of Prime Minister.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! All I say is that points have been made; reluctantly, I allow those points by allowing points of order. I hope that that is recognised in its totality when people rise for other points of order. The question has been asked. The Prime Minister has the call.

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:26): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. In answer to the member's question, first and foremost, can I say to the member, she would be aware that we have people—

Mr Abbott: She!

The SPEAKER: Order! I am trying to reduce my interventions but, please, can we get back to issues that people would expect us to be discussing, and discuss those issues in a civil manner. The Prime Minister has the call and she should be heard in silence.

Ms GILLARD: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am endeavouring to answer the member's question because it is a question about an important policy area, a policy area that goes to our core national interest. The answer to the member's question is as follows. The member is probably aware that we do have already in detention asylum seekers, and so we do need detention capacity for asylum seekers who are currently in Australia. The member may also be aware that we use detention capacity for more than asylum seekers who arrive unauthorised by boat. We use detention capacity for a wide variety of purposes related to immigration management, so people are detained for other reasons.

Can I say to the member as well that the question that will be introduced before the parliament next week will not be a question about whether or not she believes in the Malaysia arrangement. That is a matter for her, and she may choose on the weekend to consult her constituents about their views about national security, their views about border protection and their views about refugee and asylum seeker policy. But there will be nothing in this parliament that asks her to vote on the question of whether or not she endorses the arrangement with Malaysia. The vote in this parliament will be on amendments to the Migration Act which would enable the member, if she was a member of the government, if she ever
served in a future government in the capacity of minister for immigration—

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will not further debate the question.

Mrs Griggs: Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order on relevance. I actually asked about the 1,500-bed—

The SPEAKER: The member for Solomon will resume her seat. At the same time as the member for Solomon rose I was inviting the Prime Minister to not further debate the question. The Prime Minister has the call and I would hope that she was in conclusion.

Ms GILLARD: I was specifically asked about detention capacity in view of the Malaysia arrangement, so I am addressing that. I am pointing out to the parliament that in relation to the Malaysia arrangement no-one will be asked to vote on that. People will be asked to vote on amendments to the Migration Act which will enable a government, including this government, to process people offshore.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Sturt will resume his seat. The Prime Minister is concluding. The Prime Minister has the call.

Ms GILLARD: In conclusion, I will be asking, as I am asking now, members of the opposition to very seriously consider their position on these amendments, given the seriousness of this issue to our national interest.

Asylum Seekers

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (14:30): Mr Speaker, I have a supplementary question to the Prime Minister based on the answer that she has just given. The arrangement between Senator Brown and the Prime Minister requires the Prime Minister to discuss and negotiate any planned legislation. Given the answer that she just given to the question that she has just had, I ask the Prime Minister: why hasn’t she discussed this legislation, if it so important, with Senator Brown?

Mr Danby interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Melbourne Ports will leave the chamber for one hour under 94(a). He will consult with the member for Bowman about timing again. Before giving the call to the Minister for Health and Ageing, who I appreciate has approached the dispatch box with a point of order, can I say to some of her frontbench colleagues that I would prefer that, if they have comments about proceedings and they worry about whether they are in order, they take points of order.

Ms Roxon: Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. I am simply asking whether it is appropriate within the standing orders to ask a supplementary question which is not related to the question that was originally asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! I refer members to the comments I made about what I believe to be permissible in supplementary questions and, on that basis, I rule the supplementary question out of order, but I do note that a point has been made, and in other jurisdictions it probably would open the door for a supplementary. But I do not think it is consistent with those views I outlined initially regarding what I would allow for supplementaries.

Mr Pyne: On the point of order, Mr Speaker, and on the ruling you have just made, I wish to clarify that because that is a departure from the standing orders—with great respect to your ruling. Standing order 101(b) says:

… allow supplementary questions to be asked to clarify an answer to a question asked during Question Time …
That is why the Leader of the Opposition couched his supplementary question in reference to the Prime Minister's answer that she has given to the member for Solomon. As a consequence, I would put it to you that it is very much in order.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled. I say to my learned friend again: I take on board his comments but I have set down some principles about supplementary questions and I believe that my ruling is aligned with those comments. Perhaps we should all revisit them. Again, I stress that a point was made in the point of order.

Taxation

Mr OAKESHOTT (Lyne) (14:34): My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, with 10 taxes in Australia raising 90 per cent of tax revenue and in your considerations leading into the national tax forum in October, will your government commit to fewer taxes for a simpler and more resilient tax and transfer system in Australia—

Ms GILLARD: I thank the member for Lyne for his question. It enables me to talk to the House about the future tax forum and tax reform generally. First, it is very important to ensure the House has the facts at its fingertips. The Howard government was the highest taxing government in Australia's history. I know that members of the opposition are in denial about this very simple fact.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the member for Lyne does not take this the wrong way, but he is up in the backblocks. If I cannot hear the response, I would be very surprised if he can. I think that the House could just settle down or we will be here all day listening to me lecture you. The Prime Minister has the call and should be heard in relative silence.

Ms GILLARD: I am trying to share a few simple facts with the House. Under the former Howard government, tax as a share of GDP reached 24.1 per cent—

Mr Dutton interjecting—

Ms Marino interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the member for Lyne does not take this the wrong way, but he is up in the backblocks. If I cannot hear the response, I would be very surprised if he can. I think that the House could just settle down or we will be here all day listening to me lecture you. The Prime Minister has the call and should be heard in relative silence.

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Ms GILLARD: I am trying to share a few simple facts with the House. Under the former Howard government, tax as a share of GDP reached 24.1 per cent—

Mr Hockey interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Forrest is warned!

Ms GILLARD: in 2004-05 and 2005-06.

Mr Hockey interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for North Sydney is warned.

Ms GILLARD: That is a fact—24.1 per cent, making the Howard government the highest taxing government in Australia's history.

Mr Tony Smith interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Casey is warned.

Ms GILLARD: Tax as a share of GDP inherited by this government was 23.5 per cent—that is, it had come down from the Howard government's peak as the highest taxing government in the nation's history. For 2011-12, tax as a percentage of GDP will be 21.8 per cent. Importantly, that is less than the tax share—

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: under the ruling you made yesterday the opposition has responded to that by
making sure that its questions do not contain argument. The government, on the other hand, has not responded to your indication about how you will view question time because it is still using questions as an opportunity to slag the opposition. I would ask you to bring the Prime Minister to order under the ruling you made yesterday.

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister has the call. If I am being invited to listen more carefully to her response, if I am able to hear it through people stopping interjecting, I will listen more carefully. But until now the Prime Minister has been in order in responding to the question from the member for Lyne.

Ms GILLARD: I was asked about tax and the tax forum coming up in a few weeks time. I was creating the baseline fact that I think people need to know that tax as a share of GDP is less now than when this government was first elected in 2007 and certainly less than the highest taxing peak under the Howard government, as the highest taxing government in the nation's history.

I am asked by the member for Lyne about the efficiency of taxes. On the question of the efficiency of taxes, the government has been engaged in a tax reform agenda, including the tax reform agenda associated with lifting the tax-free threshold, which takes one million Australians out of the tax system. The member for Lyne has also directed my attention to the inefficiency of state taxes—the number of them and the inefficiency of them.

The SPEAKER: The member for North Sydney might as well sit down. The Prime Minister will resume her seat. The member for North Sydney will resume his seat.

Mr Adams interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lyons is warned. I really would like to know what the point of order of the Manager of Opposition Business was if it was not anything but the way in which the question was to be responded in a directly relevant manner. The only standing order that I have before me to use as the basis for a response is that they shall be directly relevant and it is open to me to interpret that. The point that the member for Sturt was making to me was about my interpretation of 'directly relevant'. I say again that this could be solved if we had the same rules for questions and answers. What I have tried to say, as is alluded to in Practice, is that it seems wrong that the same standard is not applied to responses. That is where I am trying to get to. The original point of order had to be under direct relevance. That is why I was not inclined to give the member for North Sydney the call, because I know that he knows that there can only be one point of order under direct relevance. I have said I will listen carefully to the response. There may be a learning curve in what we are trying to change here, but I will listen to the Prime Minister's response.

Ms GILLARD: I was asked by the member about inefficient state taxes and I am responding directly to that. The member raises this question and he is right to do so. It was the subject of a great deal of attention under the Henry tax review. Self-evidently, state taxes are a state responsibility, but I will certainly be encouraging participants at the tax forum, including representatives of state governments to bring proposals for fewer taxes.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for North Sydney of his status.

Ms GILLARD: I will certainly be encouraging that because the efficiency of our tax system is very important to the Australian nation and, as past tax studies, including the Henry tax review, have shown,
there is a large number of inefficient state taxes; so, of course, it would be desirable for our economy for state governments to address this question and to have fewer taxes.

Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sturt is warned.

Employment

Mr Hayes (Fowler) (14:43): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer outline to the House the importance of responsible economic and fiscal management for the creation of jobs.

Mr Swan (Lilley—Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer) (14:43): I thank the member for Fowler for his very important question, because it is three years ago today to the very day that we saw the collapse of Lehmann Brothers, which sent shock waves right through global financial markets. On that day the world did look into an economic abyss that eventually became the global financial crisis and the global recession. What followed that was an enormous amount of instability in the global economy and a collapse in global demand. What that led to was the worst recession globally in 75 years. Given the magnitude of all these events, it is perhaps not surprising that the world is still living with the aftershocks of the global financial crisis and the global recession. We can see this in very slow growth rates in Europe and in the United States and we can see it in the really high levels of long-term unemployment right across so many advanced economies; and, of course, we can still see it today in the instability in global financial markets. But the thing that is very pleasing for our country is that we are uniquely placed: we are in a position of fundamental strength in the middle of this uncertainty and turbulence elsewhere in the global economy. Our economy is stronger than our peers because we as a government took the hard decisions. We as a government got the big economic calls right in this parliament, particularly at the end of 2008 and through early 2009. The consequence of that for this country is that we did not experience the capital destruction, the skills destruction and the high unemployment that plagued so many other developed economies. We did that because we worked together and because this parliament passed not just one but two sensible stimulus packages. The consequence of that has been an economic strength in this country unlike that of our peers. In particular you can see it in terms of unemployment. Unemployment in this country is far lower than that in the United States. When the world went into the global financial crisis the unemployment rate in the United States and Australia was the same. It is almost twice that now in the United States.

So we have an exceptional record in terms of supporting employment, including nearly three-quarters of a million jobs in this country over the past four years—a very strong record of employment creation and, as we saw from the national accounts, a strong investment pipeline, solid consumption and very good income growth. These are all very good indicators which tell us about the underlying resilience of our economy, but, of course, there are parts of the economy that are doing it tough. That is why we need to put in place a fundamental reform program to assist people across the economy. We can see that those sectors of the economy that are affected by a high dollar are doing it tough. That is one of the reasons why we need the MRRT and the revenue from that to give a tax cut to 2.7 million small businesses—the instant asset write-off worth $6,500 to assist those struggling small businesses. That is why we do need to invest in infrastructure. That is why we need to build the NBN. That
is why we need to boost our national savings by building up superannuation.

All of this is based on a very strict, clear and consistent fiscal policy. That is the rock that the resilience of our economy comes from. That is an objective which is not shared by those opposite. In terms of the Parliamentary Budget Office, which we need for transparency to indicate who is serious about strong fiscal policy, we have found out that those opposite want to hide this from the public—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat. Has the Treasurer concluded?

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, the Treasurer should have taken your hint. On a point of order, it could not possibly be relevant to the question he was asked to attack the opposition. Under the ruling—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will avoid unduly arguing the response and will avoid debating a matter before the House, not on the basis that it is before the House but on the basis that it should not be debated further.

Mr SWAN: For all of the reasons that I have outlined in the House, we support the Parliamentary Budget Office. We support the recommendation of the joint committee, which was supported by those opposite and is now opposed by them. (Time expired)

Mr Hockey: You screwed it up.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McEwen is warned, but he raises a valid point, regrettably, for the member for North Sydney. The member for North Sydney will leave the chamber for one hour under standing order 94(a).

The member for North Sydney then left the chamber.

The SPEAKER: Having warned the member for McEwen, I apologise for dobbing him in.

Asylum Seekers

Mr MORRISON (Cook) (14:49): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to the policies she has advocated since the Rudd Gillard government dismantled the Howard government's Pacific solution in 2008, namely, a freeze on processing of Afghan and Sri Lankan asylum seeker claims, the East Timor solution, reopening the processing centre on Manus Island and now the Malaysian people swap. Once the Malaysian people swap has been exhausted, will the Prime Minister then consider the reintroduction of temporary protection visas?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:49): The government's policy is not to reintroduce temporary protection visas. As the shadow minister would be aware, we have been provided with very clear advice, which has also been shared with the opposition, that temporary protection visas do not have the deterrence value that has been claimed for them and they have the potential to encourage family groups and women and children onto boats, which is not something that anybody wants to see.

Economy

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (14:50): My question is to the Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism. Will the minister update the House on the contribution that the resources and energy sectors are making to the strength of the Australian economy?

Mr MARTIN FERGUSON (Batman—Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism) (14:50): I thank the member for Moreton for his question. The figures released today by the independent Bureau of Resources and Energy Economics
clearly show the strength and resilience of the Australian economy. They are also a very strong statement about our capacity to manage the implementation of the MRRT and our confidence in the future of our economy.

Let us deal with a few hard facts. Firstly, export earnings from resources and energy commodities have set a new record, reaching $175 billion in 2010-11. Secondly, this is an increase of 27 per cent on 2009-10 and a nine per cent increase on the previous record of $160 billion set in 2008-09. Clearly, the decisive action we took as a government through the global financial crisis is bearing fruit. Our community had confidence in our capacity to go forward and use the resources and energy boom to further strengthen the diversification of the Australian economy. I would also remind you that we have achieved this result despite the serious adverse weather effects experienced in Queensland, the Cooper Basin and the Pilbara region of Western Australia earlier this year. It is also interesting to note that we have not alone benefited from high commodity prices. We are also seeing increases in export volumes, which is very important. That is related to the fact that we as a government have invested and will continue to invest in productivity related issues such as the skilling of the Australian workforce and infrastructure. It is also why we are working with the resource and energy sector to try and encourage them to invest in the skilling of our Indigenous community side by side, by focusing on the increased employment of women in this sector, and to use migration with a focus on skilled and semi-skilled migration agreements to enable us to deliver these projects on time and on budget.

Take the value of liquefied natural gas. Exports of LNG have hit for the first time $10 billion, with export volumes up 12 per cent and the value of exports up 34 per cent in 2009-10. These are exceptional results that we should be proud of as a nation. Similar results apply across a range of commodities, be it iron ore, metallurgical and thermal coal or, for that matter, copper. Importantly, they say to the domestic and international economies that we as a nation are a safe haven for investment. That is why we have a capital investment pipeline at the moment of $430 billion, of which $110 billion is in the LNG sector. I am also confident that over the next six to eight months we will achieve a further investment of $50 billion to $60 billion, effectively meaning that by Easter of next year we will have $500 billion committed to new capital investment in Australia.

Our responsibility is to use this opportunity to assist those sections of the Australian economy who are finding it tough because of the strength of the Australian dollar coming off the back of the strength of our resources sector. It is about diversifying our economy, smart investment in manufacturing, support for financial and legal services and the importance of our hospitality and catering services sector. We are the envy of the world when it comes to economic opportunities, and the Australian community can have a sound confidence in our economic future.

**DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

The SPEAKER (14:54): Earlier in the day it was brought to my attention—again, this is about timing—that the National Student Leadership Forum representatives were in the gallery. Nearly all of them have left. Also it was brought to my attention that Bruce Baird, the former member of the Cook, who is involved with the National Student Leadership Forum, was also in the gallery.
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Member for Dobell

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:54): My question is to the Prime Minister. Given her office made inquiries of Fair Work Australia when it began its investigation into the member for Dobell, has she or her office now asked Fair Work Australia why its inquiry has not been resolved in over two years?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:55): In relation to the member for Sturt's question, no, my office has made no such call. It would not be trying to direct Fair Work Australia about what it should do in the independent exercise of its discretion. That would be quite wrong. If the member for Sturt is trying to encourage me to do something that would be quite wrong, then I will not do it.

Carbon Pricing

Ms LIVERMORE (Capricornia) (14:55): My question is to the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government and Minister for the Arts. Will the minister inform the House about the minister's regional consultations about the Clean Energy Future plan as well as the innovative ways regional Australia is responding to it?

Mr CREAN (Hotham—Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government and Minister for the Arts) (14:56): I thank the member for Capricornia for her question and her commitment, like all of those on this side of this House, to a clean energy future for this country. In the last two months since the Prime Minister announced the package, I have attended, at the invitation of 17 regional development authorities around the country, 17 carbon forums and one in Rockhampton in the member for Capricornia's electorate. In all of these areas there is a common theme.

Mr Randall interjecting—

Mr CREAN: That is just not right.

The SPEAKER: The member for Canning!

Mr CREAN: You were at the one where they said they did want it, if the truth is known. You came along to disrupt then and you are trying to disrupt now.

The SPEAKER (14:56): The member for Canning will cease interjecting. The minister will ignore the interjections.

Mr CREAN: We invite them along—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, on a point of order, under standing order 64 how is it in order for the minister to call our members 'you' and yet the Leader of the House takes exception to us calling the Prime Minister 'she'?

The SPEAKER: Order! I have encouraged the minister to ignore the interjections, which will get over any other problems that arise. I suggest to those that interject that they cease interjecting.

Mr Crean interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The minister's enthusiasm is recognised, but he should just settle down. He now has the call.

Mr CREAN: As I was saying, I attended 17 carbon forums around the country, including one in the member for Canning's electorate. The common theme from all of these—

Mr Randall interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Canning is warned!

Mr CREAN: was that the regions get the significance of moving to a cleaner carbon
future. Indeed, local governments and communities have set themselves carbon reduction targets. They have identified through mission statements the need to move to a cleaner energy future and they are embracing programs that encourage this very direction. Those programs in themselves have led to investment, jobs and a better environment.

An example of this is Geraldton, Western Australia, which is a city that is committed to moving to carbon neutrality and a city that is looking to renewable energy to power the significant development that is occurring in the resources industry. Investec, a company that is interested in solar energy investment around that region, has made the point recently that, whilst it has undertaken the feasibility study, it would not be economic under current conditions. However, with the announcement of the Prime Minister's package, it now says that it is viable. That is also the case in Whyalla, a place that the Leader of the Opposition visited; he swaggered into OneSteel and said, 'You'll be wiped off the face of the earth.' But what is Whyalla saying?

Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister has returned to the question.

Mr CREAN: I have.

The SPEAKER: The minister will return to the question.

Mr CREAN: Whyalla took no notice of him—

The SPEAKER: The minister will return to the question.

Mr CREAN: because over there I visited sites in which they too are looking to investment in solar energy and in rare earths, because it is the rare earths that become the ingredients and components for so much lightweight material and technology—Australian technology that is there with the solar energy. It is the same on the Eyre Peninsula, in the same seat, where they are looking at increasing their wind farm capacity, and it is the same in the upper Spencer Gulf. In Tasmania—and I have great confidence in the ability of the Tasmanian economy—there is a $100 million positive impact of the carbon price.

Treasury has said that in renewable energy alone there is $100 billion of investment in renewables in this country for the taking. Take the words of Investec: if it is not viable under current economic conditions, it will only become viable with the passage of this package. The truth is that that investment, those jobs and that cleaner environment are dependent on the package. We as a government are committed to delivering it, and it is only those who sit opposite that will run the fear campaign—

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister will return to the—

Mr CREAN: and tell any untruth they can to try and stop that development.

Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister has concluded.

Mr Schultz interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Hume! If the member for Hume wants the call, he stands. But the member for Gilmore is standing. And the member for Hume does not need to pack his papers; he is staying here, and he is going to be quiet.

Carbon Pricing

Mrs GASH (Gilmore) (15:01): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to a recent study from the United Kingdom which shows that for every green job created 3.7 jobs in other parts of the economy are destroyed. This follows—

Government members interjecting—
Mrs GASH: You do not care about jobs being destroyed?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member will ignore interjections, and those on my right will cease interjecting.

Mrs GASH: This follows a similar study from Spain which showed that 2.2 jobs are lost for every green job created. How many jobs does the Prime Minister estimate will be lost in Australia for every green job she claims will be created under her carbon tax?

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr Ewen Jones interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order—and that includes the member for Herbert.

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (15:02): In answer to the member's question, can I ask her to reflect on this: why is it that Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron would have set such an incredibly ambitious target for carbon pollution reduction—much more ambitious than the bipartisan target in this country—if he believed that the statistics that the member has just used were right? Indeed, with the sister political party to the Liberal Party in the United Kingdom, Prime Minister David Cameron is embarking on this course because he sees the prospect of new jobs for his economy.

Dr Jensen interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Tangney!

Ms GILLARD: His economy does need those new jobs because of how it has come out of the global financial crisis, and he sees the economic opportunity of this. So I suggest to the member that she may want to get some information from the related political party in the United Kingdom about the job creation prospects that British Conservatives see from dealing with carbon pollution. In this nation, I refer the member to the—

Mrs Gash: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I am asking the Prime Minister how many jobs she thinks will be lost under her carbon tax, not the United—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gilmore will resume her seat. That was the conclusion of the question. There were other aspects in the question, and the Prime Minister is responding.

Ms GILLARD: I was, of course, responding to the fact that UK research was cited in the question. On the question of jobs in Australia, I refer the member to the Treasury modelling which shows that to 2020 we will see 1.6 million jobs created in this country. We will see people in jobs. There is nothing more important to this government than people being in jobs. That is why we reacted so swiftly during the global financial crisis, and we were distressed to see that the opposition did not want to support the work of Australians during that crisis. It is why, as we move to a clean energy future, our focus is on jobs and the creation of jobs—1.6 million jobs by 2020. As the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government has just outlined and as the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency outlined a little bit earlier in question time, there are jobs in this clean energy future. There are new jobs—jobs that we cannot imagine now but that people will do in the future. In the same way, with the information technology revolution when it first started, people would not have foreseen that there would be jobs in being a blogger; people would not have foreseen there would be jobs at an entity like Google.

Dr Jensen interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Tangney will leave the chamber for one hour under standing order 94(a).

The member for Tangney then left the chamber.

Ms GILLARD: There will be jobs created that we cannot even imagine now, but there will also be the jobs that have been done over time over the ages—traditional jobs: jobs in steelmaking, jobs in plumbing and jobs in construction. These are very traditional jobs that will be done differently.

Mrs Gash interjecting—

Ms GILLARD: The member now interjects about steelmaking. Maybe she does not understand. She is voting against a $300 million Steel Transformation Plan—

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The House will come to order.

Ms GILLARD: and she will be denying steelworkers in this country the support that they need. If the member for Gilmore is seriously concerned about jobs then, first, she should get across the facts about our clean energy future, and then she should walk into this parliament and vote for jobs.

Carbon Pricing

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (15:06): On a supplementary question, Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: No, the Leader of the Opposition will resume—

Mr Abbott: I have not asked it.

Mr Crean interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government should just sit—

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr Butler: I thank the member for Wakefield for his question. Experience tells us that today seven Australians will die through suicide and more than 200 will make a suicide attempt. One in four young males who die do so through suicide. It is the biggest killer of men under 45 and women under 35. Some groups in our community, like Indigenous Australians, gay and lesbian Australians and Australians who are themselves bereaved through suicide, are particularly vulnerable. I do not imagine there is any member in this place who has not been affected by suicide.
either personally or in their role as a community representative.

The Prime Minister's commitment last year to redouble our efforts and our investment in suicide prevention forms an important part of this year's record mental health package. Those investments include expanding capacity for suicide crisis hotlines, infrastructure at notorious suicide hotspots, more money for successful community initiatives in suicide prevention and much more. Often the most effective strategies are the simplest.

Today is RU OK? Day, the third year in which this campaign has been run with the support of the Australian government. The message of RU OK? Day is that taking the time to ask someone you know who seems out of sorts, 'Are you okay?' can be the trigger to them seeking help and finding their way out of a dark and potentially suicidal place. It reminds us that, as important as government investment and government services undoubtedly are, looking out for those around us is an essential part of helping people we know and people we love to take that first step towards seeking help.

The message has been extremely successful. The campaign uses social media brilliantly. It has enlisted the pulling power of ambassadors like Jack Thompson, Hugh Jackman and Naomi Watts as well as a list of NRL stars who continue to speak to that diminishing number of Australians who continue to hold out against the ultimately irresistible spread of the AFL. Hundreds of workplaces and businesses around the country are sponsoring RU OK? events at work today to get the message out to their employees. Here in Parliament House an RU OK? morning tea was co-hosted by Senator Humphries and our own member for Kingston, Amanda Rishworth, who I think is the only qualified mental health professional at least in this chamber.

In 2009, research showed that 650,000 Australians participated in a conversation prompted by RU OK? Day. In 2010, that number reached two million, and I would be surprised if the number does not increase this year. This simple and effective campaign is the brainchild of a successful advertising executive, Gavin Larkin, who lost his own father 16 years ago to suicide. Many here will have seen Gav featured on this week's Australian Story with his son, Gus, and many others will know that Gav is not okay. Gav has advanced cancer and is currently receiving palliative care. I am sure that I can say that all of our thoughts go out to Gav and his family at this incredibly difficult time. I also imagine that his family must be very proud of the legacy that he has created through this campaign, because it is a campaign that will save lives.

**Clean Energy Finance Corporation**

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:13): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to the government's Clean Energy Finance Corporation, which is similar to a United States Department of Energy program that guarantees loans to green energy companies. Is the Prime Minister aware that under this US program half a billion dollars in taxpayer backed loan guarantees were extended to US company Solyndra, which has recently filed for bankruptcy and been raided by the FBI and is sacking its 1,100 workers? Will the Prime Minister guarantee that the government's Clean Energy Finance Corporation will not lose any of the $10 billion in taxpayer funds under its control?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (15:13): I am indebted to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for giving what I think is a
very penetrating critique of why the opposition's polluters subsidy plan is destined for failure, because at the centre of it is bureaucrats trying to pick winners and donating taxpayer funds to companies which may well go bankrupt at the cost of $1,300 per year for Australian families.

Ms Julie Bishop: Mr Speaker, a point of order on relevance: the question was about the government's Clean Energy Finance Corporation, which is the program similar to the United States—in fact, they modelled it—

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. The Prime Minister is responding, and I will listen carefully to see that she is within the standing orders.

Ms Gillard: I was just going to make the point that, in contrast to the opposition's subsidies for polluters multibillion dollar slush fund, the Clean Energy Finance Corporation will be a body that is at arm's length from government, led by commercial leaders who will be making decisions on a commercial basis. The aim, of course, is to catalyse the development of clean energy in our economy. So we will be relying on the expertise of people from Australia's private sector to work on the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, and of course we will have some things to say about that over time as the Clean Energy Finance Corporation is established.

What is truly remarkable about this question, though, is the essence of the opposition's policy is that it believes it can take $1,300 per year from Australian families, put it in a slush fund and then dole it out to polluters, and, yes, that would have the consequences the Deputy Leader of the Opposition predicts.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will settle down.

Superannuation

Mr Zappia (Makin) (15:16): My question is to the Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation. Will the Assistant Treasurer outline how the government's fiscally responsible plan to increase superannuation will benefit all Australians and help them prepare adequately for their future?

Mr Shorten (Maribyrnong—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation) (15:16): I would like to thank the member for Makin for his question. I know that he is interested in seeing 46,500 of his voters get a lift in their superannuation because the member for Makin knows that superannuation is about the future and avoiding the shock of finding you have insufficient money to retire on. That is why lifting superannuation is so important.

In fact, it is a bit like the carbon tax. What we are doing on this side is making decisions for the long term. We are not putting off till tomorrow the problems that need to be solved today. Indeed, the government is proposing and is committed to introducing an increase in the superannuation guarantee from nine per cent to 12 per cent over the next six years. What we are trying to do is make sure that people can retire on at least 70 per cent of the income they had while they were working.

We understand that Australians are living longer. You only have to look at the opposition frontbench to realise Australians are living longer! We want to make sure that older Australians have enough income to retire. We on this side know that nine per cent is not enough. That is why we are proposing to help fund the drop in Commonwealth tax revenue from putting
more income from the marginal rate of taxation into concessionally taxed superannuation. We understand that that can be funded through the minerals resource rent tax. The minerals resource rent tax is fiscally responsible because it is making sure that all Australians have enough money to retire on. Of course, that is fiscal responsibility—in contrast to those opposite, who would dump rocket fuel on the hottest part of the economy and hand back billions of dollars to the richest companies in Australia in the mining sector.

But we are not just lifting the superannuation rate from nine to 12 per cent. We are also seeking to lower the pressure of fees and charges on the money which goes into superannuation now for our strongest super reforms. What we are also trying to do is to eliminate unfair commissions paid to financial planners, making sure that there is as much money as possible available for people when they retire and it is not eaten up in unnecessary fees and charges.

In fact, what we are doing is not just good for 10 million individuals and for lifting superannuation; it is good for the nation. There are not many things that Australia is fourth in the world in, but we are the fourth largest private funds under management sector in the world. This is not an accident; this is a contribution of Labor governments. And we intend to keep contributing to our economic independence. Isn't it about time, 223 years after Captain Cook came here, that we started to have some economic independence? That is what superannuation does.

I was also asked in the question: are Australians adequately prepared for retirement? It will be good news to the House that nearly 30 in every 100 Australians already receive more than nine per cent now. This is good news. What we get on this side of the House is that it is not good enough that some people are able to look after themselves and leave everyone else behind. That is a very big difference. On this side of the House, even if the members of parliament are doing better than nine per cent, we are not going to vote against other people doing better. The shame of the opposition is that they get 15 per cent and they will not vote for that for their constituents. What hypocrisy. (Time expired)

Carbon Pricing

WYATT ROY (Longman) (15:20): My question is to the Prime Minister. How many megawatts of clean energy will be produced over and above the already agreed 20 per cent renewable energy target by 2020 as a result of the $10 billion to be spent through the clean energy fund—an amount that, for example, could have been spent building 10 much needed teaching hospitals?

Mr Melham interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Banks should be very careful that he doesn't get detention. I note that there was a degree of argument in the conclusion, but I just am noting that.

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (15:21): To the member who asked the question, first and foremost, this is a government that invests in capital for health care. We have a very proud record of doing that. We started to have some economic independence? That is what superannuation does.

I was also asked in the question: are Australians adequately prepared for retirement? It will be good news to the Prime Minister will now return to the question.
Ms GILLARD: I do not like unanswered points about the government's record being left, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I appreciate that.

Ms GILLARD: I think it is important that people understand how much money we are investing in health care. Second, in relation to the member's question, as I have just explained in answer to the earlier question, this will not be a body where politicians are there picking winners. That is the opposition's plan. The government's plan is to accept the advice of scientists and to accept the advice of economists and to put a price on carbon, because that is the cheapest, most effective and efficient way of transforming our economy to a clean energy future.

Wyatt Roy: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order on relevance. The question was: how much new clean energy will be produced as a result of the $10 billion?

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will respond in a directly relevant manner to the question.

Ms GILLARD: I was explaining the way in which the government's policy will work. At the centre of it, with the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, is not a system where politicians pick winners but a system where we have a board and management with commercial expertise which deals with projects on a commercial basis and ensures that they work to catalyse clean energy development in our economy.

I understand the member has an interest in this. The member may want to study some of the projects that have already been supported through other government mechanisms and see what is being achieved, because that might give him an understanding of what can be achieved through a mechanism like the Clean Energy Finance Corporation. For example, through our Solar Flagships program, in Chinchilla in Queensland we will see the development of a solar thermal power station which, if it were built today, would be the biggest in the world. It is that kind of clean energy development that will transform our economy. The Clean Energy Finance Corporation will work commercially with commercial expertise to help with the transformation, but at the centre of the transformation is putting a price on carbon pollution, which is what economists have advised us is the cheapest way of cutting carbon pollution, creating clean energy jobs, transforming our economy and reaching the carbon pollution emission targets that are agreed on both sides of the parliament. I certainly do not want to see—and perhaps the member would not want to see either—Australian families slugged $1,300 a year to pay for the Leader of the Opposition's carbon plan.

Clean Energy Legislation

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter—Chief Government Whip) (15:25): I ask the Leader of the House what support has been shown for the government's efforts to ensure that all members have an opportunity to actively participate in the debate on the clean energy bills.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) (15:25): I thank the Chief Government Whip for his question. The government has been determined to ensure that we have a full democratic process around the clean energy legislation. After 35 parliamentary reviews, after the Shergold report, after the Garnaut report and after the green and white papers on the CPRS, it is time now to act. On Tuesday we introduced the legislation into this House. Yesterday we commenced the second reading debate in this House. Also on Tuesday we set up a joint parliamentary committee that will allow
The SPEAKER: The question was asked and it was in order. I will listen carefully to the Leader of the House's response to the question.

Mr ALBANESE: It is called 'Leader of the House' for a reason. I am not just the leader of the government in the house; I am the Leader of the House. I am responsible for facilitating all members' rights in this House, a responsibility I take very seriously, whether they be members of the government, members of the crossbench or members of the opposition. There has been support for the action that we have taken. The Leader of the Opposition was asked whether the member for Wentworth was going to be speaking in the debate today and he said: 'Well, that's a matter for Malcolm; this debate will go over the next fortnight or so'—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the House will resume his seat. I just want to deal with one matter: the member for Dickson will withdraw an earlier interjection which I do not think was particularly helpful.

Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I was distracted at that time, but that interjection was grossly disorderly. That was my fault, but when comments are made about members of the ilk that the member for Dickson made I seek their withdrawal.

Mr Dutton: I withdraw that I said it was a lie, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: No. Order! Without falling into the trap of having the comment repeated, when comments are made about—

Mr Dutton: If it will assist the House, I withdraw.
The SPEAKER: I thank the honourable member. The Leader of the House will not overly debate the question. The Leader of the House has the call.

Mr ALBANESE: What I am indicating is that the government will ensure that every single member of this House, particularly the member for Wentworth, because I want to hear what he has to say, will have a right to participate in this debate. After saying we did not have enough time those opposite argued against the extra time.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the House will bring his answer to a close.

Mr ALBANESE: We will ensure that no-one has an excuse not to participate in this legislation.

Ms Gillard: Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

QUESTIONS TO THE SPEAKER
Clean Energy Future Legislation Committee

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (15:31): Mr Speaker, I have a question for you. Did you receive a letter yesterday from the Chief Opposition Whip nominating opposition members to the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Clean Energy Future Legislation? If in fact you did receive such a letter, the statements by the Leader of the House just a few moments ago that we had not nominated people are false. He should not have made them. I am not allowed to say that he was lying. Nevertheless, Mr Speaker, they were certainly false statements.

The SPEAKER (15:33): I received a letter from the Chief Opposition Whip. I do not want to get into the argy-bargy of the debate. I believe that I got it today, but the point is that it is in the system.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not have knowledge of whether the Leader of the House was aware of that or not. All I can say is that I was aware and the procedural requirements were being put in place.

Ms Julie Bishop interjecting—

Ms Gillard: Mr Speaker, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made an unparliamentary remark about the Leader of Government Business and I ask that it be withdrawn.

The SPEAKER: Again, because of what was happening and on the basis of a reaction, as I have been consistent, I ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to withdraw.

Ms Julie Bishop: I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The question about the membership, I would hope, has concluded. The only other observation I will make is that I received the procedural notes for business that is coming forward and it was not in the pack before the start of question time. I am in no other position than to make that comment. If people are aggrieved that I do not have the fuller facts in front of me, that is the basis.

Mr Albanese: If it will assist, Mr Speaker, I am happy to acknowledge that it has now been received during question time.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr Albanese: Well, it has!

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr Albanese: That is okay, is it? That is okay.

Ms Julie Bishop interjecting—

Mr Albanese: Mr Speaker, I ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to withdraw.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will withdraw.
Ms Julie Bishop: Mr Speaker, I would not want to withdraw 'Precious petal'.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will withdraw.

Ms Julie Bishop: I withdraw 'Precious petal'.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not the way that a withdrawal is made.

Ms Julie Bishop: Mr Speaker, it was a comma: I withdraw, precious petal.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The comma or not, the precious petal becomes me. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will take her place.

Incredibly, over a fairly minor matter, which I will take full responsibility for, I now have the letter that I passed on to the Clerk. The element that I apologise for was that, yes, it was dated yesterday, it was received yesterday, but I only processed it today. That was not a deliberate action, but that has led to the incident that everybody has been upset by. That has been in the system and has bobbed out now. It will be dealt with straight after we get this over and done with. I accept full responsibility.

Mr Abbott: on indulgence—There was no intention whatsoever by anyone on this side of the House to impugn you or your conduct.

The SPEAKER: I am not suggesting that.

Mr Abbott: Our only problem was with the remarks of the Leader of the House who was making a statement which he should not have made because it is simply untrue.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House has indicated that he received the procedures at the first instance he got. It is interesting that it is on the head of the Leader of the House to have to move these motions.

This is one of the quirks of the way this is done. That is where we are at. Surely we can put this to bed. The points have been made. They have been put in a much more robust or feisty way than I think they needed to be.

Mr Abbott: The point I am trying to make is that it would better serve this House if we did not get the kinds of cheap shots that we get all too often from the Leader of the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his place. That is why I am trying to close this discussion down. Nobody has bathed themselves in glory.

Ms Roxon: On a separate matter, unfortunately during the passage of time, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has left the chamber. I ask that she be asked to return and withdraw two further abusive comments, neither of which she referred to in her withdrawal, which were grossly offensive.

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop: We have had much discussion on the question of the comments of the Leader of the House. Basically the standing orders require him at the earliest time possible to come into the House and correct what he said as being in error. The words that he gave earlier were not acceptable.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mackellar will resume her place. All I simply say to members is try to get a feel for the place. A point has been made and an acknowledgement of what the steps that led to this point has been made. Please leave it at that. I regret that because I did not hear the remarks that were made and am not in a position to adjudicate on their offensiveness or whether they were unparliamentary. I can only guide all members to be very careful about what they say. I know that that will not satisfy some people, but that is now the position I am in.
Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, you will be pleased to hear this is not on the matter that you have been dealing with for the last 10 minutes. During the discussion we had, the Leader of the House used a phrase to describe you which I think is offensive and I ask that he withdraw it. He said that you are a bit slow. I think that is offensive and he should withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: Having been described as a precious petal and having said that I am not a precious petal, I acknowledge that sometimes I might be a bit slow.

Speaker's Panel

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter—Chief Government Whip) (15:41): As you are aware, there is a vacancy on your Speaker's Panel. Please advise the House whether you are in receipt of any correspondence from the opposition nominating a member of that panel as has been invited—or can we assume the wrecking game will simply continue?

The SPEAKER (15:42): I counsel the Chief Government Whip that that was not particularly helpful. It leads me not to respond to the earlier part of the question.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr RANDALL (Canning) (15:42): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr RANDALL: Yes.

The SPEAKER: Please proceed.

Mr RANDALL: During question time the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government made comments which I found offensive regarding a forum with the Peel RDA which was held in my electorate. First of all, his comments were not successful. When he accused me of trying to wreck his meeting, I only asked him questions which he struggled to answer. The questions included proper funding for the Peel RDA.

The SPEAKER: The member for Canning has indicated where he claims to have been misrepresented and that is now dealt with.

COMMITTEES

Selection Committee

Report

The SPEAKER: I present the Selection Committee's report No. 32 relating to the consideration of bills. The report will be printed in today's Hansard. Copies of the report have been placed on the Table.

The report read as follows—

Report relating to private Members' business and the consideration of bills introduced 12 to 14 September 2011
1. The committee met in private session on 14 September 2011.
2. The committee determined that the following bills be referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry for inquiry and report—
   • Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Mining, Petroleum and Water Resources) Bill 2011; and
   • Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2011.
3. The committee recommends that the following private Members' business item listed on the notice paper be voted on:

Orders of the Day

GST revenue for Western Australia (Mr Crook).

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS

Report No. 6 of 2011-2012

The SPEAKER: I present the Auditor-General's performance audit report No. 6 of 2011-2012 entitled Fair Work Education and Information Program.
Ordered that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

Mr ALBANESE: I move:
That the House take note of the following document:

Question agreed to.

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

Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES
Clean Energy Future Legislation Committee
Membership
The SPEAKER: With all the seriousness I can muster, I announce that I have received advice from the Chief Opposition Whip nominating members to be members of the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Clean Energy Future Legislation.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) (15:45): by leave—I move:
That Mr ADH Smith, Mrs Gash and Mr Christensen be appointed members of the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Clean Energy Future Legislation.

I acknowledge that that was received by me for the first time at 3.30 pm this afternoon.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the House will withdraw.

Mr Albanese: I withdraw, Mr Speaker. Unlike the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the House will let sleeping dogs lie.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I will give cockies corner an exclamation mark soon, if they don't settle down!

Question agreed to.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Carbon Pricing
The SPEAKER (15:46): I have received a letter from the honourable member for Indi proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The adverse impact of the carbon tax on Australian industry.

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

Mrs MIRABELLA (Indi) (15:47): There are adverse impacts on Australian industry by the government's proposed carbon tax because the carbon tax was devised deliberately to cause harm and add additional cost burdens to Australian industry. That is an objective of the carbon tax.

We should not be surprised at that because this came out of a desperate political fix that was necessary to keep the Prime Minister in power. What happened? Bob Brown demanded this carbon tax. He demanded this carbon tax because, as we all know, the Greens are not particularly interested in economic growth, industrial development, and greater economic progress and prosperity for our nation. They would rather see us living back in caves, abandoning all our vehicles and abandoning the consumer society. They want to impose their particular standards of an appropriate way of life on us. They have done that by conning the Prime Minister into introducing a carbon tax. Little is said about how the introduction of a carbon tax for industry will impact on jobs,
because when you hurt the competitiveness of Australian industry you hurt Australian jobs. So with this carbon tax we will see something that no other country on earth has introduced or even canvassed—that is, an economy-wide tax that will continue to increase. It will go up and up and up.

Why will this damage Australian industry? It will damage Australian industry because it hits at the heart of our competitiveness. It will impose additional cost burdens on industries right across our economy and effectively give a leg-up to those products and services that are imported in their competition with Australian made products and services. What will happen to Australian exports? They will be more costly to make and we will be further disadvantaged against our export competition.

Even if the government talk about compensation they fail to admit that there is no rescue for industry once this so-called compensation runs out. That is assuming that the compensation will be adequate in the first place and that it has been calculating accurately—an enormously optimistic assumption to make, considering the government's other economic predictions, which have so-far failed to hit the mark.

What happens when the compensation runs out in four years time? The issue of the relative uncompetitiveness of Australian industry will still remain. It will still be there. Does anyone imagine for one minute that significant industries that require regular, quite important capital investments will think, 'We'll go and invest two or three million dollars in new machinery because we are getting compensated over the next four years'? Of course they are not. They are going to say, 'In five years time, when we're really hit hard by the carbon tax we will not be in a competitive position, so our investment decisions today will be affected when the compensation runs out.'

What about all those businesses and all those industries that will not receive any compensation at all? There has been scant regard for the increase in the costs of many businesses right across the economy. Industry is vital for the Australian economy—not just because we want industry but because it is vital for our prosperity and for employment.

When we see the projected loss of jobs because of this carbon tax then it raises even greater concerns. New South Wales Treasury modelling is predicting 31,000 jobs will be lost in New South Wales by 2030, with 18,500 jobs lost in the Hunter alone. Deloitte predicts a loss of 21,000 jobs in Queensland, and at least 23,000 jobs will disappear across Victoria. The Prime Minister talks about this myth of green jobs, this hoax she is trying to perpetrate, this falsehood she is trying to convince everyone about—and no-one is being convinced. What has happened overseas? In the UK, every so-called 'green' job has cost 3.7 jobs elsewhere in the economy.

When we look across industries, what is one of the most important sectors in our economy? What is the backbone of so many communities, not just in the cities but in rural and regional areas? It is small business. And what exists in this package for small business? Absolutely nothing—there is no direct support for small business. There is no recognition of the increased transportation costs or the increased electricity costs because this government has not looked at those very important parts of our economy: those people who do not have a voice to force the government to the table to negotiate. We have heard the government say, 'Oh, well, you're not going to be materially affected.' The government
sanctioned small business fact sheet says that there may be some indirect cost on small business, such as higher electricity bills, as a result of bigger companies passing on the costs of the carbon price. Yet the clean energy plan says that, when it comes to indirect price impacts, most small businesses will not be materially affected. This is absolute rubbish; an absolute untruth.

All the government needed to do was speak to some of the players in the retail sector. I spoke to one of my local supermarkets in Wangaratta and they calculated the increased electricity costs to their business. Being unable to pass on those costs because their competitive advantage is to be 1c cheaper than the major players, they said that they would have to absorb those costs by reducing their workforce. That is not good for industry, for local economies or for regions, but the government refuse to acknowledge this. It is as if the government have convinced themselves that if they crash through with the carbon tax then people will forget the pain.

People are not going to forget the pain of being put out of work, of losing the competitiveness of their business or of having their investment jeopardised because the government did not engage in reform. Change is not reform. To save their political neck, the government gave in to the Greens. That is the only reason these industries will suffer, will become less competitive and will pay higher electricity and transport costs: because this government were too gutless—pure and simple—to stare down the Greens.

When we look at how the government have engaged with various industry organisations across our diversified economy we can see that they have not really engaged with them at all. When Graham Kraehe of BlueScope said any compensation would be 'like putting a bandaid on a bullet wound', what did we hear from the government? Nothing. They have scant regard for the concern of those people who are at the coalface of their particular business or industry. What VECCI said was:

We are disappointed that there is a lot of stick and little carrot for small business.

They also said:

This … will mean small businesses will need to take further energy efficiency measures in their day-to-day business operations to keep costs down.

And the national organisation, ACCI, said:

Economically, the tax is a harsh blow to import and export competing businesses, especially small and medium businesses. Our international competitors get a free kick, of our own making.

Isn't it extraordinary that we have some ministers on the government front bench bleating about government intervention and protectionism when they are engaging in a deliberate act of self-harm to Australian industry? They are adding to the costs of production in Australia and deliberately giving a competitive leg-up to import competition and to those who compete with us in exports.

Another important industry in Australia is transport. It is trite to say we are a large nation with significant transport routes crossing from one end to the other. But, when we look at what a carbon tax will do to transport, it will hit it very hard. We know that a carbon tax will be applied to trucks from 1 July 2014. The Australian Trucking Association estimates that the carbon tax on the sector will cost the industry and its customers $510 million in the 2014-15 year alone. What does that mean? It means there will be higher costs for everyday goods at the supermarket and every store. It also means that there will be less competition in the transport sector because smaller trucking companies will not be able to absorb those
costs as easily as the bigger players. That will mean greater concentration in the transport industry, and we know that when you have a smaller number of players in a particular industry that tends to make it easier for those players to put up their costs. So this will lead to a shrinking of industries not just in the transport area but in the retail sector right across the economy, leaving those who remain with greater market power. That is not good for competition, that is not good for innovative industry practices and that is certainly not good for the consumer and households, who are struggling under the costs at the moment.

The aviation sector is going to be slogged with a near tripling in the excise on aviation fuel. What will that do to airline travel in Australia? What will that do to regional airlines? It will decimate regional airlines, and those of us who have regional and rural electorates know how important aviation travel is to us. We see that the CEO of the Regional Aviation Association of Australia has said:

It appears that the government either doesn't care, or doesn't understand the role of regional aviation.

He goes on to say:

The Prime Minister claims that the carbon tax is aimed at the big polluters, but the regional aviation industry contributes around 0.2 per cent of the nation’s total carbon emissions. The fact that the tax is being applied via the aviation fuel levy to regional aviation, an industry that barely emits carbon and which actually acts as an alternative to other carbon producing transport options, makes a mockery of the Prime Minister’s claim …

And indeed it does. How many businesses will be affected because of these increased costs on regional transport? What ripple effects that will have through regional communities remains to be seen.

We also see that the building sector will be significantly affected. A carbon tax of 23 per cent will add at least $5,000 to the cost of building a new home at a time when the affordability of housing is a very vexed issue, causing great anxiety, particularly to first homeowners. We see that a carbon tax will add $36 a month to the cost of servicing an average mortgage of just over $340,000, but have we seen any recognition of the impact of that on the housing industry by the government? No, we have not. They are trying to ram this through the parliament as quickly as possible to avoid scrutiny.

And what about the impact on manufacturing—and one of the most important sectors of the manufacturing industry, the largest sector, the food and grocery sector? The industry association estimates that the carbon tax will add $120 a year to household grocery bills, because any additional costs of running a business will be passed on to the consumer, and this is three times the government's estimate of $40. I say that because a carbon tax will have an impact right across the supply chain, from farming to food processing, from transport to storage, from refrigeration to lighting. Any business that is involved in any of these areas, any industry that switches on a light and uses transport, will be affected to the detriment of the Australian economy and to the benefit of importers. (Time expired)

Mr CLARE (Blaxland—Minister for Defence Materiel) (16:02): The best part of that speech is that it is over—15 minutes of just rancid negativity. The member for Indi, who has now left the chamber, has been going around Australia with the Leader of the Opposition pretending to be the worker’s friend, pretending to be the worker’s champion. What a fraud—what an absolute hoax.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper): Order! The minister should withdraw the term 'fraud'.

CHAMBER
Mr CLARE: I withdraw. I wonder whether the member for Indi tells those workers what she said in the Work Choices debate when she said that Work Choices was 'big but fair'. The fact is that there is only one champion of Australian workers in this place and it is the Australian Labor Party. We are the ones with the runs on the board. We are the party that established workers compensation, that established the workers pension, that introduced universal superannuation and that got rid of Work Choices—and it is good to see the architect of Work Choices, the member for Mayo, in the chamber today. We are the party that has helped create 750,000 jobs in the last three years. At the same time in the United States there have been six million jobs lost. Before the global recession, unemployment in Australia and the United States was under five per cent. Unemployment in Australia now is 5.3 per cent and in the United States it is now 9.1 per cent. It tells us that we made the right decision and that the Liberal Party made the wrong decision in opposing the stimulus. If we had not acted, unemployment today would be more like it is in the United States—eight or nine per cent. The fact is that unemployment goes up quickly but takes a long, long time to come down. It would have taken five, maybe 10, years before unemployment reached the level that it is again today. That would have meant a decade of unemployment for a generation of workers.

What does the Leader of the Opposition say about this? In his first major speech as the Leader of the Opposition on economic matters in March 2010, he said:

The economic stimulus wasn't necessary to strengthen Australia's economy at a time of global recession …

His was a speech called 'Economic fundamentals'—and he got it fundamentally wrong. It shows bad economic judgment. But his judgment is bad on other things as well, because, if those opposite really cared about jobs, really cared about Australian industry, they would vote for the minerals resource rent tax. Think about this: over the last two weeks BHP has announced its largest profit ever on record—over $23 billion, its highest ever. On the other side of the country you have got BlueScope Steel, another great Australian company, announcing a $1 billion loss. A high Australian dollar has helped to create a two-speed economy and this is one of the best examples of it. Miners are earning more, pushing up the value of the Australian dollar, and that is making it harder for Australian industries like manufacturing. It is only fair, then, and it only makes sense, that mining companies pay a little bit more to help other industries like BlueScope Steel, like the industries that the member for Indi pretends to care about, to pay a little bit less.

Mr Briggs interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mayo will have the opportunity of participating in the debate if he seeks and gets the call.

Mr CLARE: The Leader of the Opposition is displaying the same bad judgment when it comes to climate change. Now, remember this: on both sides of the House both major parties agree that we should cut our emissions by five per cent by 2020. The debate is not about how much we should cut them by; the debate is about what is the best and cheapest way to do that. The advice from Treasury is that the opposition's plan will be twice as expensive as the government's plan. The Australian Industry Greenhouse Network on the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald says the same thing. That is, the Business Council of Australia, the Australian Industry Group, the Coal Association—all major Australian industries
under the banner of the Australian Industry Greenhouse Network—are saying the same thing: that the opposition's plan to cut emissions by five per cent by 2020 is twice as expensive as the government's.

Mr Deputy Speaker, think about this: if you had to drive a car from Canberra to Sydney and you had a choice between two cars, one which cost $50 in petrol and the other which cost $100 in petrol, you would—because you are a smart man—choose the cheaper one. Anyone with any nous would. It is as simple as that. That is what we are doing. We are selecting the cheapest and most efficient way to cut emissions by five per cent by 2020. The fact that the Leader of the Opposition has not chosen this path goes to his economic judgment. Paul Kelly made this point in the *Australian* on 31 August, a couple of weeks ago:

> It was said correctly of Howard before the 96 election that the public knew him and trusted him on the economy. That claim cannot not be made of Abbott.

That was Paul Kelly in the *Australian* in August this year and he was spot on. Remember that this is the Leader of the Opposition who slept through the vote in this chamber—five divisions in this chamber—on whether we should stimulate the economy to stop a recession. He cared so much about it then he did not even turn up for the vote. This is the Leader of the Opposition who appointed Barnaby Joyce as his chief financial adviser. This is the Leader of the Opposition who went to the last election with a $10 billion hole in his costings, and now just a year later it has blown out to a $70 billion black hole. Just to put that $70 billion black hole into perspective, that is about the same amount of cuts that the Greek government has to make. Just to put into perspective, that $70 billion is about the same size as New Zealand's budget. So he has a black hole in his budget the same size as the New Zealand budget and the same size as the cuts that the Greek government has to make. His economic judgment is so bad that he has taken to attacking every economist that does not agree with him on this issue of how we tackle climate change. Members may remember his attack on economists only a couple of months ago, when he said:

> So it may well be that Australian economists think that a carbon tax and an emissions trading scheme is the way to go. Maybe that is a comment on the quality of our economists, rather than on the merits of the argument.

Do you know who this reminds me of? It reminds me of a former member for Oxley, Pauline Hanson, in her famous *60 Minutes* interview in 1996. I remember when she was confronted by the facts from the department of immigration about Asian immigration which showed that her figures were not fact and that we were not being swamped by Asians. What did Pauline Hanson say then? 'They're just book figures; I don't believe them.' This is what the Leader of the Opposition is saying now: 'They're just book figures; I don't believe them.' He is acting more like Hanson than Menzies. He is acting more like Hanson than Howard.

Everything that he says now on climate change or about putting a price on carbon is proving to be wrong. Whether it is for the cement industry, steel, aluminium or Qantas, it has all turned out to be just hysterical nonsense, all made up. There is no better example of this than the coal industry. Remember what the Leader of the Opposition said about coal. He said it would be the death of the coal industry. What happened the day after we made the announcement? Peabody Coal announced the biggest takeover offer for a coal company in Australia's history—$4.7 billion for Macarthur Coal. That is a lot of money; that is not the sort of money you would invest if
you thought that this was going to be the death of the coal industry. The fact is that the coal industry has a great future. The member opposite knows that. You do not need to be Bob Woodward to work that out. Remember Watergate? Remember Bob Woodward's old mate Deep Throat? What did he used to say? He used to say, 'Just follow the money.'

To work out if this Leader of the Opposition's scare campaign is genuine, just follow the money. That is what I have done. I have looked at the share registry of all of those members opposite to see if they are investing in energy or coal companies since we made the announcement of the carbon price. Last month the member for Wentworth declared shares in Winmar Resources. Senator Adams declared shares in the Woodside Petroleum group, BHP, Duet and Ski Construction. Senator Cash took shares in Asciano group, BHP, Amoco, OneSteel and Woodside Petroleum. Senator Fisher declared shares in Reclaim Industries, Terranim and Wesfarmers. Senator Humphries declared that he bought shares in AGL Energy, APA, Bow Energy, OZ Minerals, Woodside Petroleum and Newcrest Mining. The member for Stirling bought shares in Newland Resources and GR Engineering. The member for Brisbane bought 88,333 shares in Australian Pacific Coal. It is not the sort of thing you would do if you thought the coal industry was going to die. The member for Kooyong acquired Woodside Petroleum shares. The member for Flynn bought 10,000 shares in the East Energy Resources group. Senator Ronaldson bought Galaxy Resources shares. My old mate the member for Fadden has bought shares in Conquest Mining. Senator Johnston has shares in Mt Magnet Mining and Redback Mining. Follow the money if you want to find the truth and I will tell you this: you will find it out. Since we made the announcement on the carbon price one in six members of the opposition has bought shares in resource companies, and these are the people who are going around their electorate saying it is going to destroy the coal industry and destroy the economy. They come in here and say, 'It is going to frighten off investment.' It certainly has not frightened of investment on the other side, has it?

Instead of listening to what they are saying in here, look at what they are buying and you will find out as Deep Throat said, 'Follow the money.' They are either pretty stupid or they do not believe what the Leader of the Opposition is saying. What takes the cake is the Leader of the Opposition's claim that this is all socialism dressed up as environmentalism. Who would have thought that John Howard was the red under the bed all along. If John Howard had won the 2007 election we would have an emissions trading system right now and those members opposite who were elected in the 2007 election would all have voted for it. They would have voted for the type of scheme they are opposing now, including the Leader of the Opposition. What is he saying now? Suddenly this thing that he would have voted for if John Howard was elected is socialism dressed up as environmentalism. What is he doing to try to stop socialism dressed up as environmentalism? He is organising a workers' revolt so he can replace it with a centrally planned system. It just shows how ridiculous and how desperate this scare campaign has become.

Mr Sidebottom interjecting—

Mr CLARE: Let me tell you: this party, this parliament and this country are still capable of important reform and we will prove that in the days and weeks ahead.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper): Before calling the honourable member for Paterson I remind the member for Braddon that, unless he has been
Mr BALDWIN (Paterson) (16:17): I rise today to speak in the MPI debate on the adverse impact of a carbon tax on the Australian industry. I have to say I have never heard such gall with the Minister for Defence Materiel coming in here and talking about Deep Throat and the trail of money given the track record on that side of the parliament. This government, the Labor Gillard, Greens Brown government, is perched on the precipice of an economic cliff, driven there by the deal of jumping into bed with the Greens just to occupy those government benches. This deceitful Prime Minister—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BALDWIN: I did not say she lied. I said she is deceitful.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. The member for Paterson is pushing me. He well knows it is outside standing order 90 to call the Prime Minister deceitful. I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr BALDWIN: All right, in an act of deceit the Prime Minister—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member for Paterson to withdraw the word 'deceitful' and also while he is at it the words 'act of deceit'.

Mr BALDWIN: I will withdraw, but I do beg to differ with you because this was the Prime Minister—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Paterson will withdraw unconditionally or he will be outside for an hour.

Mr BALDWIN: I withdraw then. Our Prime Minister is the one who, with her hand on her heart just days before the election, promised the Australian people that there would be no carbon tax under the government she led. This is the Prime Minister who is determined to drive the Australian economy, Australian industry and Australian jobs over that cliff. Those members opposite are lining up and rushing to the cliff like lemmings. The reality is that members opposite, like lemmings, do not have the ability to think individually about self-preservation or preservation of others; they are just lined up to go over the cliff.

Each and every one of them stood with the Prime Minister. I did not hear one member of the Labor Party in those days before the election stand up and say, 'I disagree with the Prime Minister when she said that there will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.' I did not see one comment in the media. In fact the Deputy Prime Minister said that it was hysterical to consider that there would be a carbon tax. Not one member on that side said to the Prime Minister, 'I disagree with you, Prime Minister.' Not one of them said, 'I think we need to have a carbon tax because it is good for our economy, it is good for industry and it is good for Australian jobs'—not one. But they have all lined up like lemmings following this pursuit over the cliff. In following that pursuit they are breaking the basic promise that they went to the election with.

This Prime Minister also promised that she would seek broad consensus before she did anything of this sort. She would take the Australian people on the journey and she would actually assemble 150 Australians—never mind that the House of Representatives consists of 150 people—for the purpose and there would be deep and lasting consensus.

As I have travelled this country in my shadow portfolio visiting industry after industry and operator after operator and meeting with workers, I am yet to find any
deep and lasting consensus in support of a carbon tax. In fact, the only deep and lasting consensus I can find is against the imposition of a carbon tax on our economy. Industry is scared and so, as a consequence, are those people employed in those industries. They are scared when they should not have to be. But there are the reports, including the Deloitte economic report commissioned by the Bligh Labor government, that say that in Queensland 21,000 jobs are predicted to go. Queensland Treasury modelling said that 12,000 jobs would go. The Victorian government commissioned Deloitte and they said that they would be 23,000 fewer jobs created across Victoria by 2015 as a result of this carbon tax, with the Latrobe Valley, Geelong, Port Phillip, Monash, Boroondara and Whitehorse the worst hit areas. In my home state of New South Wales, New South Wales Treasury modelling predicts 31,000 jobs will be lost by 2030, with 18½ thousand jobs gone in the Hunter Valley alone. Where are the voices standing up for those jobs in the Hunter Valley? I stand up for those jobs in the Hunter Valley. The member for Hunter supports the carbon tax; he said so in public meetings. He is quite happy to sacrifice those jobs. We have the member for Newcastle who, on the one hand, says how wonderful green energy is and, on the other hand, says it is fantastic we are building and upgrading more coal loaders to get more coal out of the area. You have the member for Shortland. But the one who will never be forgiven is the member for Charlton, the architect of the carbon tax. The people in his electorate in particular, those coal miners, those that work in various industries, will feel absolutely betrayed by this minister. As Englishman John Heywood said in 1546, 'There are none so blind as those who refuse to see and none so deaf as those who refuse to listen.' Well that about sums up this Labor-Green alliance. They refuse to see; they refuse to listen.

It would not matter what poll you turn to. There is no poll that, in the Prime Minister’s own words, would show a ‘deep and lasting consensus’ or show any strong support for a carbon tax. People want to clean up the environment, and we agree with that. That is why the coalition have signed up, the same as the Labor Party, to reduce emissions by five per cent by 2020. It is our method of delivery that is different. Our method of delivery will not kill industry and jobs in this country like Labor’s carbon tax.

If I need proof, I only to look at my own shadow ministry portfolio for tourism. The Tourism and Transport Forum, back in May this year, put out the report Carbon tax and tourism & travel—trade and global warming exposed. They said in that report that they supported a carbon tax. The Labor Party will love to repeat that to me, but have not read the fine print: providing there were compensation and transitional measures put in place for the tourism industry to address it. In that report they said that there would be 6,400 jobs lost mostly in regional and rural areas like Cairns, the Hunter Valley, across Australia, the Blue Mountains and in South Australia. The economic impact to this industry that brings in about $92 billion to the Australian economy would be between $600 million and $800 million per year. They said the only beneficiary in the industry of this carbon tax would be to the outward-bound market. Why would that be? If you fly in Australia, say between Sydney and Perth, you will pay a carbon tax. But if you fly from Sydney to LA there is no carbon tax. Already we are seeing a massive increase of Australians travelling overseas. In fact it has increased by more 11 per cent while inbound tourism has only increased by just over three per cent. According to this report, it will be exacerbated.
Ahead of the carbon tax, when the steel industry stood up, the Prime Minister rushed in and said the government would provide a package of around $100 million. The tourism industry, after the manufacturing industry, is the second largest employer in Australia. If you add to that the hospitality and restaurant industry, it is the largest employer. How much did they get, despite saying they would agree to the carbon tax if they got these eight recommendations through for a support package? Not one cent, so this large-scale employer will suffer dramatically. The only time the Prime Minister rushed in to help was when she was dragged in by Anna Bligh after the floods and cyclones and offered $6 million for the massive economic impact. There was nothing for northern Victoria, which also suffered floods; nothing for Western Australia, which also suffered floods; nothing for New South Wales, which also suffered floods; but there was a little bit for Queensland. At the same time, because Paul Howes clicked his fingers, $100 million dollars was offered. That is disgusting and an abuse of taxpayers' money.

These are the lemmings lining up at the cliff to jump over. The sad part is they are going to take Australian jobs and Australian industry with them, and destroy our economy. The idea of seeing some $57 billion per year going offshore to buy carbon credits when that money could be invested and spent here in direct action to fix the problem here at home is absolutely disgraceful. This government has a lot to answer to the Australian people.

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Throsby) (16:27): This matter of public importance brought by those opposite is another part of their grand campaign to talk the economy down. The Leader of the Opposition, together with the member for Indi, have been touring the country over the last couple of months doing everything they can to zap confidence and talk down the Australian economy. The only problem with that is the Australian economy is not listening because, unlike every other country in the world, we have an unemployment rate below five per cent. Compare that with the US, which is now going north of 10 per cent, and most parts of Europe, where they are struggling to keep their unemployment rates below nine per cent.

Instead of the doom and gloom scenarios we see from those opposite, where people will be thrown out of work left right and centre and the unemployment queues will be kilometres long, we are seeing new jobs being created. There have been over 750,000 jobs created since we came to office. Economic modelling predicts that we will see 1.6 million new jobs created by 2020. We are seeing a growth in the need for new skilled workers; 2.4 million skilled workers will be needed by 2015, doubling to 5.2 million by 2025. This is the scenario that all economic commentators and all modelling is showing, but at the same time those opposite are trying to talk down the economy with their doom and gloom scenario.

We have $190 billion worth of new investment per annum including $450 billion worth of investment going into mining between now and 2014. Interest rates are lower than they were when we took office. We have seen, because of the uncertainty around climate change policy, a capital strike in investment in the energy sector. But, because of the announcements, we are now seeing a pipeline of investment of over $100 billion of new investment in the energy sector. So, far from the doom and gloom scenario predicted by those opposite, we have a world-class economy which is situated in the right part of the world and which has the capacity to deliver strong outcomes for people over the decades ahead. If we are to keep that in place, we need good
policy and confidence. I have said many times in this place—

Debate interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper): Order! It being 4.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Media Ownership

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth) (16:30): This week we have heard a lot about the regulation of newspapers from the government. The Labor Party has a great history with newspapers. The Labor Daily in the 1920s and 1930s stoutly defended Jack Lang, and the AWU's Worker was, in the days of Henry Boote, a literary rival to the Bulletin. In the UK my mother's great-uncle, George Lansbury, founded the Daily Herald for the TUC and later published his own paper, Lansbury's Labour Weekly, for several years.

But there is another, more heavy-handed thread of Labor newspaper history that has, I am sure, inspired Senator Conroy this week. So I should share with honourable members an important piece of Labor history as recounted by one of my most distinguished constituents, the Hon. Gough Whitlam, AC, QC. In his memoir The Whitlam Government, 1972-1975, he writes:

There was one aspect of our policy, however, which did not come to fruition. I had first advocated the establishment of an Australian Newspaper Commission in 1961. At the 1971 Federal Conference the Party stepped back from the proposal, substituting a commitment to initiate a study of its feasibility. In 1975 even that modest undertaking was abandoned.

Yet in our time the Government Printer already had in Canberra, which was a convenient location under the Constitution, all the facilities to produce a newspaper, even a daily one. What we originally had in mind was a weekly, which would have published the legal and Public Service notices from the Gazette and given a more ready and permanent forum to ABC talks and the material in the Australian Government Digest, which we inaugurated.

In time, of course, I would have liked to see it developed into a newspaper of more general interest and appeal, a vehicle for independent news and comment unaffiliated with the established commercial media organisations. There was no reasoning theory why such a newspaper should not become as valuable, respected and authoritative as the ABC had become as an alternative to the commercial broadcasters.

The outrage and derision which the proposal provoked among media proprietors was more a mark of their anxiety at the prospect of Government competition than evidence of any inherent incapability or impropriety in the idea itself. By abandoning the proposal we secured no goodwill from the proprietors. Indeed, by 1975 the Australian media were uniformly and implacably hostile to the Labor Government. The Murdoch press carried its bias to such lengths that journalists on The Australian went on strike in November 1975 in protest at their proprietor's behaviour.

The Murdoch papers were not alone, however, in the extreme character of their editorialising or the unremitting nature of their anti-Government campaigning. The so-called 'loans affair' was orchestrated by the Melbourne Age throughout the whole of 1975, and editorials in the Sydney Morning Herald, including some on the front page, exhibited an intensity of virulence and hysteria which admirers of that journal might well find surprising today.

I note in passing that at the end of his memoir Mr Whitlam writes:

I am indebted to my secretary, Mark Latham, for preparing the appendices and chronology.

The Labor Party is often unhappy with the newspapers, and indeed every political party from time to time, and every politician, is unhappy with the newspapers and what the media say. But the answer to that unhappiness—for the Labor Party, at least—
is to follow that grand tradition which it has in the past of publishing its own newspapers. Indeed, the internet gives it the medium and the means to do this at a very low cost. If it does not like what the Daily Telegraph is saying, or if it does not like what Dennis Shanahan or Matthew Franklin is saying in the Australian, it can publish its own journal. The cost of reaching out to the public in a day of social media and the internet has never been so low. That, of course, is why the economics of newspapers is being smashed. The real issue is whether there will be any newspapers left in a decade or so, not whether Rupert Murdoch owns 70 per cent of them. But this thread that Gough Whitlam canvassed in his day, the government owning a newspaper, is exactly the same heavy-handed approach that Senator Conroy is taking. Instead of having a go at doing it themselves, which real labour leaders have done in the past, what they want to do is regulate and own—use government regulation or even government ownership. That is not freedom's way, it is not the way of a democracy and the Labor Party should be ashamed of its assault on the freedom of the press.

Newcastle

Ms GRIERSON (Newcastle) (16:35): After listening to the member for Wentworth, I must send him a copy of my electronic newsletter. I think he would find the last one particularly interesting; it looks at the national accounts and the strength of the Australian economy.

But I actually rise to update the House on the ongoing transformation of Newcastle into a vibrant and buzzing cultural hub, building further its potential as a world-class tourism destination. We are working very well to retain our Lonely Planet title of ninth best city in the world to visit. The transformation of Newcastle's economy has been truly remarkable and is now being further understood and studied all around the nation. But Newcastle's industrial past is not something that is forgotten; it remains a key element of the city's rich cultural identity.

At the Newcastle Museum, which was recently opened by Minister Simon Crean, the city's vibrant heritage is the subject of a central exhibition which takes visitors back into the BHP steelworks of old. I am told that, since its opening just a few weeks ago, thousands of visitors have marvelled at our new museum and its links with history. The federal government is supporting the continuing transformation of Newcastle; it contributed $8½ million to assist Newcastle City Council to realise this wonderful tourist attraction.

It is a pleasure to work with the people of Newcastle to write the next chapter in the ongoing story of Newcastle's cultural development. Last week I was delighted to again join Minister Crean in my city when he visited Newcastle Art Gallery to congratulate it on receiving $7 million in Regional Development Australia funding for the redevelopment and expansion of the gallery. This wonderful funding has been warmly welcomed by the gallery's director, Ron Ramsey, who has said that it will assist in the 'cultural change' of Newcastle. The expansion will increase the gallery's usable space to over 2,300 square metres, allowing many of the 5,000 previously stored pieces to be proudly displayed for visitors to admire and be inspired by, with a flow-on economic effect of more than $17 million. We are quite blessed with significant collections that are rarely seen by the public, and these expanded facilities will allow everyone to enjoy the collections, particularly those bequeathed to the gallery by the late Bill Bowmore and the late Anne Von Bertouch, along with the many other works that have been donated, particularly those by the late Margaret Olley.
The museum and the Newcastle Art Gallery are anchoring the cultural precinct and giving the Newcastle CBD the opportunity to become a significant tourist destination.

Newcastle has many other natural attractions, such as our sun, surf and sand and our lifestyle—the best of a big city with the best of a regional town—and this investment into Newcastle's cultural infrastructure fosters the innovation and change central to Newcastle's future prosperity. Our cultural diversity is further demonstrated by the upcoming This Is Not Art Festival, one of the nation's leading independent arts festivals. It features over 400 local, national and international dedicated artists, from performance poets to the latest new digital media innovators. Newcastle is the place they meet to collaborate and create culture, and to celebrate the National Young Writers Festival, which is a part of the TINA Festival. I wish TINA and its organisers well for the upcoming festival during the October long weekend.

However, I note with regret that the new state member for Newcastle, Tim Owen, in his naivety, I suppose, was quoted in the Newcastle Herald this morning claiming responsibility for the delivery of the $7 million RDA funding for the Newcastle Region Art Gallery. He would be far better to acknowledge that he was at the back of a very long queue of sustained community support and lobbying for increased funding for the gallery. Newcastle City Council and RDA Hunter must also be acknowledged for their strong support. Good things do happen in Newcastle through the collective power of many, but the fact is that in his wisdom Minister Crean did not make the $7 million of federal funding conditional to matching state funds. Instead, he was satisfied that with the funds committed by Newcastle City Council, those raised by the community and our $7 million a significant stage of the development could occur.

With the people of Newcastle I look forward to the state government matching our contribution in the next budget with a further $7 million. I also look forward to Newcastle's continued development as a world-class tourist destination, and I thank Minister Crean and the federal Labor government for their ongoing support to our city.

McPherson Electorate: Fly-In Fly-Out Workers

Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson) (16:40): I rise to speak about the opportunity that a fly-in fly-out terminal at Gold Coast Airport, within my electorate of McPherson, has to offer. The Gold Coast has a business advisory group, known as the Business Gold Coast Advisory Board, that works with key business development organisations throughout the region to strengthen and diversify the Gold Coast's economic base and to encourage national and international business investment. I recently attended an advisory board meeting where one of the consulting firm's mentors gave a comprehensive presentation on fly-in fly-out. The business leaders in attendance at that meeting were very supportive of its development on the Gold Coast for two reasons: firstly, because we already have the infrastructure in place to support fly-in fly-out; and, secondly, because the Gold Coast has a skilled workforce and is well placed to provide skilled workers to the mining and resources sector.

We also have a significant amount of infrastructure that would greatly support a fly-in fly-out operation. We have 33 schools on the southern Gold Coast, both government and non-government; we have hospital facilities in the Robina Hospital and the John Flynn Private Hospital; we have
Southern Cross and Bond universities; we have a number of registered training organisations; we have childcare centres; and we have sufficient public transport services to adequately support a fly-in fly-out operation. We also have a number of shopping centres, including the Robina Town Shopping Centre, which during its construction was claimed to be the largest retail and leisure development ever built in one stage in Australia. We also have four other major shopping centres within the electorate and on the southern Gold Coast; the Pines Elanora Shopping Centre, Stockland Shopping Centre and Treetops Plaza in Burleigh Heads and Showcase on the Beach at Coolangatta. Our coastal strip and inland communities are filled with retail spaces, cafes and restaurants and we have local RSL clubs, surf clubs and other local community organisations. We are well prepared to provide support to the families of the fly-in fly-out workers, which is essential.

By utilising our current educational infrastructure and resources on the Gold Coast we can facilitate an educational hub to develop the skills required for this industry to work in harmony with the proposed fly-in fly-out arrangements. This could create a variety of benefits, including a boost to the tertiary education take-up rate on the Gold Coast, a boost to the local economy and the development of a skilled workforce in the mining and resources industry. The growth that would be experienced could then lead to a more diverse range of services and courses provided by tertiary institutions on the Gold Coast. By utilising what is currently available and harnessing new opportunities, a centre of excellence in both the tertiary education and the mining and resources industries could be developed on the Gold Coast.

The unemployment levels on the southern Gold Coast have consistently been higher than the national average. Figures for August show that it is currently at 6.9 per cent, compared with 5.9 per cent in the same period last year, so the unemployment levels are certainly tracking upwards. This is due in some part to the fact that we have been a tourism and construction dominated economy for quite some time, but what that does provide us with is the opportunity to provide a skilled workforce into the mining and resources sector. Again, we are clearly very well placed to support a fly-in fly-out facility. There is currently a House standing committee conducting an inquiry into fly-in fly-out and also drive-in drive-out workers in regional Australia. I understand that there will be a number of submissions to that inquiry from the Gold Coast, and I certainly encourage those on the Gold Coast with an interest, particularly in fly out, to submit to that inquiry. I am very hopeful that the committee will visit us here on the Gold Coast so that it can see what we have to offer for a fly-in fly-out terminal. As a community we need to continue to look at ways of improving our local economy and increasing jobs, and I would welcome further investigations into a fly-in fly-out terminal.

Deakin Electorate: Sporting Facilities

Mr SYMON (Deakin) (16:45): Being a Thursday afternoon adjournment debate, I am sure, Mr Speaker, you would expect me to report on the opening of yet another new P21 building in one of my local schools. But this Thursday is a little bit different because I am going to talk about the opening of a new soccer club pavilion.

On Saturday, 6 August this year I had the great pleasure of officially opening the brand new Ringwood city soccer multi-purpose pavilion with the Mayor of Maroondah, Tony Dib. Back in December 2009, the old Ringwood city soccer stand and facilities were demolished to make way for the
construction of a fantastic, modern, multipurpose shared sports pavilion. It is well worth a look—anyone who is listening to this, please take a drive out to Ringwood in Melbourne and see what can be done with local projects.

The old facilities at the ground were built in 1962 and I do not think had ever been touched since. The ground was in a really horrible state; the facilities were worse. There were no facilities for females, no facilities for referees and certainly no access for anyone with any form of disability.

The new $5 million facility provides a home for the Ringwood City Soccer Club, the Ringwood and District Cricket Association and the MVC—Michael Victor Canavan—Boxing Club. Funding of $2.9 million was provided by the federal government under the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program, Maroondah City Council put in $1.747 million and the state government contributed $300,000 for the pitch.

Ringwood City Soccer Club has been around for a long time—since 1953, I am told—and is now one of the largest suburban clubs in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The new ground is probably the best ground in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne—that is no idle boast. The weather does not matter—being an artificial turf pitch it is playable in every season. That is something that the old ground simply was not. The artificial turf came from Italy and is the first of its kind to be installed on a soccer ground in Australia. The field has been tested and, I believe, certified as a FIFA 2-star surface, which means that it can be used for professional-level matches. That is also very good for Ringwood and surrounding suburbs.

The new pavilion and all-weather surface means that both the seniors and the juniors clubs of Ringwood city, and the girls and the boys, can now train together on the same ground instead of on different grounds. That is also a great thing for parents who are involved with the club. The building itself, servicing the three different codes, is divided into separate spaces so they can all be there at once and stay out of each other's way. That is a great thing too.

The boxing club in particular use the facility every night, with 250 people a week, and they train a lot of kids. Those kids learn a lot of things through boxing, especially, the club tells me, discipline and the importance of keeping healthy. Many older people use the boxing club as well, because they like to keep in shape. I know the MVC Boxing Club are ecstatic about their new facility. The club has not had a home for years, and in fact their old home at Bedford Park community centre I described as a concrete dungeon. It had no windows, one door and a very low ceiling. It was eventually condemned and they had to move out and spent several years training in a private garage. They now have a really modern, 21st-century facility. It is light and it overlooks the soccer ground. It is fantastic. The pavilion includes large home and away change rooms, umpires' and medical rooms, a terraced grandstand, a kiosk, a social room, administration offices and, of course, a boxing gymnasium. It also has lighting so that matches can be played at night and—a first for the area—a sealed car park rather than the old mud-and-gravel version that used to be there.

The Ringwood and District Cricket Association will be using the facility as its administrative hub. The association has over 300 teams in total, through all the various levels. It is one of the biggest cricketing associations in suburban Melbourne.

In addition to that, this facility will ensure that soccer grows locally. It means that we now have room for growth, and, rather than
parents turning up to see what it is like and then driving away, they turn up and say, 'We want to be here.' I am certain that visiting soccer teams will, when they go back to their home ground, be saying: 'Why don't we have something like this? How do we get one?' It is an absolutely sensational outcome for what has been a sorely needed local project.

I certainly hope that we can continue to do more things like this between the different levels of government. It is a fantastic result for our community.

Parkes Electorate: Coal Seam Gas

Mr COULTON (Parkes—The Nationals Chief Whip) (16:50): Tonight I rise to speak of an issue that is becoming increasingly concerning in my electorate. It is the conflict between the expanding coal seam gas industry and agriculture. The coal seam gas industry has been established in Queensland for quite some time, but it is relatively new in New South Wales and is expanding quite rapidly. I think one of the reasons for the rapid expansion was the way—and this probably allows the environment for the conflict to fester—the previous state government pretty well sold exploration licences willy-nilly right across New South Wales. There is a feeling, I think, in the farming community that this is happening far too quickly and they are losing control of the land that they farm.

The areas where coal seam gas is being explored varies from country around the edges of the Pilliga Scrub to Tarrawanna to the south of that, and from grazing country to some of the most highly productive grain-growing areas in Australia, between Moree and Narrabri.

While I am not opposed to the coal seam gas industry as such, and I believe that there is a place for both farming and coal seam to coexist, I think that we need to have a closer look at the safety aspects of coal seam gas mining. There have been groups who are locking their gates and disengaging from the process. While I can understand the emotion, I honestly do not think that is the best way to go. I think that people need to be engaged. They need everyone involved in this so that we do not get an outcome that is not the best one. I have concerns that some people will disengage from the process and their neighbours will become engaged and then we will end up with industry on one place and not another, affecting the land values.

For the fears to be allayed—and I understand that the technology has come a long way from some of the earlier disasters in Queensland and also that the underlying subterrain is different in nearly every location where coal seam gas is located—the mining companies need to work to get information out as to the safety of their operations and work with landholders so that we are not going to see prime productive land disadvantaged. We do not want to see gas wells spread right across the landscape. If there is a way of having them clustered in treelines, around the edges of hills or in roadways or something like that so they are easily maintained, they are not going to affect the management of the property and, more importantly, they are not going to affect the underground water then there might be a possibility that the two can co-exist in harmony. If the farmers can see that having a gas well on their property is an asset rather than a liability, we might be getting some way to overcoming this problem.

The Senate Standing Committee on Rural Affairs and Transport, which is chaired by Senator Bill Heffernan, has held hearings across Australia and it still is. It has been in Narrabri at my request. It will be reporting before Christmas. We eagerly await the outcome of that inquiry. Also, the member for New England has introduced a bill to
amend the EPBC Act. Last night that was referred to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry. That inquiry will hopefully have a 60-day timeframe. I will be looking very closely at what that committee finds. One of the complaints I get when I go around is that there is too much red tape. We need to be very careful that, with our best intentions in wishing to allay the fears of people, we do not introduce legislation which will actually only be more red tape, will overlay what is actually a state responsibility and in effect will catch out the farmers who the legislation will be trying to help. Indeed, if the EPBC Act is to preserve the landscape, regulations that apply to one must apply to the other. That is a concern to me. (Time expired)

Palestine

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (16:55): On this International Day of Democracy I want to reflect on the fact that Australia will shortly need to decide how it will vote when a motion is put before the United Nations General Assembly seeking recognition of a Palestinian state. Australia was actively involved in the partition plan in the early days of the United Nations, through which it was always intended that the two states of Israel and Palestine would be created. It is also Australian government policy to support a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Israel already is a viable, independent and sovereign state. This is not in doubt or under any threat, notwithstanding the ongoing regional security challenges. The question is simply whether it is now time for the Palestinians to have their own state, for the Palestinians to no longer be stateless persons. Article 1 in both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provide that all peoples have the right of self-determination. Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to their own nationality.

As part of a Swiss initiative to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the universal declaration, a research project on statelessness found:

It is an irrefutable fact that the denial and deprivation of citizenship and the creation of statelessness undermines the promotion of human security understood in the broadest sense as not only violent threats to individuals but also in the context of vulnerabilities caused by poverty, lack of state capacity and various forms of socio-economic and political inequity. The negative effects of denying people their rights to nationality and citizenship are illustrated across the globe where by disenfranchising significant populations, states have sown the seeds for underdevelopment and unrest as, for instance, in Bangladesh and the Great Lakes region of Africa as well as in Palestine and Israel and the surrounding states.

As I witnessed on my recent visit to Palestine as part of a parliamentary study tour, the Palestinian Authority has made great strides in readying institutions of state and security in the West Bank. This institutional progress has been acknowledged by Israel, the EU, the US, the IMF and the World Bank. On the other hand, the isolation and blockade of Gaza has been counterproductive from a security, economic and human development perspective. In my view, the rapprochement between the different Palestinian factions is an opportunity for stability in Gaza and a moderation in approach, while continued isolation will only result in further radicalisation within Gaza and associated impacts on Israel.

Arguably, the readiness for statehood of the Palestinians is greater than was the case when the independent states of East Timor
and, more recently, South Sudan were established. Certainly, the peace is greater than at the time of the Northern Ireland peace agreement brokered by George Mitchell. I do not believe that extremists on either side of this conflict should be allowed to derail the hopes of the vast majority of Israelis and Palestinians for permanent peace. I have heard some people say that they support a two-state solution, but just not now. They say that such a state should arise from negotiations directly between Israelis and Palestinians and not from outside processes. However, statehood itself is not a matter that should be subjected to a negotiation process. The final status issues between the Israelis and Palestinians—namely, final borders, including agreed land swaps, security, settlements, Jerusalem, refugees and water—must certainly be negotiated, and such negotiations should occur as quickly as possible. But this should not affect the principal decision that the Palestinians have their own state, as this is an objective to which the parties themselves and the international community, including Australia, have been dedicated for decades.

It appears that the majority of countries in the world agree, with around 130 countries so far pledging their support to the Palestinians for a yes vote at the UN. What effect would such a UN resolution have? In an article in the Sydney Morning Herald on 3 September, Professor of International Law at the University of Sydney Ben Saul described the situation:

A UN resolution recognising statehood might imply that many countries believe Palestine is, in fact, a state. This would be a powerful indication of global legal opinion. It could help nudge statehood across the line where criteria such as independent government are otherwise uncertain.

Israel claims that a unilateral declaration of statehood would be illegal, because the Oslo Accords of 1993 require negotiation of "permanent status". The Palestinians might argue that Oslo is void because of Israel's long delay (18 years) and bad faith (continuing to build illegal settlements). The recent Kosovo precedent also helps Palestine. It might be remembered that Israel itself unilaterally declared independence, secured by violence.

If Palestine became a state, the game would change. It would instantly delegitimise the Israeli occupation, and have practical effects. A yes vote for Palestine by Australia at the UN would be consistent with long-held bipartisan government policy in support of a two-state solution. It is my hope that resolution of the final status issues would soon follow so that peace may finally come to these two great peoples.

House adjourned at 17:00

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Mr BANDT: to move:
That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) HRL Limited was awarded a $100 million grant in 2007 by the Coalition Government under the Low Emissions Technology Demonstration Fund;

(b) to date, HRL Limited has been unable to meet the pre-conditions of the grant, and no money has been dispersed;

(c) the grant would facilitate the building of a new coal fired power plant, contradicting the current Prime Minister's statement that no new dirty coal fired power plants will be built in Australia;

(d) there are a number of low emission renewable technologies that deserve government support; and

(e) the Australian community strongly supports public funds being used to support the development of renewable technologies; and

(2) calls on the Government to immediately withdraw the grant offer to HRL Limited and allocate the $100 million to the Australian Renewable Energy Authority.
Mr CHAMPION: to move:

That this House notes that:

(1) the industrial system under the *Fair Work Act 2009* is working well with low unemployment and low levels of industrial disputation;

(2) under the *Fair Work Act 2009*, 10 800 agreements have been made covering almost 1.5 million employees;

(3) since the introduction of the Fair Work Act 2009, the number of days lost to industrial action has continued its historical downwards trend; and

(4) the *Fair Work Act 2009* is meeting its objective to balance the needs of employees and employers without taking away basic rights and guaranteed minimum standards.
Thursday, 15 September 2011

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper) took the chair at 09:30.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Maranoa Electorate: Television Reception

Mr BRUCE SCOTT (Maranoa—Second Deputy Speaker) (09:30): I rise this morning to highlight this Labor government's refusal yet again to listen to the concerns of those communities in rural and remote parts of Australia, not only in my electorate but many other parts of rural and remote Australia. I particularly refer to those communities that currently receive their television service under the remote licence area conditions. Just two weeks ago I travelled to the west of my electorate, to Birdsville in fact, with the Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott. We sat down and listened to the councils out there prior to going to enjoy the races. We listened to the community, we had our ears open. This is something this government is not doing when it comes to the switchover from analog to digital television. Senator Conroy particularly just seems to have a blank in front of him on this whole issue.

The councils explained their predicament to us and it was a very graphic description. Under the government's proposal what will happen in that community is that they are going to provide a satellite to private homes to receive digital television and the analog service will be switched off. What that means is that there will no longer be a terrestrial signal, a digital signal, like there will be in the cities and in the big regional towns, which are going to get a terrestrial signal. That means you could pick up your television with an external aerial. These communities are going to be forced to have a satellite dish on their home but there will be no other signal in the community.

On the day we were in Birdsville there were over 6,000 people. That means that this time next year those communities in caravans, Winnebagos and camper vans will not be able to put their television out on the back of a ute, put up the aerial and receive television. Unless they have got a satellite dish that they can tune in to that particular satellite and make sure it does not wobble around and only get a pixelated signal, there will be no signal in the area. What the councils are proposing, and this is the core of the issue, is that they be able to do the rebroadcast themselves, as they have done for years in funding and running the analog rebroadcast system. They would like to use the money that otherwise would be spent on the satellite receiver dish, pool that money and use that to install the necessary equipment to change from analog to digital signal. But the minister says no, he will not allow that. They have to have a satellite dish solution.

The other question they want answered by this minister is the fact that they would like a licence to be able to do this delivered from ACMA. It seems that ACMA do not want to do it and it seems the minister will not do it. These local council areas would in fact fund it and run it themselves. All they want now is the licence. I call on the minister to instruct ACMA to give these councils in remote parts of Australia in my electorate a licence to rebroadcast digital television through a terrestrial signal. (Time expired)

Isaacs Electorate: Wallara Industries and Mentone Primary School

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Cabinet Secretary and Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency) (09:33): Earlier this month I visited Wallara Industries, a
business located in Keysborough in my electorate and which provides 97 jobs to people with a developmental or intellectual disability. Supported by an $800,000 federal government grant funded through the Disability Employment Assistance Program, Wallara Industries is assisting people with an intellectual or developmental disability to undertake productive and meaningful work. Phil Hayes-Brown, the very hard-working CEO, showed me around a supportive and social workplace giving people with disabilities the opportunity to grow through their work. When I visited Wallara I saw more than just people in jobs. I met workers who had never been employed before for whom Wallara Industries was the first employer that was willing to give them a go. The federal government is assisting in these efforts through the Disability Employment Assistance Program. I am proud to be a member of a government which has taken strong measures to improve the lives of disabled members of our community through this program, the Disability (Access to Premises—Buildings) standards, the coming disability insurance scheme and the National Disability Agreement. On the other side of my electorate, on Friday, 26 August, I participated in the Principal for a Day program at Mentone Primary School. It was a privilege to be invited to be the principal, if only for a day, and it gave me the opportunity to see firsthand the technological advances that are transforming primary schools and learning environments for the better. Technology has changed the way we teach and how we learn; adapting to the speed of change presents many challenges to students and teachers. I was pleased to see these challenges being embraced at Mentone Primary. I have had many opportunities to participate in the life of Mentone Primary, from visits to the school and meeting students in Canberra to participating in the school's 120th birthday celebrations in October 2009 and more recently—and on the day I was principal for a day—officially opening the school's senior school learning precinct which was funded by the federal government's Building the Education Revolution program.

Mentone Primary has plenty to be proud of. It has grown from a school of 135 children located in the school's original, single-storey, red brick building to a thriving school of 341 children in 2011. The BER program has been a great success at this school, as with all of the others in my electorate. The four new classrooms and open learning environment have revolutionised teaching practices, allowing teams of teachers and students to work together on targeted learning.

Together with parents and the community, teachers and principals have the privilege to encourage children to think and question, to strengthen their character, to shape behaviour, to foster individuality and to embrace cultural diversity. Each of these characteristics is present at Mentone Primary. I congratulate Chris Chant, Principal, on the success of the school's education program and thank him for allowing me to experience the day-to-day activities at his primary school. I wish to thank the teachers and students who warmly welcomed me into their classrooms. Mentone Primary is a great school.

Riverina Electorate: Water

Mr McCormack (Riverina) (09:36): Family farmers and regional communities are racked with uncertainty about whether or not they have a future. No-one should ever criticise an irrigator while their mouth and stomach are full. Investment is on hold in the Riverina while the water debate drags on and non-strategic buybacks continue. The first response of the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities to further delays in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan draft was to announce more water buybacks. 'I do
not think,’ he said, ‘we can continue to delay getting back into the water market and so I will be talking to the department today about working out how quickly we can get back into the buyback of water.’ The minister would know as well as anyone that the regional Australia committee—and, more importantly, the Independent member for New England, who helps keep the illegitimate government in office—on 2 June handed down 21 worthwhile recommendations, the key of which was No. 7, calling for the immediate cessation of all non-strategic water purchases. When will the minister listen? When will he act? When will he do the right thing by the good people who grow our food and fibre?

Today, there is even more conjecture about water cuts and what the future may hold for family farmers and regional communities. Leaks from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, now due to release its draft in November, foreshadow more drastic cuts to water entitlements. The government will cower behind the fact that the MDBA, now run by former New South Wales Labor minister Craig Knowles, is an independent body. Indeed it is. But what we need now is transparency, not death by a thousand cuts. Griffith’s triweekly newspaper, the Area News, has been understandably strident in its advocacy for a fair and just outcome. This is what Ross Tyson wrote in an editorial in the Area News on Wednesday:

IT WILL take more than a little creative accounting from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) to fool Griffith.

The revised water cut figures obtained by The Area News indicate precious little has changed since the MDBA was run out of town last October.

Griffith saw the guide and its 32 to 43 per cent water cuts last year and told both the Labor government and MDBA what it thought in no uncertain terms.

Eleven months on from that astonishing show of defiance, it appears the community will have no choice but to dust off its placards once again.

The MDBA claims the draft plan, which is slated for release in November, will be light years from the guide that caused so much damage to this city even without the recommendations being implemented.

But the "new" figures being shopped around by the MDBA to various national water stakeholders certainly look an awful lot like the old ones.

The idea of stripping 3000 gigalitres from productive use in irrigation-dependent communities was predicted, in several studies completed over the last year, to have disastrous social and economic consequences.

So it is an absolute insult that after promising to listen to concerns and take on board advice from locals on the ground to then be even entertaining a figure of 2800 gigalitres.

MDBA chairman Craig Knowles will be in Griffith next week to explain the figures to local stakeholders and has urged people not to jump to conclusions until the draft plan is complete.

But since he took over the role from Mike Taylor, this community has given him a fair go—a very fair go, in fact—and it is now time for him to deliver.

Unless Mr Knowles can satisfy the Griffith people that a plan with essentially the same numbers can be substantially different, then any goodwill left will have evaporated forever.

**Holt Electorate: Citizens**

Mr BYRNE (Holt) (09:39): Last night in my adjournment speech I spoke about the people of Holt. I spoke about their willingness and courage to share their hopes and aspirations, their concerns and innermost feelings. The way in which they do that simply never ceases to amaze
me. This morning I wish to extend those sentiments particularly with respect to the constituent I mentioned last night, Mr Ron Webb of Cranbourne. When I spoke to him last week, he hit the nail on the head when he talked about people's general disposition right now both in the electorate and more broadly. In his own words, he has lived 'a good, chequered life.' He was raised in Fitzroy during World War II in what were then considered slums. His life was shaped by his travels around Victoria and, indeed, around the world through various backpacking trips he undertook as a young man and through career related travel later in life. Ron has worked in industries including utility companies, manufacturing plants and quarries in the south-east of Melbourne. Ron was instrumental in establishing the local Caribbean markets in Scoresby. In the early days, the markets consisted of a handful of people selling wares from car boots and attracted shoppers from the waterski shows. Fast forward to today: the markets have, I think, 1,000 stalls and they operate three days a week in Scoresby.

More recently, Ron has become involved in the Grace Church of Wantirna and he has been involved in humanitarian missions abroad, such as in Thailand. Ron is old enough to recall the days when you had to drop a penny into a gas metre for a shower; but this by no means reflects his attitude on his retirement. At age 73, he tells me that he has never stopped learning and he is even starting to learn Mandarin with a few fellow parishioners at the Grace Church. Disturbingly, Ron was keen to revisit my first speech in parliament more than 11 years ago—particularly the notion that suggested that this should be Australia's century. This was a natural segue for Ron to explain his perspective on modern Australia through his rich personal experiences. Ron has put forward his view—and he wanted me to communicate this to the House—that humility is what is missing around the world and that as long as people are prepared to listen, we do have the capacity to create a greater world. I can assure Ron that these sentiments will be heard loudly and clearly in this House.

Ron also spoke about the importance of recording the stories of his life for the betterment of his family and his community so that they could learn about his experiences. Ron's story is an extraordinary one, and the meeting was nothing short of moving. I warmly welcome all people from my electorate to do the same as Ron did—and as many other people who have walked through my doors have done throughout the years. Their individual perspectives make up a patchwork that represents a collective identity that I am proud to be part of and proud to represent in this place. It is the collective spirit of the people in Holt that I constantly draw my inspiration from. Their courage when they share their stories with me, baring their souls, certainly makes it worth representing them in this place.

**Carbon Pricing**

**Mr HAASE (Durack) (09:42):** On 16 August 2010, the Prime Minister said, 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.' On 13 September 2011, the Prime Minister said: … the best way is to make polluters pay by putting a price on carbon. So that is the policy of the Government I lead. And that is the plan which is before the House now.

... … ...

Today we move from words to deeds. This Parliament is going to get this done. There will be a price on carbon from 1 July 2012.

In 13 months to the day, almost, what an about-face! During her speech in parliament to introduce the toxic tax, Ms Gillard said:
I firmly believe no stone remains unturned, no voice unheard. Prime Minister, no stone has been turned and no voice has been heard in Durack. Previously, the Prime Minister said that she would wear out her shoe leather explaining the government's carbon tax. On 8 July 2011, I sent a letter to the Prime Minister requesting her to visit Durack to explain the carbon tax. I even gave her a list of 25 towns to choose from. As yet, I have had no reply.

It is truly hard to fathom how the powerhouse of the nation, the electorate of Durack, is not deemed to be worth a scratch on the shiny leather shoes of Ms Gillard. This is further evidence of a government not listening to the people of Australia. The federal Labor government is like the proverbial bull at a gate: ramming through parliament a toxic tax for which they have no mandate. Five months of committees and an election saw the introduction of the GST, yet we have had no reasonable consultation for the carbon tax. This government has a record of monumental incompetence when it comes to program delivery, and that is why there must be proper scrutiny of this massive change to our economy. Scrutiny of the 18 pieces of legislation is not something the current government is allowing the people of Australia. The federal Labor government has given opposition members an average of one minute per member per bill for debate. This is not genuine debate and it is certainly not in accord with the concept of democracy. We have seen the debacles that are this government's programs: home insulation, Green Loans, GroceryWatch, cash for clunkers and the doomed education revolution that wasted money hand over fist. We have seen the waste and the rorting. We were told: 'Everything's in hand; don't worry. Let us get on with the job.' We did, and look what happened. This government and taxpayers' money do not make for frugal economics. If there is one single most significant thing this government could do today for manufacturing, retailing—for so many sectors of the economy that are under pressure—it would be to stand by its promise and drop this massive economy-wide tax. We have the most incompetent government introducing the most complex new tax. That is clearly a recipe for disaster. Analysis by the Western Australian Treasury shows that over half of WA households will be worse off under the carbon tax, clearly showing that the Gillard government's proposed compensation will not fully compensate households for an increase in the cost of living. If this government has any mandate, it is a mandate not to introduce this carbon tax.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper): I was loathe to interrupt the honourable member for Durack, but I would commend to him the provisions of standing order 64: he ought to refer to the Prime Minister by her title.

Blair Electorate: Somerset Civic Centre

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (09:46): Last week, I had the great privilege of announcing $2 million worth of funding to the Somerset Regional Council to build the new Somerset Civic Centre. I congratulate the council and the Ipswich and West Moreton RDA committee for their submission and their work. The new civic centre, in Esk, comes out of the twin tragedies of fire and flood, replacing the century-old Lyceum Hall, which was tragically burnt down in May last year. The Somerset Civic Centre will not only be a cultural hub but operate as an evacuation centre for a region that was devastated by floods this year. This vital centre is funded under the Regional Development Australia Fund, which has delivered $150 million to 35 projects in regions like Somerset in my electorate of Blair—regional projects worth $418 million, projects that local government, local businesses and local communities could never

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have delivered on their own. The Somerset Council's $4.4 million, 350-seat capacity civic centre will be a community and cultural hub.

I remember when, back in July 1975, Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam opened Ipswich Civic Centre—it was a proud moment in my city's history. So it was with incredible pride that I, as the federal member, delivered $3.3 million to the Ipswich City Council under the Better Regions Program in 2009. Included in that important funding for the performing arts in Ipswich was $1.5 million for the refurbishment of the iconic Ipswich Civic Centre. I cannot tell you how many events I have been to at Ipswich Civic Centre. It is a place where locals celebrate, where they come to meet and where they perform. I have never actually performed at Ipswich Civic Centre, but the centre has had a long history of staging wonderful eisteddfods and theatrical and musical performances—events that celebrate talent within our region. Today, these civic centres are much more. They have the capacity to be regional entertainment centres hosting international and local acts. In addition to this, civic centres such as Somerset Civic Centre function as evacuation centres and places where people meet in times of natural disaster.

Last week, I opened the Karalee State School's $3 million performing arts and resource centre, funded under the Labor government's very successful Building the Education Revolution. This is an impressive resource and features one building with two centres: one is a library and the other a performing arts centre, with retractable seating for 140 people, state-of-the-art lighting and sound, and gallery hanging space. This resource will build on the school's already impressive arts focus. I know a lot of people assume that BER projects simply built multipurpose halls, but the reality is that schools like Karalee State School had their project tailored to meet the school's needs. These are important community resources, and you will find that the centre is, essentially, Karalee's own civic centre.

We have come a long since 1975, but our civic centres still connect communities. They are cultural and social hubs in our communities, and I am proud to be part of a federal Labor government that invests in these vital community and civic centres. (Time expired)

**Herbert Electorate: Blakey's Crossing**

Mr Ewen Jones (Herbert) (09:49): I can see it now: bunting festoons the podium, Townsville Mayor Les Tyrell takes the three short steps up to the microphone, taps the microphone to see if it is on and then proudly cuts the ribbon to a flash of camera light bulbs as he declares that Blakey's Crossing has finally been flood proofed. Alas, it is but a dream; that has not happened. We are coming to the end of another dry season, and this has not come true as yet.

Just $21 million would ensure that the major industrial artery between Garbutt and the Bohle is kept open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Twenty-one million dollars is a lot of money but not when you compare it to the $70 million it would take to build a flyover over the Mather Street roundabout, which would just shift the problem from Mather Street to Duckworth Street, where we would have to spend another $70 million on another flyover there, which would just shift the problem to the Pilkington Street roundabout, where you would have to spend another $70 million on that roundabout.

The state government has pulled over $100 million in land tax alone from the industrial development along Ingham Road. All governments of all persuasions have ignored this small,
relatively inexpensive stretch of road. I was able to get a commitment from Tony Abbott and the coalition to finally fix Blakey's Crossing. I was able to do that by demonstrating the cost of the alternatives and the economic benefits of fixing Blakey's Crossing. I did that by explaining how much time, energy, fuel and money is wasted by having to make the detour around this small stretch of road.

I acknowledge that the Labor government did not make this commitment during last year's campaign but, come on: for just $21 million you will have the thanks of all North Queenslanders. We have just had the Prime Minister in Townsville and she has made a promise of $150 million over three years for roads. Can we just get this fixed? We have had the current state Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure, Mr Craig Wallace, come up and offer, somewhat disingenuously, to go halves with the Townsville City Council in this job. Can I ask that the federal government offer to take up that offer on behalf of the people of Townsville and pay half and accept Minister Wallace's offer and get this job done? That would make it a little over $10 million each—less than a quarter of the cost of the World Cup bid, less than a third of what the state government is spending on its bid for the Gold Coast to host the Commonwealth Games, and about five hours of a day's borrowing by this government.

We are coming into another wet season and it looks like it is going to be another big one. Every time Blakey's floods it will be a failure of both state and federal governments. And it will be the working men and women of North Queensland who will be paying. It will be the residents of our northern beaches who will pay. Please fix this.

Makin Electorate: Trades Training Centres

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (09:52): On Friday, 12 August, I attended the opening of the new maths, science and electronics trade training education facilities at Para Hills High School, Salisbury East High School and the joint campus electronics trades training centre at Golden Grove High School. The Golden Grove centre serves as a joint campus facility for the co-located schools of Golden Grove High School, Pedare Christian College and Gleeson College. All of those schools now have modern, state of the art maths, science and electronics learning facilities. For students and teachers at those schools and in the region, these new facilities will make a huge difference to secondary school education outcomes and career opportunities.

The IT electronics and advanced manufacturing sectors have been, and continue to be, of vital importance to the South Australian economy and to the creation of employment opportunities. Many of these industry sectors are centred around the RAAF defence facilities and DSTO complex at Edinburgh, Technology Park and the University of South Australia at Mawson Lakes, and the GMH automotive plant at Elizabeth. Over the years, the growth of these sectors has created considerable new job opportunities. The lack of suitably educated students from the region, particularly in the fields of maths and science, has meant the new jobs that have been created have been taken up by suitably qualified people from elsewhere.

In recent years local high schools, the University of South Australia at Mawson Lakes and the defence and manufacturing industry sectors have been working collaboratively in engaging local students in the maths and science based career paths. The new science based facilities at the Para Hills High, Salisbury East High and Golden Grove Joint Campus provide an invaluable boost to that goal. The facilities will not only enable the students to gain practical, hands-on experience in the science fields but will also very likely attract more
students into this area of education. What was just as inspiring as the new facilities was that at each school the staff were outstanding educators and mentors for the students. It is very encouraging to see at the schools representatives from industry and from the University of South Australia, who have taken a keen interest in the development of the new school maths and science centres and who will undoubtedly continue to work in partnership with the schools to create rewarding career opportunities for the students.

I take this opportunity to commend the principals of each of the schools: Janette Scott from Para Hills High School; Sue George Duiff from Salisbury East High School; Phil Lewis from Gleeson College; Michael Millard from Pedare Christian College; and Paul Wilson from Golden Grove High School. I also thank their respective school council members for making the decision to pursue these facilities for their schools and, in doing so, responding to the future needs of the region and supporting the best outcomes for young people within their schools. All of these new facilities were only made possible because of the government's BER funding. All delivered value for money, all have provided education facilities relevant to today's needs and all will serve not only today's generation of students but students for years to come.

Education

Mr TUDGE (Aston) (09:55): The government's so-called education revolution is not working. The international PISA survey of students' academic achievements show that Australia is going backwards in some subjects and is standing still in others. The NAPLAN results released last week confirm this: almost half of the 20 categories of results showed declines since 2008.

We have no excuse. Our country has been prosperous, free and harmonious for such a long time, so our children should be at the top. The government is focused on the wrong areas. Computers in schools, overpriced school halls, national curriculum and plans to cut the funding of non-government schools will not have a substantial impact on education attainment. Decades of research show that it is teacher quality that matters.

To lift Australian education, we must recruit high quality people into teaching. Then we must give principals autonomy to properly manage their workforce, just like any other leader of a well-functioning, people based organisation. In recent years, the government has been releasing policies that sound like they aim to achieve these goals; but the government goes weak on promising ideas and creates turgid bureaucratic rules when simplicity is required.

Let us first look at recruitment. Finland, Singapore and South Korea are world leaders largely because they got recruitment right. But it is not bureaucratically mandated standards for teacher education that determine the quality of the graduates. Causation runs the other way: the quality of the applicants sets the limits for the quality of teacher training. The national professional standards for teachers and principals, which the government announced this year, are likely to be too vague, generalised and centrally controlled to be useful. Minister Garrett's other announcement, Empowering Local Schools, is the right idea but the implementation is tortuously slow—comprising only 10 per cent of schools by 2013—and fails on the most important point, which is to let each school recruit its teachers.

So what is to be done? Governments need to develop new policies for rebuilding the prestige of the teaching profession and allow autonomous schools to function more like other
people-intensive organisations. We need to make admission to demanding teacher training programs selective. The world's top performing school systems only recruit from the top 20 to 30 per cent of high school leavers. This should be matched in Australia. We also need to introduce absolute requirements of applicants, not only relative ones. Salaries, performance pay and retention bonuses are important to attract the best people and minimise people attrition, but most important is the overall raising of the status of the profession.

We also need to open up alternative pathways into teaching, such as the Teach for Australia program, which I am proud to have been involved in helping establish. Other pathways should be explored to attract top-calibre graduates. Most importantly, we need to give Australian school principals autonomy to manage and develop their teaching staff. School leaders should be able to recruit the right mix of graduates from highly selective teacher training programs and other initiatives such as Teach for Australia. There needs to be regular appraisal, which helps teachers to improve. Principals need to be in control of this and in control of performance pay and promotion. Critically, when teachers do not perform, principals must be allowed to dismiss them quickly.

Australian schools need strong political leadership. Accept the brightest students into teacher training and give school leaders the power to hire, fire, lead evaluation, and promote and decide performance pay. Now, that would be a revolution. (Time expired)

**Business Women Connect**

*Ms O’NEILL* (Robertson) (09:58): I want to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate Kim Williams, as director, and also the Central Coast Business Women Connect on their work in bringing networking and innovation to the business and professional women of my electorate.

Business Women Connect provides leading business women with a much needed and valuable forum to facilitate business and personal development. Professional business women, large and small business owners, public and private sector executives, managers and salespeople all benefit from Business Women Connect. This unique business networking opportunity is specifically designed for successful and up-and-coming business women who strive to develop themselves and their businesses and to offer their mentorship and guidance to other women. Just last week, the Minister for Employment Participation and Childcare and Minister for the Status of Women, Kate Ellis, addressed more than 100 business and professional women at a lunch on the Central Coast. Also in attendance were Councillor Vicki Scott and the Status of Women Committee of the Gosford City Council. Minister Ellis mentioned that in all of her travels around Australia this was the first time she had met such a body working for women within a local council structure—and they do a very fine job. I also acknowledge the presence there of Barbara Hunter, who has been a long-time leader in the Gosford chapter of the Business and Professional Women's Association. It was great to see these agencies together in one space on that particular day.

Last week's lunch exemplified the benefits that can be experienced when women in the business and community sectors work together to expand the opportunities available to all women across the coast. The jewel in the crown of Business Women's Connect is the Central Coast Women in Business Awards. Every year, recognition is given to women in a number of categories for their ongoing work in the business, community, professional and education sectors.
Today I would like to recognise and congratulate some of this year's award finalists. Business Women's Connect provides a great mentoring role for young businesswomen on the coast. I would like to recognise Rachel Davis of Beyond Your Balance and Erin McNab of Aspyre Natural Hair and Beauty as finalists for the Young Achiever Award. Congratulations to Michelle Allen of Webstuff.biz, Maidie Anne Dodd of JessEmma Equestrian Centre and Sue Henry of the Small Business Accelerator for their nominations in the Women in Business Award.

I would also like to recognise great local women Audrey Taggart of the Australian Plant Society, Nada Potter of Chertsey Primary School Schools as Community Centres and Tania Gurney of Gurney Financial Services for their continued great work in the community sector and recognition of this service through their nomination for the Gosford City Council & Wyong Shire Council Women in Community Service Award for 2011. I very much look forward to celebrating with the winners a little later this year when the finalists gather to celebrate their success and acknowledge excellence by women on the Central Coast.

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE

United States of America: Terrorist Attacks

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (10:02): 11 September 2001 was, without doubt, a day that changed the world. Although terrorism itself was not a new phenomenon, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the crashed plane in Pennsylvania, have come to symbolise what is terrorism. It is easy to see why—the sight of two of the most iconic towers in the Western world burning, knowing that they were full of innocent citizens, strikes fear and sadness into the hearts of those who see that image. It frightens us. It causes terror and, at the end of the day, that is the sole aim of terrorists.

Before September 11, we lived in a world in which a Boeing 747 was not a missile; a train was transport, not a potential high-speed weapon; an unaccompanied backpack was simply thought to be carelessly left behind by a distracted traveller; and a nightclub was not thought to be an ideal place for a strategically planned inferno. These are thoughts that will now forever be at the back of our minds, thoughts that constantly creep into our conscience. That is how September 11 truly changed the world we knew. For the first time, the attacks in which innocent people were dying were delivered straight into our living rooms in real time. The world stopped. Everyone remembers what they were doing and where they were when they watched these life-changing events unfold.

These attacks moved terms like 'terrorism', 'insurgency' and 'al-Qaeda' out of the realm of foreign policy and into our everyday vocabulary. It made the world seem like a much smaller place. World issues that were once only the problems of faraway lands were now right on our doorsteps. In that way, it shattered some of the West's remaining innocence; it made us question whether we were safe in our own homes. The attacks themselves were not just physical but a carefully planned message to strengthen their impact—'You are no longer safe.' On this day, 11 September 2001, 9-11, the Twin Towers—the symbol of world trade and modernity in the centre of one of the great cities of the world—were destroyed. Australia did not stand idly by when the time came to defend the values that were attacked that day. We understood that this was not just an attack on America but an attack on a way of life, a way of life that we too live by. This was even further apparent one year after the September 11
attacks, with the Bali bombings of 2002. We have been steadfast in our resolve and it is easy to see why President Obama wrote a particular letter of thanks to Australia on this 10th anniversary, one of only three written to nations around the world. In part, it read that Australia's support was shown immediately in the 'heartfelt words of support and sympathy on that day' by former Prime Minister John Howard, who was in Washington at the time.

A generation has grown up in the 10 years since September 11. Those who were children struggling to understand in 2001 have been through high school and university in the age of terror. They still travel, still embrace the world's opportunities, but they do so while family members are justifiably more anxious about their safety. Before 2001, a terrorist attack would have been the last worry on a parent's mind as their child travelled to New York, London, Madrid or Bali. Since 2001 that has changed. It has changed because of the lives that were lost: 3,559 souls in the September 11 attacks alone, including 10 Australians—lives changed forever, lives never forgotten. We have heard their stories. At the end they rang their loved ones. In their last moments, no petty grievance mattered, no material wealth brought joy. All they wanted to do was say 'I love you' one last time.

This year, on the 10th anniversary of the attacks, we saw the world come together to remember. We came together to remember those who fell. We came together to remember the New York firefighters and police officers who risked their lives to save others, and to remember the city and the nation which were shocked to the core by these attacks. We came together to stand beside them to show them that they are not alone. We believe in the values that were attacked that day: freedom, faith and unity, living a life of opportunity and reward, a life in which we maintain hope, living a life free of fear.

It is timely to recognise our courageous service men and women who are today still putting their lives on the line in Afghanistan to continue the battle against terrorism and to protect those values for us all. It is timely to remember the 192 of our country men and women who have been injured, and the 29 who have paid the ultimate price with their lives. This is why we continue to show that terrorism has not won. It may have changed our lives forever but we have all shown that our resolve is stronger, that we are resilient, because we have faith in freedom and because we remember those that we love.

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter—Chief Government Whip) (10:08): I rise to make a brief contribution to this important debate on one of the most significant events most of us have seen in our lifetime. It is one of those events for which all of us remember where we were when those planes hit the World Trade Center in New York. I remember it very vividly. I was on my way to a 6 am boxing class at my local gym and they were talking about it on the radio in the minutes leading up to six o'clock. I had to wait till I entered the gym and saw the footage on the television screens before I understood exactly what it was that the radio commentators were talking about. They were running commentary, assuming knowledge of what it was they were commenting on, and it was hard for me to put the jigsaw together, but on entering the gym and seeing the vision on the television screens I became very aware of the gravity of the events that had taken place overnight, our time. These were tragic events, events that led to the loss of a couple of thousand lives, including 10 Australians, and events that touched Australians everywhere. Whether they were in New York on that date, in Australia or anywhere else around the world, they quickly came to an understanding of the gravity of what was unfolding in New York that morning.
It is easy for us, 10 years on, to fall into the trap of believing that terrorism began on 11 September 2001. Of course, it did not. We had been living with terrorism and terrorist threats for many, many years before that—indeed, depending on how you measure it, for centuries before that. Munich, for example, always stands out in my mind. Those who like to cast their minds back to the 2000 Olympics in Sydney will remember how tight the security was then because of the fear of a terrorist attack of some sort. So 11 September 2001 does not mark the arrival of terrorism in Australia, but certainly it is the point at which terrorism became very much part of our daily conversation.

Events in Bali, Jakarta and, to a lesser extent for Australians, London and Madrid have reinforced in all of our minds the constant presence of the threat of terrorism. Indeed, it is a very real threat. Sadly, in the course of the decades and, arguably, the centuries it has too often had its roots in religion and differences in ideology. Stemming from that are extreme views about some of those ideologies.

I am indebted—I think we are all indebted—to the work of two academics, John Mueller and Mark Stewart, who is from the University of Newcastle, for the work they have done recently on the cost of our response to September 11. Their basic thesis poses the question of whether we overreacted and overspent in our response to terrorism, and whether, in economic terms at least, that has been money well and efficiently spent. I praise them for their work. I think it is an excellent piece of work; empirically speaking, I think it is almost without challenge. But I do want to make the point that, while their work is empirically and economically sound, it really is difficult to measure the cost of a human life. It is not something that I believe economists are able to do. I think that is where their work breaks down, in a sense. Of course, the other question is: what should we not have funded in our response to the events of 2001? And what would have been the result of not funding part of that response? Importantly, I think that is something that we must keep in mind.

Throughout this debate, we remember those who are still fighting under our flag in Afghanistan. We are in Afghanistan because of the events—at least, initially—of 9-11 in 2001. That connection remains a very strong one. I think it is important to remind ourselves of the need to finish our work there and to ensure that Afghanistan does not again become a breeding ground and launching pad for those prepared to perpetuate acts of terrorism around the world, including against Australians.

I join with the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and all those who have made a contribution to this debate. This is a very, very sad anniversary. There are many lessons for all of us to take from it. I think an important one is the question of foreign aid, and this feeds into the question we have had on our minds constantly in this place in recent days and weeks—the question of those seeking asylum. The reality is that Australia takes a very small proportion of the global flows of refugees. It is a difficult challenge for all the countries dealing with that issue but, at the end of the day, we would not have flows of refugees if as an international community, as a global community, we did more to prevent the source of problems in the first place, whether that is famine, civil conflicts or state-to-state conflicts. There are too many of those flashpoints around the world at the moment and there have been in recent years.

I find it a little bit intriguing that the same people who complain about us being too humane, compassionate and generous towards refugees are the same people who tend to oppose us investing in foreign aid. That is an obvious contradiction. I believe that, while our
own foreign aid contribution has been rising in recent years—and that is welcome—in a perfect world at least we are nowhere near where we could be in our contribution to foreign aid, nor indeed are the wealthy nations we sit in conference with on a regular basis.

We must come to the understanding and realisation, without being overambitious, that the best way to deal with the flow of refugees is to ensure we do not have a flow of refugees, and the best way to ensure that is the case is to invest more heavily in economic development, in the development of governance in developing nations and in science regarding droughts, food crises and starvation—for example, in African nations. We need to ensure that we do all we can to spread democracy in developing countries and ensure we do not have despots around the globe imposing acts of terror on their own people. Of all the things we could learn from September 11, I think that rates very highly.

I take this opportunity again to extend my condolences and sympathy to all the people who were touched by September 11. By that I mean all the people who knew someone who was killed or injured in the events of September 11. Of course, collectively, we all hope and pray that we never see events like that again in our lifetime.

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies) (10:17): I too join with my colleagues in speaking to this motion commemorating the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11 in 2001. In his book The New Vichy Syndrome, Theodore Dalrymple writes about the profound malaise that haunts Europe. It traces the malaise back to the two great conflicts of the last century, with their disastrous though understandable effects upon self-confidence. According to Dalrymple, Europeans no longer believe in anything other than personal economic security, an increased standard of living, shorter working hours and long vacations at exotic locations. As a result, according to the author, they are not in a frame of mind to face the challenges before them, whether that is increased Islamic penetration or economic competition from the rest of the world.

What makes Dalrymple's analysis relevant to this motion marking the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001 is his description of the mood that developed between the two great wars. Using popularly acclaimed plays of the day, he describes how intellectual reflection on the Great War changed and created a mood of disillusionment in Britain such that an indisputable orthodoxy was established. I quote:

… the very success of this revaluation of the meaning of war … must have made it very difficult for politicians, had they felt so inclined, to face up to Hitler by military means, even when the means needing to be employed were minor … so the re-evaluation of the war helped to make inevitable yet another even larger and more terrible war.

This was in Britain and France, which had succeeded in the Great War. As he concludes:

In Germany, disillusion bred a mad militarism; in Britain and France, a blind pacifism.

The consequences are well-known: the rise of the Third Reich, Chamberlain's attempted appeasement, Hitler's march into Prague, the Vichy regime in France and the horrible conflict that was the Second World War.

I mention Dalrymple's analysis as there is a possibility that a re-evaluation of the conflicts the West has been engaged in over the past decade will result in a similar mood. The portents are already visible in the analysis of some: Iraq was unnecessary, the Afghan conflict will end
in a quagmire. Hence, a new pacifism could emerge, placing a brake on reasonable, proportionate and necessary responses to ongoing conflict and terror.

How we respond in the coming years will shape the events of the future. That is why this motion is not just about the events of 9-11; it is also about our future. It should not be forgotten that 10 Australians were killed on 9-11 in a war on the West that has played out in various places: London, Madrid, Bali and Mumbai amongst others. Nor should it be forgotten that at least five serious terrorist plots have been prevented by Australian authorities since 2001. Yet we hear voices that are more critical of the West's response than of the actions of Islamist terrorists and that are calling for a new pacifism. We hear complaints about the length of the West's response, as if this is simply conventional warfare, ignoring the fact that our enemies are united more by identity and less by geography.

This is not a war against Islam; it is a war against totalitarianism. Regrettably, totalitarianism has reared its ugly head in every era of history. It is not confined to any one group. Only vigilance about our values of human dignity and human freedom, the values that underlie Western civilisation, and a preparedness to confront totalitarianism will preserve us from the consequences of indifference and inaction. I join with my colleagues in sending my condolences to all the victims of those terrible attacks on 9-11.

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (10:21): I have had the opportunity while in the chair, and sometimes in my office, to follow the contributions of some of my colleagues in this response. It has been a moving experience. Nobody listening to all those contributions could doubt the great sincerity and humanity of our colleagues in this place, which I think is something we sometimes lose sight of. I am pleased to be able to join in that and to acknowledge the member for Menzies, who preceded me.

It is not by design, but I want to acknowledge that I am making my contribution to the response to the statements by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition on the 10th anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks on this day, which is UN International Day of Democracy. I think it is important that we all take time to celebrate and commit to the expansion, flourishing and protection of democracy across the world. It is particularly pertinent to the challenges that face us post-September 11. No doubt those who instigated these acts sought to undermine the great values of the Free World. I welcome, therefore, the opportunity to speak on this important motion which commemorates that fateful day in September 2001.

As with so many other momentous days in modern history, each of us can recall exactly what we were doing when that first plane hit the north tower of the World Trade Center at 8.46 am, New York time. I certainly recall what I was doing: I was watching an episode of *The West Wing* on Channel 9. I recall a newsflash appearing on the screen, and at first I thought it was part of the show. Then Jim Waley appeared, announcing that a horrific accident had taken place in New York and that more details were to come. Like many others who have contributed to this response, I at first thought it was an accident, and a bewildering one. *The West Wing* episode concluded and the nightly news appeared again to report on this horrific air crash in New York City. I recall quite clearly seeing the thick black smoke billowing from the top half of the north tower, then, right before my eyes, seeing the second airliner crash into the south tower and explode into flames. Like many others, as I remember those events I can still feel the goose bumps we all felt across the world as we observed that.
During this time the true horror of what we were seeing began to dawn on us. I, like many others, stayed glued to the news, flicking from channel to channel until the very early hours of the morning. The horror dawned of seeing three buildings collapse upon themselves within the space of 102 minutes. It was hard to believe. As if this were not enough, further news reports came that another airliner had crashed into the Pentagon. Then more news, that another plane had crashed into a field in Pennsylvania. This last plane, it was speculated, was headed for Washington, to crash into a significant place there—the White House or the US Capitol, for example.

Four planes filled with innocent civilians were used by terrorists as missiles. The last plane, which crashed in Pennsylvania, was brought down by the heroic efforts of its passengers, who refused to allow the terrorists’ plans to succeed. How many lives that were saved by that action is incalculable. Sadly, this horror killed nearly 3,000 people—mostly civilians, going about the normal beginning of just another work day. Office workers were killed as well as managers and chief executives, restaurant workers and cleaners, and emergency responders—firefighters, ambulance, paramedics and police—innocent people, all of them, murdered by extremists. And of course 11 Australians were murdered on that fateful day. People from 90 countries were killed on that day.

It is said that there are six degrees of separation in this world and in some way we are all connected to everyone else. September 11, 2001 touched us all because all of us seem to know of someone who lost a loved one or was connected to someone who did. At the time of the first anniversary of this terrible event, I was in the middle of the Cunningham by-election, which was to be held on 19 October. My campaign team included Kirsten Andrews. Kirsten's close friend, Andrew Knox, was killed in the collapse of the World Trade Center. It was a hard time on that first anniversary for Kirsten, and I want to draw people's attention to a very moving tribute that Kirsten wrote to Andrew, which was published on the 'The Drum' on the ABC website last week.

Even worse, not long after remembering the first anniversary, the second experience with a disgraceful terrorist bombing occurred a week before the Cunningham by-election in 2002. On 12 October next year Australians will commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Bali bombing. Again, terrorist extremists claimed the innocent lives of 202 people: 88 Australians perished, as did 38 Indonesians. Two hundred and forty people were injured in those cowardly, murderous bomb blasts. A friend and colleague of mine, Tania Brown, was in Bali at the time. We were all touched in one way or another by terrorist activities.

In September and October 2009, as part of a parliamentary delegation to the United States, I had the opportunity to visit New York City. I have to say New York City is a fantastic place—it is indeed the city that never sleeps. I had the privilege of visiting the Tribute World Trade Center Visitor Centre located on Liberty Street. Across the street from the centre lay Ground Zero. Visiting the centre was extremely emotional. Its exhibits were heartbreaking and initially I found it hard to convince myself to continue through the whole exhibit. At the beginning, there was an almost entirely melted aluminium window frame from one of the downed planes. There was a battered and torn safety uniform of a dead firefighter. There was a twisted steel beam, torn as if it were a piece of paper, from one of the World Trade Center towers. It all brought home just how devastating the collapses were.
The most haunting and emotional exhibition of all for me was the one showing the nearly 3,000 faces of the victims of September 11, 2001. I shall never forget the faces of those innocent people. I shall also never forget the cracking, emotional voice of Mr Lee Ielpi, a retired firefighter and one of the founders of the Tribute World Trade Center Visitor Centre, as he told us the story of September 11 and his two firefighting sons. Both, as was their civic duty, risked life to try to help and save the lives of others. Both went into harm's way, into the burning, shattered and tortured World Trade Center towers. Only one son returned. The other died, another victim of that day. I shall also not forget the last room at the centre, where visitors are given the opportunity to write down on postcards to display around the walls how they feel about the exhibits and their experience. I just want to mention one message left by an Indonesian man. He wrote the words 'war' and 'peace'. 'War' was written on the upper portion and 'peace' was written on the lower portion of his postcard. But he left the letter A out of each of them and an A floated in the centre of the postcard. The remainder of his message was simple but powerful. He had written, 'We have only one letter A. It is we who will decide where we will put it.' I can think of no better way to conclude that visit to the centre and to conclude my brief remarks on this solemn motion. All of us, I am sure, prefer peace but sometimes we must fight a war against terrorism and all it represents to secure it. I will finish by saying that we should also take time today to pay our respects to those who have lost their lives in this battle and to their friends and loved ones as well.

Mr McCormack (Riverina) (10:30): We can all remember where we were and what we were doing when we first heard about or perhaps even saw the terrible 9/11 terrorism tragedy, an event which changed the course of world history. I heard on the television news about the first plane, American Airlines Flight 11, crashing into the World Trade Center's north tower. To my horror, I then watched on the live telecast the second plane, United Airlines Flight 175, going straight into the south tower.

As editor of the Daily Advertiser newspaper at Wagga Wagga, I headed straight back to the office. As many of the other newspapers, certainly the country editions, had already gone to press, I knew it was the job of the Daily Advertiser to bring our readers the awful reality of the breaking news. The Daily Advertiser published a special late edition wraparound and then printed a rare afternoon edition to cover the moments of madness. The accompanying editorial, written within hours of the horrors which unfolded half a world away but in reality so close to home, summed up the feelings then and the words still ring true today. Headed 'My God, why did this have to happen?', I wrote this:

Hell on earth. The worst acts of terrorism against mankind were perpetrated overnight.

As people awake this morning to the devastating and frightening news of the sickening events in the United States of America just hours ago, the world stands on the brink of another awful war.

The retaliation by America, its heart ripped out by the series of attacks, will be swift and deadly.

The land of the free and the home of the brave will not take such an assault on its nation and its people without a reply of unbelievable military might.

The US believes in democracy, freedom and prides itself on being the world's superpower and policemen.

What happened last night was a calculated, murderous and savage campaign of terror, the likes of which have never been witnessed on this planet.
The ramifications of such an all-out use of force against America will be far-reaching and will, undoubtedly, change the course of human history.

Indeed, history was changed forever last night.

World peace has never been in such a fragile state.

Not when Archduke Franz Ferdinand was gunned down in Sarajevo in 1914, not when Adolf Hitler's tanks rolled into Poland in 1939, not when President John F Kennedy stood ready to overthrow Fidel Castro's Cuban Government in the 1961 Bay of Pigs crisis.

The date September 11, 2001, will forever be blotted ... a date of infamy branded on the consciences of a bereaved nation, a bereaved world.

To say the world will never be the same is surely an understatement.

What will transpire in the days, weeks, months and maybe even years to come is anyone's guess but sadly it will involve untold heartache, misery and unprecedented retribution.

The thoughts and prayers of all those able to comprehend the tragedy and enormity of this horrible day must go out to the countless thousands of innocent victims.

Will it ever be possible to know how many died so one group of inhumane killers could vent its will against global peace?

Sadly, one has to ask how a country—the US—which can send people into space to live in orbit around the Earth, which can develop and mass produce such a powerful communication device as the internet, which can spy on, listen in on and know so much about anyone and everyone it cares to carry out surveillance upon, can be so ill-prepared and not know in advance of such a calamitous event as this?

Why is this so?

Indeed, why was it so? We should have been better prepared, but how can you ready a nation for something such as this? No one could have imagined that anyone, no matter how deep their hatred of the freedom so cherished in Western civilisation, would be mad enough or bad enough to do such a thing. We now know differently. If it was an attempt to strike fear into the Western world and everything that civilised people represent, it backfired. The world is a far different place than it was a decade ago—not necessarily an altogether better place and not necessarily an altogether safer place, but a different place. Some of the globe's worst evil-doers are gone or on the run. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the 'Butcher of Baghdad', is dead, as is Osama bin Laden, the founder of al-Qaeda, the jihadist organisation responsible for the September 11 attacks and many other mass-casualty attacks against civilian and military targets. Muammar Gaddafi, former autocratic ruler of Libya, has recently been overthrown. The United Nations has referred the massacres of unarmed civilians to the International Criminal Court, which on 27 June issued arrest warrants for Gaddafi.

The Bali bombings, one year and one day after 9/11, resulted in the deaths of 202 people, including 88 Australians. Of those, three were from the Riverina—all fresh-faced young men in the prime of their lives. Killed were David Mavroudis, age 29, whose parents, John and Colleen, used to live across the street in my home town of Wagga Wagga; Clint Thompson, 29, of Leeton; and Shane Walsh-Till, a mate of mine, who was 32 and from Coolamon. The cowardly, heinous, senseless acts of bastardry in Bali resolved Australia's determination to rid the world of those who sow the seeds of evil—those who wreak havoc upon innocents in the name of religion.
Australia has played a significant military role but has also paid a heavy price for its involvement in the war on terror. Our losses have been particularly high this year. In 2011, eight diggers have made the ultimate sacrifice, among the 29 brave, selfless men we have lost in Afghanistan since 22 October 2001, when the first contingent of the Special Forces Task Group was officially farewelled in Perth as it departed to assist the US-led international coalition against terrorism.

We are making progress. It is slow. It is difficult. But we must stay the course. That is what our troops want; they know there is still work to be done. It is also what Afghanistan needs. United with our American friends, we must and will reduce the threat of terrorism. The price of peace is eternal vigilance. May those who have died because of terror, and those who have laid down their lives fighting against such wickedness so that we may live free, rest in peace. Lest we forget.

Mr HUSIC (Chifley—Government Whip) (10:37): This segment of time we have dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks is important, but not just for the sake of commemoration and not just to honour those who passed as a result of those truly awful and horrific acts. The people who have spoken here in this room and those who are yet to speak have a role to renew, reflect and reinforce our commitment to this nation as custodians of a broad range of responsibilities. Those responsibilities stem from a recognition of this great democracy, not just in word but in deed. That work began with the moving and thoughtful contributions by the Prime Minister and a particularly impressive reflection by the Leader of the Opposition the other day. It continued with contributions by colleagues who are in this room right now, the member for Cunningham and the member for Riverina. I also had the opportunity to listen to the contributions by the member for Fowler, the member for Kooyong, the member for Casey and the member for Eden-Monaro.

But my heart ached especially when I watched the member for Higgins as she recounted what she was going through, because many of us have people close to us who went through that as well. And there is another person, whom I will not name here today, but when she reads this she will know that my heart is with her when she recounts those she lost. Many people across our country felt that. Friends close to me felt it, and friends in this place felt it. Regardless of who we are and regardless of what we think, we are bound through our common humanity, as custodians of what is important in this place, to defend what we benefit from every day. There are friends in the US—and I have spent time in the US—and whenever Americans and Australians share the same space there is a genuine affinity between our peoples because there is a relaxed, almost instant, bond that is formed. For so many of us here, we did not know the people that died on that day, but we felt the pain of our friends in America, just as we feel the pain of people in other parts of the world who are expected to bear a heavy price as a result of truly awful acts. I think that what occurred in the US on that day is what happened to the people, for example, in Indonesia, including in Bali— Australians who lost their lives there, and Indonesians as well, in a country that has worked so hard with us to ensure that these types of brutal acts are not repeated.

I ask people to remember that the blood burnt into the remains of the World Trade Center was the blood of people of all nationalities and the blood of people who were young or old; people who were men or women; people who were fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers or children. They were Christian; they were Jewish; they were Muslim. My mind is burned with
the image of those silhouettes passing in the final moments of the World Trade Center. I thought that those people had been denied the opportunity to return home to finish off rich lives.

Just as I do today, I felt back then that none of those people deserved to die in that way. Not one single person who died at the World Trade Center deserved to end their days in that way—not one. The people who committed those murderous acts claimed that religion drove them, but can I just say that that is not anything remotely related to the faith that I have or the faith that I share with millions of others. We were never brought up to feel that way or to be motivated in that way. So over that period of time, in these years that have followed, we have all been tested in our response to that brutal act—all of us; every single one of us. The test has been not just in a military sense and not just in a government sense; it has been a test of people and how we would react. In my mind—and I know this is something carried not only by me but by others—we cannot expect that hate matching with hate will produce anything good. We cannot expect good to be built off hate, and we cannot expect to be brought together and held together by tears that are bitter. We have to find something deeper within us to unite us as a nation.

There have been periods since then—and it is important that we reflect on this. Every time a terrorist act is committed in some part of the world, there are people of my faith who wonder what will happen next. As much as I think of the people that suffered as a result of September 11, I also think of the fear that runs through people's minds as a result of those moments when we all recoiled in horror at what had been done. So I come back to the point that we are all tested through this process. When we are tested through this process, I am proud of how our country has responded—again, not just in a physical sense but the way we have responded by saying that we will not let hate divide us and that we will walk together as a people, regardless of background, race or religion, to ensure that we protect and defend what we benefit from every single day. That is what I cherish. If I may use a word that seems so improper in this statement today, we do hold on to each other in a way that says we will deny those who seek to divide us through these vile acts. This is what is so important about today. This is what is so important about holding these statements in the way that we do, because as much as we are rivals here we are bound by a common desire to see good things done for this country that we love so much. That is why we cannot just have this as a moment to think about that important purpose. The way we conduct ourselves day in, day out, once this debate is concluded, is so important too. That is why I feel so strongly about this debate. It is because it is a touchstone for us all. It seeks for us to remember what has occurred and to be better for what has occurred.

To conclude, we ran our fingers over a scar today. We ran them over that scar to remember the hurt and to remember that we can be so much better. And we have a responsibility to be so much better. To those people who lost their lives through every act, but particularly the act that brought us here today in remembrance, my heart goes out to them all. Those families provide us with an example of something better to live for and an example for us, as custodians, to provide something better for those who follow us. I thank the House for the opportunity to make this statement.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms K Livermore): I thank the member for Chifley. I am very happy I was in the chair to hear that speech.
Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield) (10:46): As many speakers in this debate have noted, the events of September 11 are burned into our collective memory and our individual memories. Many people in this debate have spoken about their own memories on learning of the dreadful news of what was happening on that day. All of us share that sense of shock, fear and anger, and those feelings are as strong in our memories now as they were when we first had them. For many Australians that sense of shock was heightened because of their personal familiarity with the areas in the United States that were under attack, and I want to talk particularly about New York City and the World Trade Center.

I do not know how many Australians have visited the World Trade Center over the years, but I would not be surprised if it were as many as five per cent or even 10 per cent of our population. Australians, as we all know, are inveterate travellers and the World Trade Center was an absolute must-see on any visit to New York.

They say that when you stood on top of the World Trade Center on a clear day the number of people you could see in the tri-state area—New York, Connecticut and New Jersey—exceeded the population of Australia. It is quite a fascinating statistic. Many Australians have also visited Washington DC, where a third plane crashed into the Pentagon and a fourth was intended to crash, before that was prevented by the extraordinary courage of the people on board.

A very high proportion of the occupants of this building have visited Washington DC based upon our professional interest in the core business of that town, which is of course the same as the core business of this town. As has been noted by many, including Mr Howard himself, the fact that John Howard, as Australia’s then Prime Minister, was in Washington on the very day of this dreadful attack undoubtedly contributed to the speed and vigour of Australia’s response in expressing our solidarity with the United States and in our rapidly invoking the ANZUS treaty.

Many Australians have a familiarity with both New York and Washington DC through visiting there and, of course, a large number of Australians have had the opportunity to live and work or study in the United States. In my own case I was lucky enough to spend two years in New York City studying at Columbia University, between 1993 and 1995. Like all who have had the opportunity to live in New York I was entranced by this city, by its extraordinary energy and by its remarkable diversity. I visited the World Trade Center quite frequently. It was hard to avoid, it is a major transport hub with a number of subway lines and the PATH—the Port Authority Trans-Hudson train—connecting there. I also had the opportunity to attend meetings at companies based in the World Trade Center.

The fact that it is commonplace for Australians to live and work in New York City is confirmed by the awful statistics that 10 Australian lives were lost on September 11, 2001. Australians are not by any means unusual in that regard. The United States, and New York City in particular, are a magnet for people from around the world. As we have heard many times, the grim statistics are that not only were Australians killed but people of some 90 nationalities were killed in that appalling attack.

It was an attack on Western civilisation and on the values that unite the United States, Australia and so many other nations around the world. These values include freedom of movement, freedom to pursue the career of your choice, freedom of opportunity, openness to
new ideas and opportunities open to all based upon their talents, not on who they were born to, which class they were born into or where they happen to live.

When you reflect on the nature of the companies occupying the World Trade Center, many of them were companies operating in highly competitive industries like banking, insurance, law and many others where employees were chosen based upon their talents and abilities. Many people had come from around the world because they saw it as a chance to work at the height of their profession and to try their luck in a system that was, and remains, ready to give opportunities to people of ability and capacity, regardless of background. One of the things that is most admirable about the United States and its values is that it is open to so many people around the world. Like Australia, the United States is an extraordinarily successful immigrant nation that has drawn people from around the world to come and live permanently or, in other cases, to come and live, work or study for one, two, three, five or 10 years.

These values are the very opposite of the values that underpin the agenda of terrorist movements such as al-Qaeda and their ideological bedfellows in the Taliban. We need only look at the narrowness of the life they seek to impose on people in the areas over which they have physical control. You need only look at their policy of preventing education for girls. You need only look at the detailed and prescriptive control of how people are to live their lives on a day-to-day basis. You need only look at the existence of religious police, constantly on the lookout for those who are not meeting the dictates about how to live and how to worship.

Let there be no doubt that people should, of course, be free to worship as they choose. Muslims must be free to pursue their religious beliefs, as must Christians, Buddhists, Jews and Hindus and those of every religion or of none. This is core to our values in Australia and it is core to the values of the United States; it is core to the values of the many nations that have suffered terrorist attack. That is why I say that the attacks on September 11 were an attack on Western civilisation and the values we cherish.

Tragically, since 2001 there have been other such attacks— in Madrid and London, in Bali and Jakarta. It is trite but nevertheless true to say that the world changed on September 11, 2001. We have seen that in the way the Western nations, including Australia, have responded. I hasten to add that it has not only been the nations traditionally thought of as Western who have joined in the response, but certainly many of the Western nations have responded.

It is a very melancholy anniversary that we are marking in this debate. It is an anniversary that we would very much prefer not to have to mark. It is difficult to find positives in what occurred, but if there is one positive we can find it is that, since 2001, many nations around the world, including of course the United States and Australia, have come together to defend our shared values. In doing that costs, large and small, have been imposed upon everybody in the populations of the many nations affected. On a day-to-day basis, security is tighter. In many ways, we have accepted some inconvenient restrictions on freedom of movement. That is just one small change in the way we live, compared with what was the norm before the attacks on 11 September 2001.

Those small sacrifices pale in comparison to the sacrifices made in the military efforts to bring stability to Afghanistan and Iraq, and to prevent those nations being havens for terrorism. That has been an enormously costly and an enormously painful exercise. It has cost lives— far too many lives— and it has cost money. It goes without saying that, collectively, we
have made mistakes along the way. No human endeavour is perfect, and this has certainly not been perfect. Nevertheless, I think we can note in a cautious way that over the past decade we have been required to show confidence in our values and that we have managed to do that—to some extent at least.

Like all other speakers in this debate and in analogous debates in parliaments and congresses around the world and like people speaking at memorial services and other public events around the world, I add my voice to the many voices in all those events, places and forums which mourn the innocent victims of the terrorist atrocities of 11 September 2001. I add my voice to those voices which express thanks for the extraordinary courage of rescue workers. I add my voice to the voices that offer condolences to those who lost friends, family members or workmates on that day. I add my voice to those voices which acknowledge the cost and sacrifice of the military efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere that were triggered as a response to September 11. Finally, I add my voice to those which express determination to uphold the values of Western civilisation; values which offer all the freedom to live their lives as they choose and which reject terrorist aggression, no matter what objective it purports to achieve.

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson) (10:58): I would like to say that those were fine words from the member for Bradfield, and I associate myself with them. Ten years on, we can look back on the tragic events of 11 September 2001 with a seasoned perspective. We have looked back and mourned for 10 years. We have mourned the loss of loved ones, friends and even strangers, but more importantly we have mourned the loss of innocence. We need look no further than the statements of the member for Chifley and the member for Higgins to see that the grief of that loss is still raw and still very real.

The day that aeroplanes turned from being a means of transport to a means of destruction was a turning point for humanity. We will not forget the horror of the event nor the pain and suffering of those directly affected. We will always look back and mourn that loss. But, 10 years on, it is time to look at this event in its historical context, to look at the part this event will play in history and to consider how it will be viewed in 100 years time, when no living soul remembers the event itself. Will this event mark the end of something or the beginning of something, or perhaps both? Now, 10 years on, we are not so blinded by hurt, grief and anger, and we can see this tragedy for what it really was. It was not an attack on the World Trade Center—they were just buildings. It was not an attack on New York—New York is just a city. September 11 was, above all else, an attack on ideals and a way of life. An attack on the ideals and way of life that we share in Australia. Around the globe, we have a vast array of people—different races, different cultures, different religions, different ideals and different lifestyles. That is great because diversity enriches humanity. On the fringes, we have the more extremist groups with extremist views and beliefs. That is okay too, I suppose—to each his or her own. But when the most extreme ideologies are combined with the desire, the willingness and the ability to hurt, maim, kill, and destroy other peoples and their way of life, it is no longer tolerable.

We must resolve to learn the most important lessons from September 11, 2001. We can mourn our loss and we can even forgive the perpetrators of those crimes. To forgive is a virtue. But to forget would be contemptuous. We cannot just increase security at airports and then walk away thinking we have learned the lesson and taken preventative action. Increased
security will only make it a bit harder to repeat the exact same exercise. Hatred is versatile. Hatred will find another way to attack. In learning the most important lesson from September 11, we need to look at the root cause of the issue—the Islamic extremists who are out there, and in this country too, who seek ways to express their hatred.

Australia is a nation of diverse people. We have welcomed people from all nations and cultures to our shores and mostly they all adopt the same principles, the same lifestyles, the same values and the same love of this country. I believe all these cultures and faiths within our country in our communities should be protected from the radical extremists who plan to attack our way of life and our values.

The member for Eden-Monaro, in speaking to this matter yesterday, pointed out that the solution to defeating this extremism was engaging moderate Muslims in this country who share our values and our concerns. He is definitely right. We do need to engage with moderate Islam. But that does not mean that we turn a blind eye to radicalism and the Islamic extremism that exists in our midst.

I would like to distinguish here between moderate Islam and the Islamic extremists. Sometimes when the word 'Islam' is used people get offended, but there is a very big difference between mainstream, moderate Islam and Islamic extremism. In the North Queensland city of Mackay, we have a strong moderate Islamic community. It is a community of wonderful people who attend a local Islamic centre very close to the boundary we share, Deputy Speaker Livermore. I am sure there are some people in that area who are in your electorate. It is a community of wonderful people who share their faith in a constructive and compassionate way. They are Muslim but they are Queenslanders and they are Australians. It is probably in that order too because they are pretty parochial in Queensland.

I know many of the Islamic community in Mackay personally. Neighbours to my family where I grew up, a Muslim family, are an asset to the Mackay region. The Sam family, for instance, live around the corner. They are a Melanesian family involved in cane growing. At times I have had the privilege of being a passenger in a taxi driven by Ollie Sam, a member of this family. They are great people.

One of the difficulties this community faces is the fear generated by Islamic extremists. To protect, preserve and encourage moderate Islam we must be vigilant against extremism. We must be on guard against those amongst us who would have us killed and our culture destroyed. As a nation we are tolerant and forgiving, but we must learn to draw a line in the sand and not forget what hatred exists in this world and in this country.

A few weeks ago, I spoke in this place on the history of the convicted terrorist David Hicks. Hicks, an Australian, had trained with al-Qaeda and met Osama Bin Laden—he admitted that—several times for information briefing purposes. He was captured in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks. He was not a man who was in the wrong place at the wrong time. He knew exactly where he was and exactly what he was doing.

For whatever reason, we have welcomed him back into Australia. Such forgiveness, I suppose, is admirable. But when I saw that Hicks was shortlisted for the Premier's Literary Awards, I did have to question the integrity of the Queensland Premier, Anna Bligh, in letting that go ahead. In an attempt to defend the man who fought on the other side with the extremists, the Premier said:
The nomination of this book, in my view, is a profound reaffirmation of the values that distinguish us from those who want to terrorise others.

Well, no, it is not. What it was was the Premier giving affirmation to a book written by someone who had sided with the extremists, with the terrorists. It was the Premier giving affirmation on the same day that another Australian soldier lost their life fighting in that same country that Hicks went into so that he could fight on the side of the extremists.

I do not expect the Premier to put too much weight on my thoughts on the book. I thought at the time that there was no-one better, from the defence point of view, to reflect the view of diggers than Keith Payne, who was awarded the highest military honour that this country can bestow, the Victoria Cross. I am proud to say that he lives in Mackay in my electorate of Dawson. In talking to me about Hicks and that award, he said, 'I think it's very poor form for this nomination, and that's putting it mildly.' He told me that he had been with the Premier at the opening of a Korean war memorial and she was saying glowing things about our diggers. Now he is basically horrified to see her endorsing a book written by a former fellow traveller—you could say a soldier in arms—of the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Keith Payne said he had a message for the Premier, and that was: 'Make up your mind about what side of the field you're playing on.' Hicks was a minor player when it comes to extremism in Australia. But if we think that Islamic extremists are all from overseas, we really need to think again.

There is a group here in Australia called Hizb ut-Tahrir, a political party that survived a proposed ban in Australia—it must have been under the Howard government—even though they are banned in many other countries, including countries throughout the Middle East, Central Asia and Russia. I quote what is on the public record: they believe that Australian diggers fighting in Afghanistan are 'fair game' and that Muslims 'have an obligation' to attack them. They are a group that condones the killing of Australian soldiers. Their main mission is the establishment of an Islamic caliphate or a supra-national Islamic government where sharia reigns supreme and non-Muslims are treated as second-class citizens.

Next month Hizb ut-Tahrir will hold a seminar on the Afghanistan war, I note, in both Sydney and Melbourne. The seminar is titled 'Afghanistan—10 years of Injustice, Oppression and Failure'. No doubt we will have Uthman Badar, the spokesman of the group, telling us once again that Australian diggers should be killed. Maybe what he will not tell us—he and his comrades in this group—is about the oppression and injustice that reigned in Afghanistan for many years prior to the current conflict—oppression and injustice that was mandated by the extremist Taliban regime against the Afghan people, against Muslims themselves. I and no doubt many others will be keeping a close watch on Hizb ut-Tahrir, this upcoming seminar and their future activities, because without a doubt the hate that is peddled by these people is of the same pedigree as that harboured in the hearts of those who flew those planes into the World Trade Center, into the Pentagon and into a field in Pennsylvania, killing thousands and changing this world forever.

The former President of the United States of America, the late Ronald Reagan, was a man of eloquence. I want to paraphrase him here, albeit a bit at length, because his words, which were originally spoken against the threat of Soviet Russia, apply equally now to the threat of Islamic extremism and terrorism throughout the Western world. Long before he held the title of President—in fact, in 1964—Ronald Reagan spoke these words at a Republican National Convention:
There's no argument over the choice between peace and war, but there's only one guaranteed way you can have peace—and you can have it in the next second—surrender. Admittedly, there's a risk in any course we follow other than this, but every lesson of history tells us that the greater risk lies in appeasement, and this is the specter our well-meaning … friends refuse to face—that their policy of accommodation is appeasement, and it gives no choice between peace and war, only between fight or surrender. If we continue to accommodate, continue to back and retreat, eventually we have to face the final demand—the ultimatum. And what then … someday when the time comes to deliver the final ultimatum, our surrender will be voluntary, because by that time we will have been weakened from within spiritually, morally, and economically.

We'll preserve for our children this—'Western civilisation,' I suppose Ronald Reagan could have said—the last best hope of man on earth, or we'll sentence them to take the last step into a thousand years of darkness.

History will judge—only time will tell—whether the horrendous attacks on 11 September, 2001 were the wake-up bell for us in the West to restore and promote the values of Western civilisation and to defend them against those who oppose them or whether it was the bell tolling on these virtues, our civilisation and our way of life.

Mr HUNT (Flinders) (11:11): In commemorating the terrible and tragic losses of 11 September, 2001, I begin on a different day in a different place. I have had some close association with the events of 12 October, 2002. Four years ago next month, I represented Australia and the Australian government at the fifth anniversary memorial service in Bali for the 88 Australian victims of the Bali bombings. These are victims of the same course of action, the same movement, the same motivation as that which led to the even greater—although no greater in each individual case—tragedy of 11 September just a year before the Bali bombings.

I met the families five years after their terrible loss, and they said to me that those five years had been both the longest time and the shortest time in their lives. The sense of pain was almost undiminished, but they had to live their lives in order to celebrate those whom they had lost: their sons, daughters and—in some cases—their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and loved ones. These families recognised that for them the pain and the loss would be eternal. As long as they lived, the loss would live because that was in fact their way of keeping alive the memory, the connection and the human dimension of the very people to whom they were closest but who were taken from them on 12 October.

That is a reminder that what occurred on 11 September was neither the start nor the finish of a great global challenge. It proceeded with Bali a year later and it continued through London and Madrid with the terrible bombings there and, as we have seen, with so many other bombings throughout Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, particularly in Egypt and Iraq, and in many other places.

That tells us that it is not just the Western world that has suffered losses—although we have suffered terrible losses—but people of all origins. Whether they are black or white or of any other racial description; whether they are Christian, Muslim or a nonbeliever; whether they come from Australia, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom or from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan or Indonesia, there have been terrible human losses. As John
Donne said: ‘Ask not for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee. Each man's death diminishes me, for I am involved in mankind.’ That is the context in which September 11 occurred. It occurred in the form of the most notable, striking and profound element in the great struggle between extremist Islam and moderate Islam and between extremist Islam and all other forms of belief, whether political or religious. This is literally a war against everything other than itself and a war against everything other than a totalitarian caliphate—a caliphate with a vision steeped in the most extremist forms of wahhabism. It is not a representation of Islam. Islam is rightly regarded as one of the world's great and enduring religions. Its practitioners, who represent the mainstream, represent a religion which has a great belief in tolerance, diversity and, above all else, compassion and care. But this perversion of the wahhabist stream is an enduring threat because it represents a form of nihilism and a form of totalitarianism which is willing to play itself out through supreme violence.

When I look at the last decade and put it in context, what do I see? I see that it was part of a continuing battle and that there have been terrible tragedies since. And I fear that there will be continuing tragedies in the next decade. But I make this point: when we look back to 12 September, a decade ago, we could only have imagined, as we did, that the subsequent decade would have been far worse than it turned out to be. So this decade has seen loss, but on 12 September we rightly imagined that the loss would be far greater than it has turned out to be. The reason is that there has been a concerted battle in terms of both the soft power and hard power to deal with the sources of threat in the homelands, whether that is in the United States or Australia, as well as in the source countries of those who would seek to bring harm to the entire world and anybody who disagreed with their extremist form of religion and their extremist view as to how we must live. Having said that, I think the extraordinary vigilance and powerful action which has been taken in the West and in other countries have meant that we have had a better decade than might reasonably have been imagined on 12 September, 10 years ago. But the threat remains, and this brings me to the second part of my condolence.

We cannot lose our concern for what might occur in the future. Let me start with the greatest of all threats. The threat of a dirty bomb remains. There is no doubt that there are elements within al-Qaeda who to this day seek to acquire nuclear capability in such form as can be deployed with a conventional mechanism for detonation but with the ability to distribute and spread radiation in the form of what is colloquially known as 'a dirty bomb'. That is a real, tangible and genuine threat. It has receded during the last decade; but, whilst there are those with not just murderous but also genocidal intent who have no internal constraints, only hard action can be taken to defeat that process. That means difficult decisions in terms of security and difficult decisions in terms of military conflict. But without those difficult decisions there will be a tragic legacy for future generations.

Sadly, I remember standing in this very chamber prior to the Madrid train bombings and warning of bombings to come in Spanish cities if we did not take strong and immediate action. Unfortunately that came to pass. I do not know whether we could have stopped those bombings, whether the murderous intent, carried out in secrecy and silence, could ever have been detected. But I make the point now that we face a similar threat going forward, although the likelihood has receded, which is a good thing. But let us not delude ourselves for one moment into believing that the architects of such attacks, along with their motivation and degree of murderous intent, are anything other than galvanised and continuing.
Therefore the question remains, as we look at the future: what is their intention? Their intention is to create, over the course of the next century, a caliphate based on the very practices which the Taliban put into being, which were oppressive in the extreme to women, to intellectuals, to anybody who varied from the most brutal of world views. That would mean, ultimately, destabilising one of the great Islamic states—whether it is Pakistan, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia or Egypt—and taking control.

Indonesia has been a model of what we could hope for, with the way it has developed a pluralist democracy over the last decade. The great majority of people in Indonesia deserve our thanks and congratulations—in particular, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Indonesia is an exemplar, along with, in large part, Turkey, as to the way in which Islam and democracy can both coincide and flourish.

Pakistan is a work in progress. There is a battle for the soul of Pakistan. We must do all we can to be smart about the way in which we help to ensure that that country is able to remain both stable and democratic.

Saudi Arabia has not democratised, and I think sometimes in Australia, on both sides of the House, we turn a blind eye to the degree of rough justice which is carried out in Saudi Arabia. It is an ally, but we should not be silent about any abuses of human rights and we should not be silent about the fact that it is not a democracy and it is not on the path to democracy. We must support that path to democracy.

As we see in other countries involved in the Arab Spring, Egypt is on the path to democracy. It faces a binary choice. We do not know how the elections, when they come, will turn out, but we do know that they will in all likelihood be genuine elections and that it is the young people and people from throughout that society who have put Egypt on this path—not just the Muslim Brotherhood, as we had feared. There will be a battle for the soul of Egypt, but I think that the forces of plurality and democracy are winning. In my judgment, they are more likely than not to succeed.

Going forwards to make sure that we do all that we can to effectively remove and diminish the threats, we have two tasks. Firstly, we have to engage in soft diplomacy, soft power, both at home and abroad, to encourage moderate elements, to provide educational opportunities, to provide a path for personal development and fulfilment. That applies just as much in Australia as abroad. Secondly, we have to engage, from time to time, in hard power activities, because we cannot simply hope that those who are of murderous intent and unbridled brutality will just curb their ways. We have to confront that head-on but recognise that the great majority of people, no matter what their religion, are exactly the same: they seek freedom, they seek hope, they seek personal responsibility, they seek independence. That is the lesson of the last decade: that the extremists must be confronted and the moderate elements must be allowed to flourish.

As we see from the Arab Spring, there is great cause for hope but a responsibility for eternal vigilance. In light of September 11, October 12 in Bali and the losses in Madrid, in Spain, we should never forget the terrible price paid by our society for being free and open and democratic.

Mr SLIPPER (Fisher—Deputy Speaker) (11:24): I normally do not rise in the chamber to read statistics from a newspaper. I am indebted to the Parliamentary Library for forwarding
some statistics included in the 11 September 2011 edition of the UK newspaper the *Daily Telegraph*. The article in the *Telegraph* provides a detailed description of what happened on September 11 and includes some information which is quite chilling:

- 2,996 people – including 19 hijackers – died in the attacks. Of the 2,753 victims who died in the World Trade Center itself, 343 were firefighters, 60 were police officers, and 8 were private emergency medical workers. A further 184 people were killed in the attack on the Pentagon.
- The South Tower of the World Trade Center burned for 56 minutes before collapsing, while the North Tower burned for 102 minutes before collapsing. Fires in the buildings are estimated to have reached 2,300 degrees farenheit.
- The site – now known as ground zero – continued burning for 99 days.
- 1,506,124 tonnes of debris were removed from ground zero as part of the clean-up.
- The Dow Jones fell 14.3 per cent in one week after reopening on September 17 – at the time, it was the largest one-week drop in history.
- It took nine months for the air quality around the Twin Towers site to return to pre-9/11 levels. Over 2,500 contaminants – including carcinogens – were released by the debris of the fallen buildings. Many rescue workers and survivors suffered debilitating illnesses in the aftermath of 9/11. 75 rescue workers have since been diagnosed with blood cell cancers likely caused by exposure to the toxic air.
- The total value of art lost when the Twin Towers collapsed exceeded $100 million. Items included Alexander Calder’s sculpture WTC Stabile, Joan Miró’s epic World Trade Center Tapestry, a painting from Roy Lichtenstein’s Entablature series, and others by Picasso and David Hockney.
- 422,000 New Yorkers are estimated to suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a direct result of 9/11. Following the attacks, alcohol consumption went up by 25 per cent in the city, while cigarette consumption rose by 10 per cent.

Ten Australians died in the attacks: Alberto Dominguez, Yvonne Kennedy, Craig Neil Gibson, Steve Tompsett, Elisa Ferraina, Lesley N. Thomas, Leanne Whiteside, Peter Gyulavary, Andrew Knox and, from Queensland, Kevin Dennis. Kevin Dennis was originally from the Gold Coast and had become a US based stockbroker with Cantor Fitzgerald. He was working on the 101st floor of the World Trade Center's north tower.

Many honourable members have said that they remember, as I do, exactly what they were doing when they heard the news of this appalling tragedy. The uncle of a former staff member of mine was a colonel in the Defence Intelligence Agency of the United States. When the plane struck the Pentagon, his uncle was attending his retirement party in the Pentagon. Happily for him, the plane struck a different part of the Pentagon and his uncle was quite safe.

All of us as Australians, in partnership with people who think correctly around the world, could not help but be stunned by the attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001. Ten years on we are still surprised that these horrendous attacks were carried out not for any obvious or sensible purpose but out of a general hatred for Western values. The attacks were an attack on freedom, hope, respect, love of our fellow men and women and the rule of law. I found it astounding that anyone of any religion could carry out such a barbaric series of acts that had a complete lack of respect for human life.

What is positive is that the ideals held dear by nations such as Australia and the United States have remained and grown stronger over the past decade.

*A division having been called in the House of Representatives—*
Mr SLIPPER: As I was commencing to say when I was rudely interrupted by the series of divisions in the main chamber, I believe that President George W Bush showed great leadership during that period, and I have to say that I was enormously moved to see President Obama and former President Bush and their spouses together helping to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the attack on the United States. There is no doubt that there were plenty of tears around the world, but what is important is what we do from this time forward—and, indeed, what we have done during the period since September 11.

I think it is vital to recognise that the war against terror is a war that we cannot afford to lose. I do not see this as being any sort of religious war; I believe that right-thinking people of good values, regardless of their religion, would have been appalled by the senseless acts of terror we saw during the attacks on America during September 2001. The sight of terrified New Yorkers running to escape the carnage, showing their panic, their confusion, and the human horror of that terrible event will never leave us. The attacks on the two towers in New York have become the symbol of that day, but that day also saw planes crash into the Pentagon, as I mentioned earlier, in Arlington, Virginia, and a fourth plane crash into a field in Pennsylvania.

The perpetrators of this appalling act of criminality had to appreciate and must appreciate that their act of terror from the very outset would be met with resilience and determination and that their attempts to rob people of their lives, their way of life and their values would be met by the world, which would not be prepared to succumb. The terrorist attacks were a public relations disaster for the terrorists, and I think the world has since then galvanised towards making sure that our planet is a safer place.

In Australia we are singularly fortunate because we are a peace-loving nation and, generally, we respect the rights of others. We sometimes may disagree with the views of our fellow citizens, but we support, in the majority, the ideal that we are free to think what we want, and we also believe that others have the right to have different beliefs. We believe in freedom. We support a stable society. We care for others in times of need. While we might have different views on a whole range of subjects, including politics, there is more that binds us together than separates us. The ideals of Australia have not crumbled or fallen. They have never, ever looked as though they were precarious. We and the rest of the Western world have grown taller. All people from democratic countries, including Australians, should carry the resolve and belief that we will prevail against the horror we saw on that day and the horror that has been attempted on a number of occasions since. I am particularly pleased to have the opportunity to associate myself with the sentiments of all other honourable members who have spoken during this very moving and very important opportunity for us to place on the record how we feel about the terrible events of September 11 and how we feel the world should move forward to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth) (12:01): I listened carefully to the speeches of my colleagues who have just preceded me—

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Proceedings suspended from 12:01 to 12:32
Mr BUCHHOLZ: I move:

That the Main Committee do now adjourn.

Finance Minister of the Year Award

Mr TONY SMITH (Casey) (12:32): A couple of weeks ago I was thumbing my way through the Financial Review, as I do on a daily basis, when on page 38 I saw a news item that left me gobsmacked. It was headlined 'Swan in line to be national Treasurer'. It turns out that a certain magazine might be planning to give the Treasurer of Australia its Finance Minister of the Year award. I confess I found this to be an implausible concept and I wondered whether the Fin had launched a new satire section—it was, after all, in the Rear Window section. I checked my calendar to see that it was not April Fools' Day. I then checked to see whether the award in question was being sponsored perhaps by Mad magazine, which we all fondly remembered from our childhood.

I finally discovered that the sponsoring magazine was the famous, or should I say in this case 'infamous', Euromoney magazine. I checked again to see who its editor was. As I indicated earlier, it might have been Alfred E Neuman from Mad magazine—but no, it turns out, according to the Financial Review that Euromoney magazine is absolutely deadpan serious when it comes to considering the Treasurer of Australia for this award. We ask the question: for what? This Treasurer has driven the budget into deficit after deficit and has racked up more than $100 billion in debt over four short years, a mean feat after starting with nearly $45 billion in the bank. This Treasurer has presided over massive waste on all the programs we have seen, from the Julia Gillard memorial halls to the Home Insulation Program. Here is a Treasurer who is now apparently scheming to conduct a midnight raid on the Future Fund to desperately try to bring his budget into surplus. It will be his first surplus if he can manage to achieve it, albeit by artificial means. Naming the Australian Treasurer as finance minister of the year would be like giving an award for navigational excellence to the captain of the Titanic. The Treasurer is far more worthy of an award from the magicians guild for his smoke and mirrors tricks with government spending and far more deserving of a prize from the international association of carnival operators for the shell game he is running with the federal budget than he is of the Finance Minister of the Year Award.

Upon reflection, perhaps this award is not so surprising after all. Euromoney magazine will ring a bell for those with a memory in this place. It was the magazine that made former Treasurer Paul Keating finance minister of the year. After that award, Paul Keating presided over a million unemployed and the recession he said we had to have. By the time he left office he had plunged the country into massive debt—$96 billion in net government debt—and a $10 billion budget black hole. We should fear the prospect of the current Treasurer receiving the same award. With the history, we should be very afraid of what would follow if this Treasurer stayed in his job. Euromoney magazine claims that the award is based on input from many leading global bankers and investors. I wonder—I would certainly hope that those in the bureaucracy and in the Treasury would have better things to do than to spend time...
lobbying for the Treasurer's nomination, but we will find out the truth in the fullness of time, no doubt. Freedom of information requests and Senate estimates will no doubt reveal whether that is the case or not.

In concluding, if the Treasurer does end up getting this award it will trigger great national mirth and hilarity, because the only prize this Treasurer of Australia is worthy of is a booby prize.

**Calwell Electorate: Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation Centre**

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (12:37): The Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation centre, located in Broadmeadows in my electorate, was originally established by the Howard government to be a low security transit accommodation centre for visa overstayers. In the last couple of years the government has placed unaccompanied minors in the centre, and its capacity has been expanded from its original 50 to about 140. Last year I spoke about my own community's involvement with the MITA centre and of the developing relationship between the local community and the 130 unaccompanied minors who were then resident there. I spoke of the interaction between those who were at the centre and a wide range of local schools, community groups and organisations and about my community's enthusiasm to build relationships and engage in a positive way.

I am pleased to say that all the unaccompanied minors have now left MITA and are in community detention facilities. The government's community detention program has to date been a very successful part of the overall management of asylum seekers in this country. While we maintain mandatory detention, we also acknowledge that families and unaccompanied minors do not need to remain in high security detention. With the minors in community detention, the MITA is beginning to receive older asylum seekers—people who are generally on a positive pathway but who need to remain and are better off in low security detention. My community has therefore once again risen to the occasion, and on the basis of the infrastructure that was built and the involvement that took place last year I am proud to say that my community once again has shown that it is driven by its values of compassion and humanity. This again is the case—and very much so—with the Islamic Council of Victoria, which was the first organisation to be involved at the MITA with its new residents. I congratulate the Islamic Council of Victoria for the initiative it took last Sunday to conduct a Ramadan festival at the MITA detention centre. I also want to note to the House that recently I was visited by a number of pastors from my electorate who represent a significant part of my constituency, and I want to report to the House that they urged this House to show compassion towards refugees and asylum seekers. In fact, they offered the government and this parliament their homes and churches—offered them to the people who come here seeking asylum. This is the nature of the Australian community as I have come to know it, and I want to pay tribute to the compassion not only in my electorate but also in cities, towns and regional centres across Australia.

Recently, the Joint Standing Committee on Migration, which I chair, visited the South Australian town of Mount Gambier to investigate a humanitarian resettlement program. About four years ago, Mount Gambier was chosen to pilot the humanitarian settlement of refugees in regional centres. Since 2007, more than 800 refugees have settled on the Limestone Coast. The pilot's success shows the strength and goodwill of communities across Australia—in particular, regional communities, who can provide the right context for successful
humanitarian refugee settlement programs. The refugees in Mount Gambier arrived straight from refugee camps and are predominantly from Burma, Afghanistan and the Congo. Our committee had the opportunity to hear firsthand how the town managed the many complexities associated with refugee settlement, and most impressive was the management of the refugee children, who had little English and had never lived outside a camp. I want to congratulate the local Mount Gambier primary school for the excellent program that it provides for these children.

It is, and it was, a welcome reminder to us all that Australians, whether in cities or in regional towns, have the capacity and inclination to be welcoming and supportive. This is because we know that, when we welcome migrants and refugees to Australia, we are investing in our future, increasing our human capacity in a rapidly changing world, and not only fulfilling our international and humanitarian obligations but also enriching our society and building Australia's capacity to meet the challenges of the future.

I think that our country is at a stage in its awareness and development where it is very possible to increase the number of refugees that we take annually, and I want to congratulate the government for taking that first step and increasing it by 1,000 for the next four years. This is to accommodate the Burmese refugees. I am confident that we can actually expand that program—and we should do so, for the reasons that I have just noted. But we should also do it because it is in our national interest.

Lawn Bowls

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell) (12:42): I rise today to raise an issue important to senior Australians not just in my electorate of Mitchell but all around the country, and that is the decision of the ABC to remove the screening of lawn bowls from its charter in the very near future.

Mr Danby: Disgraceful!

Mr HAWKE: I agree with the member for Melbourne Ports; it is a disgraceful decision. Lawn bowls is one of the highest participation sports in Australia today, and its participation is especially high amongst and important to those Australians over 60. It is important in helping Australian's senior citizens to stay fit, active, healthy and connected to their communities, and it is one of those sports that has a long history of involvement with our community.

I want to raise for the House's benefit the charter of the ABC. Often we hear justifications for public broadcasters and the funding of public broadcasters. I am a person who would ask: 'Why do we need a public broadcaster? What is the worth of it? What is the value of it? What does it do for us?' The charter of the public broadcasting corporation under the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983 says that the functions of the corporation are to provide:

(i) broadcasting programs that contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain, and reflect the cultural diversity of, the Australian community …

and:

(2) In the provision by the Corporation of its broadcasting services within Australia:

(a) the Corporation shall take account of:

... ...
(iii) the responsibility … as the provider of an independent national broadcasting service to provide a balance between broadcasting programs of wide appeal and specialized broadcasting programs …

It is important to note that bowls is one of the most popular sports in Australia today. Indeed, the viewing stats had between 200,000 and 500,000 viewers watching bowls each week. There were 2,000 bowling clubs affiliated within Australia in 2010 and about half a million participants in Australia who played lawn bowls.

In my electorate of Mitchell you have great institutions like the Castle Hill Bowling Club, men's and women's; the Hills district bowling club, men's and women's; Northmead bowling and recreation club—these clubs have 200 to 500 members each—and Dural Country Club, Toongabbie Sports and Bowling Club, Pennant Hills Bowling Club and the West Pennant Hills men's bowling club. We know that the ABC receives in the forward estimates $2.1 billion over three years. According to its charter, the ABC will, among other things:

… contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain, and reflect the cultural diversity of, the Australian community …

There could be no better way of doing that for senior Australians than broadcasting what would be the single most significant sport in Australia for people over the age of 50. There is no other sport than lawn bowls that captures what they are doing. It is quite a significant issue.

The ABC today has four channels: ABC1, ABC2, ABC3 and ABC24. We have a public broadcaster to contribute to our sense of national identity. I think it is an outrageous decision and I am 100 per cent behind the shadow minister for seniors, Bronwyn Bishop, who has launched, along with Bowls Australia, a nationwide petition to keep lawn bowls on the air at the ABC. I believe and agree with the argument that cutting lawn bowls breaches the charter of the ABC. It is breaching the idea that the history and tradition of lawn bowls in this country is part of our national identity—a current, contemporary part of our national identity. For senior Australians it is a very large part of their national identity. I have contacted all my local clubs and advised them that we are running this petition. We have had people signing it already. As one of the highest participation sports for seniors, with so many benefits, I think there is a clear case for the ABC to come to the table and reverse its decision.

Over the years I have been quite critical of the ABC, but there are shining moments when it delivers something that is within the cultural identity of Australians. It does programs that can be quite perceptive about our history, culture and identity and that have worth. Lawn bowls is a good example of what should be retained by the ABC for senior Australians. There is no commercial or other broadcasting institution in the country that will take up this important part of seniors' national identity and which has a long history. The Victorian Bowling Association was one of the first national bowling associations worldwide. It is one of those things that make up the great social fabric of our country. There is a clear and present argument for the ABC to reverse this retrograde decision, fulfil the obligations of its charter under the Broadcasting Act 1983 and return lawn bowls to the screen on the ABC.

Shortland Electorate: Health and Police

Ms HALL (Shortland—Government Whip) (12:47): The people of Shortland electorate were significantly disadvantaged during the Howard years in relation to health. There was a chronic shortage of doctors, a decline in bulk billing and a total disregard for the health needs of the people that I represent. When I was a state member of parliament, when the Carr
government first came to power, we were confronted with neglect within the health system there. So on both fronts, federal and state, we had Liberal governments that neglected the health needs of the people I represent.

That is in stark contrast to what the Rudd and Gillard governments have done. We have put more money, $19.8 billion, into public hospitals and there are 1,316 more beds, 5,500 GPs, 680 more specialists, less waste, because hospitals are funded for what they actually deliver, and shorter waiting times in emergency departments and for elective surgery. That is a real turnaround in delivering to the health needs of people in the Shortland electorate and, for that matter, throughout the whole of Australia.

When the Liberals were in power, their 10-year record is that out-of-pocket health expenses increased by 50 per cent—$1 billion was ripped out of the hospital system. There was a shortage of doctors which affected six out of every 10 Australians. But in the Shortland electorate it was greater than that; people were waiting three weeks for an appointment to see their doctor. And, of course, the Liberals were being financed by the tobacco industry. You can understand my confusion when I saw the state Liberal member for Swansea espousing the benefits that that Liberal government had delivered to the people of the Swansea electorate. He talked about the purchase of 14 subacute rehabilitation beds. The state governments have benefited by getting $16.4 billion extra from the Commonwealth. 'So where is the money coming from?,' I ask. Where is the money coming from for those subacute beds?

I was further confused when I read through his speech. He did talk about how his wife was a registered nurse and that she was going to have more time to cut his hair or something like that, which I thought was quite inane when you are talking about health needs. When he stood for election in that state seat of Swansea, one of the things that he got out there and said to people was: 'Vote for me. Vote for me. I'm going to have the Swansea Police Station staffed 24 hours a day.' This is on the record. This is what he stated. But, in the latest reports I am receiving from residents in Swansea, they say that they are lucky if they can spot a policeman or policewoman driving through Swansea. The people of Swansea now believe that a newly-built police station, built by a Labor government, is about to be closed. Police are supposed to be the winners in the budget which claimed to be investing more in front-line policing services to improve the community. But guess what? Not in Swansea. And that was despite a promise that policing in Swansea would be 24 hours a day.

What I have to say to the member for Swansea is that it is not good enough to say one thing before an election and then do something different after the election. The other thing that I would say to the member for Swansea is that, when he starts claiming credit for money spent on the Belmont Hospital, he really needs to look at where that money is coming from. (Time expired)

**Indi Electorate: Agriculture**

*Mrs MIRABELLA (Indi) (12:52):* I rise to speak about a very important sector in my electorate—that is, the agricultural sector. After so many years of droughts and difficulties, we have had good winter rains, the dams are full, water allocations are up and yield prospects are looking better than they have for many years. You ask: what could possibly be wrong with that? The problem that my communities, who have waited for so long for such good environmental and weather conditions, are facing is a crisis of confidence in the government. We have seen this in recent surveys. A rural confidence survey conducted by Rabobank that
was released only the other week shows farmers have registered a large decline in confidence, and it is largely attributable to Labor's carbon tax and live export ban—and no doubt they are also extraordinarily distressed at the misuse and waste of the hard earned taxes that they and other hardworking Australians pay.

This report shows that the current government is crushing confidence in the agricultural sector and doing significant damage to rural communities and rural economies, including mine in north-east Victoria in the electorate of Indi. Usually the results of these sorts of reports are a reflection of seasonal factors, but this particular decline in confidence is purely attributable to external factors outside the farm gate. These figures are startling because the huge drop in confidence has occurred over such a short period of time. It is not just the carbon tax and the live animal exports disaster; it is also the complete confusion over the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. We see only today the sneaky, underhanded shadow-boxing: releasing a few figures, trying to test the waters and trying to test public reaction. Water is a very significant policy area for the federal government. They should come clean and release the details so that they can be assessed by various communities, states and stakeholders. This very sneaky approach of releasing a few figures and saying they are not official is really shadow-boxing and quite cruel because what investors in agriculture need is certainty. What communities need is an understanding of what the government wants to do and be able to assess whether that is accurate and fair and how that impacts across all communities across the basin. There is a lack of confidence in the government's management of funds and a lack of confidence in the government's poor policy proposals, such as the carbon tax and the live animal export knee-jerk reaction, which was a diplomatic and economic disaster, and now we even have areas such as water policy being utterly mismanaged in a very unprofessional way, in an unseemly way, by a national government.

Farmers want a return to certainty. As decent Australians, they want to have respect for their national government, but respect is not given as a right; it is earned. They want an end to this chaotic, shambolic, embarrassing, unprofessional government. What they say to me is not so much that this is a bad government but that they often get a sad, sinking feeling that there is no government—that no-one is driving the agenda. The person they see most clearly driving the agenda, particularly in policy areas that concern them, is the alliance partner of the Labor Party, the Greens.

I see the member for Melbourne Ports across the table. He, like so many other decent members of the Labor Party, is concerned that they have sold their soul and are in alliance with the Australian Greens. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper): Before calling the honourable member for Melbourne Ports, I will advise him that he will get his full five minutes. The honourable member for Melbourne Ports has the call.

Australian Defence Force

Mr DANBY (Melbourne Ports) (12:57): Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. We all love Old Blighty. I defer to no-one in my admiration of the poetry of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, the popular culture of Steptoe and Son or the heroic role of Britain in the extension of civil liberties and civility, from the Magna Carta to Churchill's heroic and successful defence of world civilisation in the Second World War—as he memorably put it, 'against a thousand years of darkness' which would otherwise have descended on the world—but it is
wearying and exasperating to turn on the History Channel to watch another episode of *Britain at War*, about the 1940-41 campaign in the Western Desert, see the slouch hats but only hear about the 'British forces', with no mention of Australia.

Similarly, I was reading the otherwise excellent book, *The Bitter Sea*, by the Scottish historian, Simon Ball. Again, the ethnocentric, Eurocentric view of the world that denigrates Australia's role in those events in the Second World War is really exasperating. The book refers in passing to the first victory in the Mediterranean Battle of Cape Spada in the Second World War. Mr Ball refers to 'an Australian cruiser' that sank the *Bartolomeo Colleoni*, without mentioning its name. Of course, the cruiser's name was the *Sydney*. Mr Ball, 645 people died on the *Sydney* later in the confrontation with the German raider *Kormoran*. Later in the book, the enervating ethnocentricity which denigrates the role of Australia is repeated again and again. The role of Australian troops in liberating Bardia and Benghazì and, indeed, the whole of Cyrenaica in the Western Desert in the December 1941 battles is not mentioned by Mr Ball. Let me remind him that it was the 6th Division who liberated Benghazì. Troops from the 6th Division were involved in that campaign. Battalions of the 6th Division, like the 7th, were moved subsequently and 'used up' by the British in Greece.

In 1941—and Simon Ball mentions this in his book—the major infantry element trying to occupy and pre-empt a German invasion of Lebanon was the 7th Division of the 2nd AIF, which had very bitter fights with the Vichy French. There were also British and Free French forces there, but the principal infantry element, as in the Western Desert campaign, was the Australians.

Montgomery's chief of staff at El Alamein, de Guingand, said later that he wished he had had at Normandy the magnificent 9th (Australian) Division. Rommel said that, in all of his experiences during the campaign in the Western Desert, the Australian troops were the ones that the Germans feared the most. I say all of these things not out of pure Australian nationalism, although I do not disavow that.

The *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, problems with wartime co-operation and post-war change 1939-1951*, published in 1958, quotes the great man himself, Winston Churchill:

To General Auchinleck Mr Churchill expressed his grief—
that the Australians were eventually withdrawn from Tobruk—
... but added: 'I have long feared the dangerous reactions on Australian and world opinion of our seeming to fight all our battles in the Middle East only with Dominion troops.'

Who was he talking about? The Australians. The quote goes on:

Once again, added Mr Churchill, the trouble had arisen largely 'through our not having any British infantry divisions in various actions, thus leading the world and Australia to suppose that we are fighting our battles with Dominion troops only'.

That was very much the case during the period of the Middle East campaign from 1940 right through to the end of the battle of Battle of El Alamein in late 1942.

One does not disparage the great role that Britain played in the Second World War. One does not disparage the role of British troops, the British Navy et cetera. But I wish historians like Simon Ball would pay tribute where it is due, to the people who played an absolutely key role in world history—the heroes of the Australian Army and Navy who fought in all of those
campaigns and who are owed credit for it. It is disgraceful, in my view, that this seems to be a continuing problem with British historians in particular—that the role of Australia is completely negated. We had this experience with the First World War, in relation to the key role of the Australian corps who fought under Monash and broke through to the Hindenburg line and earlier defended the British at Amiens after the great German Schwerpunkt came from Russia. British ethnocentrism is a continuing problem. On behalf of most Australians, I say: we have had enough of it.

Question agreed to.

Main Committee adjourned at 13:03
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Nicotine Products
(Question No. 470)

Dr Jensen asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 16 August 2011:

(1) Is she aware of the serious health implications and high rate of addiction associated with the consumption of products containing nicotine.

(2) Is she aware that United States regulation requires purchasers of products such as nicotine gum, lozenges and patches to be over 18 years of age.

(3) Is she aware that nicotine products including patches, gum and lozenges, specifically labelled with an 'Adults 18+' warning, are currently being sold in Australian supermarkets without restriction.

(4) Will she consider restricting the sale of nicotine products including patches, gum and lozenges, to consumers over 18 years of age.

Ms Roxon: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) Each year, smoking kills 15,000 Australians and costs Australia $31.5 billion. Approximately three million Australians still smoke regularly. The Australian Government is committed to reducing smoking rates to 10 per cent by 2018. To achieve this, the Australian Government has subsidised a range of smoking cessation aids and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products (including nicotine patches) on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Although there are risks associated with the use of any product containing nicotine, due to the harm to public health associated with tobacco smoking, the Australian Government supports the broad availability of NRT products to help the public to quit smoking.

(2) Yes.

(3) Yes.

(4) The Australian Government believes that it is in the interests of all Australians wanting to quit smoking to be able to access NRT products as quickly and easily as possible. The more widely available the products are, the more beneficial to those smokers who have decided to quit or who are contemplating quitting. Since 2004, a range of NRT products have been available from supermarkets and other retail outlets. These include NRT products in the form of chewing gum, lozenges, transdermal patches and sublingual tablets.

Medicare Dentistry
(Question No. 487)

Mr Oakeshott asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 16 August 2011:

(1) What impact has the $430.78 million spent on Medicare dentistry during 2008-09 done

   (a) specifically to reduce public dental waiting lists, especially for those in the NSW community who have been struggling to access public dental services for years, and

   (b) more generally to improve Australians' oral health.

(2) What have the neediest and most disadvantaged people in our community gained in improved access to dental treatments having $450 million, a doubling of public money, been spent on dentistry.

(3) What actions have been taken to evaluate the Medicare

   (a) Enhanced Primary Care Program, and

   (b) Teen Dental Program, and informing the community on exactly what has happened to the $430.78 million allocated to dentistry in 2008-09.
(4) What method is used to compile 'waiting lists' for people requiring services at public dental clinics, and will the Government consider introducing a system whereby those on the waiting list can be given some indication of their place on the list or an estimate of how long they are likely to have to wait.

(5) Would the Government consider legislating to allow a voluntary (not compulsory) co payment for the provision of dentures for people who are in a position to do so, thus reducing the amount of time and numbers on the waiting list.

Ms Roxon: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) (a) Pensioners and concession card holders can access the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme (CDDS) and the Medicare Teen Dental Plan (MTDP) if they meet the eligibility criteria. It is not possible to link information about pensioners and concession card holders who access these Commonwealth programs with public dental waiting list information. Public dental waiting lists are managed by state and territory governments and questions about them are best directed to the relevant state or territory government.

(b) In 2008-09, 2,381,277 services were provided under the CDDS and 459,691 preventative dental checks provided under the MTDP.

(2) The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) undertakes a National Survey of Adult Oral Health. The results are analysed by a number of socio-demographic characteristics, including eligibility for public dental care. As the last National Survey of Adult Oral Health occurred between 2004 and 2006, data is not available on the periods of CDDS and MTDP operation as these programs commenced in 2007 and 2008 respectively. A future National Survey of Adult Oral Health has not been scheduled to date.

(3) The Gillard Government has announced its intention to close the CDDS in order to make funding available for the introduction of the Commonwealth Dental Health Program (CDHP). The CDHP would provide additional public dental services for pensioners and concession cardholders. An evaluation of the CDDS has therefore not been undertaken.

As required by legislation, a review of the operation of the Dental Benefits Act 2008 (the Act), which sets up the MTDP, was conducted shortly after the first anniversary of the commencement of the Act. The Report on the Review of the Dental Benefits Act 2008 was tabled in Parliament on 15 March 2010. The Review committee found that the introduction of the MTDP has been successful, and utilisation of vouchers was highest in metropolitan areas while bulk billing rates were highest in areas of relatively greater disadvantage and remote areas. The report is publicly available at: http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Dental_Report_on_the_Review_of_the_Dental_Benefits_Act_2008

Information on benefits paid and services provided under the CDDS and MTDP is available to the community on the Medicare Australia website.

(4) Each state and territory is responsible for public dental services, including the management of patient arrangements for appointments and waiting times. Questions about public dental services are best directed to the relevant state or territory government.

(5) Co-payments form part of existing state and territory arrangements for public dental care, including the provision of dentures. These arrangements vary between state and territories. Co-payment charges for public dental services are a matter for each state and territory government.