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RADIO BROADCASTS

Broadcasts of proceedings of the Parliament can be heard on the following Parliamentary and News Network radio stations, in the areas identified.

- **CANBERRA**: 103.9 FM
- **SYDNEY**: 630 AM
- **NEWCASTLE**: 1458 AM
- **GOSFORD**: 98.1 FM
- **BRISBANE**: 936 AM
- **GOLD COAST**: 95.7 FM
- **MELBOURNE**: 1026 AM
- **ADELAIDE**: 972 AM
- **PERTH**: 585 AM
- **HOBART**: 747 AM
- **NORTHERN TASMANIA**: 92.5 FM
- **DARWIN**: 102.5 FM
FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—NINTH PERIOD

Governor-General

His Excellency Major-General Michael Jeffery, Companion in the Order of Australia, Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Military Cross

Senate Officeholders

President—Senator the Hon. Paul Henry Calvert
Deputy President and Chairman of Committees—Senator John Joseph Hogg
Leader of the Government in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Nicholas Hugh Minchin
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Helen Lloyd Coonan
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate—Senator Christopher Vaughan Evans
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate—Senator Stephen Michael Conroy
Manager of Government Business in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz
Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate—Senator Joseph William Ludwig

Senate Party Leaders and Whips

Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—Senator the Hon. Nicholas Hugh Minchin
Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—Senator the Hon. Helen Lloyd Coonan
Leader of The Nationals—Senator the Hon. Ronald Leslie Doyle Boswell
Deputy Leader of The Nationals—Senator the Hon. Nigel Gregory Scullion
Leader of the Australian Labor Party—Senator Christopher Vaughan Evans
Deputy Leader of the Australian Labor Party—Senator Stephen Michael Conroy
Leader of the Australian Democrats—Senator Lynette Fay Allison
Leader of the Australian Greens—Senator Robert James Brown
Leader of the Family First Party—Senator Steve Fielding
Liberal Party of Australia Whip—Senator Stephen Parry
Nationals Whip—Senator Fiona Joy Nash

Opposition Whips—Senators George Campbell, Linda Jean Kirk and Ruth Stephanie Webber
Australian Democrats Whip—Senator Andrew John Julian Bartlett
Australian Greens Whip—Senator Rachel Siewert

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(1) Chosen by the Parliament of Queensland to fill a casual vacancy vice Hon. Santo Santoro, resigned.
(2) Chosen by the Parliament of Victoria to fill a casual vacancy vice Hon. Richard Kenneth Robert Alston, resigned.
(3) Term expires at close of day next preceding the polling day for the general election of members of the House of Representatives.
(4) Chosen by the Parliament of Tasmania to fill a casual vacancy vice Susan Mary Mackay, resigned.
(5) Chosen by the Parliament of South Australia to fill a casual vacancy vice Hon. Robert Murray Hill, resigned.
(6) Chosen by the Parliament of South Australia to fill a casual vacancy vice Jeannie Margaret Ferris, died in office.

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS
AD—Australian Democrats; AG—Australian Greens; ALP—Australian Labor Party; CLP—Country Labor Party; FF—Family First Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals

Heads of Parliamentary Departments
Clerk of the Senate—H Evans
Clerk of the House of Representatives—I C Harris
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—H R Penfold QC
HOWARD MINISTRY

Prime Minister
Minister for Transport and Regional Services and Deputy Prime Minister
Treasurer
Minister for Trade
Minister for Defence
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Health and Ageing and Leader of the House
Attorney-General
Minister for Finance and Administration, Leader of the Government in the Senate and Vice-President of the Executive Council
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Deputy Leader of the House
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
Minister for Education, Science and Training and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women’s Issues
Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Indigenous Affairs
Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service
Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for the Environment and Water Resources
Minister for Human Services

The Hon. John Winston Howard MP
The Hon. Mark Anthony James Vaile MP
The Hon. Peter Howard Costello MP
The Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP
The Hon. Dr Brendan John Nelson MP
The Hon. Alexander John Gosse Downer MP
The Hon. Anthony John Abbott MP
The Hon. Philip Maxwell Ruddock MP
Senator the Hon. Nicholas Hugh Minchin
The Hon. Peter John McGauran MP
The Hon. Kevin James Andrews MP
The Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
The Hon. Malcolm Thomas Brough MP
The Hon. Ian Elgin Macfarlane MP
The Hon. Joseph Benedict Hockey MP
Senator the Hon. Helen Lloyd Coonan
The Hon. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP
Senator the Hon. Christopher Martin Ellison

(The above ministers constitute the cabinet)
HOWARD MINISTRY—continued

Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation and Manager of Government Business in the Senate
Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz

Minister for Small Business and Tourism
The Hon. Frances Esther Bailey MP

Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads
The Hon. James Eric Lloyd MP

Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer
The Hon. Peter Craig Dutton MP

Minister for Workforce Participation
The Hon. Dr Sharman Nancy Stone MP

Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence
The Hon. Bruce Frederick Billson MP

Special Minister of State
The Hon. Gary Roy Nairn MP

Minister for Ageing
The Hon. Christopher Maurice Pyne MP

Minister for Vocational and Further Education
The Hon. Andrew John Robb MP

Minister for the Arts and Sport
Senator the Hon. George Henry Brandis SC

Minister for Community Services
Senator the Hon. Nigel Gregory Scullion

Minister for Justice and Customs
Senator the Hon. David Albert Lloyd Johnston

Assistant Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
The Hon. Teresa Gambaro MP

Assistant Minister for the Environment and Water Resources
The Hon. John Kenneth Cobb MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister
The Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport and Regional Services
The Hon. De-Anne Margaret Kelly MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer
The Hon. Christopher John Pearce MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration
Senator the Hon. Richard Mansell Colbeck

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources
The Hon. Robert Charles Baldwin MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs
The Hon. Gregory Andrew Hunt MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
The Hon. Sussan Penelope Ley MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Science and Training
The Hon. Patrick Francis Farmer MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence
The Hon. Peter John Lindsay MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing
Senator the Hon. Brett John Mason
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<td>Julia Eileen Gillard MP</td>
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<td>Industrial Relations and Shadow Minister for Social Inclusion</td>
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<td>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Minister for</td>
<td>Senator Christopher Vaughan Evans</td>
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<td>The Hon. Archibald Ronald Bevis MP</td>
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<td>and Customs and Shadow Minister for Territories</td>
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<td>Shadow Assistant Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Revenue and</td>
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<td>The Hon. Simon Findlay Crean MP</td>
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Shadow Minister for Federal/State Relations, Shadow Minister for International Development Assistance and Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House
Robert Francis McMullan MP

Shadow Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator Kerry Williams Kelso O’Brien

Shadow Minister for Human Services, Shadow Minister for Housing, Shadow Minister for Youth and Shadow Minister for Women
Tanya Joan Plibersek MP

Shadow Minister for Health
Nicola Louise Roxon MP

Shadow Minister for Superannuation and Intergenerational Finance and Shadow Minister for Banking and Financial Services
Senator the Hon. Nicholas John Sherry

Shadow Minister for Education and Training
Stephen Francis Smith MP

Shadow Treasurer
Wayne Maxwell Swan MP

Shadow Minister for Finance
Lindsay James Tanner MP

Shadow Minister for Public Administration and Accountability, Shadow Minister for Corporate Governance and Responsibility and Shadow Minister for Workforce Participation
Senator Penelope Ying Yen Wong

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs
Anthony Michael Byrne MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence and Veterans’ Affairs
The Hon. Graham John Edwards MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Environment and Heritage
Jennie George MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Treasury
Catherine Fiona King MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Education
Kirsten Fiona Livermore MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition
John Paul Murphy MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Industrial Relations
Brendan Patrick John O’Connor MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Industry and Innovation
Bernard Fernando Ripoll MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern Australia and Indigenous Affairs
The Hon. Warren Edward Snowdon MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition (Social and Community Affairs)
Senator Ursula Mary Stephens
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Tuesday, 8 May 2007

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. Paul Calvert) took the chair at 12.30 pm and read prayers.

CONDOLENCES

Senator Jeannie Margaret Ferris

The PRESIDENT (12.31 pm)—It is with deep regret that I inform honourable senators of the death on Monday, 2 April 2007 of Senator Jeannie Margaret Ferris, who served Australia and South Australia with distinction in this place from 1996. I will call the Leader of the Government in the Senate, Senator Minchin, to move a condolence motion at 2 pm today.

REPRESENTATION OF QUEENSLAND AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The PRESIDENT (12.31 pm)—I inform the Senate of the resignation of Senator Santo Santoro and Senator Amanda Vanstone and table their letters of resignation. I also table copies of letters to the Governors of South Australia and Queensland notifying them of the vacancies in the representation of those states. I have received, through His Excellency the Governor-General, copies of certificates of the choice by the parliament of Queensland of Suzanne Kay Boyce as a senator to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Senator Santoro, and the choice by the parliament of South Australia of Simon John Birmingham as a senator to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Senator Ferris. I table the documents.

SENATORS SWORN

Senator Boyce and Senator Birmingham made and subscribed the affirmation of allegiance.

NOTICES

Presentation

Senator Allison to move on the next day of sitting:

That the Senate—

(a) notes:

(i) that on Tuesday, 17 April 2007, the Mayor of Nagasaki, Iccho Itoh, was murdered in a senseless crime,

(ii) that Mayor Itoh was born just 2 weeks before the atomic bombing of Nagasaki and throughout his life worked tirelessly for the eradication of nuclear weapons,

(iii) that Mayor Itoh was vice president of Mayors for Peace and a leader of their global campaign to eliminate nuclear weapons by the year 2020, and

(iv) his significant role in the three Nagasaki Global Citizens’ Assemblies held while he was mayor;

(b) recalls his opening address to the Assembly in 2006 where he began by asking ‘What can people possibly be thinking?’ 61 years ago ‘a single atomic bomb destroyed our city, instantly claiming the lives of 74,000 people … and yet, [today] some 30,000 nuclear weapons stand ready nonetheless to annihilate humanity’;

(c) considers that the world has lost a great peace leader in Mayor Itoh; and

(d) conveys its condolences to the family of Mayor Itoh, the Mayors for Peace and the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Senator Watson to move 15 sitting days after today:

That the Australian Federal Police Amendment Regulations 2006 (No. 1), as contained in Select Legislative Instrument 2006 No. 326 and made under the Australian Federal Police Act 1979, be disallowed.

Senator Watson to move 15 sitting days after today:

That Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests) 2006 – Instrument 2006 No. R33,
Senator Watson to move 15 sitting days after today:

Senator Siewert to move on the next day of sitting:
That the Senate notes that:
(a) 26 May 2007 is the 10th anniversary of the tabling in the Senate of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission report, Bringing them Home: National inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families;
(b) as recommended in the report, the Senate recognises that 26 May is National Sorry Day, a day of remembrance each year to commemorate the history of forcible removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and its effects on individuals, families and communities; and
(c) of the 54 recommendations in the report, very few have been fully implemented in the decade since its release.

Sitting suspended from 12.38 pm to 2 pm

CONDOLENCES

Senator MINCHIN (South Australia—Leader of the Government in the Senate) (2.00 pm)—by leave—I move:
That the Senate records its deep regret at the death, on 2 April 2007, of Senator Jeannie Margaret Ferris, Senator for South Australia, and places on record its appreciation of her long and meritorious public service and tenders its profound sympathy to her family in their bereavement.

Jeannie was born on 14 March 1941 in Auckland, New Zealand, where she spent her early years. In the early 1960s she came to Australia to continue her education at Monash University in Melbourne, where she graduated in agricultural economics. After first working on the Rotorua Post in New Zealand, she continued her career as a journalist in Australia, working in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, before first coming to Canberra in the late 1960s.

During the years that followed, Jeannie worked at the Canberra Times, and as editor of the Yass Tribune. She took pride in claiming that she was the first female newspaper editor in 165 years in rural Australia. She moved on to work in public relations and lobbying, notably in agripolitics. In the early 1980s, Jeannie worked for the CSIRO and she was later the director of public relations with the National Farmers Federation, and corporate affairs director for the South Australian Farmers Federation.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Jeannie went into party politics as a senior staff member. She worked with her former NFF colleague, the South Australian federal Liberal member and later minister Ian McLachlan, as well as a number of state Liberal ministers, including Diana Laidlaw, Dale Baker and Rob Kerin. It was during this period—when I was the state director of the South Australian Liberal Party and, from 1993, a senator—that I got to know and admire Jeannie Ferris. Thus when a vacancy arose on the South Australian Liberal Senate ticket for the 1996 federal election, following Baden Teague’s decision to retire, I put to my particular friends and colleagues in the South Australian Liberal Party that we should encourage Jeannie to nominate for the vacancy.

A number of us were attracted to the idea that Baden should be replaced by a good conservative woman, and Jeannie seemed the ideal candidate. My particular group of friends agreed wholeheartedly and it fell to me to call Jeannie to ask her to nominate, with our support. That was one of the con-
versations I will long remember—Jeannie’s excitement, her eagerness and her gratitude leapt out of the telephone. Jeannie went on to win the No. 3 spot in a very keenly contested preselection—as they always are in South Australia—and on 2 March 1996 she became Senator elect Ferris.

Jeannie had left her position as chief of staff to the then state Liberal minister Dale Baker to contest that election, so she was then unemployed until she could take her seat on 1 July. With an eye for talent, I decided to offer Jeannie a short-term position on my staff as my native title adviser, given my new responsibility at that time for reform of the Native Title Act. Jeannie was very well qualified for that role.

At my urging, Jeannie sought and obtained legal advice as to whether there was any legal or constitutional problem with a senator elect working for a parliamentary secretary. The advice was quite clear that there was no problem. However, in any event, she only had paid employment for less than a week and otherwise worked for me on a voluntary basis. As is well known by many in this place, the opposition nevertheless mounted a full-scale attack on Jeannie’s right to sit as a senator from 1 July that year. Throughout May 1996, exactly 11 years ago, then Labor senator Nick Bolkus attacked me and Jeannie on a daily basis, asserting constitutional doubts about her eligibility. It was a relatively stressful period for Jeannie and a tad embarrassing for me. It appeared Jeannie’s Senate career might be over before it began. Jeannie did become a senator on 1 July but, to remove any ongoing doubts about her status, I had to persuade her to resign from the Senate on 12 July—12 days later—on the basis that the South Australian state parliament would then appoint her to fill the vacancy created by her own resignation. This was a rather ingenious way of removing the doubts Senator Bolkus had created about Jeannie’s status. Jeannie was a little unsure about the wisdom of this strategy but placed her whole trust in me to pull it off. History records that the South Australian state parliament did indeed appoint Jeannie Ferris to fill the casual vacancy on 24 July 1996, thus confirming beyond question Jeannie’s status as a senator—and we heard no more from Senator Bolkus.

This episode did secure Jeannie’s unique place in the history of the Senate. No other senator has ever resigned within two weeks of becoming a senator and then been appointed to fill the vacancy created by his or her own resignation. So you could say Jeannie arrived in the Senate with a bang and kept on banging for the next 11 years. I should report that Jeannie, Nick Bolkus and I subsequently became very good friends, and I do know that Nick misses her as much as anyone else in this place.

I take this opportunity to record my sincere appreciation to those ALP and other non-government senators and members who attended Jeannie’s memorial service in the Great Hall. It reflects the respect for her across the parliament. In particular, I want to acknowledge the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Stephen Conroy, who I think was the most senior opposition member present at the memorial service. I know that, as someone who became very close to Jeannie—particularly through her illness—Senator Conroy was extremely upset by her death.

Jeannie Ferris had ideal training for the job of senator, with nearly 30 years experience as a journalist, public relations officer, lobbyist and political staffer. Her successful Senate career speaks volumes for the virtue of entering the Senate a little later in life, although of course we welcome the occasional more youthful addition to our ranks. Jeannie’s biggest contribution to the Senate
was her work as Government Whip for the last 4½ years—in my view, the toughest job in this place, especially in the last 20 months, with the government’s bare one-seat majority and of course the coalition parties’ acceptance of the right of senators to cross the floor without facing expulsion. Jeannie performed that very demanding role with the vigour, discipline and goodwill which so characterised her approach to life.

Jeannie was not only someone whom I regard as my star parliamentary recruit, my good friend and invaluable Senate colleague; she was also my Canberra landlady and co-habitant. Senator Alan Ferguson and I and Alexander Downer, recently replaced by Senator Cory Bernardi, have been renting Jeannie’s Canberra house for nearly 10 years. We have the three downstairs bedrooms and she had the upstairs room. So Jeannie had the very good fortune to have us pay off her mortgage for the last 10 years, to have exceptionally good tenants, to have the government install security to protect the foreign minister after 9-11—they did not care much about me, Jeannie or Alan, but apparently Alexander’s life was worth preserving—and of course to have her house renowned as the most conservative household in the whole of Canberra. It was a pretty good arrangement. I think our three wives took great comfort in knowing that Jeannie was hovering over us every night, keeping a close eye on us. And, of course, we kept a close eye on her. I should mention that our wives have absolutely nothing to fear.

Jeannie was in her prime and was loving life to the full when she discovered, late in 2005, that she had ovarian cancer. In typical Jeannie fashion she was determined to fight the disease and beat it. She had a terrible summer in 2005-06, being treated for that cancer, and she showed tremendous courage and tenacity to return to the political fray in 2006. Having suffered the miseries of the cancer, she threw herself into the cause of improving the way our society deals with gynaecological cancers. She was a key member of the Senate committee of inquiry into gynaecological cancers in Australia, which resulted in the government providing $1 million in seed funding for a new centre for gynaecological cancers to provide education and increase awareness among medical and allied health professionals about gynaecological cancers.

We all thought Jeannie had won her battle with her disease. The magnetism, vivaciousness and charm which had always characterised Jeannie were in full view in 2006. Alas, our optimism was unfounded. About 10 weeks ago she returned to hospital in Canberra, where she remained until she died peacefully early on the morning of 2 April, just two weeks after her 66th birthday.

Jeannie was loved, respected and admired by an extraordinary range and number of Australians, from members of parliament to journalists, from scientists to farmers. When you think of Jeannie you immediately picture that engaging smile, the cheeky glint in her eye, her wonderful sense of humour and her take-no-prisoners approach to life. While we celebrate a life well lived, we do mourn the friendship lost. Saddest of all is the recollection of the enthusiasm that she had for her post-parliamentary life, which she had planned following her decision to retire at the next election. Now that is not to be.

Of Jeannie it can truly be said that she touched the lives of all who knew her. On behalf of the government, I offer condolences to her two sons, Robbie and Jeremy, and to her extended family. In particular, I offer my deep sympathy to her two sons on the extraordinary double tragedy of the loss of their father, Bob Ferris, whom I also knew very well and had known for some 20-odd years, just a few days after Jeannie’s passing.
Senator CHRIS EVANS (Western Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (2.10 pm)—I, on behalf of the Labor opposition, would like to support the motion of condolence moved by Senator Minchin following the death last month of our Senate colleague Jeannie Ferris. On behalf of Labor senators I pay tribute to her contribution to the Senate and to broader public life, and I convey the sincere condolences of all Labor senators to her family and friends and particularly today to her Senate colleagues.

Unlike many in the chamber, I did not know Jeannie well. As senators will know, there are some people who you get to know very well and there are others who, if you do not serve on committees with them, you do not know quite as well. But I know her passing touched many Labor senators who counted her as a personal friend, and her loss affected us all.

I think she is the second senator since I have been here who died while in office. The previous senator was John Panizza, who was also Government Whip at the time. I knew him much better, and he was a very sad loss—one of the Senate characters. I think times like this bring us all back to earth about our humanity and our private lives and remind us that we ought not to take ourselves too seriously and that there are more important things than being a senator.

We had a great deal of respect for Jeannie, for her energy and for the effective way in which she carried out her duties. We were shocked and saddened to hear about the re-emergence of her health problems after she made such a successful return to the Senate. We were all buoyed by her energy and her reappearance and were hopeful that she had beaten the illness.

I, like Senator Minchin, offer condolences to her family and colleagues, but I also note that she had a highly successful and engaging career, which is probably the focus we should take. As Senator Minchin said, she was born in Auckland in 1941—I forgave her for being a Kiwi—and migrated to Australia in 1963. She worked in the public sphere for more than four decades and, as a journalist, worked on a number of publications right around Australia. She and her former husband, Bob, moved to Canberra in the late sixties and she worked for some years at the Canberra Times, and apparently also as editor of the Yass Tribune. She earned a Graduate Diploma in Agribusiness from Monash University and worked in public relations and lobbying, particularly in the agribusiness area. She became a public affairs officer at the CSIRO in 1979, and in 1984 she became Public Relations Director at the National Farmers Federation and then went on to the position of corporate affairs director at the South Australian Farmers Federation. I understand that while at the NFF she was involved in organising the famous farmers’ demonstration in Canberra in 1985—something she spoke proudly about in her first speech to the Senate more than a decade later—although at the time I think a few of our former colleagues were not so impressed by her capacity for organising.

As Senator Minchin said, she held a number of political roles before coming into the Senate: as an adviser to federal Liberal MP Ian McLachlan, with whom she had worked at the NFF; as an adviser to South Australian minister Diana Laidlaw; and as chief of staff to South Australian primary industries minister Dale Baker and his successor, Rob Kerin. I did not realise Senator Minchin was solely responsible for her preselection on the Liberal Party ticket, but it does not surprise me. As a result she was elected in March 1996. Of course, as Senator Minchin pointed out, there was some controversy at the time, and Senator Bolkus did a good job in holding out for the appropriate constitutional standards. I
think Jeannie’s mistake was taking Senator Minchin’s advice and not realising earlier that she had a much more serious problem. Senator Minchin, as leader in the Senate now, should have known about the conventions in this regard, and clearly it was sloppy on his part. But, as he pointed out, it certainly was not personal, and Senator Bolkus became and remained a very close friend of Jeannie and I know was very saddened by her passing. As Senator Minchin indicates, she will be found in Odgers and other historical records as someone who had a very bumpy start to her Senate career, but she went on to make a serious contribution to the Senate.

Her first speech indicated her pride in representing South Australia. She spoke of the state’s pioneer history and more modern growth and development. She was also very proud to be part of a tradition of women who had served in public life. I know a number of women on our side found her a great ally in common causes. She mentioned a number of women in her maiden speech who had provided inspiration for political life, including Dame Enid Lyons; former South Australian senator Nancy Buttfield, whom we spoke of recently upon her passing; the social reformer Catherine Helen Spence; and her state’s first female governor, Dame Roma Mitchell. Jeannie’s commitment to advancing issues of particular importance to women was very much reflected in her later work in the Senate. In her first speech she talked about the hope and optimism she had felt as a young woman and of her belief that her role here was to ensure that all young people shared that sense of hope, saying:

Our task here—not only as elected men and women but also mostly as mothers and fathers, and some as grandparents—is to take on the task of restoring this sense of hope and optimism to all of our young people.

Over the 11 years, Jeannie built up a substantial body of work in the Senate committee system of which she and her family can be very proud. She served on a number of our committees, including in the policy areas of employment, industrial relations and education and in areas of her particular interests, in rural and regional affairs and also foreign affairs, defence and trade. She was, for her sins, a member of the Scrutiny of Bills Committee for six years and of the Selection of Bills Committee for five. Also, at various times, she was chair of the Select Committee on Information Technologies, of the Joint Committee on the National Crime Authority and of the Joint Committee on Native Title and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Fund. So she played a very active role in the Senate committee system and made a huge contribution there. I know she particularly spent a lot of time and took great interest in issues of child custody.

I came to know Jeannie more in relation to her role in the chamber, where for 5½ years she worked to ensure its smooth running. She was Deputy Government Whip from November 2001 and then became Government Whip in the Senate from August 2002. Being a former whip, I understand the trials and tribulations she would have gone through, particularly when she came at a time when the government had a majority in the Senate of only one. Trying to keep the National Party in line must have driven her absolutely mad. To have Senators Boswell and Joyce corralled must have been a huge challenge, and no doubt there were some fractious Liberal senators who needed dealing with. I did have the odd conversation with her about such issues—there is a former whips club in this place that has shared experiences. I did not realise she was landlord to such a motley crew. It seems like she never got any time off, then, from supervising Liberal senators! I was interested to read
in Jeannie’s obituary in the Canberra Times, her old employer, that she was described as a ‘born organiser who seemed to know every- one’—qualities that of course served her well in the whip’s job and I think are reflected in the fact that so many people on the non-government side of the chamber knew her well and were very fond of her.

As I said, she made a huge impact on issues of women and health in her time here. She was also a strong advocate for the interests of rural women. In the last few years of her life she became associated with a number of highly complex and highly emotionally charged issues of conscience about which she felt passionately and argued forcefully; and I think, for those of us who have been through it, she revealed a lot about herself during those debates. She believed that women’s health issues crossed party lines and she worked effectively behind the scenes, employing her knowledge of Senate rules and her seniority with the government. Obviously she would have had a fair bit of dirt on a few senior ministers that would have come in handy as well! She defended the public funding for IVF treatment through Medicare, arguing against imposing an eligibility criterion based on age rather than medical assessment. She was deeply involved behind the scenes in the debate about RU486, in part by working to ensure a respectful and productive debate in the chamber in which she played a big role. And, along with Senators Patterson, Stott Despoja and Webber, she was one of the drivers of last year’s legislative response to the Lockhart review and changes to the regime involving stem cell research. That is when I had most contact with her, and her passion for those issues was obvious. I think she was very influential in a lot of senators coming to the views they did. Obviously she was able to draw on her own medical experience as well to advance her case. I think she held this debate and this outcome as one of her proudest achievements in the Senate.

More recently she put her efforts into improving awareness of and services for women experiencing cancer. Her own knowledge of the lack of medical awareness of gynaecological cancer and the experience of fighting it was one of the factors which motivated her work in the area. She was instrumental in establishing the Senate inquiry into the issue and lobbying within the government to see that the committee’s recommendations were acted upon. It is a testament to the effectiveness of Jeannie and those other senators who worked on the issue that the government responded in record time. She has had a lot more success than most of us have had, but she also managed to get them to respond so positively to the committee’s report. I think Jeannie, like the late Peter Cook, leaves a powerful legacy in this regard: senators who took their own experience from cancer and combined it with their strong political skills to try to provide benefits to other Australians who faced similar challenges. I think that is one of her enduring legacies.

The recent announcement of funding to establish the new centre for gynaecological cancer was a great result for her and obviously for the broader community. She made a huge impact in these policy areas to which her substantial skills and energy were devoted. I think her contribution to the parliament is one which her family and the Liberal Party can be very proud of, and I know that many Labor senators have very strong personal links with Jeannie and some of them will speak in the debate today. Her loss is felt by all across the chamber, and on behalf of the opposition I again offer our sincere condolences to her family and friends and to her Senate colleagues.
Senator BOSWELL  (Queensland—Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (2.23 pm)—On behalf of my National Party colleagues I too would like to support the condolence motion moved by Nick Minchin and supported by Senator Evans. Australia has lost another great political identity in Jeannie, and a very brave woman. The Prime Minister at her memorial service said she was a woman of courage, principles and decency, and I agree with all those sentiments.

Jeannie as a whip tried to bring us all together. Everyone’s birthday was always observed. There was a cake out there for anyone that had a birthday or if someone had some significant event happen in their life, such as 20 years service in parliament, she took it upon herself to organise some sort of celebration. She took that part of her job very seriously, welding us all together. Through the long nights she made sure that we had coffee and other things we needed. She did a great job as a whip and I would imagine she was very thorough in any other pursuit she undertook.

Prior to being elected to the Senate in March 1996, Senator Ferris made a significant contribution to public life as a journalist, lobbyist and political adviser. She was the editor of the Yass Tribune and also a very significant figure in the National Farmers Federation. I am one of those people that attended that rally of 45,000 farmers that massed at the front of Old Parliament House, I think it was, and she organised that on behalf of the National Farmers Federation. Buses came from every part of Australia, and she took a prominent role in organising that.

She was an adviser to Liberal members of parliament at both a federal and a state level before being elected to the Senate for South Australia. She was passionate about issues to do with rural and regional Australia and was a member of the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs Committee for the duration of her time in the Senate. I think that she was more than a member; she was the secretary and she took a very active interest in that.

She was a great advocate for women’s issues. Sometimes I did not agree with her but nevertheless we still remained friends. As a woman in the Senate, she was able to bridge the party divide on many of these issues. Most people when diagnosed with an advanced cancer would cease work to concentrate on their health. Senator Ferris instead helped set up a parliamentary inquiry into cancer and then focused on ensuring that the National Centre for Gynaecological Cancers be established. She was not unlike Senator Cook. She can also claim success for the national program of vaccinations against cervical cancer for young girls, which was launched on the day of her death. She will ultimately be remembered by the Australian public for advancing these causes on behalf of Australian women.

Her talents and strong principles were recognised by her fellow Senate colleagues when she was appointed Government Whip in August 2002. She certainly brought goodwill and good humour to the role and often made the remark that it was like ‘herding cats’. Despite our views diverging on some issues, I will remember her as a compassionate person with a positive attitude and a strong will, and I have great respect for her. On behalf of my National Party colleagues in the Senate, I sincerely extend my condolences to her sons, Robbie and Jeremy, her family and her friends. She will be missed in this place.

Senator ALLISON  (Victoria—Leader of the Australian Democrats) (2.27 pm)—It is with great sadness that I make my contribution to the condolence motion for Senator Jeannie Ferris. The death of any senator in office demonstrates untimeliness and Senator
Ferris was probably at a high point in her political career when cancer struck. Untimely deaths rob people of their time as useful, productive contributors to society and to their families. They also leave a big gap in the lives of family, friends and colleagues, which is why we are talking about Jeannie Ferris today.

I have known Jeannie Ferris for 11 years, some of those years as Democrat Whip when I met with her daily in her final parliamentary role as Government Whip. I also served with her on several committees over those 11 years. But perhaps I knew her best for her work in defending women’s reproductive health rights and services, an area which was to take her life.

She is well known for her role in getting started the Senate inquiry into gynaecological cancer and she brought to that inquiry direct, personal and often painful experiences of cancer. She embraced the issue in a way that government whips are not often able to do. Indeed, senators who are not also ministers or parliamentary secretaries do not often take centre stage in the public arena on these issues. But she did on this issue and was successful in bringing public opinion on board, winning the confidence of women and the medical profession and having the certainty that her objectives were in the interests of women in these very difficult circumstances. As we all know, the government response to the Senate inquiry’s report was swift and positive and, if there is any silver lining for Jeannie, it is that she was here to witness and celebrate that success.

At a personal level, I think we were all hugely relieved when her treatment after diagnosis seemed to have been such a success and we expected her to be with us for many years to come. This was not to be. Apparently she knew her prognosis was not very good when she returned to the Senate just a few weeks before going back into hospital, but for her this was a very private time and most of us did not suspect that we might be seeing her for the last time.

Jeannie had a life that was probably more interesting than most and I gather she lived it to the fullest. She certainly cracked the whip on members of her ranks—mostly trying to stop them talking in this place! I know there were some senators who pushed her patience to the limit. I enjoyed her company and my admiration for her grew as we worked closely in the last year or so. She was also a woman in the Senate, and within her party she was a strong voice for women’s issues and I hope this too will be seen as an important legacy. We will miss Senator Jeannie Ferris and I express my thanks for her work and, on behalf of my Democrat colleagues, condolences to her family and friends.
Senator Minchin following the death last month of Senator Jeannie Ferris. I am the Greens’ whip and, like other whips, every day I attended meetings with Senator Ferris. Although I was a newbie, for two years I thoroughly enjoyed my time working with Senator Ferris, and I came to respect her a great deal. She was a woman of great dignity and principle, and that thought was obviously shared by many people who attended the service in the Great Hall. Over those 18 months when I first started, Jeannie cut me no slack—even though I was a newbie I had to start straightaway, and she was quite severe. We worked together on many issues, not only in women’s health but particularly in rural and regional affairs, where we shared the same background and qualifications—the issue of apples was one of them. Jeannie was very supportive on the issue of apples. Those of you who do not know that issue will not appreciate what that means.

The time I really got to know Jeannie was when we were working on women’s health issues. She showed leadership in those debates. Just after the stem cell vote went through, Jeannie was coordinating the letter from the female senators on Gardasil. She was going around the chamber getting us to sign the letter. She sat next to me, because Senator Milne was not here, and we were talking about the letter and she said, ‘I think I am getting a little bit radical.’ I said, ‘Keep going, Jeannie.’ But Jeannie was always a radical on the issues she worked on. She was radical on women’s health, on regional issues and in fact on every issue that she campaigned on.

It was a pleasure to work with her. It was fun. Here is a secret from a whips meeting: when Jeannie decided she was going to take off her wig we saw that she had curly hair. It was the subject of a number of discussions in that whips meeting. It was a female dominated meeting and we talked about Jeannie’s hair when she decided she was going to go wig free. They are the light-hearted moments that I remember and treasure about Jeannie. She set an example of how we could work across parties, and for me coming into this place as a newbie that was extraordinarily strong. We worked together on RU486 and on stem cells, across parties. To a large extent it was women working together. That showed me what we can achieve in this place if we put aside some of our prejudices and our fear of working with those who are opposed to some of our other views and work together to achieve a common goal. They are the most powerful things I will remember of Jeannie—how she led those debates and how she extended the hand of friendship through that. We got to know each other on different levels. I found that extremely powerful.

I pass my condolences to Jeannie’s family, who were extremely brave during the service, and who also showed great dignity. Obviously, her sons take that example from their mother. I add the Greens’ support for this condolence motion. Jeannie will be long remembered in this place and by all those whom she helped.

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (2.36 pm)—Family First support this condolence motion and offer condolences to the family of the late Senator Jeannie Ferris, particularly to her sons Robbie and Jeremy. Jeannie’s loss is even more difficult for the family because of the subsequent and sudden death of her former husband, Bob Ferris. What really matters in life is family, and families are a great consolation when a loved one dies. I hope Jeannie’s family has found comfort in being with one another and sharing cherished memories of a remarkable woman. We also offer condolences to Jeannie’s staff, who I know were shocked and saddened by her sudden death. Political staff work tirelessly
and I commend Jeannie’s staff for their hard work and dedication.

I cannot claim to have known Jeannie very well. One of the pitfalls of being a senator is that we work long hours together but with little opportunity to get to know everyone well. However, I want to record that I am very grateful for the help Jeannie has given me since my arrival in the Senate a couple of years ago. As the sole Family First senator, I have relied on the goodwill of many people in the Senate to help me learn the ropes and navigate the mix of procedure and convention that regulates Senate business. Jeannie was always willing to help and give advice. As the Government Whip she also helped to get me speaking time on an often very clogged speaking list. Jeannie was a stickler for detail and knew exactly how things worked, which is as it should be for a good whip. But I also learned that she was more than an able political adversary on issues where we disagreed. If you were ever going into battle on a particular issue, you would always want Jeannie on your side.

I remember that on Jeannie’s return from cancer treatment late last year I did not recognise her—not because she looked unwell but because of a radical change in her hairstyle. But, despite knowing the difficult time she had gone through with chemotherapy, I always expected Jeannie to be around. Put simply, Jeannie Ferris was a feature of this parliament. Death is a part of life but it can still so easily shock us all. I imagine that Jeannie knew a lot more about her condition than she was willing to divulge, and I respect that entirely. Jeannie Ferris was a woman I respected and a woman who managed her life with great dignity, and I am sorry we did not have the chance to say goodbye.

Senator COONAN (New South Wales—Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts) (2.39 pm)—It is with a profound sense of loss that we in the Australian Senate farewell Senator Jeannie Ferris this afternoon. Professionally, as others have said, Senator Ferris was an outstanding advocate for the people of South Australia and a parliamentarian who displayed a strong empathy for issues affecting rural and regional Australians. Her continuous membership of the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee since 1996 was demonstration of her ongoing commitment to issues affecting rural people, and she will long be remembered by this constituency for her capacity to make their concerns her own.

In 2002 Jeannie Ferris took on what we all know is the demanding position of Government Whip in the Senate, and her relationships with all fellow senators across the chamber were marked by a style and a candour that were her hallmark. I am a former Deputy Whip myself, and we often discussed the remark that keeping everyone in line was like herding cats. I have also heard her say that it was like keeping frogs in a wheelbarrow. She often discussed with me—as I would be on duty here and she would be in her usual position—and would be tut-tutting about who did not have their pagers. She said one day, ‘I just wish I could give senators yard duty or something to make them carry their pagers.’ I am sure she is looking down on us now—probably on Senator Boswell and wondering whether he has his pager with him.

However, it was her passionate advancement of issues affecting women, which has been remarked on this afternoon—most notably, gynaecological cancers—which I think she leaves as her outstanding legacy. It is very difficult to pick what is her outstanding legacy, because she was so accomplished in so many areas. Her integral, and indeed very personal, engagement with the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs and its
report on the inquiry into gynaecological cancers in Australia, *Breaking the silence: a national voice for gynaecological cancers*, has delivered groundbreaking new initiatives that, it is hoped, will help protect a generation of women from the cancer that inexorably took Jeannie’s life. I know that she was particularly proud of the recent million dollar funding provided in February this year that she wrestled out of Mr Abbott, the Minister for Health and Ageing, to establish a new centre for gynaecological cancer set up by the government in response to the Senate committee’s report. I also recall with some poignancy that the government recently launched the new cervical cancer vaccine, Gardasil, as was mentioned earlier, in Senator Ferris’s home town of Adelaide. But, whilst her passionate advocacy for this treatment will be literally a lifesaver for future generations of young women, she very sadly passed away on the eve of this related breakthrough announcement.

We in the Senate like to think—at least, I think this is true—that this chamber is different from any other parliamentary chamber in Australia. It has a character and a camaraderie that often belie modern partisan politics—and I say that very sincerely. Perhaps it is the late nights or the fact that we have a six-year tenure, but I think it breeds a relationship that is more akin, in some circumstances, to family than combatants, and it is with this sense of community that the Senate family is now mourning the loss of one of our most loved colleagues in Jeannie.

On behalf of all my Senate colleagues, I extend my deepest sympathy to Jeannie’s sons, Robbie and Jeremy, and her many friends and family members. We know that Robyn Mills and all her staff are greatly missing Jeannie, too, and our thoughts are also with them.

I am personally proud to have worked with Jeannie, and I know the women of Australia owe her a great debt for the work she did over the past 11 years for them. I entered the Senate with Jeannie over a decade ago. We were in the class of ’96, which saw the Howard government sweep into office. It was a very euphoric time. There is and always will be a special bond between those of us who were part of that historic victory, especially the women who entered parliament at that election in such historic numbers. Jeannie then worked tirelessly for the issues she cared about. Although she left us far too soon, hers was a life lived to the full, a life that truly made a difference to the thousands of other lives she has touched. Hers is a life to celebrate.

Jeannie will always be loved and remembered by those who had the great good fortune to serve with her in the Senate and to experience her warmth, her humour and her friendship, which was generously given to all who came within her circle. May she rest in peace.

**Senator Ellison** (Western Australia—Minister for Human Services) (2.44 pm)—In this condolence motion we pay tribute to Senator Jeannie Ferris: woman, mother, friend, writer, advocate and parliamentarian. Jeannie was all of these things and a fine example of each. She was a fierce advocate for South Australia and for the causes for which she stood, and I can say that I learnt that from working closely with her as a former Manager of Government Business in the Senate when Jeannie was Government Whip and I was in the other role. I think that the task of whip is a demanding one. It is one which demands respect. You have to have some aspect of popularity and you also have to be feared. I think Jeannie had all of those attributes. Certainly, I must admit that I had some fear of her from time to time. But she was a great whip.
As an advocate she was unequalled and, whilst a great colleague and someone who you would wish to be in the trenches with, I can also say she was a formidable opponent. Why do I say that? It is because I have been on the other end of the argument to Jeannie in relation to some very serious issues—the stem cell debate and a number of others—and it was then that I learned what it was like to be on the other side of Jeannie Ferris. I must say that I respected her greatly for the way she carried herself and also for the courage of her conviction, but I also respected her great talent, if I can put it that way, as an advocate in an argument to which you are opposed.

Of course, Jeannie more recently was involved in the cause of gynaecological cancer, and that was something that was very personal to her because of her failing health. It was typical of Jeannie that she turned adversity into a positive outcome. In her maiden speech she talked of the rural sector, something which was a passion of hers throughout her life, but she could well have been talking about herself when she said of country people:

Maintaining standards and more than a modicum of commonsense in the face of testing adversity is a proud tradition in country families. It still remains strong and long may it continue. Their personal contribution and those of their industries built the strong foundations of this great country. We in the cities continue to enjoy the benefits that flow from their bountiful harvests and offer them support when the elements do not.

That was typical Jeannie: looking at a disadvantaged sector, a sector which faced great challenges, but the adversity that she spoke about she faced herself with great bravery. Previous speakers have mentioned other senators in this place, notably Senator Peter Cook, who did the same thing. Jeannie carried on a fine tradition in relation to that.

To Jeannie’s staff, Robyn, Bronte and the others: you have our condolences; you are in our thoughts. You can tell the mark of a person when you see the loyalty which they enjoy from their staff. That great affection was evident in relation to Jeannie’s staff and it was a tribute to her as a person who employed them.

For my part, I will miss her greatly. I can still hear that husky voice, and I can still see her. On many testy occasions in this chamber, I have taken her advice and it has been very sound advice indeed. I extend the condolences of Caroline and myself to Robbie, Jeremy and her extended family. Caroline wanted to place on record her condolences too. She had great affection for Jeannie and enjoyed catching up with her when she visited Canberra. Jeannie was always a good source of advice. She was a great Australian and a great senator, and we shall miss her dearly.

**Senator GEORGE CAMPBELL** (New South Wales) (2.48 pm)—I worked closely with Jeannie from November 2005, when I was elected Opposition Whip. Virtually every sitting day since then concluded with a whip’s meeting that Jeannie would preside over. While she could be feisty and testy, at the end of the day when she flashed that smile it was very hard to not like Jeannie Ferris. She was always cooperative and open to negotiation on matters which affected the chamber management. I think there were very few occasions when, at the end of the day, we were not able to reach an agreement or an accommodation on any of the issues relating to the management of the chamber. I think it is fair to say that between us we did a good job in managing the chamber very well over that period.

Despite some of the blues that we had recently on the Selection of Bills Committee, I am pretty sure that, in most situations,
Jeannie was sympathetic to our arguments. But she always carried the government’s torch with strength and forcefulness in arguing for the government’s position. That was a thing that characterised all of the work that Jeannie did. When she set about a task, she set about it with 110 per cent energy and commitment to achieving the outcomes that she was fighting for. Others have referred to the work she did on many of the health issues that have recently been debated in this chamber.

She was a dedicated parliamentarian and a tireless advocate for women and for regional Australia. Others have already spoken about the detail of Jeannie’s work, particularly with the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs. She and other members of that committee engineered major social change in this chamber. Suffice to say that Jeannie was a very active member of the Senate committees and was prepared to take on issues that she believed in with gusto and enthusiasm to see them through to a conclusion. It was always entertaining to watch Jeannie sitting on the other side of the chamber wagging her finger like a headmistress at senators on her own side for perceived or real misdemeanours.

I did know about the housing arrangements at Jeannie’s house in Yarralumla; Senator Ferguson told me about them a long time ago. All I can say is that there must have been some interesting evenings in that house. I sometimes wished I were a fly on the wall.

Senator Ferguson—She would have swatted you!

Senator GEORGE CAMPBELL—Others got there first, Alan! It was more entertaining to see the reaction of her colleagues to the dressing-down that they got. I must say that height, size and gender meant nothing to Jeannie when she was wagging her finger. She did a very good job in keeping that side of the chamber in check for most of the time that they were here while she was the Government Whip.

I watched her struggle with the cancer and I saw her deterioration in the final weeks, which she faced with great courage and strength. It is with great sadness that I acknowledge Jeannie’s passing. I offer my condolences to her family, who I am sure will miss her deeply.

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation) (2.52 pm)—Today we celebrate the life and contribution of Senator Jeannie Ferris. While Senator Jeannie Ferris has now been lost to the service of this parliament, the people of South Australia and the Liberal Party, her memory and her work will be long remembered. Many will recall—and, indeed, have recalled—her brave battle with illness and the lasting role her illness and untimely death have played in obtaining extra resources in a vital area.

I first became acquainted with Senator Jeannie Ferris in the same circumstances that the Leader of the Government in the Senate has explained to us. I recall being invited by the then Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate, Richard Alston, to continue the debate to ensure that we ran out of time on that particular occasion, because there were negotiations to be had. I recall, with the two Greens senators from Western Australia at the time. If my memory serves me correctly, they were Christabel Chamarette and Dee Margetts. The debate was talked out, and I do not know how or what former Senator Alston did, but, in his usual fashion, the next day certain issues were resolved in relation to the particular vote and the circumstances that Senator Minchin has outlined took place. As a result, Senator Ferris resigned and became a senator courtesy of her own casual
vacancy, if I can put it like that. I had not met Jeannie Ferris before then. As one might imagine, there was one person listening in very closely to the broadcast of the Senate on that occasion, and that of course was Jeannie Ferris. When I first met her, she reminded me of my contribution and we became quite good friends as a result. I recall her being one of a very small number of colleagues at my 40th birthday party, which is now many years ago, as you might imagine.

The time that I really got to know Jeannie Ferris the best was when we both served on the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Native Title. Her role as chair of that committee was quite rightly referred to by the Reverend Peter Grundy in his address in the Great Hall. Reverend Peter Grundy was not Reverend Peter Grundy at the time that he was secretary of the native title committee, and he served that committee with great distinction. He was secretary of that committee under many chairs, including myself, but I think he quite rightly identified Jeannie Ferris as the best chair that the committee had whilst he was the secretary of it. I have written down a few words that I think describe Senator Ferris’s role as a member of that committee and then as chair of it: sensitive, capable, insightful, genuine, committed and always interested in getting the balance right. On the native title committee, one tended to travel into the far reaches of this country. For me, being a Tasmanian senator, I learnt very quickly how big our whole country is in comparison to Tasmania. You would find yourself stuck—and I do not say ‘stuck’ in a derogatory sense; it was always a delight—in small townships and Aboriginal communities right around this country. Of an evening you would sit down to a meal and discuss the witnesses. We often had comments for white lawyers, I must say, in relation to that, and we shared other thoughts and experiences.

I always found Jeannie Ferris to be a person who was genuinely committed to getting the balance right for the cause of our Indigenous community and also to ensuring fairness for the pastoral and other sectors of our community so that no sector felt as though they had been dealt out of the game, which would potentially give rise to the sorts of factors that we did unfortunately see rise within our community with One Nation. Senator Ferris’s contribution in the area of native title is the one that I know the best. She made a fantastic contribution. She was always willing to try to get the balance right, and I think she succeeded in doing so.

Of course, we experienced her work as Government Whip as well. All of those qualities that I have just talked about in the native title setting were the same ones that she brought to bear in the whip’s position. She was always trying to get the balance right and trying to be fair. One of the good things about Jeannie Ferris was that she was always willing to speak without fear or favour, irrespective of who a person might be. In fact, I understand it has been recalled that she, to use the term, ‘civilised’ one Ian McLachlan on women’s issues. One can just imagine how Senator Ferris would have done that: with all her femininity and charm but with all the determination of somebody who believed in that which she was saying. My observation is that she gave the benefit of her views just as forthrightly to those above her in the political food chain. Be it the Prime Minister, right through to the lowliest back-bencher, she would treat them with exactly the same respect but also firmness. She has made a great contribution to this place. It has been one of life’s experiences to have known her and to count her as a friend. I say to her sons that they have lost a great mother; South Australia, the Australian people and the Liberal Party have lost a great servant.
Our loss is heaven’s gain, and I wish for Jeannie Ferris to rest in peace.

Senator STOTT DESPOJA (South Australia) (2.59 pm)—I rise also to speak on this condolence motion for Senator Jeannie Ferris. I particularly appreciate the comments that Senator Coonan made about the collegiate atmosphere in this place. It is a gift in this place to make friends, and it is an even more precious and rare thing to make a dear friend. Although I had known Jeannie since her entry into this place in 1996, my having got in in 1995, my affection for Jeannie and time spent with her were also the result of my husband being one of her dearest friends. Ian and Jeannie go way back. They used to work for the former Liberal leader in South Australia Dale Baker, who is a dear friend to a number of people in this place and was one of Jeannie’s closest friends. I have had the opportunity to develop a friendship with Jeannie as a colleague, and she has been a dear and close family friend and particularly a wonderful friend to our son, Conrad.

I also acknowledge the sparring that took place in this chamber between former Senator Bolkus and Jeannie Ferris. Senator Minchin has done justice to that particular debate, but I wish to put on record the fact that Nick Bolkus and Mary, his wife, became very close friends with Jeannie over the years; indeed, they have travelled together. They also felt the loss of Jeannie very greatly.

I must pay tribute and acknowledge the speeches that were made in the two memorial services: the one in the Great Hall and the one in Adelaide. Senator Minchin, Joan Hall, Caroline Schaeffer and Ian McLachlan, among others, paid wonderful tribute to Jeannie Ferris in acknowledging her distinguished and dignified career, and I will not attempt to emulate those speeches today. Obviously, her past as a journalist, a public affairs officer, her involvement in the CSIRO and her role as a senator, legislator, whip and a policymaker have been referred to. Jeannie Ferris was multifaceted: her love of policy extended from her love of the land; she was interested, as has been acknowledged, in Indigenous affairs, native title and science policy, including stem cells; she had respect for and advocated for women’s issues generally and reproductive rights specifically—all important issues. On top of that, she had a great shoe collection, which was also acknowledged in the memorial.

Jeannie Ferris loved policy, and she loved a bit of gossip, loved her friends and also talked about shopping and clothes on the odd occasion. But it is really hard to overestimate—and others, and certainly Senator Siewert, have recognised this fact—Senator Ferris’s involvement, or her influence, in some of the cross-party women’s work that has occurred in this place. She may not always have had her name on a bill or have been perceived as the sole advocate but, boy, was she influential in recent debates: RU486, stem cells and Gardasil, which has been referred to. Jeannie had this ability, which few of us in this place have—and I do not know if many others do—of bringing together not only senators but also women in particular on a cross-party basis. Jeannie Ferris will be long remembered for that in addition to her many other achievements, her policy interests and, as has been noted, the recent Senate cancer inquiry, which has been responded to, thankfully, with alacrity by government and has resulted in the establishment of a centre and the allocation of seed funding.

Jeannie Ferris was great in terms of her friendships; she always made time for people. A trip to Canberra was not complete for Conrad without disrupting Jeannie Ferris’s office—up-ending cushions and sculptures and what have you. I can see some of her staff laughing. Jeannie was great for giving
presents from her trips. Conrad has cushions from Cambodia, he has got T-shirts from Capri and—this one is a little ironic—George W Bush socks from the United States. If it did not have the presidential seal, folks, they just would not be going on those feet! The fact is that Jeannie adored Conrad and in turn Conrad adored her and my husband adored her. My husband has lost a great mate and friend.

I want to acknowledge Jeannie Ferris’s devoted, loyal and amazing staff. I see Robyn Mills sitting in the gallery: you two have had some tough times and you have been through a lot together, and that is acknowledged by all of us. There is Bronte McQueen, of course, and Simon Lloyd previously, Amy Lambert, Vicki Pegram, Angela Marino. I know, Simon, Angela, Bronte, Robyn, that you are all here today, and we want to acknowledge that you have been through a tough time as well.

Jeannie Ferris loved a bit of gossip. Ian McLachlan put that best in his memorial tribute, which some of us heard. I want to acknowledge Robbie and Jeremy and send our condolences, and to Pam as well. In something that I rarely do, I am going to give my husband the last word. With the indulgence of the Senate, I quote from an obituary he gave:

Jeannie Ferris was the sort of person that could only enhance the reputation of politicians. A better role model for aspiring legislators would be hard to find. A golden heart was entwined with a will of steel. Jeannie had compassion but never left you in any doubt of politics’ realities. Jeannie always had time for people. Despite being one of the coalition’s busiest people as Senate whip, she would always make time for people in distress. When my wife, Natasha Stott Despoja, had emergency surgery last year, Jeannie, not well herself, asked if she could do anything to help. ‘Can I look after Conrad?’ she asked. She died with a picture of Conrad beside her bed.

I add my condolences, along with that of my family, to this motion today.

Senator WEBBER (Western Australia) (3.06 pm)—As many have already said, Jeannie Ferris was a larger than life personality. It was with deep regret and great sadness that we learnt of her death. Not long after I learnt of it, I heard Senator Minchin on the radio discussing the extent of their friendship and support and his admiration for her. He commented on the fact that he had learnt what a formidable opponent she could be in recent debates we have had in this place. In all of those debates, she was on my side and I have to say that I could not have got there without her—I am awfully glad that she was on my side. Those debates were on RU486, stem cells and Gardasil in particular. In the debate on RU486, as others have alluded to, Jeannie did not necessarily take a prominent role but she ensured that, as much as possible in this place, the debate was conducted with respect, that people’s needs were accommodated, that people were allowed to put their views, and that the right decision prevailed.

Jeannie and I became frequent visitors to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs. Neither of us were formal members of the committee, but we became frequent visitors as they inquired into matters of conscience. The committee, as I understand it, has a fairly harmonious and peaceful existence, although a very heavy workload, so it must have been somewhat stunning to the committee secretariat and other members of the committee when the forceful, larger than life personality of Jeannie came in to hurry them along in their dealings with some complex and controversial issues. I am sure that it was somewhat stunning and amazing to some of the witnesses at some of the inquiries. We all learnt a lot in that process.

Jeannie and a number of us participated in the inquiry into gynaecological cancers—and
I am sure that the four members of the committee who are going to speak here today will talk more about that. As we all know, she was still suffering enormously but she chose to make sense of the saying ‘politics is personal’. She made that personal issue a political issue and tried to make life better for others. In sitting through some very harrowing hearings in which women came forward to talk of their own experiences, while she was still feeling tired, in pain and going through the emotional trauma of treatment for her disease, she could not help but get up and offer comfort to others who chose to take that very courageous step of sharing some deeply personal stories on the public record with us all. Those of us who were involved in the inquiry can tell how much those extra steps that she took meant to them. I am sure that other members of the committee got the same emails that I did from a young woman who was living in Perth at the time but who is now back in Sydney, Tanya Smith, who felt for all of us on the committee when she learnt of Jeannie’s passing. Kath Mazzella, the woman who started the petition that got the whole inquiry rolling, went out of her way to get in contact with all of us, because we all shared the journey, although not all of us shared the pain. I know that Professor Neville Hacker, Margaret Heffernan and others were very proud of the achievement of the inquiry—it was Jeannie’s inquiry—and felt Jeannie’s passing very sadly and deeply.

Then there was the other side of Jeannie. Whenever I tried to engage her on one of those issues, she began busily telling me that one of her proudest achievements was her visit to Iraq. When the wheat for weapons scandal erupted, she felt the need to do something about that issue, too, to show that she was not just a one-dimensional person. She did not want to be seen as a single-issue woman in this place. She talked endlessly about her visit to Iraq. It obviously really touched her.

We had a dinner in Sydney during the hearings for the gynaecological cancer inquiry, and she and I were chatting after that dinner and talking about the structure of the report. She said to me, ‘Right, and when we’ve finished this we’ve got to do stem cell legislation.’ The woman did not know how to rest. I would have thought that going through one harrowing inquiry meant that we deserved a little bit of a break before we went on to the next issue, but that was not her way.

As others have said, she was a real example of how women in this place can work together. Senator Ellison reminded us of—and some of us in this place have laughed about—her imposing discipline, particularly on some of her colleagues over there. Size and gender certainly did not count. It was interesting for some of us to watch it take place. She would stand up and chastise them and then go to walk out the door. They would think that they had been dispensed with and go back to sit in their places, and then she would turn round because she had thought of some other error in their ways, and she would come back and give them another go to let them know that she was there.

I extend to her family my apologies for not being able to get back to the memorial service. I was out of the country at the time of her death and her service and, airlines being what they are, could not quite make it from where I was to Canberra in time. My condolences to her staff, who, when we worked on all of the inquiries and the letter on gardasil and what have you, were a support to me. They were a support to all of us, because they knew the extent of her suffering and we were constantly inquiring about her welfare. That took incredible strength. My condolences to Jeannie’s family, particularly...
her sons. Although I could not be at the service, my good friend Senator Moore has told me about the moving tribute that her family paid to her.

Senator JOHNSTON (Western Australia—Minister for Justice and Customs) (3.13 pm)—I suppose I became aware of what a rare jewel Jeannie Ferris was when I attended my first coalition parliamentary backbench agriculture, transport and regional affairs committee, where I saw her controlling the likes of Bill Heffernan, Wilson Tuckey, Alby Schultz and Ron Boswell. That is a task which I do not think we are likely to see performed with such dexterity and ability ever again. It was there that I realised that this was a very special person. As a new senator, I was fortunate in having Jeannie Ferris take me under her wing and provide me with advice and support. In 2005-06, I realised that the rare jewel that I thought Jeannie was was a very rare jewel indeed: a courageous fighter who lived up to every one of my expectations of her.

The advice she gave me was always good. It was blunt. She was a person who prided herself on firmness and discipline. I was a person who obviously needed that sort of advice and guidance. She was respectful of this place and its institutions. She was a very principled and committed yet outspoken person. I learnt much from her in my early time as a senator back in 2002 and 2003, just after she was elected as Government Whip in the Senate.

She made a phenomenal contribution in a broad range of areas for a senator. I wish that I could make such a contribution as she made. In wheat and primary production, she was across all of the issues and had all of her knowledge and understanding of that complex and important area at her fingertips. She was my predecessor as Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Native Title and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Account and she spent considerable time assisting me, guiding me and advising me as to where that committee should go and what the role of the chairman should be.

I noted with interest that one of her early campaigns was on the issue of youth suicide. She was a great advocate for people who were not as well off as she was and not as strong in character as she was. She was a great friend of pastoralists and people living in isolation.

I am very pleased and proud to say that she was a great friend and confidante of mine and, I know, of many other senators and indeed many members of parliament in this place. I was enormously saddened to hear of her passing, as sudden as it was. She put up a fantastic fight. I extend my condolences to her sons, Robbie and Jeremy, and say that she was a phenomenal advocate for South Australia and fulfilled every expectation of that state’s election of her. I extend my condolences to her family and her friends and particularly to her loyal and hardworking staff. One measures the capacity and calibre of a person by the loyalty of their staff to them, and the group of people in her office were admiring of her and committed and dedicated to her. I will miss her greatly.

Senator NETTLE (New South Wales) (3.17 pm)—I just want to add a few words about how much I enjoyed working with Jeannie on various issues to do with women’s reproductive rights, in particular on the vote that we had here in the Senate around the issue of RU486. On those issues to do with women’s reproductive rights, the passion that Jeannie had for achieving change and her commitment to working to achieve that were really great to see, and it was great to work with her on those issues. Everyone knew how unwell she was at the
time, but that was not going to stop her standing up for the things that she thought were important and the issues that she thought were important for Australian women. It was quite incredible and impressive to see that, even though she herself was so unwell, that was not going to stop her fighting for the things that she thought were really important.

The Senate inquiry into gynaecological cancers was something else that was really personally important to her, and she ensured that she did what she could to contribute to trying to ease the difficulties that other women in circumstances similar to hers might experience. She had a real passion and a real commitment about standing up for the rights of women when it came to women’s health issues and, in particular, women’s reproductive rights issues.

It was great to have somebody so committed on those issues who was very happy to work with people—women in particular—from all across the board, whatever their views were on other issues. If you were going to stand up for the rights of women and women’s health, you were a friend of Jeannie in working on those issues. That was great and I really enjoyed working with Jeannie on those issues. I miss that spirit in here on those issues, and I think for many of us across the political spectrum.

Others have spoken at greater length than I intend to on the detail of Jeannie Ferris’s career. I can only speak of my knowledge of Jeannie Ferris as a colleague. There were many things on which we did not agree. I can recall Senator Ferris heckling me during the industrial relations debates when Senator Abetz and I were going head to head. In fact, I can recall her heckling me on a number of occasions in various debates! Senator Ferris was a fighter, in the best sense of the word, and her fighting spirit was certainly called upon in her struggle with her own illness. Not many days before she died, I received a text message from her in which she said she hoped to be back for the budget session. Unfortunately, that was not be.

Although there were many things on which we did not agree, there were many things on which we did agree. Broadly, I suppose you could call those things women’s issues. I want to acknowledge and pay tribute to Jeannie’s work on issues that affect so many Australian women. She was a passionate advocate but, perhaps even more importantly, she was a strategic advocate. She was a woman whose sights were fixed on those things in which she believed and those things she believed were important to improving...
and advancing the rights and the health of Australian women and the services available to Australian women.

I come from a state which has a long tradition of strong women—women such as Catherine Helen Spence and Roma Mitchell. It is a state which has put into this chamber former Senator Amanda Vanstone and Senator Natasha Stott Despoja. I count Senator Jeannie Ferris amongst those strong South Australian women. Much that has been achieved in this country when it comes to the experience of women could not have been achieved but for the willingness of women across the parties to work together. If you look over Australia’s history at so many of the issues that have affected Australian women and so many of the advances for Australian women—things like equal pay, access to education, equivalent social security rights, access to health services and reproductive rights—you find that many of the advances that we have seen in these areas could have been achieved only because women from both sides of the political divide were advocating for change. I hope we remember this when we think of Senator Jeannie Ferris. I hope her legacy to women across the parties will be that we remember the importance of all of us taking responsibility for issues affecting women. I suspect that, for our lifetimes, it will still be one of the responsibilities which fall to women who are elected to this place.

I extend my sympathy to her sons, to the rest of her family and to her friends. I especially want to extend my sympathy to her staff, with whom I have dealt on many occasions. I know this has been a very difficult period for them. I also want to express my sympathy to other senators, particularly women senators in this place, many of whom have lost a friend and dear colleague.

Senator PATTERSON (Victoria) (3.23 pm)—It is with a very heavy heart that I rise today to speak about my friend and colleague Jeannie Ferris. I hope I can get through it. Others have spoken about her early life, her education, her career as a journalist, her passionate interest in agripolitics, her roles in the CSIRO and the NFF and her work as an adviser for state and federal members of parliament, so I will not go over all of those again. Jeannie came to this place with a wealth of life experiences and a range of skills that I would hope many others would come to this place with, and she used every one of those fully. If it was about transport, Jeannie was there. If it was about rural issues, Jeannie was there. If it was about Indigenous affairs, particularly Indigenous women, Jeannie was there.

When I was shadow minister for women’s affairs, Jeannie became interested in that area and got involved. When I became minister for women’s issues, Jeannie was there backing me up, running meetings and organising various groups to give me information about particular issues, particularly with respect to Indigenous women. As has been mentioned, Jeannie took a particular interest in youth suicide and, more latterly, in gynaecological and women’s reproductive issues. I was very glad Jeannie was on my side on the stem cell bill. I needed every skerrick of her skill. I know that some people in here disagreed with her, but she conducted herself in that debate with great aplomb and with a great understanding that other people felt very strongly in other ways. It was Jeannie’s calmness and control that helped that debate to be carried out in the best manner possible given the difficult circumstances everyone faced in that debate. She set a tremendous example.

I remember bumping into Jeannie in a shop in Sydney. She was with a very good friend of hers, Lisa, and they were on a
shopping spree. Jeannie was passionate about shopping sprees. Jeannie caused me to do a lot of damage to my Visa card that Saturday. Afterwards, we were a bit tired and we sat and had lunch. The next day—I think it was a Monday—Jeannie rang me and said, ‘I’ve got an awful cold. How are you?’ I said, ‘I’m so sick, I’m not going to China.’ So Jeannie and I texted each other for two weeks, detailing the progress of our flu. Jeannie thought it was the flu, but that was the beginning of Jeannie’s feeling unwell. I recovered from that flu. I remember seeing Jeannie here one night walking from the dining room on the second floor and she was holding onto the wall. I said, ‘Jeannie, you need to go home,’ and she said, ‘No, the Senate hasn’t risen yet.’ That was the depth of her dedication to this place. I would have gone down to the whip and asked for leave, but she was the whip and she was still here.

It was, I think, Alan Eggleston who encouraged her to seek further medical help. It was due to her determination in insisting on having a CAT scan that that insidious and, in fact, terminal tumour was discovered. She used the knowledge and understanding of how she felt to say to other women that they needed to listen to their own bodies. Jeannie took this adversity and turned it into a triumph—and there was no greater triumph than when she got the inquiry into gynaecological cancer in Australia up. I remember how pleased she was to get up and speak when the Gynaecological Cancer Centre was announced. I hope that all of us, on both sides of the chamber, will be pushed to ensure that that is just the beginning, not the end—that Jeannie’s challenge to us will be to continue fighting for the causes she believed in.

Jeannie set herself goals. She said that she would be back in the Senate after her chemotherapy in December-January 2005-06; that she wanted to be back here for the beginning of February. Jeannie also set herself the goal to take off her wig on the first day of September. Jeannie always called me ‘Patto’, though I think she may have called me ‘Kay’ on one occasion when I missed a division. She rang up and said, ‘Kay, I want to see you,’ and I trembled. I got the same treatment as everybody else received for missing a division, and I duly apologised and was forgiven. As people have mentioned, Jeannie was a friend but she was also firm with us. She could divide that line when she needed to. Senator George Campbell mentioned Jeannie wagging and pointing her finger. I was on the end of her finger one time when she pointed at me and said, ‘Don’t do it again!’

The thing that humbles me is Jeannie’s incredible courage in the face of enormous adversity and enormous difficulty. Jeannie sat through those hearings of the Senate committee inquiring into gynaecological cancers and she heard about what her future would more than likely be, and yet she stuck it out. I am not sure I would have had the courage to do that; in fact, I know I would not have. The Prime Minister asked Jeannie to go to Iraq. As people have said, she had a deep interest in rural issues. She had not long got over her chemotherapy treatment, and I said to her, ‘Don’t go Jeannie; it is madness.’ I used every excuse I could come up with for her not to go—‘You would be on planes where people have got germs’—but it was a waste of time. Jeannie had been asked by the Prime Minister and she felt it was her duty to go, and so she went. I will always remember those photos of Jeannie getting off the Hercules in Baghdad. I asked her, ‘Weren’t you scared?’ She said, ‘No, it was nothing compared with what I have just faced’—and she was right. That was Jeannie: there in the middle of a war zone doing her duty.

Jeannie also went on a study tour late last year. When I was in San Francisco in March
I met some of the people she met there. They said: ‘We were so impressed with Jeannie that we asked her to come and speak at a stem cell conference in San Francisco.’ Jeannie asked me if I would go; she used the excuse that she had something else to do in the Northern Territory, but I suspected she thought that it would be best if I went for a whole lot of reasons. I went and gave that speech to an audience of about 400 people. The reason she wanted me to go was because she knew there would be a lot of investors at the meeting, and it would have an impact on Australia and encourage people to invest in Australia. So I went—a little reluctantly as I was not particularly keen to go on a plane. I asked her if I could have some leave and she said, ‘No, you get back here on time.’ At the conference, a number of people talked to me about how impressed they were with Jeannie on that visit, and why they had invited her. I felt it was important that I went and I realised that she thought that it was important too. There has since been significant interest from some of those people about investing in Australia. Jeannie was all the time working at doing the best and at how we could put Australia at the forefront in as many areas as possible. She had a global view, she had a local view and she had a very personal view as well. She set us an enormous example. I came back and reported to her about the stem cell meeting and she said, ‘Good on you, Patto, you should have gone.’ I do not think anyone will ever call me ‘Patto’ in the same way.

I remember too the last phone call I had from her when she was in hospital. She finished it by saying, ‘Just imagine I am putting my arms out and giving you a hug.’ I said, ‘A virtual hug’, and she said, ‘No, a real one.’ That was a very special hug.

Jeannie loved shopping; she had an absolute passion for scarves. I remember once, when I was a minister and I was going to New York, I was commissioned to go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to find one with roses on it, because she had not bought one when she was there. So I traipsed off in the very few minutes I had to go to the museum and I came back with trepidation hoping I had bought the right one. Fortunately, I had.

She loved being with friends, and she loved life and lived it to the full. We talked about some of the incidental things in life—but that is what made Jeannie. She was a person who had a lot of energy, she exuded friendship, she exuded love and she exuded a love of life. It is a tragedy that she has been taken from us so soon.

There was the serious Jeannie—when you had not turned up for a division—and there was the Jeannie who was passionate about the issues that concerned her. When she was passionate about a rural issue, or a medical/social issue or an economic issue, she had a breadth and a depth that many of us wish we could have. Others will say other things about Jeannie; we cannot cover everything in a very short time.

I want to take this opportunity to extend my condolences and deepest sympathy to her family and friends. Jeannie’s compassion and care and concern extended well beyond her immediate family. There are many whose futures have been changed for the better because of her personal sacrifices, both emotional and financial. To Robbie and Jeremy, losing one parent prematurely is an absolute tragedy but to lose both your mother and your father in the same week is to be delivered an almost unbearable blow. She talked about the boys often. They should be very proud of her. Today will put an indelible imprint on their minds of what a wonderful person they had as a mother. I hope that the comments made today help them to appreciate that even more, and to appreciate just
how much she was valued as a colleague and friend.

To Pam, her sister in New Zealand—I know that when she went to New Zealand, it was a time of respite, a time of joy and a time of renewing her relationship with her sister—I extend my deepest sympathy.

This job is a demanding one. We spend a lot of time with our colleagues—more time than sometimes we choose to spend, and more time than we would spend with colleagues in a normal job. But we also spend more time with our staff than you would normally spend. Often those staff become lifelong friends. Jeannie has had some very loyal and dedicated staff over the years. Today I want to acknowledge the loyalty and love extended to her by Robin, Bronte, Simon, Vicky and, more recently, Angela. They extended to her the love and loyalty that she gave to them. I know how much she appreciated all that they did for her. Sometimes friendships are almost as deep as families. I know that Lisa—her very dear friend who went on that shopping spree with us when we bumped into each other in Sydney—was there with Jeannie in some of the darkest hours. She shared those hours with her; and it is not always easy to confront with somebody their deepest concerns and their deepest anxieties. To Lisa, thank you for all that you did for Jeannie.

She was a magnificent mum, she was a fantastic friend, she was a courageous colleague and she was a sensational South Australian senator. She was fair and she lived her life to the full and with flair. She said to me once, ‘You have got to live your life, Kay, with no regrets.’ No regrets: that was her policy. Iraq was an example of that no regrets policy. I would have caved in—I would not have gone. But no, Jeannie was going to have no regrets. As I said, she lived it to the full with no regrets. But we do, however, have one regret, and I am sure I can say that on behalf of every senator in this chamber: we regret that we have lost a wonderful colleague and a very good friend.

Senator MOORE (Queensland) (3.37 pm)—For the first few months that I was in this place I was deeply in awe of Jeannie Ferris. I would sit over here and watch her perform, and we have heard other senators talk about the way she moved around the Senate, the way she had control and the way she used every part of her body when she was talking with people and engaged in this place. She was the mistress of the dramatic sigh and the mistress of the very loud interjection as required. I have never been sure how Hansard dealt with her ‘Tut, tut, tut—you’re better than that’, as it came across the chamber. I am not sure whether that came out every time, but we were very much aware of it. It was mostly for people on our side of the chamber, but not always, that she would give that feedback when she was engaged in what was going on in this place.

I was strengthened by the way she approached her work not just in the chamber but also across the committees and in her role as a senator for her state, because she had a deep dedication to her job. She felt that by being elected as a senator she took on a great responsibility. She felt that there was a dedication and a responsibility in that that she owed to all those people whom she represented. She was a dedicated hard worker, and that is a quality that I think we should always admire. Jeannie did her job and expected the others in this place to do their jobs as well, and by that courage and that excitement she made us all better. That is something that we must acknowledge.

I was absolutely overwhelmed, when I became ill shortly after I arrived here, to get a personal message from Jeannie. From that moment on, when she contacted me, she
would pop by occasionally just to make sure that I was doing the right thing and looking after myself. It is rather ironic that towards the end of her struggle I am not quite sure that she was looking after herself as much as she should have been, but her colleagues were watching out for her. I must acknowledge, as many other people have done, the love, the respect and the deep ties she shared with her staff. To her staff: I know that you walked all those miles with Jeannie and that she loved you and cared for you as you did for her.

We had great experiences in this place when working together on a range of important issues. One of Jeannie’s goals was to come back so that she could be engaged in the RU486 debate. That was at a time when she was not feeling great, but she was determined to be here. She gave many of us the strength to keep on going. One of the things I valued in having Jeannie’s support was that when she gave you her commitment it was her bond. When she said, ‘It’s done, mate; it’s done,’ and walked away, you knew you did not have to count that number again because it had been done.

That degree of commitment continued into a number of other occasions where we had cross-party support but also when we were working on general issues in this place, doing the job for which we were elected. I think that Jeannie is watching today, because every single senator who has talked has talked about the gynaecological cancer inquiry—that great monument to her hard work, which was called ‘the silent voice’—somewhere in their contribution. That is not a silent voice; that is a real voice, and I think we are sharing still in the contribution that Jeannie made.

Sitting as a member of the community affairs committee through those hearings was one of the most moving experiences that I will ever have. Jeannie was sometimes not well, but she was there and she never left. Senator Adams would sit beside her, using the particular medical knowledge that she has, and look at me sometimes and go, ‘Tut, tut, tut’—again, not recorded in Hansard. That said it all about what we were going through in that process. Occasionally, when witnesses came forward with their own experiences, Jeannie would sit through the evidence and engage but then we would look around at the end of the evidence and find the women gathered together and hugging each other. Jeannie would be there, interacting with the witness, sharing the experiences and continuing her commitment that that particular Senate inquiry was not going to be just another one that had a range of recommendations; it was going to have action.

If she said that once, I cannot count the number of times she said it throughout the process. Sometimes it was in working through finding the exact words so that a recommendation would not be just a nice-sounding thing that said, ‘Isn’t this a terrible thing and something should be done about it.’ She would try to find how the recommendation could be framed so that there would be commitment, accountability and action; she would sheet it home every time so that it would have success and get a result. She would sit there, fold her arms, tap her foot under the table—often with a new pair of shoes—and say, ‘Well, we’ll just see about that,’ and also, ‘Leave it to me; I’ll go and see them.’ And, once again, we would know that the action would take place, and that confidence would move through all of us around the table.

No-one can talk about Jeannie Ferris without talking about her laugh. When she heard something that she thought was amusing or she thought other people would think was amusing, she would burst into a spontaneous laugh which grew and was contagious.
We would be sitting around, sometimes in the cancer inquiry and in other inquiries, considering the most gut wrenching evidence and she would start to laugh. It would catch on, and people would have no idea why the committee members were sitting in a room together with the secretariat laughing their heads off. I think that is therapeutic; I am sure it must be. In working with Jeannie, you were never allowed to slack off. You had to give your best; there was no changing of dates or cutting or messing around. You gave your commitment and you did your job.

I think the turning point for me to have the confidence to interact with her as a person, rather than as someone who I respected sitting on the other side of the chamber, was one late night during an adjournment debate when there was hardly anybody here. Senator Webber and I happened to be in here together, and Jeannie came in with no fanfare and just took her turn in the adjournment debate and gave the most amazing speech about a friend of hers who, when she was a young woman, went through a horrific time in seeking a termination in a rural part of the world. Jeannie did not identify the area when she gave the speech.

It was so beautiful the way she talked about her relationship with this woman and the impact that her experience had on her. When she finished that speech she just sat down and looked across and nodded at Senator Webber and me. We were able after that to meet outside, and I think that particular evening led to a lot of the discussions that came later in an amazing number of interactions, not just on issues that pertained to women’s health but on other issues that we as a Senate struggle with. We were then able to talk quite openly about what we agreed on and about what we did not agree on but were able to work together on to come up with solutions. I think that is extremely valuable.

I enjoyed working with Jeannie Ferris once I had worked through that fear that I had in those first few months. And you got an amazing sense of achievement when she told you that you had done a good job, because those were not light words for her; she only gave credit when she felt that credit was deserved. When you got the nod from Jeannie Ferris you knew that you had done something okay, and I think many people in this chamber could remember how it felt when she thought they had done a good job.

We believe that Jeannie Ferris did a good job. We value her. We thank her family for enabling us to work with her. Her legacy will live on because women across this country and across the world—some of the emails we have received as a result of the gynaecological work have been international—are celebrating the strength, the wisdom and the wonder that was Jeannie Ferris.

Senator FORSHAW (New South Wales) (3.46 pm)—Today is a very sad day. I look across the chamber and I do not see Jeannie. We do not see her marshalling the troops at question time, delivering the ballot papers for some internal coalition ballot, explaining to a couple of senators how to fill out the ballot paper. We do not see Jeannie or, as Senator Moore has just said, hear her pointed interjections. I look across and see the flow- ers at her seat. They are entirely appropriate: they are bright, they are colourful and they are dignified. That was Senator Jeannie Ferris.

I was not associated with Jeannie in the inquiries by the Senate Community Affairs Committee into cancer. But like all other senators, and all Australians, I acknowledge and appreciate the great work that she did in initiating those inquiries and working so hard to put those issues more forcefully on the public health agenda. My main association with Jeannie in the formal political sense was
through being involved in the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee for quite a number of years up to about 2002. I notice my colleague Senator O’Brien is going to speak later and I am sure he will recall Jeannie’s involvement in that committee as well. I particularly recall her involvement in the first inquiry, in 2001, into the issue of the importation of New Zealand apples to Australia. This issue arose following a risk assessment analysis conducted by AQIS and led to the inquiry. I can recall Jeannie— and her coalition colleagues, but Jeannie in particular—being a vigorous and forceful defender of Australia’s agricultural industries, particularly the apple industry. That was somewhat ironic because, as has been pointed out, she was born in Auckland, New Zealand. She later came to Australia and took up her work with the National Farmers Federation and became a great champion for agriculture and agricultural communities.

But in that inquiry I well recall officers of AQIS and later of Biosecurity Australia quivering at the cross-examination by Senator Ferris. Indeed, at times we were happy to sit back and let her go: she was doing the work that oppositions often do. This was a very important issue relating to the potential risk to the Australian apple industry, and Jeannie was in there, without fear or favour, pursuing it. I notice that on Wednesday this week there is a public hearing of the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport, and the title is ‘A follow-up to the inquiry into the administration of Biosecurity Australia—revised draft import risk analysis for apples from New Zealand’. So, six years later, it is still going on. I know there are other members of that committee present in the chamber now who are still vigorously pursuing it. We recall the work that Jeannie did in those earlier inquiries and I am sure that on Wednesday she will be looking down from up there to make sure they take on the issue and pursue the department and the agencies vigorously.

In his speech earlier this afternoon the Leader of the Government in the Senate, Senator Minchin, said that Jeannie had the toughest job in the Senate as the Government Whip. I would not necessarily disagree with that, but I know Jeannie disagreed with that. I recall a chat I had a couple of years ago with her—it was one of those quick chats you often have with other senators as you walk out of this chamber—and I remember that we discussed the whip’s task. She said to me that being whip was not the toughest job in this parliament; that the toughest job was being chair of the coalition’s backbench rural committee. I said, ‘How come?’ And she said, ‘If you’ve got Barnaby Joyce, Bill Heffernan, Alby Schultz and Wilson Tuckey on a committee, that’s a tough job!’ I thought to myself, ‘Gee, she’s lucky that Bob Katter has left the coalition!’ But that was Jeannie’s good humour. I would have to say that managing that committee with those individuals would be a tough job, but my money would be on Jeannie: she’d still come out on top!

Like all other members of this parliament, I enjoyed Jeannie’s company. She was feisty, she was bright, she was intelligent, she was humorous, direct and forceful—you could think of a whole lot of adjectives—but she was also a wonderful and delightful friend. I attended the memorial service on 10 April here in the parliament and that was a fitting tribute to Jeannie. It was a wonderful service.

Those who knew her for longer and in a closer way than I did, spoke that day. As I listened to the various speakers then and again today, talking about her experiences and her life, I felt that, yes, that was Jeannie. All those stories are obviously true because that was the Jeannie you expected would have lived that life—helpful, friendly and, above all, courageous both in her public and
her private contribution. I am going to miss her; we are all going to miss Jeannie. It is really sad not to see her back here today because she would have continued to make a wonderful contribution to this parliament and to her political party and she would have continued to be a great friend to us all. I extend my sympathy to her family on this sad loss, and particularly to her sons, who had the double blow of losing their father in the same week. That was just tragic. Jeannie has made a wonderful contribution and her legacy will live on.

Senator COLBECK (Tasmania—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration) (3.54 pm)—I too would like to add my comments to the words that have been spoken in this place today about Jeannie Ferris. I think it is a mark of Jeannie that we are observing one of the most civilised times that I have seen in this place since I have been here, with people from all sides and corners of the parliament standing up to express warm feelings of their experience of Jeannie.

Mine began in early 2002 when I came to this place and was fortunate enough to be appointed to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee, which as we have heard already was a committee that Jeannie was on for her entire time here in the parliament. Jeannie set about training the new senator, scolding when necessary. We have heard of the ‘tut, tut’, but she also had a way of saying, ‘Don’t you dare do that!’, but praising also and giving guidance. To sit and watch Jeannie in operation as a member of that committee provided me with the best training that I could get. She was absolutely fierce in her pursuit of issues in support of Australian agriculture. That has been mentioned here many times today. But she also supported the government steadfastly. She would not let anything get in the way of the support for Australian agriculture, particularly in respect of quarantine issues and biosecurity. It was one of the key issues she supported, particularly in relation to apple imports. I also recall the time when she was concerned about a few things not right in AWI. I can still recall a cartoon in one of the rural newspapers showing Jeannie with her foot on the neck of a particular employee of one of those organisations as if to say she had him pinned to the ground. She was going to get her man and she ultimately did.

There have been many words of support and expressions of the way that Jeannie supported people through particular issues, debates and discussions. At key moments when she could see that you were under enormous pressure or that some things were not going quite right, she was particularly supportive. During some of the conscience debates Jeannie was very aware of the pressure that different people were under, the lobbying that was being conducted and the pressure that was being applied to them for their vote in some of the really important debates that we have had here over the last two or three years. At just the right moment Jeannie would turn up and say, ‘We are proud of what you have done.’ I think Senator Moore mentioned that when she was making her presentation earlier and I have certainly had the benefit of those quiet words of encouragement from Jeannie at a key moment when the pressures were coming from a number of different angles. You knew that there was that level of support from someone who was keeping an eye on what was going on around the traps, and a word of encouragement and support. Sometimes that can be pretty rare in a competitive place like this. So that sort of support was very good.

She also knew how to keep your feet on the ground, mind you, if she thought you were getting a bit ahead of yourself. When I was fortunate to go into the agriculture portfolio, appearing before that famous back-
bench committee for agriculture, she certainly knew how to make sure you knew your stuff. You were not going to take a piece of legislation through that backbench committee without going through the full circuit. She made sure that you were across your brief and you knew what you were talking about. There was nothing put past that committee.

I did not have so much contact with her on a lot of the other issues that have been mentioned here today so I will confine my comments mostly to the rural sphere. Over her time here Jeannie not only had an interest in rural issues but also really cared about the rural communities. I remember talking to her one day after she had done a trip through western New South Wales in 2003 or 2004. She was telling me how she had been to a black tie dinner in a community where it was so dry that the dams were all dry. They had a black tie dinner to celebrate their way of life on the floor of a dry water storage facility. That is the way she got around. She talked to these communities and she really cared about them. She worked hard to implement programs that supported them, and really supported members who pushed for programs to meet the needs of rural Australia in times of real stress, which we have seen a lot of over the last five or six years. She really put in a strong effort to support rural communities.

I have mentioned that she knew how to scold, and I was the beneficiary of the mother of all scoldings on a very famous occasion. Senator McGauran is not in the chamber at the moment but I recall him indicating to the chamber one day that we had won a vote by one vote. That was the day that the tractors arrived from Tasmania and I was with Senator McGauran’s brother, Minister McGauran, out on the front lawns of Parliament House announcing some funding that we had put together for the vegetable industry. When I got back in I apologised to Julian for causing him some grief by missing the division. He said to me, ‘Don’t worry, mate, I think I took the focus off you following the count.’ The only person whose focus he did not manage to take off me was Jeannie because she gave me the rounds of the kitchen something fierce when she caught up with me. I think it was Senator Patterson who said at the conclusion of that discussion that we all agreed that I would never miss a division again.

As I have said, Jeannie really felt an affinity with people in rural and regional Australia. She really cared for what they were about and what they did. To use the Australian colloquial term that is perhaps the ultimate compliment of some of those real hard nuts out in the bush, she was a ‘damn good sort’. She was someone who cared about people and her community. It might not be fashionable to use that terminology but it is not meant in any other way than as what I would see as the ultimate compliment from a lot of people who are doing it tough and working hard in rural and regional Australia.

My sincere condolences go to Robbie and Jeremy. The loss they suffered in that terrible week is something very few of us can consider. Our thoughts are with them. To Jeannie’s staff, friends and colleagues in the chamber who were very close to Jeannie, I also extend my condolences. It has been a tough time over the last few weeks just thinking that Jeannie will not be back here. So my thoughts are with all those who feel that way. And to Jeannie: rest in peace. We are all going to miss you.

**Senator O’BRIEN** (Tasmania) (4.03 pm)—I am very pleased to be able to make a contribution to this debate. I started my current term on the predecessor to the current Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport back in about 1997. I have probably spent more time on that com-
mittee with Jeannie Ferris than anyone else currently in this place. As a result, it is quite natural that my recollections of Jeannie centre around her role on that committee and on the issues that the committee touched. I did not have the privilege of being involved in some of the other very important issues that Jeannie pursued through other committees in this place. We have all been enriched with a recollection of her contribution to those other very important issues, some of very special personal importance to Jeannie in the latter part of her time in this place.

I remember Jeannie as a very competent senator and a very efficient whip. She did have some problems with her colleagues but all whips do; as a former whip I can say that there is nothing unusual about that. Short of chaining people into this place it is impossible to get every senator turning up to every vote at the appropriate time. I have not met a whip or former whip who has been able to boast that they have been able to do that. Frankly—apart from it being unparliamentary to say this—I suspect they would be telling a lie if they said that they had.

I recall Jeannie Ferris as a colleague in that we spent a considerable amount of time together on issues which we shared similar views on as well as on issues where we vehemently disagreed. I remember Jeannie as a fierce competitor, arguing the case that she thought was right; arguing her position within her party and within this chamber on behalf of her party. In that sense she was an unflappable advocate for the things she wanted to pursue. But I also remember her as a person of compassion. Plenty has been said in this debate about Jeannie’s compassion and the way she empathised with the people who came before the committee. That was my experience at least and I am sure there are plenty of other examples. People from rural communities and organisations came before the committee with issues that they thought needed the attention of the parliament, and Jeannie had compassion for genuine people and often expressed that publicly and privately in this place and elsewhere.

But who can forget Jeannie’s engaging smile, that beaming smile that always struck one in conversation? And who can forget her keen sense of humour when things that amused her—and often the rest of us—passed in conversation between us? Those characteristics are things we will probably remember when all else fades a little from our memory. I also remember those evenings in the Senate, at the end of the day—they seemed almost always to be in the middle of the week—when there was some black tie event that coalition senators were attending. Jeannie would be off with that beautiful smile and a gleam in her eye, about to go out and enjoy herself with her colleagues. She was dressed in her very best and always looked as though she belonged there.

I have to also say that I probably will not forget her jousting with Bill Heffernan in private meetings of the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport. It was often about his comments on particular issues during those private meetings. Tut-tutting is not the way I would describe it; it was more like the comments I received during some of my contributions in this chamber. Jeannie would interject with something like, ‘That’s outrageous,’ in her usual tone, indicating that she was displeased that I was attacking the coalition, a minister or a particular policy of the government. That is because one thing you have to say about Jeannie is that, in this place, in public, she certainly was always loyal to her party. She may have had different views—in fact, I know she often did—but in this place she would portray the views of her party in circumstances where sometimes she felt they should have been different from those which had been determined and which were en-
trusted to her to portray. Sometimes in pri-
vate she made it plain that the opposition was rightly, and perhaps sometimes even effectively, pursuing the government or some agricultural organisation through estimates, in the community, during inquiries or in the parliament. But it was always in private, and she always indicated a view that I thought derived from her understanding of and long involvement in issues that I had been in-
volved in with the agriculture portfolio.

I also recall Jeannie’s very effective use of her journalism skills. Jeannie would sometimes come to an inquiry, disappear for a while and then come back in when it was her turn to ask a question. She would ask a few very dramatically put, pointed questions and then, surprise, surprise, up they would pop as dramatic grabs on Country Hour. Jeannie always had herself organised. When she wanted to make a point and get it publicised, she knew just how to put it to make sure that the grab she wanted to appear would appear on programs such as Country Hour.

I recall her private criticism of AWB during the 2002-03 inquiry into the performance of our international wheat marketing arrangements. I think some of that criticism flowed over into the way she questioned that organisation during that inquiry, particularly about the organisation’s handling of its responsibilities and about the perception that there was an arrogance in the organisation that was not appropriate. I thought that, whilst Jeannie respected the views of her party, she always had concerns about that organisation. I am sure she was not entirely surprised when things very publicly went amiss with regard to that organisation’s performance.

It has been touched on earlier, but I also recall her pursuit of a rural organisation’s leader—and I will not sully this debate by naming that person. That person was ulti-
mately found—exposed, in part, by Jeannie’s actions—to have misappropriated grower and government moneys, to have acted with nepotism in appointing people to the organi-
sation and to have been engaged in sharp electoral practices within that organisation. I recall her recounting a very threatening telephone conversation she had from that person during the conduct of the inquiry but, of course, took not one step back from her pur-
suit of the issue that she thought was right.

What has also been touched on is her passionate pursuit of biosecurity issues, with an intent to ensure that AQIS and Biosecurity Australia got it right, and that if they got it wrong the officers who got it wrong were held to account and corrective action taken. I know that many departmental officers were not keen to get on the wrong side of Jeannie Ferris at hearings when we were discussing a variety of issues, including New Zealand apples. The irony of her pursuit of that issue had not come to me before today’s debate, because I have never seen Jeannie as any-
thing other than as a person who pursued the interests of this country to the exclusion of all others in relation to her responsibilities in this place.

My experience of Jeannie Ferris has been substantially limited to those areas in that committee and sometimes to her role as a whip in this chamber. I have always counted her as a friend. It is very distressing that her life has been cut short and that she has not been given the benefit of retirement from this place and the opportunity to reflect on all the good work she has done. I know that she leaves us all with the feeling that our lives have been enriched by her presence here and by our knowing her. I too would like to pass on my condolences to her sons, Robbie and Jeremy, and to her extended family. I feel for their loss, but they should be very proud that Jeannie holds such a prominent place in our hearts.
Senator FERGUSON (South Australia) (4.15 pm)—I rise to associate myself with this condolence motion for my colleague, close friend and landlady, Senator Jeannie Ferris. I thought I might make a comment first on Jeannie as a landlady. As Senator Minchin said, Alexander Downer, Nick Minchin and I were tenants of Jeannie for over 10 years. The thing I will miss most about Jeannie is that when I would arrive in Canberra on a Sunday night—usually about half past nine or something like that—the first thing I would hear when I opened the door was: ‘Is that you, Fergie? I’ve got a couple of things I have to tell you.’ Those couple of things that Jeannie had to tell me of course I would not like to classify as gossip; I think they were more in the form of information! I will always remember those Sunday nights with Jeannie, because quite often the other two tenants were not there; they would invariably arrive early on a Monday morning. I remember that time with Jeannie.

The other thing I remember distinctly is Jeannie’s complete abhorrence of smoking. You can imagine the reaction to Alexander’s cigars—invariably Cuban cigars, I think—at 11 o’clock at night as the smell wafted through the house, even with all the doors shut. One day Jeannie said, ‘We have to do something about Alexander and his cigars.’ As a reformed smoker for the past 16 or 17 years, I actually quite like the smell of cigars so it did not bother me much at all. But the health fanatic, Nick Minchin, and the landlady, Jeannie Ferris, made Alexander open every door in the house, and if he wanted to have a cigar it had to be after we had gone to bed.

As a colleague, there was nobody who worked harder in this place than Jeannie. In all the time that I have been here—and I came to this place only a few years before Jeannie—I have never seen anybody tackle as many subjects and be on as many committees, and attend all of the meetings. She would work seven days a week and many, many hours every day. Because she was on her own most of the time, she felt she had the time to do it. Jeannie was an energetic, hardworking colleague and I think that is one of the reasons why she left such an impression on her colleagues in this place and on the wider community as well—she was involved in such a broad range of issues.

As a friend, there was no-one more loyal than Jeannie. We happened to have the same friends in many cases because of the circles we moved in, previously and after she began her time in parliament. Jeannie was loyal to every friend she ever had—not just in the Liberal Party; she had plenty of friends outside of the Liberal Party. Senator Stott Despoja has already spoken of Jeannie’s friendship with her and her husband. Jeannie was intensely loyal to all her friends. Thankfully, at the end, she was very lucky that she had such loyal friends in Canberra like Lisa, who has been mentioned before. And Jeannie was able to go and see her sister, Pam, at Christmas time and her sister came back here to see her. Certainly, to the friends she had and the friends she made was intensely loyal.

Jeannie also had a lot of successes—far too many to mention here. Many of the previous speakers have spoken about the successes that she had with the various pieces of legislation and the committee work she was involved with, particularly in the last couple of years. But I must contradict Senator Abetz. Earlier, Senator Abetz said that Jeannie Ferris said that she was involved in the civilisation of Ian McLachlan on women’s issues. That was an event that I can promise you never took place! But Jeannie certainly influenced a lot of other people when she was doing her work either inside the Senate or outside the Senate.
Much has been said by all speakers about Jeannie’s more recent successes, such as her heavy involvement in the inquiries into gynaecological cancer and stem cell research, as well as others. But the emphasis on those inquiries overlooks what I think was the most important role in Jeannie’s life: representing people in rural Australia for 20 years, without exception. From her time working as media and publicity officer with the CSIRO to her time with the NFF—during Mudgiberri and the live sheep dispute, and all of the issues when primary industries in South Australia were going through quite a tumultuous time—Jeannie was at the forefront every time. After that, she moved on to be a personal assistant to Ian McLachlan when he was president of the National Farmers Federation, and when Ian came into parliament she became his chief of staff when he was shadow minister for industrial relations, amongst other things.

Jeannie’s involvement in the rural community and her contribution to rural people in more recent times, particularly in South Australia, was significant. She inevitably attended every rural council meeting in South Australia. She was the focus of people’s attention because, as a member and sometimes chair of the rural committee in the parliament, she was completely up to date with all the latest things that were happening in the rural world. I happen to live in rural South Australia, and have for a long time, but my focus has been diverted onto other areas. I would find myself getting advice from Jeannie, who had never been on a farm in a working capacity in her life. She had an intimate knowledge of rural industries throughout Australia, particularly through South Australia. She also worked with the isolated children’s association in South Australia and she would host them in Canberra when they came here lobbying for better conditions and education for isolated children. This was another part of her contribution to rural affairs.

People forget that when she was chair of the native title committee she organised several meetings with Aboriginal women throughout Australia, particularly throughout South Australia. She would sit down and talk to the Aboriginal women leaders of those communities. Because of her recent activities in other women’s issues, people tend to overlook the enormous contribution she made to Aboriginal women in rural Australia. For many years those women felt disadvantaged, and they are probably still disadvantaged, but Jeannie did her best to redress some of those disadvantages by meeting with them on a regular basis back in the nineties. I will never forget the efforts that she put into that.

Jeannie’s staff have been just marvellous. Robyn Mills, whom I have known for quite some time, has been the Rock of Gibraltar. Robyn originally worked for Ian McLachlan, then worked for Senator Mason for some time when she moved to Queensland, and then came back and worked for Jeannie. It has been terribly tough for her. She has been through the same problems herself, having family involvement in cancer. Robyn has been just wonderful. Bronte and Simon, who were here earlier, were so close to Jeannie. I know they were so shocked by her passing because they did not expect it, and neither did many other people. I have a feeling that Robyn probably knew, but it was such a shock to many of those who were close to Jeannie.

The other thing that I want to place on the record is Jeannie’s involvement in many other sensitive issues within the community—things that go unnoticed here. Very few people know about Jeannie’s involvement in the rehabilitation of young drug offenders in Adelaide. There was a safe house in, I think, the Elizabeth area, and Jeannie’s
phone number was available to be rung 24 hours a day. She never told anybody about that; she just did it. She had a particularly keen interest in the problem of drugs amongst our youth, so she did something in a practical way. There are many young people who owe a lot to Jeannie, not only those who were unfortunately involved in the drug scene but also those in her extended family. I know how she has helped other people through education and matters such as that.

The thing that saddens me most is that Jeannie had such great plans in retirement. She had been a very astute investor. She had very carefully planned what she would do in retirement. One Sunday night she confided in me that what she would really like to do when she retired was to have a bookshop in Manuka, but it was important that it have a coffee shop alongside it so that she could catch up on all the gossip and people would have a chance to talk and have coffee while she ran the coffee shop. I do not think she cared whether it ever made a profit, but I can see that Jeannie would have had a wonderful time as the proprietor of a bookshop with a coffee shop alongside it, having all of her old journos coming in with all the latest news and titbits. I am very sad that Jeannie will not have the chance to fulfil what I am sure would have been a wonderful retirement—a retirement that we all would have enjoyed just as much as she would have.

Jeannie’s sons, Robbie and Jeremy, and her sister, Pam, have been through a terrible time over the last five or six weeks. I pass on my sincere condolences to them. The one thing that you can be sure of is that Jeannie Ferris will never be forgotten.

Senator BRANDIS (Queensland—Minister for the Arts and Sport) (4.25 pm)—I also want to associate myself with the condolence motion and the remarks of senators who have preceded me in this condolence debate. We mourn today but also celebrate the contribution of a great Senate figure. Jeannie Ferris’s career and the impact that she made in this chamber serve to remind us that you do not have to be a minister to make a very big impact, particularly in the Senate. There are many who go through the Senate and, I dare say, many who sit on the front bench in the Senate who will not be remembered for very long after they have left this place. If I can pick up where Senator Ferguson left off, one thing you can be sure about Senator Jeannie Ferris is that she will be long remembered as one of the great personalities of this place, certainly in our time here. In fact, so palpable was her presence that, even in speaking in this debate now, I almost expect to see her marching purposefully through that door to reprimand an errant senator, find out why the debate was taking so long or, otherwise, do the many jobs that she had to do as a whip.

She was a feisty and formidable politician. I think the Prime Minister, as he so often does, captured her perfectly in his condolence statement when he described her as a two-fisted political fighter. She had an unsentimental view of human nature and was a close student of human frailty, but at the same time—and this has come out in so many of the tributes that have been paid to her—she was also an extremely warm-blooded person. She was an extremely humane and a very compassionate person. She was a person you felt that you could talk to when you had troubles. I have been trying to think of the quality which struck me as the most outstanding of Jeannie Ferris, and from my point of view it is that she had the gift of empathy. You could talk to Jeannie Ferris and she would understand you. She would understand a human situation perfectly because she read personalities so well, and, because she was such a capable and adept politician, she read the play of politics so
well. As a result of those two skills—the personal skill of understanding people and the professional skill of understanding political dynamics—she had a very empathetic personality. That is what I will remember her for in particular.

As a whip, I think she was exemplary, because she was very fair. One of the great qualities that a whip must have, as those of us who are professional politicians know, is to make sure that everybody feels that they get a fair go, and I felt this all the time that I was on the backbench and Jeannie was the whip. She would take the utmost pains to make sure that everybody got a fair go. If there was a senator who felt a bit marginalised or a bit disengaged, she would do what she could to bring them back into the fold. If there was a senator who was getting perhaps a bit too big for their boots or being selfish in their use of the speaking time, Jeannie would make sure that that particular person was also brought back to the field. She understood the need to keep the balance and to keep everybody involved and everybody working together.

As whip she had many challenges. I will till my dying day remember her frequently expressed exasperation about certain colleagues whose indiscipline on occasions vexed her. I am trying to say this gently, but I think all senators will know what I mean when I say that I can see Jeannie right now in my mind’s eye expostulating, ‘Bloody Bozzie!’ when one of our esteemed colleagues had transgressed—and I am sure he was not the only one.

Jeannie was very kind to me. I remember—and I will not say more about it than this—about three years ago, when I was experiencing a great deal of grief from a particular colleague, that she was the model of diplomacy in trying to heal that breach, and she devoted an enormous amount of emotional energy and time to healing that breach.

A couple of times over the years, I lent Jeannie my beach house up at Peregian on the Sunshine Coast and she would have a week’s holiday there. Twice that happened, and each time she left a thoughtful gift, by which I will remember her. In fact, so enthusiastic did she become about the beautiful Sunshine Coast of Queensland that she bought a place of her own there, at Noosaville—one of her many astute investments. One of the things which I will miss is the occasional, rather astonished conversation Jeannie and I would have about Sunshine Coast real estate prices.

When Jeannie died, we were all taken aback by the suddenness of it, because, although I think many of us at least had a sense that she was not long for this world, we thought that we would have her until the natural expiry of her Senate career in the middle of next year, when she would have retired. But she was taken with awful suddenness, as her illness accelerated through March and she died at the beginning of April.

When she died, the newspapers appropriately published a lovely photograph of Jeannie that captured the radiant smile of which so many have spoken. But there is another press photograph of Jeannie Ferris which I remember and which in a sense summed up the other side of her personality and was in a sense more revealing. It was not a portrait photograph; it was a photograph of Jeannie in action. She had come back from her chemotherapy and had bravely, with an enormous sense of duty and personal courage, agreed to accompany the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Vaile, on his mission to Iraq about a year or so ago to try to save the Australian wheat contract. There would not have been anyone better to accompany Mr Vaile because of her deep knowledge of agricul-
tural issues, as other senators have said. You will probably remember it, Mr Acting Deputy President: it was this very evocative photograph of Jeannie—I think it was on the front page of at least some newspapers—literally and metaphorically in full battle-dress. With battle helmet on, she was marching determinedly down the back ramp of an Orion which had just landed in Baghdad, unsmiling, with that fixed, purposeful expression on her face, her lips clenched together. That was the other side of Jeannie Ferris; a very determined lady, a person with a tremendous sense of duty, a person who meant business and was very effective in securing the outcomes she sought to secure.

So Jeannie and I had a great friendship in this place. She was always somebody I could talk to. As others have said, she was always up for a gossip. The exchange of—the latest news and the latest reflections upon personalities in this place is one of its small and naughty joys, and Jeannie was a great aficionado of those arts.

I will always remember the twinkle in her eye, her wicked sense of humour, her ready smile, her infectious laugh and her sheer joy of life. She left such an affectionate legacy in the hearts of, I think, all of us, even those who may have crossed her from time to time or whom she may have crossed in political competition. I am sure that, although we were friendly, she did not always advance my interests, but I am also sure that she always protected my interests, and I think the difference between the two tells you all you need to know about the complex nature of relationships and friendships in an intense political environment.

And she left behind a standard by which future whips will be judged. Senator Parry—I do not think this has been officially announced yet but I hope he will forgive me for saying so—is going to be the new Government Whip in the Senate, and I am sure Senator Parry and generations of whips subsequently will have ringing in their ears from time to time, ‘Now, if Senator Ferris were here,’ or ‘Jeannie would never have put up with this.’

Senator Webber—Yes.

Honourable senators interjecting—

Senator BRANDIS—Thank you, Senator Webber, and I hear ‘hear-hears’ volleys across the chamber. So Senator Ferris made such a great impact, not only on the place but also on the job, on the role. She really defined the way in which a whip ought to go about their business of corralling fractious, difficult and wilful personalities in order to bring out the best in everyone for the greater good.

I will certainly miss her. She lightened my days. I always loved Jeannie’s company, even when I was in her bad books, as I very seldom though occasionally was. I extend my condolences to her family and, in particular, as others have mentioned, to her very close friend and loyal secretary, Robyn Mills, who I think has borne the brunt of the last few months and whose loyalty, friendship and service to Jeannie—and to all the government senators—has been truly exemplary.

Senator PARRY (Tasmania) (4.37 pm)—I certainly acknowledge Senator Brandis’s comments. Yes, there will be the Ferris model for whips that we will abide by, I am sure. Sitting in the whip’s position today are some flowers which were kindly placed there by Jeannie’s loyal staff—and it has been mentioned today a few times—Robyn Mills, Simon, Bronte, Vicki and Angela. They have all lovingly signed a card. The gerberas and gypsophila represent her favourite colours and some favourite flowers. It has been mentioned, and I also have to say in the chamber today, that it is like the riderless horse with
the stirrups facing backwards, and the boots. Given the comments by some senators today, we should have had a pair of those famous shoes on there as well, facing backwards. It has come down through the ages that the riderless horse represents the memory of someone who has gone before us. Having the stirrups on backwards indicates that the person is looking back upon her fond troops. This would be very appropriate for Jeannie today. It is great to have that symbolism of the empty whip’s chair with the flowers as a poignant reminder.

I want to mention a few things that happened during Jeannie’s last few weeks in this parliament prior to her having the last session in hospital. Even while she was in hospital for that last session, in typical Jeannie fashion Jeannie was monitoring the television during question time, saying, ‘Where is Senator So-and-So?’ and ‘Someone needs to tell Senator Such-and-Such.’ She was still the true whip until the very end.

Senator Coonan mentioned the frogs and the wheelbarrow. Senator Ferris sat me down when I became deputy whip and gave me what I call the motherly talk but also the mentor talk and the scolding before anything could possibly go wrong. She talked about the frogs and the wheelbarrow. I was asking how best to describe the whip’s role. She said, ‘Just describe the role as wheeling in one direction a frog full of wheelbarrows’—I am sorry, I should have said a wheelbarrow full of frogs; that would be just as difficult!—’a wheelbarrow full of frogs, and indicate that you just need to keep them all in the wheelbarrow and keep wheeling the wheelbarrow.’ I used that in my first radio interview after becoming deputy whip. I got more calls about that than I did about the substance and other important issues. It was the metaphor that I used and the description that really attracted people’s attention.

Jeannie had a way with words and a way to describe things like that.

Many would not be aware that in her last weeks she was pretty unwell. She came into the chamber bravely, I would say. There was one particular occasion when we had six or so divisions and she was not well enough to count the divisions. I was more than happy to do that for her. We were voting in the negative and she was sitting over on the other side of the chamber. When the divisions finished and we all went back to the normal course of government business, Jeannie could not move for about half an hour or so. She sat there and held court and then eventually quietly left the chamber. That was just her way. She did not draw any attention to herself; she just left the chamber and went back to her office and had to lie down for a while. That was the difficulty. She has the office with the closest proximity to the chamber.

We had morning administration meetings on every sitting day and we would go to the ministerial wing. On the way back on one occasion—this is when I knew she was getting quite unwell—she stopped and could not continue very well. So we continued at an extremely slow snail’s pace back to her office. She shared with me then her difficulty with fluid retention. She was just retaining so much fluid. She was describing it quite graphically, then she paused and said, ‘It’s just as well that you can handle all of this graphic stuff.’ It was quite good for her to share that with me.

Later that day we commenced a process. There is a rubbish bin behind the desk which Jeannie has used during all of her time as whip. We placed a cushion and other bits and pieces on that to make her comfortable. She sat here in quite a bit of pain during question time in particular with a cushion on top of her bucket. She did not want anyone to know
that there was anything wrong. That was just how we survived. Other unkind senators, not realising what the issue was, would think, ‘Gee, Parry, you have it well here, with all of these cushions and things on this particular seat.’ But they were there for Jeannie when she was in the chamber.

They are just some of the things that I will remember from the six months that I had as deputy whip with her as Government Whip. She was a great mentor. I am deeply saddened that she is not here to continue my education. I have a lot to learn. Jeannie’s six months of instruction and tuition was great and I just wish I had more of that. I know that we will all survive.

I conclude by extending my sympathy and also the sympathy of my wife, Allison, to Jeannie’s family. We will miss her. I only got close to her in the last six months. I know that Jeannie will be in heaven now, running the Pearly Gates with St Peter. St Peter will have a far more organised approach to the Pearly Gates. I can guarantee that no-one—absolutely no-one—would get leave from heaven.

**Senator NASH** (New South Wales) (4.42 pm)—I rise also to make a few comments about Jeannie and her life and her time here. While I did not know her nearly as well as many in this chamber, in the very short time I have been here I found that you could not possibly be in Jeannie’s orbit without having it affect you. I remember very early on, not long after I was elected—just after the election—I had a phone call from Senator Ferris inviting me out to lunch. It was still a number of months before I was actually going to take my place here. But she invited me to lunch. We went and had a very nice lunch.

I thought two things at that point. I thought that it was incredibly thoughtful that she had bothered to take the time to meet me, get to know me and ask me to have lunch with her. I also thought at the time that she was really just wanting to get a good look at this new crew that was going to come in and make sure that she had the jump on everybody else on how we were all going to operate. I think they were two sides of Jeannie that really reflect the type of person that she was. She was a very clever person, a very astute person and a person with a lot of dignity.

So many members and senators held her in such high regard. I would also like to make the point that it was not just members and senators; it was also a lot of our staff. She was very good to a lot of our staff. Certainly my staff said how much they valued the relationship that they had with her and how good she was to them. I think it is very important that we make sure that that is also acknowledged. She was very tough. When I took on the role as Nationals Whip—it is a fairly daunting job—

**Senator Kemp**—It is a tough role!

**Senator NASH**—You are quite right, Senator Kemp, that is a very tough role and it is a very daunting role, but I think it was even more daunting getting to know Jeannie in that role because I had such respect for her. Not only was she wise; she knew so much about how this place works that you just knew you did not argue with Jeannie. It was an innate thing when you first met her; you just knew that you did not argue with Jeannie. She was very good to me. She was very good in counselling me, advising me and gently steering me along a path. In my early days that was certainly very helpful.

As many have commented, Jeannie often had this wonderful, wicked glint in her eye and she had this wonderful sense of humour. As has been mentioned many times, there is the story about the frogs—keeping 38 frogs in a wheelbarrow. I cannot think of anybody other than Jeannie Ferris who would actually...
come up with that description of trying to be Government Whip in this chamber. It is very apt. I think all the frogs on this side of the chamber, and those on the other, owe her a great sense of gratitude for her contribution in this place, which really was enormous.

Jeannie was incredibly dedicated. The work that she has done on behalf of women has been mentioned already today. It cannot be underestimated how important that was. I had the good fortune to work with Jeannie on a particular issue which was to be a cross-party issue. I appreciated her knowledge and understanding of not only the issue but how to make sure it went forwards, how to make sure that the processes would work, so that we would not trip at hurdles down the track and so that it would actually be successful. You knew you could rely on Jeannie and that what she knew would be right. I think that in this place we all relied on her an awful lot for her knowledge and her strength. It was that incredible strength that saw her through in this place. I do not think even to this day we can understand how much strength she must have had to continually come into this place; so many of us did not know how unwell she was.

Senator Siewert remarked on that dedication earlier in relation to the cervical cancer vaccine. I can remember very clearly that question time with Jeannie whizzing around the chamber and making sure she got all these signatures from all these women. Only Jeannie would think: ‘I’ve got a captive audience. I have to use it; I’ve got 40 minutes to whiz round this place and make sure that I’ve got this right.’ It was an issue that really was not going to go forward until that point but, within 48 hours, Jeannie had an outcome. It was an extraordinary thing for her to be able to do. The way she thought about it, planned it, did it and got an outcome was really a testament to how she worked and operated in this place at such a wonderful level. It was just an extraordinary example to all of us and especially those of us who are still very new to this place.

I remember her final speech in this place. I was on whip’s duty, so I was sitting next to Jeannie as she was delivering her speech. There were a few of us, not too many, in the chamber at that time. I know that those who were there will remember that as a very special moment at the time, not even in hindsight, because her belief in doing the right thing for women’s issues and the things that she was fighting for came through so strongly in that speech. I had no idea she had been so unwell. She sat down next to me and said, ‘Interesting, isn’t it—they’ve got no idea I’ve been in hospital this morning.’ At that stage, I gaped a bit. She said, ‘I said to them this morning I had to be back in here by four o’clock this afternoon to do a speech and they said, “You can’t possibly do that.”’ I will not say exactly what she said to them but it was along the lines of, ‘I most certainly will be back there to do that speech.’ That was the day leading up to that most wonderful speech that was the culmination of all her hard work.

She was a wonderful person, she was a real lady and I think that needs to be said—not only was she a great warrior; she was a real lady. I have the utmost respect for her, as I know so many other people do. My condolences to her family and also the staff, who I know have been incredibly affected by this. She will be very sadly missed, but very well remembered.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS (New South Wales) (4.49 pm)—I would like to add my support to the condolence motion for the late Senator Jeannie Ferris. Many have spoken of Jeannie’s achievements not only as a senator but in the many other facets of her life. Over the years, Jeannie developed many friends across the Liberal Party and I know
today that I speak for many in the New South Wales division of the Liberal Party where she was always a welcome visitor. Last year I was present when she spoke at the National Council of Women of New South Wales about her role as Senate Government Whip and she was, as always, well received.

I came to this place on budget day two years ago and I remember well my first days here. One of Jeannie’s first comments to me was that it was good to have another woman in the ranks; they always worked hard and were always less trouble. I wonder why she gave me that advice. Jeannie spoke often of the challenges of her job as Government Whip and, as Senator Parry and others have said, she used the analogy of the wheelbarrow full of frogs, but then she went on to tell me it was because you have some hopping in, some hopping out, some thinking about it, some happy to be there and others stuck at the bottom wanting to get out. It certainly was a very apt analogy, Senator Parry.

We have heard that Jeannie enjoyed a chat. Her job was to know what was going on. I think Jeannie knew the job very well and was always, as others have said, well informed. She enjoyed her job despite its challenges and she was good at what she did. Jeannie had a passion for life. She also had a passion for shoes, a passion which I share, and we often made comparisons as to whether her shoe collection was larger than mine. Many have spoken of her passion for women’s issues. Unlike many of my female colleagues who have spoken today, I was not on the same side as Jeannie. Indeed, on both RU486 and the cloning debate I was one of the few women in this place who voted on the opposite side to Jeannie. She was a formidable opponent and she was always able to give as good as she got.

However, it was on the issue of gynaecological cancer that I understood fully her courage and for which I am very grateful for her advice. I spoke to Jeannie after her illness was diagnosed. I mentioned to her that I had a history of breast cancer and gynaecological cancer on my father’s side of the family. She told me that DNA testing was available to see if you have the gene that makes you susceptible to gynaecological cancer. It was through Jeannie that I have become aware of the fantastic work of Professor Neville Hacker, director of the gynaecological centre, and his team at the Royal Hospital for Women. I know she worked hard to secure the $1 million funding for the national gynaecological cancer centre. It will be a lasting testimony to her hard work.

It is through Jeannie that I have made contact with the hereditary cancer clinic and understood the important work that they do. Thank you, Jeannie: I may end up being one of the lucky ones who knows what is coming and can do something about it. It is through Jeannie that I have better understood the silent killer that is gynaecological cancer. It does not have the profile of breast and other cancers. Jeannie helped raise the profile of this killer disease, and it is important that we continue her legacy by continuing to speak about this silent killer and to do her good work.

On behalf of her friends from New South Wales in particular, I offer my condolences to her sons, Robbie and Jeremy, her sister, Pam, and the rest of her family and friends. To Robyn, Bronte and her other staff: I know you will miss her. You honour her memory by all the hard work you have done and will continue to do. Jeannie, may you rest in peace.

Senator IAN CAMPBELL (Western Australia) (4.53 pm)—I am delighted to be able to associate myself with some remarks on the condolence motion moved by Senator Minchin. Jeannie and I served together for
all of her time in this place, and for much of that time she was either deputy whip or whip and I was Manager of Government Business in the Senate. For hour upon day upon month upon year, Jeannie would sit either where Senator Parry is now when she was deputy or where that marvellous bunch of flowers is located when she became whip, and I sat in that well-worn chair closest to you, Mr Acting Deputy President. For a long time we worked together. The manager and the whip on both sides of the chamber need to work together to make this place work. On the government side and in an era where up until recently the government was in a minority in this place, the work that had to be done between the manager and the whip and deputy whip, the roles that Jeannie performed so wonderfully, were at the heart of much of what the government had to do here, so I got to know Jeannie very well.

We would while away many hours with me turned around—totally against standing orders, no doubt—kneeling on these leather seats looking backwards and yarning about absolutely anything; usually nothing to do with our work, usually to do with gossip around the building. She would always keep me informed of any gossip about me, which was useful, and I would always try to neutralise it wherever possible, but sometimes it was pushing back the tide. She was a wonderful person to share that time with.

Jeannie would love to see all the schoolchildren in the gallery tonight hearing these stories about one of their senators. Through the media you only see the combative nature of politics and you mostly only see it here. You do not often see what occurs between senators from opposing political parties in the media. You do not see what happens at restaurants and behind the scenes. It is wonderful for the schoolchildren today and anyone listening to hear that a character like Jeannie can make so many friends and create such a wonderful difference to this nation by choosing to serve her nation, choosing her state of South Australia, coming to the federal parliament and having such an impact on so many lives and on policy. That is quite exceptional. It is something that is very exciting, and I encourage all those listening today who have an interest in politics to pursue it. It is a wonderful career. I am sure Jeannie would say that herself. You can make a big difference. It is important that people choose politics as a career. Jeannie did that and she made Australia a much better place. She changed the lives of many.

I want to record the special difference Jeannie made to me. Senator Rod Kemp, another former minister, and I were chatting privately about how Jeannie was so good to us as ministers. As a minister from Western Australia and as environment minister, I had to travel a lot internationally—an extraordinary amount; Jeannie could not believe it, nor could I. The demands that I made on the whip to get leave from this place were absolutely extraordinary. That always put pressure on the whips. I think you get roughly five pairs generally. Pairs, for the uninitiated—when I use the word ‘pairs’ to people who do not know politics, they have no idea what I am talking about—are when a senator from one side or the other is not able to be here and we have an arrangement that we will pair off. We make sure that a senator from one side is equalled with the absence of a senator from the other side. It is, Senator Parry, fair to say one of the major stresses in the life of the whip from either side is that you generally have more than five people wanting to be out of the place on any given day. It is very important to make sure that the votes of the chamber reflect the way that the people of Australia voted in the Senate elections. Making sure that absences from either side are balanced is an incredibly vital part of making sure our democracy works, but it
also puts a heavy load on the whips. Jeannie was always very fair to me.

A personal story is that I missed one of my son's speech nights once, and there was nothing Jeannie could do about it. She tried as hard as she could, but I had to apologise to my son and my family, and I missed it. On that day I put in an application for a pair for the school speech night 12 months hence. Jeannie told me that she had never received an application for a pair 12 months out, and I was given one of her famous whip's awards for doing that. She was extraordinarily helpful. She knew the stress that we were under and she looked after us.

The other thing I want to record—and Jeannie knew this, because we spent a lot of time talking during those last few weeks—is that my family have gone through some battles over recent years and very much so lately. Jeannie gave me some personal assurance and advice. I record for the benefit of her children and her sister—I have not had the pleasure of meeting them but if they are related to Jeannie I know they will be absolutely wonderful people—that the assistance that Jeannie gave me over those last few weeks when she was obviously going through absolute turmoil was quite phenomenal. She gave me some pieces of advice and I can only imagine in retrospect what she was going through. I remember the time that Senator Nash talked about when Jeannie had to dash off to hospital that last week that she was in this building. Then she came back and she had to go in again. I think all of us wished it was just a minor complication and we all thought that it was. It was not until she was in there for a bit longer that we knew it might be a bit more serious. But at that time, when she was going through that trauma in her life, she took the time out to give me some help and to give me some advice that really helped me deeply.

I say to her children: you have had a mother who has made a huge difference to this country and to this place. She made the Senate a much nicer place to be because of her very presence here. She was a character who transformed all of our working days. It can be a very tough place; it can be an inhuman place. It can exact enormous loads from people because we all have to travel so far to get here and because we work under so much pressure when we do get here. But all of our lives and our performances here were enhanced because this wonderful woman called Jeanie Ferris chose to come here and chose to share her life with us. Your mother was a wonderful lady. I am thinking of you in this period of your grief. Please, Jeannie, rest in peace and please, Jeannie’s children, be assured of what a wonderful mother you had. We were so lucky that she was part of our lives.

Senator Kemp (Victoria) (5.02 pm) I too pay tribute to Jeannie Ferris and associate myself with the condolence motion and the wide-ranging remarks that so many of my colleagues have made. There are three things I want to briefly speak on. As a minister, one spends a great deal of time in this chamber. Jeannie Ferris would of course obviously be in the whip’s chair. While we were always transfixed by the contributions of colleagues, I would occasionally move up to where Senator Parry is seated at the moment and talk to Jeannie. That happened over days, months and years. I got to know her very well as a result of the information exchanges which occurred over that period of time.

Jeannie, to me, was a great whip. It is an extraordinarily difficult job. None of us are shrinking violets in this chamber. I have never met a senator or a parliamentarian who is not ambitious for themselves and for their party. They all have strong interests. They all have immediate needs which must be ful-
filled quickly. Often this puts huge pressure on a whip. Jeannie handled that very difficult job with great skill, in my view. It is interesting that so many people can stand up and make so many comments, including personal comments, about the impact that Jeannie had on their lives. I cannot think of an occasion on which I put a request to Jeannie Ferris when she was not able to assist or do her best—as Senator Ian Campbell pointed out to us—to see what she could do to help. Jeannie was a great whip. That puts a bit of pressure on you, Senator Parry, but the truth is that it is a good model to follow. She kept in very close touch with her colleagues and did that extremely well.

That leads me to my next comment: she had an enormous capacity for friendship. I have been most moved by the many anecdotes and stories that so many senators have conveyed to us and the personal effect that she had on their lives. It is not typical that someone could have so much to say to so many people and to have so much of an impact on them. Although, of course, in a condolence motion we always speak favourably, the sincerity with which people have spoken this afternoon is remarkable and it is an enormous tribute to Jeannie Ferris.

Finally, I share a story with the Senate. In my many conversations with Jeannie Ferris, particularly over the last 12 months, I learnt that Jeannie had determined to leave this chamber. As much as she loved it, as much as she loved her colleagues, she had decided to bring her Senate career to an end. She would speak to me regularly about that. I do not know whether she was trying to give me a hint or not, but she said that it was important to her that she left the Senate with dignity. She wanted to leave of her own wish. There are times when people do have to make the judgement to leave this place. The Senate is perhaps the best club in Australia, and it is hard to leave.

I thought her advice on that issue was very sensible and, I must say, in thinking of my own position and what I would do, Jeannie’s views on it did play loud with me. I thought her comments on how you bring to an end an important part of your life were very wise, sensible and had much merit. Jeannie, as was pointed out by Senator Ferguson, did not in the end leave in the way she had wanted to. Jeannie, in her maiden speech, spoke of the need for optimism in life and the need to think boldly about the future. And Jeannie was thinking boldly about the future. She was an optimistic person and I think that her thoughts, her comments and the way she lived her life showed that. I will miss her, like so many others in this chamber and in the wider community will. She was a great senator, she was a great person and she will be greatly missed. On behalf of myself and my wife, I would very much like to extend our condolences to her family.

Senator IAN MACDONALD (Queensland) (5.07 pm)—Jeannie Ferris was a wonderful person, and all of us in this chamber are well aware of that, but, for those who might be listening, the number of tributes that have been made to Jeannie with such genuineness and heartfelt kindness are an example of the sort of person she was. She was a true friend I think to most of us here. She was a genuine friend of rural and regional Australia. I well remember how for many years she would lead the Thursday morning meetings of the rural and regional Liberals, and she would proudly proclaim to all and sundry that it was our party that was the true voice of country people, and she and I had that so very much in common. That is what we both believed, and Jeannie was a living example of how our party has been closely associated with rural and regional people throughout its existence.

She did much for country people and for country industries. As chair of our rural and
regional backbench committee, she not only contributed much to the Howard government’s policy initiatives in rural and regional Australia; she also did something that I can confidently say no-one else will ever be able to emulate. She used to be able to manage in a skilful, firm and even pleasant way the policy ‘debates’—if I can use that word in inverted commas—between three of our more gentle debaters: Wilson Tuckey, Bill Heffernan and Alby Schultz. The way Jeannie would handle them will forever live in my memory and, as I say, I am very confident that no-one else will ever be able to achieve what Jeannie did in her control of that particular committee.

She used the same sort of firmness and fairness in the way she handled all of her duties in this chamber. Others have spoken about the many issues that she worked very closely on. I well remember her calm determination and her management skills in those difficult debates on RU486 and stem cells. They were issues where Jeannie showed every consideration for everyone else’s view and position, which is very difficult at times. As the whip—and there were not really whips for those particular debates—she made sure that the debate continued in such a way that everyone had their say and no-one was put under more pressure than they should have been. In her way, whilst being fair to all sides, she did a hell of a lot of work to achieve what Jeannie did in her control of that particular committee.

I extend my condolences and those of my wife, Lesley, to Jeannie’s family, to Robbie and Jeremy, and particularly to her staff, Robyn and Bronte and the others in her office, who were all very much part of Jeannie and her Canberra family. Jeannie was very kind to me in a personal way at a time when my troubles would have been very minor in comparison to her troubles, which she principally fought privately. Thanks very much for everything, Jeannie; rest in peace.

Senator SANDY MACDONALD (New South Wales) (5.11 pm)—I, like my colleagues, would like to make a brief contribution about the late Jeannie Ferris. Like many senators, I regarded her as a good friend, and I am sure that that was reciprocated. I endorse all the generous things that have been said about her. She was no whitebread politician. She was a larger than life person, a real character, who brought a deal of life experience to this place.

She represented your state well, Mr Acting Deputy President Ferguson. She represented regional Australia well. She represented Australia well, particularly in her role as an outstanding chair of the US-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group, which she built up to be I think the second largest group in the parliament. She was a great lover of America and believed in many of the fine ideals of the American state and its sense of generosity, freedom and commitment to free enterprise. She also represented Australia well in connection to the role she played early last year in going to Iraq to help reopen the Australian wheat trade, which was important and still is. Also, she had a passion for health—which has been talked about a lot today—agriculture generally, social policy and of course politics. She did all of those well and with passion. She was also a great whip and an extremely perceptive and empathetic person, and she was always a great help to anyone going through a difficult time. Nothing that I am saying is new; these are aspects of Jeannie’s character which all of us felt and all of us feel very personally about.
She was also a very discreet person; that is clearly the case. Sometimes she opened the window a little bit on her private life, and there was much that she did in the community that none of us, even some of her closest friends, knew all about. Simply, she was a very good person, a humane person with extraordinary talents and experience. She had a deal of personal charm, which has also been talked about. Like many people with a lot of charm, in my experience, she had her favourites and I modestly think that I was one of those. She liked the country boys, as she called us, and she was a wonderful exponent of country mindedness in the Senate. She had a twinkle; she was attractive; she was always fun. She loved to be the centre of intrigue and attention. You always felt a little buoyed to be in her presence. She was never a dull person. You certainly would not have realised that she was well into her 60s. Every time you saw her, she had the vibrancy and sense of fun and excitement of somebody on the first day of a new and exciting job, and her sense of purpose rubbed off on all of us. I am sure that her spirit will live on in this place and with her friends and family for a long time.

I will finish by saying that three very fine people have died in my time in the Senate. As I am retiring next year, I hope there are no more. Those three people were the late John Panizza from Western Australia, also a whip and an extremely outstanding person who brought a lot of experience to this place; the late Peter Cook, a very outstanding trade minister; and now Jeannie Ferris. When such good people die while serving in the nation’s parliament, it might be a moment to reflect on the many outstanding people who have served in this place. Australia is a great country, and great countries are only great if they have good people who are prepared to serve. It is a pity that not all our fellow Australians necessarily realise that. But with the passing of somebody of the quality of Jeannie Ferris, surely that brings things back into perspective for even the most cynical of our fellows. Godspeed, Jeannie. You were a lovely person and your participation in this institution will be missed. On behalf of Alice and me, we will miss you and we feel very honoured to have known you.

Senator MASON (Queensland—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing) (5.16 pm)—The first senator I ever met in this place was Jeannie Ferris. I remember the occasion very well. She could be rather intimidating. You knew what she stood for; she wore her colours on her sleeve. But while assertive and even combative, because she was a fighter, this was tempered by her love of fun and a very wicked sense of humour.

I remember my first speech in this place. At the end of it Jeannie came up to me and gave me a big hug. I watched the video the other day. It was nearly eight years ago. We all looked a lot younger—I had no grey hairs—but it seems like yesterday.

Our profession is an important one. I think it is a noble one, and Jeannie answered that calling. Jeannie’s death reminds us all that there are things that transcend politics and transcend public service. Family, friends and the joy of life are the real core of our humanity. The joie de vivre that Jeannie brought to this house made this place and this profession that bit easier for all of us here to bear.

When the division bells stop ringing, as they will for all of us, we can at best hope that we have made a difference and that the world is a better place than we found it. Jeannie did her part in that, and she did more.

Senator CHAPMAN (South Australia) (5.18 pm)—It is my privilege to join this motion of condolence to a fellow South Australian Liberal senator and colleague in Sena-
tor Jeannie Ferris. I was saddened and shocked by the recent death of Senator Ferris. It was only on the previous Wednesday that I inquired of her staff member Simon, during a meeting of our government members’ agriculture committee, as to the state of her health while she was in hospital. He indicated to me that he thought she had picked up a bit during that week, so it was certainly a shock to find on the following Monday, only a few short days later, that she had passed away.

As has already been described by a number of my colleagues this afternoon, a large part of Jeannie’s life was devoted to rural advocacy and the welfare of rural people. This was evident during her time with the CSIRO, with the National Farmers Federation, with the South Australian Farmers Federation, on the staff of the Hon. Ian McLachlan, on the staff of South Australian minister the Hon. Dale Baker and ultimately as a Liberal senator for South Australia.

As a fellow South Australian, Jeannie was a hardworking representative of our state in this federal parliament and served South Australia with distinction. Through our shared interest in agriculture, as I have already mentioned, I worked with her on the government members’ agriculture, fisheries and forestry committee, which she chaired with aplomb, always ensuring that everyone on the committee got the chance to have their say on the sometimes controversial issues confronting the committee, and among some controversial and outspoken members of that committee.

During her first speech in the Senate she talked at length about the contribution of primary producers to Australia’s economy and praised the involvement of women in Australian politics. Jeannie was also a strong supporter of quality health care for rural Australians, firstly in her capacity with the Farmers Federation when she helped fight against the closure of a number of rural hospitals in South Australia. Later she was instrumental in building strong relationships between rural doctors, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Health and Ageing, resulting in landmark legislative changes to support rural medicine. Jeannie also served on the Australian delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union for the three years from 2002 to 2004, during which time I led the delegation. She was always an effective contributor to the plenary sessions and committees of this international parliamentary body.

Jeannie endured with typical fortitude her treatment for cancer in 2006. She fought valiantly against ovarian cancer for close to two years and her return to the Senate last year, again as has been mentioned by a number of colleagues this afternoon, was courageous and warmly welcomed by all of us here, her parliamentary colleagues.

Indeed, Jeannie, as a senator for South Australia for almost 11 years and the government upper house whip for four years, should be remembered for her courageous and successful fight to secure funding for research into gynaecological cancers as one of the key recommendations of a Senate inquiry that she helped to establish. She viewed her own experience with cancer as a lesson to other women to be active with regard to their own health. Sally and I and our children extend our condolences to her sons, Robbie and Jeremy, and to all of her extended family.

Senator HEFFERNAN (New South Wales) (5.22 pm)—Jeannie would not have expected me to be too organised today, because she knew that I am a person who does not make many speeches; so I will not be letting her down, because I am not organised. She was my keeper. She stuck to me, as they say, like the proverbial you know what to the
blanket when things were tough, and things were tough at times. I am well aware that she would be hammering me from up there right now; she would be giving it to me today. I got to know Jeannie really well. She would not be surprised that I have not got my beeper on me today—she was always going crook about that. She found that the only thing that I was any good at was carving the meat at the barbecue. She was a really good mate. I have to say that she was part of the culture and part of the glue that held the rural constituency of the Liberal Party together. She was a very important part of the thinking in this parliament about the bush. The bush uses a different language to a lot of the rest of Australia. Terms like, ‘Well there you go,’ were not exceptional in the language that we speak. Jeannie helped the bush. She had long experience of life in the bush. She was a great communicator. She was a great committee person. She was a proud supporter of the bush. For me, she was the brains in my rural and regional committee. She put what we had into words and I just signed the document.

I had no idea that things were shaping up the way they were when they were. She did not communicate. She faced up to what life had dished out to her in a very transparent way. She did not really want any sympathy; she just wanted to get on with the job. I did not have a clue that when she came back for the December sittings she was terminally ill. She never let on. I went and saw her three times in hospital in the last couple of weeks and sat down with her for two hours and she never let on. We had a great yarn. In fact, I rang her on the night she died and I still did not know. All they said was that she had people with her. I said, ‘Oh, well, tell Jeannie I’ll ring her in the morning.’ And it was too late. Jeannie, I am still causing a lot of trouble; I am still a headache. I am looking forward to catching up with you in the hereafter.

**Senator McGauran** (Victoria) (5.25 pm)—I associate my remarks with those of the former speaker and those of all my colleagues on both sides of the house. I extend my condolences to Jeannie Ferris’s family—her sister, Pam, and her two sons, Robbie and Jeremy—on the sudden passing of our friend and colleague. I offer to the family my thoughts and prayers for the grace and strength needed in their time of sorrow. I respected Jeannie very much as a professional and as a friend. I worked with her seemingly on a daily basis. We seemed to pick the very same interests. I assisted her for many years in the role of whip. As you all know, she was the senior government whip; I was very much the junior. I was also a member of the government backbench rural and regional committee, which Jeannie chaired. I should say that within the government that is a most senior position. We both sat on the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport for, if my memory serves me right, the past decade, if not the whole term of the government. Jeannie had a very heavy workload, which Senator Ferguson alluded to, but it did not bother her. It very much reflected her political career, the speciality that she came to politics with, her passion and her life experiences. She was a worker and an enthusiast, which makes for a very energetic mix. Jeannie was, at every level, across her brief. She was serious about her work but she was never short of that somewhat cheeky or somewhat witty Jeannie smile. Only on occasions did her stern look come out. It was all this that made her an ever pleasant person to be around. That is quite a personal achievement in life, yet alone this particular profession.

Her achievements have been outlined by my colleagues, particularly the way she tackled, without fear or favour, the rural issues of the day—whether in the wool industry, the
beef industry, the wheat industry or the citrus industry. One time or another, each one of those industries required a shake-down if not a shake-out. Jeannie was just the person to achieve that. She had the knowledge, the experience and the unflinching determination. Inevitably, she was always right when she sought reform within these industries, even if she had to convince many of us on the committee along the way. I will not give case-by-case examples, but I heard Kay Patterson mention the apple industry and the wool industry. They are just two examples. We are all aware of the fights that she took on in the rural industry, which is one of the toughest grounds to fight any political battle. She was inevitably the first to take up the fight and she was inevitably right to do so.

Most of all, away from the daily grind of parliament, I appreciated her friendship and her closeness, which I found greatest while on the overseas delegations with her representing Australia. As we on both sides of parliament all know, when you go overseas to represent the country, away from the hustle and bustle of politics, political friendships are struck and you get to know people better. This was well before her illness, which for over a year robbed her of her natural vitality, as you would expect it to, though through it she was an example to everyone as to how to keep looking forward and to keep active, even in adversity. I trust now she rests joyfully in heaven.

Senator HUMPHRIES (Australian Capital Territory) (5.30 pm)—I want to also pay tribute to a woman who made an enormous contribution to public policy in this country and who was extremely important in the effective operation of the federal coalition in the Senate. Jeannie Ferris was a somewhat fearsome figure. She had an unshakable sense of the duty that each of us brings to this place when we are members of a political party, and she instilled in everybody here a strong sense of that—and sometimes it was more by reminding us of the sticks than the carrots. There was more than a touch of the tyrant in her. I recall after my arrival here having my first conversation with her about membership of Senate committees. I went down to speak to her to advise her of my intentions, my wishes, with respect to what committees I should be on, and I came away with a very strong sense of her intentions of what committees I should be on! Indeed, her intentions prevailed over mine.

She was very clear to remind us all the time that we had a near sacred duty to bear in mind the party’s and the coalition’s broader interests. As Senator George Campbell said, she always carried a torch for the government, and heaven help any of us who lost sight of that fact. That was particularly brought home to me when I had the misfortune on one occasion—and I emphasise it was only one—to miss a division. By doing so—with another senator, who is not here at the moment—I incurred the wrath of the Government Whip in the Senate. It did not help that this was one of the earlier attempts by the government to sell Telstra. It was a fairly significant occasion to miss a division. No schoolboy caught smoking behind the shed ever endured a tongue-lashing in the headmistress’s office of the dimensions that my colleague and I experienced on that day. We had the rounds of the kitchen, I can assure you! Senator Ferris did her job in spades that day. But I also recall sitting here licking my wounds, metaphorically speaking, later in the day and catching her eye. She gave me a glance which was half-smile, half-reproach, as if to say, ‘I’ll forgive you, but make sure it’s only this one occasion I have to do it.’ For all the toughness of her approach, she was respected and liked by all of her colleagues, no matter what she had to tell them—whether it was that she could not find the pairs they wanted or that they did not
have their pagers or that she thought some motion was a stupid idea. She always imparted her view, but in a way which ensured that we continued to respect the strength of her conviction and her views.

Of course, her job got much tougher after she was afflicted by cancer. Despite that there were very few of us who would have noticed any break in her stride as she went about her job in this place. She was one who was determined to fight the encroaching darkness all the way. Indeed, she wanted to turn her experience of ovarian cancer to the advantage of others who might follow in her position. As members have noted already in this debate, she was the driving force behind the inquiry of the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs into gynaecological cancers. Although I chaired that inquiry at the end—Senator Moore chaired the start of the inquiry—we all knew that this was Jeannie’s inquiry and that the good that was to flow from this inquiry, and there was very significant good for the 1,500 Australian women or so who are killed each year by gynaecological cancer, was, in part, Jeannie’s defiance in the face of death. She participated fully and forcefully in that inquiry, despite the fact that the subject matter must on occasions have come very close to the bone for her and despite the fact that she was obviously on occasions also very unwell. But she participated with an eye to an outcome. She knew what she wanted and she got what she wanted, and that was a lift in the quality and the quantity of assistance available to Australian women faced with the challenge of cancer.

The call by the committee at the end of the day for a national centre for gynaecological cancer within Cancer Australia originated with Jeannie, and the decision to make a bid for a million-dollar fund to kick-start that centre was Jeannie’s. Although she was by no means the first woman to be afflicted by this disease, she was one uniquely placed to reduce the number of women who might follow her down that dark path. I want to take this opportunity today to repeat a call I made a few weeks ago for the government to seriously consider naming the new centre for gynaecological cancer after Senator Jeannie Ferris. She richly deserves that honour, and that would be a fitting tribute to one whose vitality and determination were in large part responsible for the existence of that resource for Australian women.

Like some others, I had the misfortune to be aligned against Jeannie on a number of key issues in women’s health, including RU486 and stem cell research. Clearly the results in those debates might have been different had that side in the debate not had her formidable organising and procedural skills at their disposal. Particularly that was the case with the stem cell debate, which swung ultimately on only one vote. I might not have agreed with Jeannie’s view on that issue, but I acknowledge that she carried forward her convictions into action with unique passion, recognising the opportunity that she had, by being a member of this place, to influence events.

Finally, I want to put on record the great love that Jeannie had for the city of Canberra. She often mentioned to me what a beautiful city this was to live in and how much she adored it. Her proud citizenship of Canberra never interfered with her passionate advocacy for and defence of the interests of South Australia and South Australians. I would have liked to have thanked Jeannie for the considerable assistance and guidance that she showed to me during my early days here but, like so many others, I was surprised by her death. That is very often the nature of things: we do not have the chance to say in life what we would like to. But I want to put on record today—and I hope Jeannie is listening—that I thought she was a great Aus-
tralian, a great parliamentarian and a great Liberal, and it was an honour to have spent time in this place and in this life with her.

Senator EGGLESTON (Western Australia) (5.37 pm)—I too rise to pay tribute to the memory of Jeannie Ferris. As we have heard today, Jeannie was a great advocate for South Australia, for rural issues and, more recently, for issues associated with women’s cancer. As Ian Macdonald reminded us, she was the convener of the Liberal Party rural breakfasts, which were held once a month and which, as Jeannie was very fond of pointing out, attracted an attendance of around 40 people a month. She was also very fond of pointing out that there were more people in the Liberal Party representing rural Australia than there were people from another party which claims to do so. She was very strong on that point.

I came into the Senate in 1996 with Jeannie. Today we have heard a little bit about some of her sayings. One of her sayings which she frequently put to me was that everyone who came to the Senate was figuratively given the same piece of rope and it was up to each individual to see how far they could swing on that piece of rope while they were here as a member of the Senate—a very interesting metaphor. I think Jeannie swung a very long way on her piece of rope and made a great contribution to the affairs of the Senate.

I worked with Jeannie as Deputy Government Whip for four years from 2002. That was an interesting experience, not least because Jeannie, having been associated with the press gallery and the National Farmers Federation, had a fascinating knowledge of the Australian political process and many of the characters involved in it. During many a question time we engaged in interesting discussions about people and events around Parliament House. Jeannie’s stories were often humorous, and it was frequently quite a difficult struggle to maintain a straight face to the people of Australia watching question time as she told her rather humorous stories while a television camera was pointed at you across the chamber. She was a person with a great sense of humour, which has been referred to by many people.

I will remember Jeannie as a person with strong views, a passion for her causes, a good understanding of human nature and excellent political insights, and as a person of great personal charm and a sometimes quite wicked sense of humour. Other people have referred to that as well. I respected her contribution to the Senate and the Liberal Party as a senator, as the Senate whip and as chair of the Liberal Party federal rural committee—a role in which she gained the respect of Liberal Party members around Australia. Most importantly, I respected her for her advocacy in the Senate of women’s issues and her determination to ensure that more attention was directed to the detection and treatment of gynaecological cancer, which will perhaps be her most lasting legacy.

Parliament produces some great and memorable characters, and I believe Jeannie Ferris was one such character who, I am sure, will be long remembered in the records of this place as someone who gave her all and did so with great determination and always with a twinkle in her eye. May she rest in peace.

Senator RONALDSON (Victoria) (5.41 pm)—It is with great sadness that I rise this afternoon to pass on my condolences to Jeannie’s sons and to Jeannie’s friends in this place, one of whom, Senator Patterson, is sitting behind me. Friends are not necessarily easy to make in politics, because the dynamics dictate that we are all in competition with each other. One of Jeannie’s lasting legacies
is that she was able to make close friends. That requires an enormous amount of work to achieve. It requires some take but it also requires an enormous amount of give. I have watched Jeannie’s close friends over the last 18 months and what I have seen has reinforced to me that Jeannie was a very special person who could maintain extraordinarily close friendships, such as the one Senator Patterson and others had with her.

Jeannie and I shared two things—things which we both understood without having to talk about in any great detail. One was the fact that we both had cancer. I am one of those lucky ones who is still here; Jeannie, unfortunately, was taken. The other thing we shared was that we had both had the role of Chief Government Whip. I have no doubt in mind that the pressure of this job in some way contributed to Jeannie’s ill health. It is only when you have been in that position that you understand the extraordinary pressure associated with it. Indeed, Jeannie has taken to her grave—as I will take to my grave—the keys to the skeleton closet. It was an extraordinary responsibility that she bore for some five years, where she knew where the skeletons were and was the only person who knew where the key to the closet was. The mark of a great whip is a whip who keeps the whereabouts of the key something that only she or he knows.

The job that Jeannie did in ensuring that she did not play favourites was important. I have absolutely no doubt that Jeannie had her favourites. It would be unusual for her not to have had her favourites. Did she ever show that in her role as whip? No. I think that is a mark of someone who takes their job incredibly seriously. You are, if you like, the receptacle for your colleagues’ problems. You are the one who knows those with matrimonial problems, financial problems or medical problems. It is a remarkable load that someone in the position Jeannie held must carry. Indeed, there have been issues in the other place over the last five or six years which again heightened the need for us all to appreciate that we must be able to talk about issues. This can be a very lonely life. In many respects, the secrets and matters that Jeannie has taken to her grave are matters that colleagues felt they could not trust anyone else with. It was a huge load that she carried.

I also want to pay tribute to Jeannie’s staff, Robyn and Bronte particularly because they are the two I know best. You cannot do the whip’s job unless you have incredibly loyal and dedicated staff. They are, in fact, your eyes and ears. The relationship you have with your staff in this position actually determines whether you do your job properly. They have to be the model of discretion. They have to be tough and caring—indeed, they are an extension of the whip. What has been said about Jeannie since her death is a fair indication that she lived her life to the fullest. I think one of the great challenges for all of us is to go to our graves knowing we lived our lives to the fullest. Did Jeannie have things left that she wanted to do? Of course she did. Did she make the most of every opportunity that was given to her? She undoubtedly did.

I think the great tragedy for her boys is that they are not going to spend the time that they should have with their mother post politics. This is an incredibly cruel occupation for relationships, particularly with children. My great sadness for the boys is not just the loss of their mother; it is the loss of the opportunity over the next five, 10, 15 or 20 years for their relationship to be nurtured and to grow, and for her to enjoy the fruits of their love and their relationships as well. To the boys, to the extended family, to Jeannie’s close friends and to Jeannie’s staff, it is an utter tragedy that she was taken. But, as I said to Robyn, we must celebrate a great life.
because I think if we do not celebrate that great life then we would be doing Jeannie a great disservice.

Senator ADAMS (Western Australia) (5.47 pm)—I also rise to express my thoughts on this condolence motion for our colleague Jeannie Ferris. I did not know Jeannie as long as most other speakers, being a new member in this place. It is most important that I speak of her kindness and consideration in taking me under her wing when I was endorsed as a senator for Western Australia. This occurred two years and three months before I was actually sworn in. Jeannie was the first person outside Western Australia to congratulate me on my endorsement. With that phone call came an invitation for me to join her at the 2003 Liberal Party federal conference, which was held in Adelaide. She organised for me to attend the rural policy committee meetings and many other briefings to do with rural issues. Actually, in those two days she ran me off my feet. This was amazing coming from a stranger who really did not know me but was thrilled to think that another woman was coming into the parliament, even though that took another two years.

I also have a wonderful memory of Jeannie from my Senate orientation day. She organised my accommodation, gave me a personal reference for my landlady and had Robyn drive me to my interview. That evening, we had dinner at the Canberra Yacht Club. It was a wonderful occasion, much like Senator Nash was talking about earlier. That was Jeannie’s way of finding out where I came from and what made me tick. It was quite amazing getting to know Jeannie too—this is really telling stories out of school. She happened to tip a glass of red wine over her beautiful blue, long coat. Without any problem, she took it off and called the person who was looking after us and said, ‘Can you put it into a bucket of iced water with some salt, and it will be fine,’ and we continued our conversation. That was the start of learning about Jeannie Ferris.

When I did my first speech in the Senate I knew Jeannie and I both had links with New Zealand—her being born in Auckland and me being born in Picton—and I highlighted these links and spoke about my grandfather, a trooper with the Auckland Mounted Rifles who was killed at Chunuk Bair on 8 August 1915. As soon as I finished the speech, Jeannie came over and congratulated me, and said, ‘I don’t care what you are going to do next, but you must come to my office.’ I thought, ‘Why does she want me to come to her office?’ Anyway, I went to her office and I found that on her wall she had the medals of her great uncle, who had actually been with my grandfather. They were killed at the same time, on the same day. So Jeannie and I really did have a link.

From then on her encouragement and determination that I should pursue the issues that I held very dear were wonderful. I mentioned those issues in my first speech. Just before I took my place in the Senate we had our federal council meeting in Canberra, and the two issues I wanted to speak about were the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme and breast cancer. Jeannie was right behind me on them. She pushed and pushed me and said, ‘You’ve got to keep going with these things.’ I have actually done that, and it was a great thrill to finally get a Senate inquiry into the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme. A bit like Senator Humphries, I said to her, ‘Now I’d like to be on this committee and that committee.’ The Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee did not have a vacancy and she said, ‘Your background is in health and ageing, you must go onto that committee.’ So having found myself now on that rural committee in place of Jeannie, I will certainly be doing my best to do what she would have liked.
Following Senator Patterson’s shopping expedition around Sydney, that afternoon we were going on the Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program. Jeannie invited me to accompany her and Louise Markus on this trip. Spending that time with her was just incredible. It was when she really started to feel bad. Thinking about our trip around Sydney Harbour in an RHIB, which is a rigid-hulled inflatable boat, I can still see her climbing down the ladder to get into the boat, and now I know just how sick she was on that day. She was determined not to ruin our trip. As we went on, we had a few little problems and she realised that she had to go back to South Australia. I would like to pay tribute to Captain Pete Leavy and Lieutenant Commander Sam Jackman for the work that they did. The way she was looked after was absolutely brilliant. We know the story from then on. Jeannie was determined to get over it. We had lots of talks. With my nursing background, she would say to me: ‘Where’s this going? What’s going on?’ It was so great that we could sit down and do that. On the last night, when she came back to respond to the recommendations of the gynaecological report, it was lovely to be able to sit and talk to her about things. One thing that she said then was: ‘Don’t give up on the wheat.’ I am certainly still moving on the wheat debate. That was Jeannie’s love. She wanted it fixed and somehow, between us, we have to fix it. I do not know how we are going to do it, but we will.

For Senate inquiries, I am on the Community Affairs Committee. Jeannie was just so good. She was not on the committee, as people have said, but, by gee, she was right behind us. It did not matter what we did or discussed; she was there and got the women in this place to work together collectively to achieve things for other women. She has done that. I hope that the cancer centre which has come to fruition is named after her because no-one else could get the impetus for that. We were all behind her, but she drove it. For her to get Senator Patterson to do her work for her when she went to America to make a speech was Jeannie all over.

The worst part for me was probably the fact that I was en route to the Middle East on the Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program and could not go to her memorial service. As I sat in the RHIB in the middle of the Persian Gulf one day when it broke down and we waited for the ship to come back and get us, I thought, ‘Jeannie would have loved to be here.’ I will always remember her for just how much she was prepared to help us all. Most of it has been said, so I will not go on. I did not know her other staff as well, but Robyn and Bronte really protected her to the end. They were just so good. To Robbie and Jeremy, and Jeannie’s extended family: we are all here for you.

Senator JOYCE (Queensland) (5.56 pm)—Obviously I endorse the comments of the others, but I feel that I should speak on this condolence motion as an apology from an errant senator who will tragically not be able to give this apology in person. I hope this is not taken as presumptuous, but I feel that at times I may have been Jeannie’s biggest problem, obviously prior to a malady that sadly took her from us.

In St George, long before entering the Senate, I had my first meeting with Jeannie when I was an observer at a rural and regional affairs committee meeting into water. Slightly exasperated, she was trying to control a gentleman named Senator Heffernan—a job that I believe she never completed. On arrival in the Senate I remember being summoned, with Senator Nash, to a first meeting with the whip. Senator Nash was basically running to the meeting for fear of being late. With my usual recalcitrance, I said: ‘She’ll be right. She can wait.’ Senator Nash said
that I would learn from unfortunate experience in the future that the smart money was on not keeping Jeannie waiting. Much later, after entering the Senate, I remember the meeting between Senator Heffernan, Jeannie, me and Helen Georgopoulos about the development of remote and depressed regional areas. I see Senator Heffernan’s work in this area as a testament to Jeannie and a benevolence from her to the people of remote and regional Australia and Australia itself.

We have all heard about the life and anecdotes of Jeannie. I would like to add to those and note my respect for her immense courage, which I have only just realised. She did not go on with the terrible distraction that her health would have been; she got on with her job. I wonder whether we will meet our end with that bravery. She was ferociously to the point. One anecdote I remember is when I wanted to raise a dissenting point from here. Jeannie spotted me and came to visit. Senator Murray, who was presiding in the chair, asked me if I wanted the call. Jeannie answered for me in the negative, which was very kind of her. She then explained to me, in a very Jeannie way, how she thought my approach may be inappropriate. Jeannie was not very subtle in how she approached my wandering spirit on some issues. I remember her screaming at me, ‘You’re outrageous!’ when I found issues on which I disagreed with my own side and voted accordingly. Later we had a quiet chat: ‘Barnaby, you must understand. It is give and take in this job and you owe it to your colleagues.’ You could guess the rest of the conversation. That was her job and I understood it. She never showed me that she took it personally. I always wanted to tell Jeannie about the time, in her absence, when three government senators missed a division on native title. That was saved only by the fact that three non-government senators had missed it as well. Maybe we all relaxed a little bit too much in her absence. It would be fair to say that there would have been fur and feathers all around this chamber had she been here.

Obviously, I disagreed with Jeannie’s views on RU486 and embryonic stem cell research, but she never carried that as a point in her whip’s dealings with me.

Jeannie had that spark that beautiful, full women have and never lose—that sparkle in the eye of a fellow free spirit, but one who has the self-discipline to avoid legislative pandemonium.

I keep Jeannie in my prayers and I hope others do too. I think her spirit will be in the corridors and dwell somewhere up the end of this chamber. I keep thinking I am going to see her looking out from her office or glaring across the chamber or meeting us prior to prayers to give us the drill for the day. In the next life, I hope we do meet again and I can continue trying to explain myself to her. She will haunt me, I suppose, and I know that she will be looking down with those impeccable teeth and sternly warning me at some stage in the future. Jeannie, I felt, softened at the end, and her humanity was more apparent. In the last meeting we had, she was earnestly explaining to me that as a National I could not nominate myself for trips overseas allocated to Liberals. She must have wondered what the hell she had in her office. But she did it with quiet grace and humour.

To Robbie, Jeremy and Pam: your family, via Jeannie, has made a great contribution to your nation and you should be proud of that. I also acknowledge the great tragedy of the loss of your father, Bob, as well. Robyn and Bronte were also devastated, and my thoughts and prayers go out to you all.

A final parting thought, as a salutary message: I tried today to google Jeannie’s maiden speech; it is no longer there. Things have changed. Things have moved on. The page cannot be displayed. Maybe that is a
message for all of us—to remember that our human nature, in all of us in here, is far more spectacular than any of our tribal peripheries.

Senator WORTLEY (South Australia) (6.01 pm)—I rise to associate myself with the comments that have been made in the condolence motion before us today. Authentic, decent, straightforward, dynamic, irressible, intelligent, effervescent, energetic, wise, dignified and vivacious are just some of the words that have been used to describe Senator Jeannie Ferris. It is fitting that such thought has gone into the many words chosen to describe her, as it is words that built Jeannie’s pathway to politics—with her appointment as a journalist on the Rotorua Daily Post in New Zealand.

Jeannie moved from New Zealand to Australia in 1963 and began work at the Canberra Times in 1967, followed by a stint with the ABC. She worked at the Yass Post as editor and, as Senator Minchin mentioned earlier, claimed the title of first female newspaper editor in Australia in 165 years. Her ties with her early career as a journalist remained with her. Only last year, while battling cancer and attending to her parliamentary duties, Jeannie’s sense of duty and commitment exceeded the expected boundaries when she accepted an invitation to be a judge for the South Australian Media Awards—a task which she carried out with an expert eye and dedication. Somehow, even with everything else happening in her life, in true journalistic form she managed to meet the deadline.

Jeannie was a passionate advocate on issues affecting women. In her support for the swift implementation of vaccinations against cervical cancer, her position on IVF and RU486 and her support for stem cell research she was unwavering. Jeannie’s work with the Senate Community Affairs References Committee, in particular her role in the inquiry into gynaecological cancers, was certainly a significant achievement in her parliamentary career. It says something of the woman Jeannie was that, following the diagnosis of her cancer, she not only helped set up a parliamentary inquiry into gynaecological cancers but then sat through the many gruelling hours of evidence from others with cancer, from their doctors and from their families. The report, Breaking the silence: a national voice for gynaecological cancers, and the implementation of its recommendations will impact significantly on the lives of thousands of families. The work she did, along with that of the other senators on the committee, deserves the recognition afforded it today.

Jeannie was a passionate advocate for the cervical cancer vaccine Gardasil being made available to young women in Australia. It did not go unnoticed that she passed away on the eve of the first vaccination taking place in her state of South Australia. Jeannie pushed hard for this vaccination against cervical cancer to be fast-tracked so that today’s generation and future generations of young women would not have to experience the suffering that thousands of other women and their families have endured. Only weeks before her death, Jeannie put her energy towards the inquiry’s key recommendation that a national centre for gynaecological cancers be established.

Senator Jeannie Ferris was one of eight female South Australian senators who made history when, in the 41st parliament of Australia, South Australia became the first state to have a majority of women representing it in one parliament—in the Senate. Her contribution was significant, and her contribution in the parliament and particularly as an advocate for women’s health will benefit future generations of women and their families. She achieved what many of us set out to do. Jeannie did make a difference. My con-
dolences to her colleagues, her staff, her boys and the other members of her family for their loss.

Senator MURRAY (Western Australia) (6.06 pm)—I will speak briefly because I do not wish to repeat the many wonderful statements made about Senator Ferris around the chamber. Moments like these are enormously encouraging for all senators, because the regard, the depth of feeling and the understanding senators have for each other is exhibited on these occasions. I think Jeannie Ferris would be proud to hear the words being spoken here, as they say much about the people who are expressing them as well as about Jeannie herself. I merely wanted to say that I liked and respected Jeannie Ferris, and Jeannie Ferris liked and respected me. We got on well. Our relationship was warm at the personal level and extremely productive at the professional level. To the government I say: you should be proud that you had such a person in your ranks.

Senator BERNARDI (South Australia) (6.07 pm)—It is with a heavy heart that today I add my condolences and those of my wife, Sinead, and our two sons. But in doing so I wish to extend a sense of comfort, hope and peace to all of those who share in our loss here in Canberra, in South Australia and, indeed, all around the world.

It was on budget day last year that my very good friend Jeannie Ferris helped to lead me into the chamber. Sadly, she is no longer in this place, but her legacy is with us in so many ways, as is evidenced by the tributes on her life today. Jeannie fulfilled many roles, not just in her life as a politician but also as a journalist, mother and strong advocate for rural and regional Australia. She also filled many roles in my life and the lives of others. It is that which I would like to reflect on briefly today.

Jeannie was simply a great friend. She was fiercely loyal and always straight. She loved being around other people. No matter how busy she was, Jeannie always had time for her friends. She was a very generous person. She was generous not in the fact that she gave gifts all of the time; she was generous in so many different ways. When Sinead’s and my sons were born, Jeannie was always the first to call in. She would bring a pair of pants with her—the ‘first’ pants. They were always denim. Her catchcry was: ‘The first jeans from Jeannie.’ It stayed with us for all of that time. Sinead and I were reflecting on it the other day as we looked at the pants that Jeannie had given us and that we had shared with our friends and siblings—a lasting legacy and one of a number of legacies that she has left.

Jeannie’s generosity was most evident, I thought, and extended through her willingness to share her life with others. She was liberal with her advice. For more than a decade she shared her wisdom with me willingly. She was one of the people responsible for me being in this place today. There may be some of you who think that is one of her worst legacies, but there are some who appreciate it very much. For many years we worked very closely together, never more so than in the 11 months we shared as senators. Her encouragement, guidance and famous stern warnings will all be sadly missed.

Jeannie Ferris was much more than a political mentor for me. She was always interested in my family and their welfare as only a true friend ever can be. When Jeannie was hospitalised for the last time I went to see her in hospital. It was her birthday. I had greetings and gifts from some of her many friends around Australia. Whilst she was obviously in some discomfort, her eyes sparkled as we discussed what was going on in the Senate, in the parliament, in South Australia and in the lives of my family and hers. She was op-
timistic about the future. I do not really think she had a choice in that, for optimism was really a part of her nature. That day was the very last day that I got to see my friend. I remember very clearly her smile and the final confidences that she shared with me—of course, under the promise that I would never ever tell any other person. That was simply her way.

Only in the weeks since her passing have I come to realise just how often we used to speak together. There were phone calls every single day discussing all manner of subjects—mostly politics, because Jeannie loved the fact that politics is about helping people and it could change people’s lives. Jeannie really did change people’s lives for the better. We have heard that in all of our discussions today. Shortly after Jeannie’s passing I was talking on my mobile phone, with my youngest son, Harvey, in the room. My wife, Sinead, came in and said to Harvey, ‘Who is Daddy on the phone to?’ ‘Jeannie Ferris,’ he replied—‘Daddy is on the phone to Jeannie,’ Sinead looked a bit bemused by this and she raised an eyebrow and looked at me. Harvey then added: ‘Oh, no, he is not. Jeannie Ferris has now gone to heaven.’

The President (6.12 pm)—I would like to add a few of my own words to the tributes that have been paid to our late friend Jeannie Ferris today. As a former whip I feel a special affinity to Jeannie and all of those other whips who occupy that position. I was thinking only yesterday that I will not be able to sit here and say, ‘I appoint Senator Ferris as teller for the ayes,’ or the noes or whatever side of the chamber it may be.

A lot has been said about Jeannie today. She was the mother hen of her side of the chamber. She looked after all of her ‘children’, I suppose you would call them. But she had a special worry about Senator Ferguson’s health. She always used to say to him on Thursday mornings: ‘You two boys played up last night. I left the mummy light on and it was still on when I went to bed. You were home late.’ I think that Senator Minchin knows what I am talking about.

Mention has been made today of Jeannie’s significant contribution in the field of women’s health—I think that is most significant—and also on rural matters. I particularly mark her service on the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport, which has been spoken about. She always stood up to ensure that the interests of those Australians who live in country areas were both heard and protected.

One of the things about a sudden death like Jeannie’s is that you do not have the opportunity to say goodbye. But I think the wonderful tributes that were made at the parliamentary service of thanksgiving are a testament to Jeannie’s contribution to Australia. I would particularly single out, as many have here today, the loving and courageous words from Robbie Ferris on behalf of the family. Above all, of course, apart from her public service, Jeannie will be missed as a loving and compassionate mother. My wife, Jill, and I join with everybody else in extending our condolences to her family and friends.

On the morning that Jeannie passed away I received the following letter from His Excellency the Governor-General which he asked me to read to the Senate:

Dear Mr President

I should be grateful if you would convey to the Senate my deep sympathies following the passing of Senator Jeannie Ferris recently.

Senator Ferris has made a significant contribution to the public life in Australia and especially during her time as a Senator for South Australia and as Government Whip since August 2002. I know that she fought valiantly against the insidious cancer that eventually took her life.

My wife, Marlena, joins me and so many Australians in offering our sincere condolences to
Senator Ferris’s family and friends. She will be greatly missed.
Yours sincerely
Michael Jeffery

Question agreed to, honourable senators standing in their places.

Senator MINCHIN (South Australia—Leader of the Government in the Senate) (6.15 pm)—I move:

That, as a mark of respect to the memory of the late Senator Jeannie Ferris, the Senate do now adjourn.

Question agreed to.

Senate adjourned at 6.16 pm
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions were circulated:

Post-Budget Function
(Question No. 1886)

Senator Milne asked the Minister for Finance and Administration, upon notice, on 6 June 2006:

Did the Minister host a post-budget function after the release of the 2006-2007 Commonwealth Budget on 9 May 2006; if so: (a) where was the function held; (b) who was invited to the function; (c) who attended the function; (d) what was the cost of hosting the function; (e) was the cost charged to the Commonwealth; if not, to whom was it charged; (f) was a ticket price charged; if so, what was the ticket price; (g) if no ticket price was charged, was a donation requested; (h) how much revenue was collected by way of tickets charged or donations received; and (i) to whom was the revenue paid.

Senator Minchin—The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:

Yes, a drinks function was held on the evening of 9 May 2006.

(a) Suite MG68, Parliament House.
(b) Approximately 130 people, including parliamentarians, business people and senior public servants.
(c) See (b) above.
(d) $2184.69 (GST inc.)
(e) Yes.
(f) No.
(g) No.
(h) Not applicable.
(i) Not applicable.

Post-Budget Function
(Question No. 1897)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, upon notice, on 6 June 2006:

Did the Minister host a post-budget function after the release of the 2006-2007 Commonwealth Budget on 9 May 2006; if so:

(a) where was the function held;
(b) who was invited to the function;
(c) who attended the function;
(d) what was the cost of hosting the function;
(e) was the cost charged to the Commonwealth; if not, to whom was it charged;
(f) was a ticket price charged; if so, what was the ticket price;
(g) if no ticket price was charged, was a donation requested;
(h) how much revenue was collected by way of tickets charged or donations received; and
(i) to whom was the revenue paid.
Senator Scullion—The Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question: The Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs hosted a private function on 9 May 2006 at no cost to the Commonwealth.

Post-Budget Function
(Question No. 1898)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Education, Science and Training, upon notice, on 6 June 2006: Did the Minister host a post-budget function after the release of the 2006-2007 Commonwealth Budget on 9 May 2006; if so: (a) where was the function held; (b) who was invited to the function; (c) who attended the function; (d) what was the cost of hosting the function; (e) was the cost charged to the Commonwealth; if not, to whom was it charged; (f) was a ticket price charged; if so, what was the ticket price; (g) if no ticket price was charged, was a donation requested; (h) how much revenue was collected by way of tickets charged or donations received; and (i) to whom was the revenue paid.

Senator Brandis—The Minister for Education, Science and Training has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question: Yes (a) The function was held in the Minister’s Office, Parliament House (b) Approximately 124 people, including senior public servants, parliamentarians, higher education providers, representatives from education associations and business people. (c) Approximately 67 people, including senior public servants, parliamentarians, higher education providers, representatives from education associations and business people. (d) $2,889 (e) Yes (f) No (g) No (h) Nil (i) Not applicable

Post-Budget Function
(Question No. 1903)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Vocational and Technical Education, upon notice, on 6 June 2006: Did the Minister host a post-budget function after the release of the 2006-2007 Commonwealth Budget on 9 May 2006; if so: (a) where was the function held;
(b) who was invited to the function;
(c) who attended the function;
(d) what was the cost of hosting the function;
(e) was the cost charged to the Commonwealth; if not, to whom was it charged;
(f) was a ticket price charged; if so, what was the ticket price;
(g) if no ticket price was charged, was a donation requested;
(h) how much revenue was collected by way of tickets charged or donations received; and
(i) to whom was the revenue paid.

Senator Brandis—The Minister for Vocational and Further Education has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
The previous Minister hosted no functions.

Post-Budget Function
(Question No. 1909)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Special Minister of State, upon notice, on 6 June 2006:
Did the Minister host a post-budget function after the release of the 2006-2007 Commonwealth Budget on 9 May 2006; if so: (a) where was the function held; (b) who was invited to the function; (c) who attended the function; (d) what was the cost of hosting the function; (e) was the cost charged to the Commonwealth; if not, to whom was it charged; (f) was a ticket price charged; if so, what was the ticket price; (g) if no ticket price was charged, was a donation requested; (h) how much revenue was collected by way of tickets charged or donations received; and (i) to whom was the revenue paid.

Senator Minchin—The Special Minister of State has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
(1) No. (a) to (i) Not applicable.

Finance and Administration: Monetary Compensation
(Question No. 1989)

Senator O’Brien asked the Minister for Finance and Administration, upon notice, on 8 June 2006:
What is the quantum of payments made as settlements to claims for monetary compensation by the departments and agencies for which the Minister is responsible that are consistent with Legal Services Directions issued under section 55ZF of the Judiciary Act 1903, by financial year, since the first Legal Services Directions were issued.

Senator Minchin—The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:

Department of Finance and Administration
(1) Comcover, the Commonwealth’s self managed fund for insurable risks, holds some of the information necessary to respond accurately to the question. However, it is not possible without a significant diversion of resources, to distinguish between amounts of compensation paid on behalf of agencies and the reimbursement of costs incurred by claimants.
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ComSuper
(1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme</th>
<th>Public Sector Superannuation Scheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>5 claims $24,664 lump sum &amp; $7,000 pension p.a.</td>
<td>9 claims $89,887 lump sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>5 claims $98,969 lump sum</td>
<td>1 claim $4,081 lump sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>1 claim $4,400 pension p.a.</td>
<td>3 claims $35,903 lump sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>2 claims $300 lump sum &amp; $3,800 pension p.a.</td>
<td>2 claims $100,600 lump sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>2 claims $61,000 lump sum</td>
<td>2 claims $23,498 lump sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>3 claims $59,000 lump sum</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>11 claims $314,317 lump sum</td>
<td>8 claims $61,435 lump sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29 claims $558,250 lump sum</td>
<td>25 claims $315,404 lump sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$15,200 pension p.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian Electoral Commission, Australian Reward Investment Alliance, Commonwealth Grants Commission and Future Fund Management Agency
(1) Nil

Prime Minister: Visit to the United States of America, Canada and Ireland
(Question No. 2068)

Senator O’Brien asked the Minister representing the Prime Minister, upon notice, on 16 June 2006:
Can details be provided of the Prime Minister’s visit to the United States of America, Canada and Ireland in May 2006 including: (a) the date of departure from Australia; (b) a detailed itinerary including all official meetings; (c) details of departmental officers, including name and role, who accompanied the Prime Minister; (d) details of personal staff, including name and role, who accompanied the Prime Minister; (e) details of family members who accompanied the Prime Minister; (f) details of other persons, including name and role, who accompanied the Prime Minister; and (g) the date of return to Australia.

Senator Minchin—The Prime Minister has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
(a) to (g) see attachments A and B.

ATTACHMENT A

VISIT BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND MRS HOWARD
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, CANADA AND IRELAND
FRIDAY 12 TO THURSDAY 25 MAY 2006

ITINERARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRIDAY 12 MAY 2006</td>
<td>Leave Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00 am</td>
<td>Arrive Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.50 pm</td>
<td>Private lunch given by Vice-President and Mrs Cheney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATURDAY 13 MAY 2006</td>
<td>Tree-Planting Ceremony at Ambassador’s Residence (with President and Mrs Bush)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.10 am</td>
<td>Private dinner hosted by the Ambassador (with President Bush and family)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAY 15 MAY 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00 am</td>
<td>Meeting with the Honourable Ben Bernanke, Federal Reserve Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.45 am</td>
<td>Meeting with the Honourable Samuel W Bodman, Secretary of Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30 am</td>
<td>Meeting with the Honourable Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 noon</td>
<td>Official luncheon hosted by the Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00 pm</td>
<td>Meeting with the Honourable Donald H Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00 pm</td>
<td>Reception and investiture of Mrs Harriet Mayor Fulbright into the Order of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.30 pm</td>
<td>Private dinner with senior commentators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY 16 MAY 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00 am</td>
<td>Arrival Ceremony White House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00 am</td>
<td>Restricted Meeting with President Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.35 am</td>
<td>Expanded Meeting (President Bush and Cabinet Members)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.45 am</td>
<td>Joint Press Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.30 pm</td>
<td>Meeting with leadership of the US House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.15 pm</td>
<td>Meeting with leadership of the US Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15 pm</td>
<td>B’nai B’rith International Reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.00 pm</td>
<td>Official Dinner given by the President and Mrs Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WEDNESDAY 17 MAY 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.30 am</td>
<td>IDU Executive Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.50 am</td>
<td>Leave Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.35 pm</td>
<td>Arrive Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30 pm</td>
<td>Visit to Chicago Mercantile Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.15 pm</td>
<td>Meeting with Mr W James McNerney Jr, Chairman, President and CEO, Boeing Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.30 pm</td>
<td>VIP Reception hosted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.00 pm</td>
<td>Dinner and Address hosted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THURSDAY 18 MAY 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00 am</td>
<td>Leave Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.50 pm</td>
<td>Arrive Ottawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.45 pm</td>
<td>Welcoming Ceremony in Rotunda Parliament Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00 pm</td>
<td>Address to Joint Session of Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.05 pm</td>
<td>Meeting with the Hon Noël A Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.25 pm</td>
<td>Meeting with the Honourable Peter Milliken, Speaker of the House of Commons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.45 pm</td>
<td>Dinner given by the Rt Hon Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada and Mrs Laureen Harper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRIDAY 19 MAY 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.45 am</td>
<td>Wreath laying ceremony at Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, National War Memorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00 am</td>
<td>Meeting with the Prime Minister of Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.20 am</td>
<td>Joint press conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30 pm</td>
<td>Business Roundtable and luncheon given by Mr Thomas d’Aquino, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Council of Chief Executives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00 pm</td>
<td>Afternoon tea with Canadian serving and veteran servicemen. Planting of commemorative tree at High Commissioner’s Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SATURDAY 20 MAY 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00 am</td>
<td>Leave Ottawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.45 pm</td>
<td>Arrive Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY 21 MAY 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No official engagements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| SUNDAY 21 MAY 2006 |
| No official engagements |

| MONDAY 22 MAY 2006 |
| 9.25 am  Wreath-laying ceremony at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham |
| 10.10 am  Meeting and discussion with students from University College Dublin |
| 11.30 am  Civic reception hosted by the Lord Mayor of Dublin |
| 12.40 pm  Meeting with senior Irish business leaders |
| 1.00 pm  Business luncheon hosted by the Chamber of Commerce and the Irish Business and Employee Confederation |
| 3.00 pm  Meeting with Mr Bertie Ahern TD, Taoiseach |
| 4.00 pm  Joint Press Conference |
| 4.30 pm  Meeting with Mr Dermot Ahern TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs |
| 7.30 pm  Official dinner hosted by the Taoiseach |

| TUESDAY 23 MAY 2006 |
| 9.45 am  Meeting with editorial board of Independent News and Media PLC |
| 11.00 am  Call on President McAleese |
| 11.45 am  Call by Mr Edna Kenny TD, Leader of Fine Gael |
| 12.10 pm  Call by Mr Pat Rabitte TD, Leader of the Labour Party |
| 12.30 pm  Parliamentary luncheon hosted by the Speaker |
| 2.10 pm  View Book of Kells at Trinity College |
| 5.00 pm  Address to the Dail |
| 9.00 pm  Leave Dublin |

| THURSDAY 25 MAY 2006 |
| 6.30 am  Arrive Canberra |

**ATTACHMENT B**

**VISIT BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND MRS HOWARD**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, CANADA AND IRELAND**

**FRIDAY 12 TO THURSDAY 25 MAY 2006**

**ACCOMPANYING PARTY**

The Honourable John Howard MP

*Prime Minister*

Mrs Janette Howard

*Prime Minister’s Office*

Mr Tony Nutt

*Principal Private Secretary*

Mr Nick Warner

*Senior Adviser (International)*

Mr Tony O’Leary

*Press Secretary*

Ms Suzanne Kasprzak

*Private Secretary to the Prime Minister*

Ms Susan Bruce

*Adviser (Programme and Event Management)*

†Ms Jodie Doodt

*Assistant Adviser (Programme and Event Management)*

---

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**
*Ms Marnie Gaffney
Assistant Adviser (Programme and Event Management)
Ms Danielle Kerr
Personal Secretary
Mrs Julie Roberts
Personal Secretary
Ms Nicole Fuller-Breen
Assistant Media Adviser
Æ In advance, Washington, Ottawa
† In advance, Dublin
*In advance Chicago, Ottawa

Officials

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Æ Dr Peter Shergold AM
Secretary
Mr Hugh Borrowman
First Assistant Secretary
International Division
Æ Mrs Jan Fuhrman
Visit Co-ordinator
Ceremonial and Hospitality Branch
† Ms Alex Cullum
Visit Co-ordinator
Ceremonial and Hospitality Branch
Mr Michael Jones
Official Photographer

AUSPIC

Medical Officer
Dr Graeme Killer AO

Australian Federal Police Officers
8 Officers
Royal Australian Air Force
Squadron Leader Tony Ormrod
Staff Officer VIP Operations
Flight Lieutenant David Jackson
Assistant Staff Officer VIP Operations
Æ Travelled only Washington, Chicago, Ottawa
Æ In advance Washington, Chicago, Ottawa
† In advance, Dublin
Employee Assistance Program

(Question No. 2183)

Senator O’Brien asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, upon notice, on 14 July 2006:

(1) With reference to the Employee Assistance Program for the period 30 June 2003 to 30 June 2006, by portfolio agency, by month: (a) how many calls were logged; and (b) what was this as a percentage of Full Time Equivalents by agency.

(2) What was the cost of the program for each portfolio agency in the 2004, 2005 and 2006 financial years.

Senator Johnston—The Minister for Transport and Regional Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Calls to the Employee Assistance Program for the period 30 June 2003 to 30 June 2006, by portfolio agency, are provided on a quarterly basis, consistent with the quarterly reports provided by the Employee Assistance Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003-04</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>2004-05</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>2005-06</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Transport and Regional Services</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Calls Logged as a percentage of FTE</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Maritime Safety Authority</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Calls Logged as a percentage of FTE</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Aviation Safety Authority</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Calls Logged as a percentage of FTE</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Capital Authority</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Calls Logged as a percentage of FTE</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(2) The cost of the Employee Assistance Program in each portfolio agency in the 2004, 2005 and 2006 financial years is shown in the table below:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>2003-04</th>
<th>2004-05</th>
<th>2005-06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Transport and Regional Services</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airservices Australia</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>$236,833</td>
<td>$266,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Maritime Safety Authority</td>
<td>$8,360</td>
<td>$8,360</td>
<td>$8,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Aviation Safety Authority</td>
<td>$29,881</td>
<td>$31,104</td>
<td>$28,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Capital Authority</td>
<td>$4,377</td>
<td>$2,362</td>
<td>$3,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Airservices Australia’s Employee Assistance Program data is not available.

Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport
(Question No. 2326)

Senator O’Brien asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, upon notice, on 9 August 2006:

For each of the financial years 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06:

(1) How many flight movements occurred at Sydney Airport on a monthly basis.

(2) Have there been any changes to flight paths; if so: (a) on what dates did these changes occur; (b) have these changes been maintained; and (c) what, if any, consultations were undertaken by the Department with residents affected by the change in flight path.

(3) How many noise complaints have been received by the Department or any portfolio agency on a monthly basis.

Senator Johnston—The Minister for Transport and Regional Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Refer table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>25481</td>
<td>21166</td>
<td>21034</td>
<td>23111</td>
<td>23426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>25826</td>
<td>20918</td>
<td>21030</td>
<td>23389</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>20326</td>
<td>20419</td>
<td>21459</td>
<td>23031</td>
<td>23043</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>20935</td>
<td>21881</td>
<td>22479</td>
<td>23340</td>
<td>23482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>20512</td>
<td>20906</td>
<td>21678</td>
<td>22680</td>
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<td>258526</td>
<td>272172</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* movement numbers exclude helicopter operations

(2) Yes.

(a) Permanent changes were made to flight paths in July 2001 and mid-2003. Whilst technically not a flight path change, aircraft flew a different procedure for the period 21 February 2006 to 17 March 2006 when the Instrument Landing System (ILS) was unavailable due to ILS works.

(b) Both permanent changes have been maintained.
(c) All changes were administered through the Sydney Airport Community Forum (SACF) and Implementation Monitoring Committee (IMC) consultative process. The temporary change was also notified in Sydney newspapers.

(3) The number of noise complaints received directly by the Department for the period 2005-06 was eight, in 2004-05 there were ten. Data for earlier years is not readily available.

Refer to the table below for monthly Airservices Australia noise complaint figures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>July</td>
<td>2037</td>
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<td>Sept</td>
<td>2021</td>
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<td>Oct</td>
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<td>Dec</td>
<td>740</td>
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<td>Jan</td>
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<td>Feb</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>319</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>574</td>
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<td>363</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>565</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>470</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>690</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>11954</td>
<td>4556</td>
<td>4044</td>
<td>4213</td>
<td>6080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** noise complaints taken by Airservices Australia Noise Enquiry Unit

National Airspace System

(Question No. 2395)

Senator O’Brien asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, upon notice, on 16 August 2006:

With reference to the media release by the former Minister for Transport and Regional Services (Mr Anderson) on 20 February 2004, which states that the implementation of the National Airspace System (NAS) ‘involves 50 steps over several years’ and that as at that date, 13 steps had been introduced: Can an outline be provided of the details of each of the 50 steps involved in the implementation of NAS, including: (a) the date of introduction of each of the 13 steps to 20 February 2004; (b) the date of the introduction of each of the steps since 20 February 2004; and (c) the timetable for the introduction of all future steps.

Senator Johnston—The Minister for Transport and Regional Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

In May 2002, the former Minister for Transport and Regional Services, the Hon John Anderson MP, announced that the Australian Government had accepted the recommendations of a panel of industry leaders, the Aviation Reform Group (ARG), that the National Airspace System (NAS) be adopted as the model for airspace reform.

The Government agreed that the ARG establish an implementation group, the National Airspace System Implementation Group (NAS IG), to assist it in developing the NAS implementation process. The NAS IG determined that the implementation process would consist of 50 elements or ‘Characteristics’.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Timetable for rollout of NAS Stages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAS Stage</th>
<th>Date implemented</th>
<th>NAS Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAS Stage 1</td>
<td>28 November 2002</td>
<td>1 and 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS Stage 1a</td>
<td>20 March 2003</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS Stage 2a</td>
<td>10 July 2003</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS Stage 2b</td>
<td>27 November 2003</td>
<td>2, 8, 10, 20, 46, 47 and 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS Stage 2b</td>
<td>25 November 2003</td>
<td>4 (partly reversed) and 22 reversed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional NAS Stage brought forward from NAS Stage 3c</td>
<td>June 2005</td>
<td>13 and 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS Stage 2c</td>
<td>24 November 2005</td>
<td>6 and 29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NAS characteristics implemented to date include:

- Large volumes of uncontrolled airspace were upgraded to become controlled airspace.
- Large volumes of en route Class C airspace were designated as Class E;
- In areas with radar coverage, the base of Class A airspace was lowered to 18,000FT;
- Changes that have had the effect of reducing unnecessary radio chatter and providing increased flexibility for Instrument Flight Rules flights (IFR) in Class E airspace;
- Air Traffic Control (ATC) procedures in Class D airspace were standardised to follow International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) rules;
- Mandatory transponder carriage was expanded to include all aircraft operating in all classes of airspace at and above 10,000FT; and
- A uniform set of operating procedures was introduced at all non-towered aerodromes.

Of the characteristics that now make up the NAS:

- 17 have been implemented Stages 1 and 1(a), Stages 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c) and two additional NAS characteristics brought forward from NAS Stage 3c.
- Six form NAS Stage 3(a) and nine form NAS Stages 3(b) and 3(c). The timetable for the introduction of future NAS characteristics is being considered in light of the Australian Government’s announcement on 14 September 2006 on future airspace reform in Australia.
- Nine form NAS Stage 4 that will not be implemented until traffic mix and density reaches certain levels, rather than according to a set schedule.

As follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAS Stage</th>
<th>NAS Characteristic</th>
<th>Characteristic description</th>
<th>Date of Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Altimeter</td>
<td>An altimeter setting of a station along the route within 100NM of the aircraft should be used. Where there is no station within 100NM, the Area QNH (Altimeter sub-scale setting used to obtain airfield elevation) will be used.</td>
<td>28 Nov 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS Stage</td>
<td>NAS Characteristic</td>
<td>Characteristic description</td>
<td>Date of Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>2 Transponder carriage requirements</td>
<td>All aircraft must be fitted with a transponder for operations in Class A, B and C airspace and when operating in any class of airspace at or above 10,000FT. All aircraft, except aircraft operating Visual Flight Rules which are not fitted with an engine driven electrical system capable of continuously powering a transponder must be fitted with a transponder when operating in Class E airspace. Exemptions to this requirement are found in Aviation Information Publication General (AIP GEN) 1.5- 8 Section 6.</td>
<td>27 Nov 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 GPS standard</td>
<td>A Global Positioning System (GPS) longitudinal separation standard will be established.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>41 Charting simplification</td>
<td>Charting will be simplified by removing unnecessary information. For example, removal of Flight Information Area (FIA) boundaries, Restricted Areas on En Route Charts (ERC) (High) and Designated Remote Areas.</td>
<td>27 Nov 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 US transponder requirements</td>
<td>The US requirement for transponder carriage will be established.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
<td>6 Encourage UNICOM</td>
<td>Operators of Regular Public Transport (RPT) services will be encouraged to arrange for UNICOM services to be provided when RPT services operate to non-towered aerodromes. (UNICOM (Universal Communications) are a non-Air Traffic Services communications service provided on the Common Traffic Advisory Frequency to provide information about a non-towered aerodrome).</td>
<td>24 Nov 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>7 Visual Flight Rules implied clearance into Class D airspace</td>
<td>Procedures for Visual Flight Rules aircraft will follow the US model in respect of clearances where establishment of communication with Air Traffic Control constitutes a clearance.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>8 Class A boundaries</td>
<td>Class A airspace will be established with a base of 18,000FT where required and generally consistent with radar coverage. In all other airspace, Class A airspace will have a lower limit of 24,500FT. Over Australia’s territorial limits, Class A airspace will have an upper limit of 60,000FT, outside Australian territorial limits the upper limit will be 46,000FT.</td>
<td>27 Nov 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9 Class B introduced</td>
<td>Class B airspace may be established at Australia’s busiest airports.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS Stage</td>
<td>NAS Characteristic</td>
<td>Characteristic description</td>
<td>Date of Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>10 En-route Class C and OCA Class C replaced</td>
<td>En-route Class C and Obstacle Clearance Altitude (OCA) Class C will be removed.</td>
<td>27 Nov 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Already available prior to NAS system 11 Class C terminal airspace</td>
<td>Class C airspace will exist in terminal areas associated with Cairns, Brisbane, Coolangatta, Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. Class C procedures will also apply to the joint Civil and Military user airfields, Darwin, Townsville and Williamtown.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Already available prior to NAS system 12 Class C Control Zones (all or segments) allocated to control towers</td>
<td>Class C Control Zones (all or segments) will be allocated to control towers to visually manage low level Visual Flight Rules aircraft arriving into or departing the zone.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>Stage brought forward from NAS 13 An on-request radar flight following service for Visual Flight Rules aircraft</td>
<td>An on-request radar flight following service for Visual Flight Rules aircraft will be available on a sector specific and workload permitting basis.</td>
<td>June 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14 Class D dimensions</td>
<td>Class C airspace will consist of a 5NM radius core surface area that extends from the surface up to 4,000FT above the airport elevation, and a 10 NM radius step that extends from 1,200FT to 4,000FT above the airport elevation.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>See Note 4 154 Class C Terminal Airspace</td>
<td>Class C terminal airspace will have an upper limit consistent with the North American model.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>16 US model Class D airspace will exist at non-radar towers</td>
<td>US model Class D airspace will exist at non-radar controlled Terminal Control Areas where a tower service is provided.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>17 General Aviation Aerodrome Procedures aerodromes redesignated as Class D</td>
<td>Existing General Aviation Aerodrome Procedures aerodromes will be redesignated Class D aerodromes.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18 Class D dimensions</td>
<td>The lateral and vertical dimensions of Class D airspace will be individually tailored. Generally the Control Zone will extend to 2,500FT above ground level.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAS Stage</td>
<td>NAS Characteristic</td>
<td>Characteristic description</td>
<td>Date of Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>19 Instrument Flight Rules pick-up</td>
<td>Visual Meteorological Conditions operations in Class E airspace for Instrument Flight Rules aircraft while awaiting an airways clearance. (This enables Instrument Flight Rules flights to climb through Class E airspace under Visual Flight Rules while remaining in Visual Meteorological Conditions while waiting for an airways clearance.)</td>
<td>20 March 2003 Note: 17 August 2004 – The procedures associated with Characteristic 19 and 21 are not permitted above 18,000FT. 27 Nov 2003 Two Class E corridors between 12,500FT and 18,000FT between Sydney and Dubbo and between Melbourne and Mildura re-introduced. Class E airspace over Bass Strait and Tasmania lowered to 12,500FT; this was previously introduced with a base of 14,500FT. The Class E base outside radar coverage remains at 18,000FT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>20 Interim Class E base 8500FT radar and FL180 non-radar</td>
<td>Class E airspace will be established at a base of 8,500FT and generally associated with radar coverage. In less dense airspace the base will be 14,500FT within Australian territorial limits.</td>
<td>10 July 2003 Note: 17 August 2004 – The procedures associated with Characteristic 19 and 21 are not permitted above 18,000FT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>21 Instrument Flight Rules operations in Class E</td>
<td>Instrument Flight Rules operations in Class E Airspace procedures introduced. This incorporates two individual procedures: Visual Flight Rules climb or descent (allows Instrument Flight Rules flights after ATC clearance, to conduct a Visual Flight Rules climb and descent in Visual Meteorological Conditions due to conflicting traffic), and Visual Flight Rules-on-top (allows pilots to fly above or below the flight planned level to avoid hazardous weather phenomena).</td>
<td>10 July 2003 Note: 17 August 2004 – The procedures associated with Characteristic 19 and 21 are not permitted above 18,000FT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS Stage</td>
<td>NAS Characteristic</td>
<td>Characteristic description</td>
<td>Date of Introduction</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>225 Class E steps over Class D towers</td>
<td>Beneath the Class E base low-level Class E steps will adjoin the Class D tower airspace</td>
<td>27 Nov 2003 Reversed by Airservices Australia 25 Nov 2004. Class E Control Area (CTA) steps over Class C and D aerodromes replaced with Class C CTA steps to the base of overlying Class C or Class A airspace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>23 Class E terminal airspace</td>
<td>Class E terminal airspace will be introduced at two specific locations.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced June 2005 Brought forward and implemented by Airservices Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>24 Pop-up clearance procedures</td>
<td>Pop-up clearance (en-route Visual Flight Rules upgrading to Instrument Flight Rules) procedures introduced. (This allows Instrument Flight Rules aircraft operating in Class E airspace the flexibility to assume responsibility for their own separation when Visual Meteorological Conditions exists.)</td>
<td>June 2005 Brought forward and implemented by Airservices Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>25 Low level Class E corridors</td>
<td>Introduce low level Class E corridors, where required, above 1,200FT Above Ground Level and above 8,500FT.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>26 E corridors designed to a GPS cross track error dimension</td>
<td>E corridors, where implemented, will be designed to a GPS cross track error dimension (the amount of deviation to the left or right from the true course).</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See Note 3</td>
<td>273 An on-request radar flight following service for Visual Flight Rules aircraft</td>
<td>An on-request radar flight following service for Visual Flight Rules aircraft will be available on a sector specific and workload-permitting basis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28 Multicom</td>
<td>Introduce Common Traffic Advisory Frequency on multicom of 126.7 MHZ at all aerodromes that are not currently CTAFs or Mandatory Broadcast Zones (MBZ). (Multicom: A radio frequency used by pilots for self-announce broadcasts while operating within Class G airspace in the vicinity of a non-towered aerodrome which does not have a designated CTAF).</td>
<td>28 Nov 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS Stage</td>
<td>NAS Characteristic</td>
<td>Characteristic description</td>
<td>Date of Introduction</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
<td>29 Introduction of Common Traffic Advisory Frequency to replace existing MBZ/CTAF/Multicom</td>
<td>US CTAF procedures will apply at all airports in Class G airspace. (This includes MBZs reclassified as CTAFs). Pilots must be trained to apply the following practices: See and avoid, Remaining clear of CTAF approach and departure airspace where practical, Remaining clear of Instrument Flight Rules routes where practical, and Remaining clear of the circuit area unless approaching or departing the aerodrome where practical.</td>
<td>24 Nov 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>30 Directed Traffic Information services withdrawn</td>
<td>Directed traffic information services for en-route Instrument Flight Rules aircraft will be withdrawn.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>312 Frequency allocated for Instrument Flight Rules pilot to pilot communication</td>
<td>A radio frequency will be allocated for Instrument Flight Rules pilot to pilot communication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32 Instrument Flight Rules/Instrument Flight Rules Directed Traffic Information service will be provided in terminal areas with published instrument approach procedures</td>
<td>A directed traffic information service will be provided for Instrument Flight Rules aircraft on other Instrument Flight Rules aircraft in terminal areas, with published instrument approach procedures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33 Services for Instrument Flight Rules aircraft that submit a flight plan with Airservices Australia</td>
<td>Instrument Flight Rules aircraft that submit a flight plan with Airservices Australia will receive the following services where possible: Hazard alerting, SARTIME alerting based on aerodrome arrival and departure, and on request traffic information service in relation to observed radar tracks. (SARTIME is the time nominated by pilots for the initiation of Search and Rescue action if a report has not been received by the nominated time).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>343 An on-request radar flight following service for Visual Flight Rules aircraft</td>
<td>An on-request radar flight following service for Visual Flight Rules aircraft will be available on a sector specific and workload-permitting basis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>35 Removal of Directed Traffic Information - assessment</td>
<td>Aeronautical study methodology will be used to assess the removal of directed traffic service in low density Class G terminal areas.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAS Stage</th>
<th>NAS Characteristic</th>
<th>Characteristic description</th>
<th>Date of Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>36 Change from Danger to Alert areas</td>
<td>Amend Danger Areas to Alert Areas (Alert areas are depicted on aeronautical charts).</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>37 Rationalisation of Military Restricted airspace</td>
<td>Military Restricted airspace will be rationalised.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>38 Warning areas replace Restricted Areas</td>
<td>Warning areas will replace Restricted Areas, which are currently established outside Australia’s territorial limits.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>39 Establishment of Military Operating Areas</td>
<td>Military Operating Areas are established and vertical and lateral limits established.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>40 Military Training Routes</td>
<td>Military Training Routes are established where necessary.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>41 Merging target procedures</td>
<td>Merging target procedures introduced.</td>
<td>27 Nov 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Already available prior to NAS system</td>
<td>42 Target resolution (new separation standard)</td>
<td>Target resolution procedures introduced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>43 Visual separation (requires regulation change to allow above FL.125)</td>
<td>Visual separation will be available in all controlled airspace except Class A Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) (FAA Order 7110.65N Section 2). This extends the existing Australian standard to make it consistent with FAA practice.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>44 Non-radar Class E to base of FL.145</td>
<td>In less dense airspace the base of Class E will be lowered to 14,500FT within Australian territorial limits.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>45 Visual Flight Rules-on-top in all controlled airspace except Class A</td>
<td>Visual Flight Rules-on-top will be available in all controlled airspace except Class A.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>47 ICAO Class D</td>
<td>Introduction of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Class D airspace (Visual Flight Rules aircraft subject to an airways clearance) at existing Class D Control Zones (except General Aviation Aerodrome Procedures aerodromes). This resulted in a more consistent level of service, and improved flexibility for Visual Flight Rules.</td>
<td>27 Nov 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS Stage</td>
<td>NAS Characteristic</td>
<td>Characteristic description</td>
<td>Date of Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>48 Introduction of Controlled Firing Areas</td>
<td>Introduction of Controlled Firing Areas.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>49 Instrument Flight Rules Visual Flight Rules climb/descent in all controlled airspace except Class A</td>
<td>Visual Flight Rules climb and descent will be available in all controlled airspace except Class A.</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>50 Visual Flight Rules implied clearance into Class D airspace</td>
<td>Procedures for Visual Flight Rules aircraft will follow the US model in respect of clearances where establishment of communication with ATC constitutes a clearance (Class C Control Zones).</td>
<td>Yet to be introduced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes.
1: NAS Stage 2b Characteristic 4—partly reversed by Airservices Australia in November 2004.
2: Characteristics deleted (31, 42). 31 deleted as frequency allocation for pilot to pilot communication is already available as freq. 123.45MHz.
3: Former characteristics 27 and 34 were combined with number 13 as they essentially related to the same issue.
4: Former characteristic 15 was combined with number 14 as they essentially related to the same issue.

**Wilderness Society**

*(Question No. 2399)*

**Senator Bob Brown** asked the Minister representing the Prime Minister, upon notice, on 17 August 2006:

Has the Minister met with representatives of the Wilderness Society in the past 5 years; if so, on what dates.

**Senator Minchin**—The Prime Minister has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

The Prime Minister meets many organisations and individuals to discuss issues. Such discussions are conducted in a proper manner. Government decisions are made on the merits of the case concerned.

**Airspace Management Contract**

*(Question No. 2497)*

**Senator O’Brien** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, upon notice, on 18 September 2006:

With reference to the airspace management contract between Airservices Australia and the Government of the Solomon Islands:

(1) What was the commencement date of the Airservices Australia internal investigation that found that, between 1998 and 2003, contract payments totalling $2.2 million had been made to third parties.
(2) When did the internal investigation conclude.
(3) Who conducted the internal investigation.
(4) When was the report of the internal investigation provided to: (a) the Minister and/or the Minister’s office; and (b) the department.
(5) Can a copy of the report be provided; if not, why not.

**Senator Johnston**—The Minister for Transport and Regional Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) 27 August 2003.
(2) 29 September 2003.
(3) The internal investigation was conducted by Airservices Australia’s Office of Security Risk Management.
(4) (a) The internal report was not provided to the Minister. (b) The internal report was not provided to DOTARS.
(5) No. The specified report was made available to the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) in the course of its audit of the administration of the Solomon Islands Upper Airspace contracts. The ANAO has reported to Parliament.

**Indonesia: Death Penalty**

(Question No. 2595)

**Senator Allison** asked the Minister representing the Prime Minister, upon notice, on 31 October 2006:

(1) Is the Prime Minister opposed to the execution by Indonesia of Australians Scott Rush, Tan Duc Than Nguyen, Si Yi Chen, Matthew Norman, Myuran Sukumaran and Andrew Chan; if so, will the Prime Minister express this view publicly: (a) in Australia; and (b) to the President of Indonesia.
(2) What representations have been made to date to Indonesia on the matter of the execution sentence of these six young Australians.
(3) Given that the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Downer) is reported as saying ‘We will at the appropriate time support appeals for clemency’: (a) when will the time be appropriate; and (b) what form will such support take.
(4) Does the Prime Minister consider that the death penalty should be seen as a warning on the dangers of carrying drugs through Asian countries; if so, why.

**Senator Minchin**—The Prime Minister has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Yes. I have publicly registered the government’s opposition to the imposition of the death penalty on Australian citizens, including these six, on many occasions. Indonesia is well aware of Australian policy on this issue.
(2) These representations are outlined in the attached table.
(3) The government will support any appeals for clemency that the six might make when legal appeals processes have been exhausted. The government’s support for clemency pleas is ordinarily expressed in the form of written and personal representations to key government ministers, together with representations through diplomatic channels.
(4) The government is opposed to the imposition of the death penalty. However, drug trafficking is a serious crime which attracts very severe penalties in many Asian countries, including Indonesia.

Death Penalty in Indonesia
Representations to Indonesian Ministers

Written representations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Minister</td>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td>18 December 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Justice</td>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td>15 January 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney General</td>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td>18 January 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney General</td>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td>16 February 2006</td>
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Personal representations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Minister</td>
<td>Indonesian Ambassador</td>
<td>6 December 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Indonesian Ambassador</td>
<td>17 December 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambassador-Designate</td>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>21 December 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge d’Affaires and</td>
<td>Attorney-General and Deputy Attorney-General</td>
<td>23 December 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Minister</td>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>27 February 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>Members of Parliamentary Commission 1 (Defence, Foreign Affairs, Communication and Informatics)</td>
<td>13 June 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>26 June 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td>Minister for Law and Human Rights</td>
<td>29 June 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign Minister</td>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>22 September 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Minister</td>
<td>Minister for Law and Human Rights</td>
<td>6 March 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td>(joint meeting)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Australian Defence Force: Personnel**

*(Question No. 2621)*

Senator Mark Bishop asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, upon notice, on 8 November 2006:

1. With particular reference to rest breaks and minimum sleep time, what guidelines exist in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) for the maximum hours of duty to be performed on any 1 day and on consecutive days.

2. What guidelines exist in the ADF with respect to the imposition of the disciplinary measure of sleep deprivation caused by long hours of duty resulting in sleep periods less than 8 hours per day, as might for example be imposed as part of restriction of privileges.

3. (a) What provisions exist for the recording of disciplinary measures imposed, such as restriction of privileges; and (b) how is such discipline supervised.

4. For the 2005-06 financial year: (a) on how many occasions were disciplinary measures taken involving deprivation of less than 8 hours of duty, (that is by requiring duty in excess of 16 hours per day) at the Army bases of: (i) Holsworthy, (ii) Singleton, (iii) Robertson Barracks, (iv) Townsville, and (iv) Kapooka; (b) what was the average length of time of such discipline; and (c) what was the maximum, and the minimum period of consecutive days on which it applied.

5. (a) Was the issue of sleep deprivation considered in the Podger report; and (b) has any action been taken to limit its application since the release of the Podger report.

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**
Senator Ellison—The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) ADF fatigue risk management guidelines: Within the ADF, there exists a range of fatigue risk management guidelines. In general, current fatigue management within Defence is based on prescriptive models of hours of duty and rest periods. This guidance may be in many forms, from standing orders through to commanders’ guides. Fatigue guidelines are more common in elements of the ADF dealing with transportation. One of the most encompassing documents is Standing Orders for Vehicle Operators (SOVO). In Volume 1, Part 2, Chapter 4 of SOVO, it states in relation to duty hours and rest for road drivers:

Drivers/Operators are not to drive for a period of more than 12 hours, including short halts in any 24 hour period. This is to include one period of eight hours continuous rest.

Driver/Operator of Infantry Mobility Vehicles are to have had at least one period of 24 consecutive hours of rest during the preceding seven days.

Fatigue guidance is also routine within the Defence aviation capability. For example, Army Aviation Standing Instructions for Flying Operations - Part 6, Flying Safety and Aviation Medicine, OPS 6–201 dated 26 April 2004 includes guidance on flying hour limitations, mandated rest periods, and adjustments to duty/rest periods associated with both night flying using night vision devices and transmeridian flight across time zones. Each Aviation Force Element Group has its own fatigue management guidelines based on the nature of its operational tasks.

Fatigue management best practice: In recent years, there has been a move away from industry-wide, prescriptive approaches to managing fatigue towards individual operator-tailored approaches that are based on increased fatigue awareness education. This issue was examined in depth by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communication, Transport and the Arts and discussed in the Committee’s report of October 2000: “Beyond the midnight oil: An inquiry into managing fatigue in transport.”

Current guidance on Fatigue Risk Management Systems (FRMS) recommends that such systems be an integral part of an organisation’s Safety Management System. The purpose of a FRMS is to prevent, reduce or mitigate the errors, incidents and accidents to which fatigue can contribute. A well-designed FRMS should contribute to improved safety, efficiency, productivity and operational flexibility while satisfying the organisation’s duty of care to its employees and the general public.

Defence Way Ahead: The ADF has been sensitive to the issue of fatigue for many years. In 2002, the Land Warfare Development Centre published a substantial (96 page) Commander’s Guide entitled: “Fatigue Management during Operations”.

Defence continues to monitor fatigue issues with the three Services – especially utilising the capabilities of DSTO.

Defence has established links with several leading Australian researchers in the area of fatigue. For example, Defence assisted Professor Drew Dawson from the Centre for Sleep Research at the University of South Australia in developing a fatigue assessment tool.

(2) There are no guidelines within the Australian Defence Force with respect to the imposition of the disciplinary measure of sleep deprivation. Sleep deprivation is not imposed on any member and is not an approved disciplinary penalty.

The two disciplinary measures that may impact on a member’s sleep regime are Restriction of Privileges and Detention. Both these forms of punishment have restrictions on the hours that a member is to be on task.

For Restriction of Privileges, the Australian Defence Force Publication 06.1.1 Volume 1 Discipline Law Manual, Chapter 11, paragraph 11.47 restricts the time a member can work outside normal
working hours to four hours in a working day and eight hours in a non-working day. Additionally, paragraph 11.47 (d) limits the reporting time to between 0600 hours and 2300 hours.

For Detention, the Defence Military Correction Establishment Orders for Detainees state that all detainees must have lights out between 2030 hours and Reveille 0530 hours.

(3) (a) Disciplinary action is recorded on a member’s personnel record.

(b) Duty personnel and Service Police.

(4) This information is not readily available and would require the devotion of considerable resources and time to collate.

(5) (a) No.

(b) Not applicable.

**Australian Defence Force: Personnel**

**(Question No. 2622)**

Senator Mark Bishop asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, upon notice, on 8 November 2006:

(1) (a) For each of the years 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 to date, what has been the combined resignation and discharge rate of recruits with less than 12 months service in each of the three services; and (b) what statistics exist on the reasons for those discharges whether they be medical or otherwise.

(2) For the 2005-06 financial year, how many applications to join the Australian Defence Force were rejected: (a) on the grounds of: (i) obesity or excessive weight, (ii) past substance abuse including alcohol and drugs, and (iii) poor eyesight; and (b) for any other reason (please specify).

(3) Under the new reduced recruiting standards, what estimates have been made of the additional cost of: (a) medical treatment; and (b) remedial education.

Senator Ellison—The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) (a) The combined resignation and discharge rates for the three Services are as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Navy</th>
<th>no. enlisted</th>
<th>discharged &lt;12mth service</th>
<th>Loss rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>medical</td>
<td>other</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>1534</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>1506</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>1145</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Army</th>
<th>no. enlisted</th>
<th>discharged &lt;12mth service</th>
<th>Loss rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>medical</td>
<td>other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>1713</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>2266</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>442</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>2201</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>458</td>
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### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Air Force</th>
<th>no. enlisted</th>
<th>discharged &lt;12mth service medical</th>
<th>other</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>Loss rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

**Methodology:**
- The numbers enlisted are a discrete cohort consisting of all members entering a Service during a financial year.

**Medical:**
- The medical column contains the numbers of members recorded as being Medically Unfit for Service.

(2) For 2005-06, the number of applications to the Australian Defence Force that were rejected are as follows.

(a) On the grounds of:
   - Obesity or excessive weight – 203,
   - Past substance abuse including alcohol and drugs – 432, and
   - Poor eyesight – 181.

As at July 2006, the ADF does not automatically reject candidates on the basis of prior drug use alone. Prior to this date, an admission of using prohibited substances may have resulted in the removal of a candidate from the recruiting process.

(b) For any other reason:
   - Below the recruiting standard for chosen avenue of entry – 3181,
   - Medically unsuitable for military service excluding obesity and eyesight – 1592,
   - Assessed as unsuitable by the Defence interviewer – 808,
   - Lacking minimum education standard – 733,
   - Psychologically unsuitable – 566,
   - Not recommended at the Officer Selection Board – 170,
   - Past criminal history – 131,
   - Citizenship issues – 47,
   - Not recommended at the Flight Screening Board – 9,
   - Over age – 7,
   - Under age – 6.

(3) (a) and (b) Specific medical treatment and remedial education for ADF entrants with visible tattoos, admission of minor past drug use, alignment new eyesight standards, or who are at the upper limits of Body Mass Index (30-33 BMI units) is not warranted but I am pleased to advise that those whose BMI is with the 30-33 unit range will be monitored for 12 months for weight changes, any adverse health effects and maintenance of individual readiness for deployment.
Civil Aviation Safety Authority: Change Management Project
(Question No. 2659)

Senator O’Brien asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, upon notice, on 10 November 2006:

Can details be provided of all costs associated with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority’s Change Management Project, for each of the years since its inception.

Senator Johnston—The Minister for Transport and Regional Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

Expenditure associated with CASA’s Change Management Project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>$684,988</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>$7,828,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>$396,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(as at 31 October 2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(3) (a) Nil. (b) Nil.
(4) Yes. (a)Yes. (b)Yes. (c)Yes.

Civil Aviation Safety Authority: Air Safety Environment
(Question No. 2667)

Senator O’Brien asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, upon notice, on 10 November 2006:

(1) Is the Minister aware of the finding in the report of the Seaview Royal Commission that ‘no doubt the benevolent treatment of industry and the apparent willingness to overlook quite serious breaches was given impetus by industry being declared the partner of the Civil Aviation Authority’.

(2) Is the Minister concerned that the 2005-06 annual report of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), the successor to the Civil Aviation Authority: (a) declares that CASA wants to be ‘the valued partner with the aviation community industry in providing Australia with a world-class air safety environment, which has public trust and confidence’; and (b) proposes that CASA delegate more activities to industry ‘which will enable qualified industry participants to partner with CASA to ensure safety’.

Senator Johnston—The Minister for Transport and Regional Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Yes.
(2) No.

Civil Aviation Safety Authority: Projected Revenue
(Question No. 2669)

Senator O’Brien asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, upon notice, on 10 November 2006:

Can the Minister identify the make-up of projected revenue for the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, comprising: (a) government appropriations; (b) aviation fuel excise; (c) fees; (d) interest; and (e) other revenue, by year in the 2007-08 and 2008-09 financial years.

Senator Johnston—The Minister for Transport and Regional Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

Projected revenue for the Civil Aviation Safety Authority in the financial years 2007-08 and 2008-09 are provided in Transport and Regional Services Portfolio, Portfolio Additional Estimates 2006-07, Table 3.1.

Enforceable Voluntary Undertakings
(Question No. 2671)

Senator O’Brien asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, upon notice, on 10 November 2006:

With reference to the evidence given by Mr Patrick Murray, Group General Manager of the Air Transport Operations Group, Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee estimates hearing on 30 October 2006 (Committee Hansard, p. 85) about section 30DK(4) of the Civil Aviation Act 1988 relating to the publication of details of enforceable voluntary undertakings (EVUs):

(1) Is the Minister aware that Mr Murray claimed that information about the Transair EVU published on the CASA website ‘is designed to be a summary and is designed for ease of understanding by
lay people, whereas perhaps publication of the detail of the EVU would mean that it would be less understandable’.

(2) Which elements of the Transair EVU would not be understandable if published on the CASA website.

(3) Did CASA fail to publish parts 1 to 9 and parts 11 to 14 of the Transair EVU because this material would not be understandable.

(4) Did CASA fail to publish full details of specific undertakings contained in part 10 of the Transair EVU because the specific undertakings would not be understandable.

(5) Can the Minister advise where in the Civil Aviation Amendment Bill 2003, the explanatory memorandum for the bill, the second reading speech for the bill and/or the Act, CASA is exempted from publishing details of EVUs that it deems not understandable.

Senator Johnston—The Minister for Transport and Regional Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Yes.

(2) to (4) These questions were asked and answered during testimony to the Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport on 31 January 2007.

(5) There is no exemption. CASA now publishes all Enforceable Voluntary Undertakings in their entirety.

Civil Aviation Safety Authority: Unplanned Absences

(Question No. 2679)

Senator O’Brien asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, upon notice, on 10 November 2006:

Why was the Civil Aviation Safety Authority’s average of 6.99 days unplanned absence per employee in the 2005-06 financial year above the Australian Public Service average.

Senator Johnston—The Minister for Transport and Regional Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

CASA does not consider that the average number of days of unplanned absence of its staff is significantly different to APS-wide norms.

Civil Aviation Safety Authority: Serviceable Autopilots

(Question No. 2711)

Senator O’Brien asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, upon notice, on 10 November 2006:

With reference to Australian Transport Safety Bureau safety recommendation R20060003 issued on 20 January 2006 during the course of the investigation into the Lockhart River air tragedy in May 2005: (a) What is the timetable for the Civil Aviation Safety Authority’s consideration of this recommendation relating to the fitting of serviceable autopilots to Australian aircraft engaged on scheduled air transport operations; and (b) when will consideration of this matter conclude.

Senator Johnston—The Minister for Transport and Regional Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

CASA will consult industry through the Standards Consultative Committee and the timeframe for implementation of serviceable autopilots will depend on the outcome of those consultations.
Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs: Northern Territory
(Question No. 2766)

Senator Crossin asked the Minister for the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, upon notice, on 15 November 2006:

(1) Can a departmental organisational chart for the Northern Territory be provided.

(2) How many vacant positions are there in each Northern Territory Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC) and can a breakdown by position name (for example, Solution Broker) and level be provided.

(3) What cross-cultural induction is provided for new departmental staff in the Northern Territory.

(4) Is this for all new staff; if so: (a) when; and (b) how often, is it provided.

(5) How many departmental officers in the Northern Territory are acting in positions (at Administrative Service Officer level 6 or above) above their substantive levels.

(6) Can details be provided of the actual operating budgets for each of the ICCs in the Northern Territory.

(7) Can a list be provided of all shared responsibility agreements (SRA) now agreed to and signed off in the Northern Territory.

(8) Why is the website with SRA details not kept up to date.

(9) What is the average time taken from starting SRA negotiations to sign off.

(10) (a) Can updated information be provided for an SRA administered by Nhulunbuy ICC (the education, arts and nutrition project at the Dhuruputipi homeland community (DHC)), signed on 31 August 2005 which was to provide a building renovation to house a School of the Air and art centre with $80,000 in funding from the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) and to provide a tractor and tools for gardens with $50,000 in funding from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations; (b) has this project progressed at all; and (c) what has been the outcome to date after 14 months.

(11) (a) In relation to paragraph (10) how much money has been released; (b) to whom has the money been released; and (c) is the DHC an incorporated organisation able to receive Commonwealth funds; if not, why were direct negotiations held with them on the above SRA.

(12) (a) Who costs this type of project which required some building work; and (b) does the ICC engage expert advice to cost such projects.

(13) Does OIPC intend to make this sort of direct negotiation with family groups the usual model; if so, how is the need for releasing funds only to incorporated organisations met.

(14) (a) If the Minister or department negotiates with a family group and then has to get another incorporated organisation to accept the funding and carriage of the project, is this a fit and proper way to organise projects; and (b) how does this affect risk management.

(15) (a) What happens if the initial funding estimate and agreed amount is insufficient; and (b) does the signatory incorporated organisation have to find the rest of the funds.

(16) In the case of the DHC, has the community complied with its communication part of the agreement and provided regular written reports.

(17) Was any consideration given to the fact that Indigenous people traditionally rely on verbal communication, not written, when this agreement was negotiated.

(18) Given that in the communications feedback mechanisms it was agreed that the ICC would visit regularly, how many visits have been made to the DHC since the agreement was signed.
(19) For the year 2006 to date, can a list be provided of all visits made by officers from each of the Northern Territory ICC’s broken down by: (a) office; (b) community visited; (c) who visited and what department they represented; (d) length of visit; and (e) date(s).

(20) How many of these visits incorporated the whole of government approach espoused by the Government and included officers from across departments or even across levels of Government (that is, included both federal and Northern Territory government officers).

(21) Given that the review of Indigenous housing, The Best way Forward: Delivering housing and infrastructure to Indigenous Australians was due to be completed by the end of September 2006, can a copy of the final report be provided.

(22) (a) If vital negotiations are continuing, such as at Galiwinku and Nguiu, how do the department’s officers identify who is really a traditional owner; and (b) on whose expertise and word do they rely.

Senator Scullion—the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

A departmental organisational chart for the Northern Territory is available from the Senate Table Office. The answers to questions 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 were responded to by the department during the Supplementary Estimates Hearings 2006. It is the usual practice that new departmental staff who will be visiting indigenous communities for the first time are offered the opportunity to attend a cross cultural training course.

FaCSIA has maintained separate budgets during 2006-07 for the different elements of the network that allow it to show allocations and expenditure for the former OIPC State Office and ICCs. It is FaCSIA’s intention to maintain the existing levels of effort in the Northern Territory ICCs and it will continue to be possible to demonstrate this.

The report of an independent review of indigenous housing was released by the Minister on 8 March 2007 and is available on the web site of FaCSIA.

Section 19A only allows the granting of a head lease where the relevant Land Council provides a written direction that it is satisfied (among other things) that the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land understand the nature and purpose of the proposed lease and, as a group, consent to it. Departmental officers rely on the expertise of the relevant Land Council to identify those traditional Aboriginal owners for the purpose of negotiations.

Adult Literacy and Numeracy
(Question No. 2857)

Senator Wong asked the Minister representing the Minister for Vocational and Technical Education, upon notice, on 28 November 2006:

(1) What is the average number of annual curriculum hours undertaken by a student enrolled in adult literacy and numeracy programs classified under Australian Standard Classification of Education Broad Field 12, in the following narrow field areas: (a) 1201 General Education Programs; (b) 1203 Social Skills Programs; (c) 1205 Employment Skills Programs; and (d) 1299 Other Mixed Field Programs.

(2) For each of the above programs, what is the: (a) average per hour cost; and (b) proportion of that cost contributed by the Commonwealth.

Senator Brandis—the Minister for Vocational and Further Education has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
(1) The average number of curriculum hours undertaken by a student in the Australian Standard Classification of Education Broad Fields, requested, during 2005, are provided in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of Study</th>
<th>2005 hours</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Average hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1201 - General Education Programmes</td>
<td>29,166,976</td>
<td>114,530</td>
<td>254.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1203 - Social Skills Courses</td>
<td>593,193</td>
<td>2,630</td>
<td>225.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1205 - Employment Skills Courses</td>
<td>10,205,298</td>
<td>47,943</td>
<td>212.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1299 - Other Mixed Field Programmes</td>
<td>1,247,032</td>
<td>25,582</td>
<td>48.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NCVER Client Data Cube, 2005

(2) (a) This information is not available. Under the Australian Vocational Education & Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS), the States and Territories do not provide data on funding per course.

(b) It is not possible to accurately provide the proportions of State and Commonwealth funds for these courses, as data on funding per course are not available. The Australian Government has no powers under the Agreement to direct the states on their application of the funds to courses or training providers.

Civil Aviation Safety Authority: Regular Public Transport Operations

(Question No. 2858)

Senator O’Brien asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, upon notice, on 28 November 2006:

(1) Did the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) discontinue the category of ‘high-risk’ carrier when assessing regular passenger transport operations; if so: (a) when; and (b).

(2) Has Qantas Airways Ltd even been rated a ‘high risk’ carrier by CASA.

(3) Has CASA instituted a replacement assessment process; if so, what are the current assessment categories for regular passenger transport operations; if not, why not.

(4) What is the current risk assessment for Qantas.

Senator Johnston—The Minister for Transport and Regional Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) There has never been any formal categorisation of ‘high risk’ carrier applied to Regular Public Transport (RPT) operators.

(2) See answer to question 1.

(3) See answer to question 1.

(4) There is no company-wide (whole of Air Operator’s Certificate) risk rating.

Australian Defence Force: Psychiatric Referrals

(Question No. 2869)

Senator Mark Bishop asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, upon notice, on 28 November 2006:

With reference to the answer given to question on notice W1 (c) from an estimates hearing of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee on 1 June 2006 concerning the referrals made to psychiatric providers in Western Australia, for each of the years 2004, 2005, 2006 to date, how many resulted in a discharge.

Senator Ellison—The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
The total number of psychiatric referrals made to providers in Western Australia for the financial years 2003/2004, 2004/2005, 2005/2006, as well as the discharges that resulted are contained in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003/04 year</th>
<th>2004/05 year</th>
<th>2005/06 year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of individuals referred to a psychiatrist</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical discharges related to psychiatric conditions</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Aboriginal Health Strategy: La Perouse Community
(Question No. 2889)

Senator Chris Evans asked the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, upon notice, on 29 November 2006:

(1) With reference to the $1.45 million grant under the National Aboriginal Health Strategy (NAHS) program for the La Perouse community: (a) how much money will be spent on: (i) new housing stock, (ii) housing repairs, (iii) infrastructural works, including sewerage, (iv) the remuneration and expenses of the project manager, and (v) other items/services (please specify); and (b) has the department engaged a project manager to oversee the NAHS program; if so, on what date was the project manager appointed.

(2) What actions/repairs have been taken since the department received the environmental impact study (EIS) on La Perouse including: (a) the date of the action/repair; and (b) the cost of the action/repair.

(3) Are the costs of the repairs, undertaken as a result of the EIS, being funded from the $1.45 million grant or a separate pool of funding.

(4) Has the department remedied all the environmental health issues that were raised in the EIS.

(5) Does the department intend to offer another grant of NAHS funding to the La Perouse community in addition to the $1.45 million; if so, when will that offer be made.

(6) At the time that NAHS was transferred from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission to the department, was any amount of NAHS funding allocated for the La Perouse community; if so, what amount was allocated.

(7) Has the La Perouse community ever been allocated $4.5 million of NAHS funding in the time that the department has been responsible for the program.

Senator Scullion—The Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

In regard to the $1.45 million grant to the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council, the funds have been allocated as follows: (i) $1,100,000 (ii) $150,000 (iii) $0 (iv) $132,000 (v) $70,000 (contingency)

The Project Manager has not yet been appointed. Formal tenders are expected to be submitted shortly.

Since the environmental health assessment was completed FaCSIA approved an additional $195,000 for the following works which were completed throughout October and November:

- Repair broken asbestos inside and outside of houses
- ‘Emu pick’ loose asbestos from yards
- Install an electric exhaust fan in each bathroom
- Clean mould affected areas to wet areas and repaint those areas with mould reducing paint
• Install new gully traps to sewer lines
• Remote camera video inspection of sewerage lines for all houses
• New sewerage vent pipes
• Place an air vent in each roof to facilitate air flow throughout the house
• Paint main graffiti wall at the site of the pensioner units
• Clear rubbish from yards and public spaces
• Mow long grass to reduce the hazard of spiders, snakes and fire

The costs of the repairs are additional approved funding and not a part of the $1.45 million grant.

The department has advised that all the issues that were identified in the environmental health assessment relevant to the department have been remedied. Sydney Water Corporation has committed to undertake work on sewer system blockages and Randwick Council has committed to remediate the landfill site. Randwick City Council has indicated that this will not be addressed until some time in 2007-08.

At the time NAHS was transferred from ATSIC to FaCSIA, the only funding that was allocated to La Perouse was $140,000 for the engagement of the Community Development Facilitator to work with the community from February 2004 to Feb 2005.

The La Perouse community has not been allocated $4.5 million of NAHS funding in the time that the department has been responsible for the program.

It is worth noting that the houses concerned are not owned by the Commonwealth, but are the responsibility of the La Perouse Land Council.

Aboriginal Child-Care Services
(Question No. 2890)

Senator Chris Evans asked the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, upon notice, on 29 November 2006:

(1) For each of the years 2005 and 2006 to date: (a) how many Indigenous children were/are enrolled in Multi-Functional Aboriginal Child-care Services (MACS); and (b) can a breakdown be provided of those figures by state and territory.

(2) For each of the years 2005 and 2006 to date: (a) how many Indigenous children were/are enrolled in Aboriginal playgroups; and (b) can a breakdown be provided of those figures by state and territory.

(3) For each of the financial years 2000-01 to 2006-07 to date, how much funding was allocated and expended to: (a) MACS; and (b) Aboriginal playgroups.

(4) For each of the financial years 2005-06 and 2006-07 to date, can a list be provided of the bodies, including their location, that have ceased receiving MACS or Aboriginal playgroup funding.

(5) For each of the financial years 2005-06 and 2006-07 to date, can a list be provided of the bodies, including their location, that have begun receiving MACS or Aboriginal playground funding.

(6) Given that the 2004 census of child care services found that there were no MACS or Aboriginal playgroups in the Australian Capital Territory, was that still the case in: (a) 2005; and (b) 2006.

(7) Can the Minister confirm that funding to MACS in the western Sydney suburbs has ceased; if so: (a) when did funding cease; and (b) what child care services are now available to Indigenous children in the western suburbs of Sydney

Senator Scullion—The Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
The number of children enrolled in Multifunctional Aboriginal Children’s Services (MACS) and Indigenous Playgroups for the years 2005 and 2006 to date, by state and territory is not available.

For the financial years 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03 programs were not differentiated in a way that would identify expenditure for MACS and Indigenous playgroups.

For each of the financial years 2003-04 to 2006-07 (year to December 2006), the following funding was expended to MACS and Indigenous playgroups. Allocations are unavailable for these programs as they are part of a larger program allocation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial year</th>
<th>MACS Expenditure</th>
<th>Indigenous Playgroups Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>11,984,675</td>
<td>1,201,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>12,055,763</td>
<td>1,466,733 (Note 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>11,364,682</td>
<td>2,346,401 (Note 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07 YTD Dec 06</td>
<td>5,567,121</td>
<td>1,075,442 (Note 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: Includes figures from the Playgroup Program (Supported Playgroups and Intensive Support Playgroups) which began during the 2004-05 financial year. All figures are based on estimates. Actual expenditure is reported at the program level only.

During 2005-06 and 2006-07 to date (February 2007), five supported playgroups and four additional Intensive Support Playgroups funded under the Playgroup Program began operation.

The national provider for Supported Playgroups is Playgroup Australia located at:
86 Orchid Street,
Enoggera Qld 4051

The five individual Supported Playgroups are located at Griffith (NSW), Katherine (NT), Point Pearce (SA), Hampton Park (Vic) and Bunbury (WA).

The four additional intensive Support Playgroups are located at:
Bega Valley/Wallaga Lake Intensive Support Playgroup
Eurobodalla Family Support Service (Lead Agency) in partnership with Imlay Special Needs Group and Far South Coast Family Support Service
54 Campbell Street
MORUYA NSW 2537

Ceduna/Yalata Intensive Support Playgroup
Minya Bunii Incorporated
1 Kelly Street
CEDUNA SA 5690

East Pilbara Intensive Support Playgroup
Newman YMCA in partnership with Resource Unit for Children with Special Needs
5 Carson Road
MALAGA WA 6090

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Cooktown Intensive Support Playgroup
Cooktown District Community Centre
13 Charles Street
COOKTOWN Qld 4895

There is one MACS service in the ACT (Wreck Bay) although the service is administered by the NSW office of FaCSIA and was reported in the NSW figures in the 2004 Census. This service is currently funded.

Funding to the Murawina Mt Druitt MACS in the Blacktown Local Government Area (LGA) was terminated on 8 March 2005 as the provider was placed into receivership. The liquidation remains a matter subject to potential court action. There are 96 Long Day Care centres and 1 Family Day Care scheme in the Blacktown LGA providing approximately 4,990 places.

**Proposed Pulp Mill**
*(Question No. 2942)*

Senator Bob Brown asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, upon notice, on 12 December 2006:

With reference to the Minister’s statement on 7 December 2006 that item 189 of the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006 will not apply to the Gunns Ltd owned pulp mill because the Minister has already made a controlled action decision in relation to the pulp mill *(Senate Hansard, 7 December 2006, p.136):*

(1) Can the Minister confirm that item 189: (a) does not apply to the Gunns pulp mill, given that the Minister has not yet made a decision to approve or refuse to approve the taking of the action (namely Gunns pulp mill); and (b) will apply to future developments such as pulp mills, wood-fired power stations and charcoal plants.

(2) Are the proponents of the Gunns pulp mill required, under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, to assess the impacts on listed threatened species of forestry operations necessary to supply wood for the pulp mill.

Senator Abetz—The Minister for the Environment and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) (a) Item 189 deals with considerations at the time of making a decision under section 75 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) as to whether an action is a controlled action. As the former Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, made a section 75 decision for the proposed Gunns pulp mill proposal on 5 October 2005, item 189 did not apply to that proposal as it was not in force at that time. However, I understand that Gunns Ltd has put in a new referral for the proposed pulp mill under the EPBC Act. In this circumstance, as item 189 is now in force, it will apply to any section 75 decision made in relation to the new referral; and

(b) Item 189 will apply to decisions as to whether an action is a controlled action for proposals involving the use of timber from Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) forestry operations (as defined in section 38 of the EPBC Act), or forestry operations in an RFA region (as defined in section 40 of the EPBC Act).

(2) No, if the forestry operations are RFA forestry operations undertaken in accordance with an RFA.
Aged Care Facilities  
(Question No. 2949)

Senator McLucas asked the Minister representing the Minister for Ageing, upon notice, on 18 December 2006:

With reference to Commonwealth funded residential aged care facilities which failed to meet the 1999 Certification Assessment Instrument by 31 December 2005, as at 18 December 2006, how many facilities: (a) have received technical advice from the department; (b) have had a review conducted of their suitability to be certified by the department; and (c) are being closely monitored by the department for their regulatory compliance and demonstration of continuous improvement under the Aged Care Accreditation Standards.

Senator Ellison—The Minister for Ageing has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(a) The 59 services that had a review of their certification status in 2006 have all received a report of the assessment. The assessment report provides information on areas that do not meet the requirements of the 1999 Certification Assessment Instrument. This information can be used to develop strategies for improvements. However, approved providers must obtain their own technical advice and assistance from relevant building professionals in planning and undertaking building works.

(b) 59 facilities to date have been reviewed under the Aged Care Act 1997.

(c) As at 31 December 2006 there were 202 services that had not yet met the higher fire and safety standards of the 1999 Certification Assessment Instrument. All of the 202 homes have been visited by the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency and assessed against relevant Accreditation Outcomes. The Department is also case managing homes that have not yet met the higher standards.

Tysabri  
(Question No. 2977)

Senator Allison asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health and Ageing, upon notice, on 5 February 2007:

(1) Can the Minister confirm that the drug, Tysabri, was: (a) approved for use in the treatment of multiple sclerosis; and (b) registered for use in Australia in 2006.

(2) Has an application been made for Tysabri to be listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme; if so, when.

Senator Ellison—The Minister for Health and Ageing has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) (a) Yes. TYSABRI® (natalizumab) is indicated as monotherapy for the treatment of patients with relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis to delay the progression of physical disability and to reduce the frequency of relapse. (b) Yes. TYSABRI® was registered by the Therapeutic Goods Administration on 30 October 2006.

(2) Yes. An application for the listing of TYSABRI® (natalizumab) on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme was considered at the November 2006 meeting of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC). PBAC rejected the submission because, although it agreed clinical benefit had been demonstrated, the cost-effectiveness ratio was unfavourable and uncertain. This information is in the public domain and can be found on the Department’s website in the PBAC Outcomes section (www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/pbac-outcomes).
Defence Material Organisation: Legal Branch
(Question No. 2978)

Senator Mark Bishop asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, upon notice, on 6 February 2007:

With reference to the answer to question No. W23 taken on notice at the supplementary estimates hearing of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee in November 2006: Has the Inspector-General conducted any investigations into professional behaviour within the Legal Branch of the Defence Materiel Organisation; if so: (a) what were the findings; and (b) what action was taken.

Senator Ellison—The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:
(1) Yes, an investigation was conducted into management practices within the former General Counsel Division.
(2) Further action is being taken in response to the findings of the investigation. It would be inappropriate at this stage to comment on the details.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
(Question No. 2984)

Senator Allison asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs, upon notice, on 6 February 2006:

(1) What is the status of discussions between the Government and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) regarding the forging of a formal relationship.
(2) Does the Government support NATO’s policy of nuclear first strike.
(3) Is the Government aware of the public opinion polling conducted by independent reputable companies, commissioned by a non-government organisation, which reveals that close to 70 per cent of citizens in all six European countries hosting NATO nuclear weapons (Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey) under NATO nuclear sharing arrangements wish them to be removed (Survey found at: http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/nuclear-weapons-in-europe-survey).
(4) If Australia does establish a formal relationship with NATO, will the Government raise concerns about how out of step the NATO nuclear sharing policy is with the democratic majority in European nations hosting nuclear weapons.

Senator Coonan—The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the honourable senator’s question:
(1) Australia is not seeking a formal relationship with NATO.
(2) NATO does not follow a nuclear first strike policy.
(3) Yes. The Government has not taken a position on the issue of nuclear sharing in NATO.
(4) Refer to (1) and (3).

Palm Oil Products
(Question No. 3018)

Senator Allison asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health and Ageing, upon notice, on 22 February 2007:

(1) Does the Minister consider the current labelling requirements on palm oil products to be satisfactory.
(2) Does the Minister agree that palm oil, though technically a vegetable oil, should be identified as palm oil, given that it is a saturated fat; if not, why not.

(3) Has the Government investigated the extent to which palm oil is being used in processed food; if so, does it consider its use a health risk.

Senator Ellison—The Minister for Health and Ageing has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) The current labelling requirements for products containing palm oil are adequate. Where ‘vegetable oil’ is provided on the label as the name of the food or where provided in the ingredient list, there is no requirement to indicate the presence of palm oil because the saturated fat content of the food is already provided in the Nutrition Information Panel.

(2) It is not necessary that palm oil be identified as such on food labels. If a consumer wishes to be informed on the saturated fat content of a food, the Nutrition Information Panel provides adequate information to make an informed purchasing decision.

(3) The Government has not investigated the extent to which palm oil is being used in processed food.

United States Vice President: Visit to Australia

(Question No. 3021)

Senator Stott Despoja asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 22 February 2007:

(1) Has the Government of the United States (US) of America applied to the Attorney-General for permission to bring firearms into Australia during the period of Vice President Cheney’s visit to Australia, as called for under the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956.

(2) (a) What legislation in New South Wales addresses the carriage of firearms by foreign security personnel; (b) under what circumstances would foreign security personnel be permitted to carry firearms, in New South Wales; and (c) what types of firearms would they be allowed to carry.

(3) Given that Guideline 14.6 of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Protocol Guidelines, pertaining to security personnel for foreign dignitaries, does not appear to allow any exceptions to its determination that: ‘It is a long-standing policy of the Australian Government that foreign security personnel accompanying foreign dignitaries on visits to Australia are not permitted to carry firearms’, can the Government confirm whether in fact there are any exceptions allowed under this Guideline.

(4) Can the Government reassure the Australian people that US security personnel accompanying Vice President Cheney on his visit to Australia will not be permitted to carry firearms while performing their duties, in accordance with DFAT Protocol Guideline 14.6.

Senator Johnston—The Attorney-General has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Yes.

(2) (a) The Firearms Regulation 2006.

(b) This is an operational security issue and as is normal practice, specific details or circumstances surrounding the potential carriage of firearms by foreign security officers are not disclosed.

(c) This is an operational security issue and as is normal practice, specific details concerning the protection of visiting dignitaries are not disclosed.

(3) There has been a longstanding provision in Australian Government policy whereby foreign governments may formally seek exemption to the standing prohibition on firearms, with the Australian Government considering such requests on a case-by-case basis.
(4) This is an operational security issue and as is normal practice, specific details concerning the protection of visiting foreign dignitaries are not disclosed.

**Firearms Regulations**

(Question No. 3022)

**Senator Stott Despoja** asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 22 February 2007:

(1) Did the Federal Government request that the Government of New South Wales alter firearms regulations to allow security personnel for United States (US) Vice President Cheney to carry firearms while in Australia; if so: (a) what changes were made to New South Wales regulations; and (b) what type of firearms will US security personnel be allowed to carry.

(2) On what basis does the Federal Government consider it acceptable to alter longstanding policy against foreign security personnel carrying firearms when, as detailed in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Protocol Guidelines, Australia has security capabilities of a ‘...very high standard’ and a ‘...low level of threat’.

(3) Will the Federal Government now consider allowing foreign security personnel guarding prominent dignitaries from other countries to carry firearms in Australia.

**Senator Johnston**—The Attorney-General has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) The Australian Government sought the assistance of the NSW Government to amend the Firearms Regulation 2006.
   
   (a) The NSW Firearms Regulation was amended to enable the NSW Commissioner of Police, upon application from the Australian Government, to issue temporary firearms permits to visiting foreign security officers for the purpose of close personal protection of a dignitary.
   
   (b) This is an operational security issue and as is normal practice, specific details concerning the protection of visiting foreign dignitaries are not disclosed.

(2) It has been longstanding Australian Government policy that requests for exemption by foreign governments are considered on a case-by-case basis. As is normal Government practice, specific details concerning operational security issues associated with the protection of foreign dignitaries are not disclosed.

(3) Requests by foreign governments for the importation and carriage of firearms will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**National Plan for Water Security**

(Question No. 3025)

**Senator Allison** asked the Minister representing the Prime Minister, upon notice, on 23 February 2007:

With reference to the $10 billion in funding for the National Plan for Water Security:

(1) What are the timelines for returning water to the Murray and Darling Rivers.

(2) Is it the intention of the plan to return at least 1 500 billion litres to the Murray River; if not, what is the target.

(3) In determining water entitlements, will reductions in the Murray River’s flow predicted to be 3 300 billion litres within the next 50 years as a result of climate change, be taken into account; if not, why not.
(4) Is it the case that under the plan, the states will still manage river catchments, while the Commonwealth will control the river’s water; if so, how will the responsibility for protecting and renewing river health be determined.

(5) What changes, if any, are anticipated with respect to the controlled release of water which currently reverses natural flows, for example, is it proposed that water will be released to mimic natural floods.

(6) (a) Under the plan, what is the process for determining whether saved water is returned to the river for environmental flows or sold to irrigators; and (b) will the final decision be made by the Federal Government or state governments.

(7) Will non-government independent environment organisations be given legal standing to question decisions to sell, withhold or give away environmental water; if not, why not.

(8) In regard to the 90 kilometre open channel proposed to connect the Murray and Goulburn Rivers, has the Prime Minister considered the report commissioned by the Victorian Government in 2006 which found that this scheme was the worst and most expensive option available; if so, what is the rationale behind the proposal.

(9) With regard to the proposal for the Commonwealth to fund 80 per cent of the cost of fixing irrigation channels, does this mean that 80 per cent of the water savings will be returned to the river; if not: (a) what is the anticipated percentage; and (b) on what basis was it determined.

(10) What monitoring programs will be put in place to ensure targets and agreements are met.

**Senator Minchin**—The Prime Minister has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

I am advised that:

(1) The Plan is a ten year programme.

(2) The Plan will implement a new sustainable cap on extraction of surface and groundwater in the Basin. This cap is yet to be calculated, although it is estimated that the $5.9 billion for modernising irrigation infrastructure will save some 3 000 GL nationally per annum, of which some 2 500 GL would be within the Basin.

(3) Consistent with the National Water Initiative, water entitlements in the Basin are either already, or are in the process of, being defined as a share of the water that is available for extraction in any given year. The new sustainable cap on extractions within the Basin will take account of latest scientific analysis, including with respect to climate change.

(4) It is proposed that a Basin-wide strategic plan for water will be prepared by the Commonwealth that sets out broad objectives for water management across the Basin. Among other things, the Basin-wide plan will establish the new sustainable cap on extractive use and a new environmental watering plan for the Basin. States would continue to prepare individual catchment-level water plans, which would need to be accredited by the Commonwealth as being consistent with the Basin-wide plan.

(5) Water will be managed consistent with the environmental watering plan.

(6) (a) Water savings made under the modernising Australia’s irrigation infrastructure element of the Plan will be shared 50 per cent with irrigators and 50 per cent managed to achieve environmental outcomes consistent with the environmental watering plan. Water entitlements purchased through the addressing overallocation element of the Plan will also be managed to achieve environmental outcomes consistent with the environmental watering plan. (b) Final decisions on the use of water entitlements held by the Commonwealth will be made by the Commonwealth. Interested community groups will be able to comment on the draft Basin-wide plan and the environmental watering
(7) The Australian Government is aware of the report Assessment of Victorian Demands in the River Murray and Future Supply Options. We believe there are a number of ways this assessment could be improved and we are committed to undertake thorough assessment in all cases, as required by the National Water Initiative.

(8) The Australian Government will fund a $3 billion works programme to which irrigators are expected to contribute at least $750 million in order to share 50 per cent of the total water savings achieved. The remaining 50 per cent of the water savings will be held by the Commonwealth and used to reduce overallocation and achieve environmental outcomes.

(9) Improved water resource measurement, water usage metering and comprehensive water accounting are cornerstones of the National Water Initiative. The Plan backs these reforms with almost $1 billion in new investment nationally for more precise metering and monitoring and to enable the Bureau of Meteorology to undertake a range of water monitoring and information functions. Within the Murray-Darling Basin, performance with implementing both the Basin-wide and catchment-level water plans, and the environmental watering plan, will be subject to progress reporting and periodic auditing.

**Child Care**

(Question No. 3038)

Senator Stephens asked the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, upon notice, on 27 February 2007:

(1) For each of the years 2005, 2006 and 2007 to date, how many instances has the department uncovered, of services submitting fraudulent claims for the Child Care Benefit or Special Child Care Benefit.

(2) How much money has been recovered as a result of these investigations.

Senator Scullion—The Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

The Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs commenced the child care compliance function on 1 July 2006. Centrelink previously undertook this work. Since then, several cases were transferred from Centrelink and a number of additional allegations have been received and are currently under investigation. While there has not yet been any cases brought before the courts, $1.2 million was successfully restrained in one case under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

**Wellington Park Private Care**

(Question No. 3039)

Senator McLucas asked the Minister representing the Minister for Ageing, upon notice, on 28 February 2007:

With reference to Wellington Park Private Care:

(1) For each of the financial years 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 to date, what is the number and date of: (a) support contacts announced; (b) support contacts unannounced; (c) review audits announced; and (d) review audits unannounced, by the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd.

(2) For each contact in the above time period: (a) why was the contact instigated; (b) was the contact instigated as a result of complaints about the facility; (c) was the facility found to be non-compliant on any expected outcomes; if so: (i) when were these items of non-compliance found, and (ii)
which expected outcomes were non-compliant; (d) was there any concern of serious risk at the facility; and (e) what measures were undertaken to ensure compliance with quality outcomes.

(3) Who are the key personnel at the facility.

**Senator Ellison**—The Minister for Ageing has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Financial year</th>
<th>(a) support contacts announced</th>
<th>(b) support contacts unannounced</th>
<th>(c) review audits announced</th>
<th>(d) review audits unannounced</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>2006-2007</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(2) (a) Support contacts were conducted as part of the Agency’s monitoring program. (b) No. Support contacts were conducted as part of the Agency’s monitoring program. The Agency has not received complaints or referrals from the Department of Health and Ageing in relation to this home. (c) No. (d) No. (e) The Agency monitors the home’s compliance with the Accreditation Standards through its monitoring program consisting of audits and support contacts (announced and unannounced).

(3) The Manager is Mr Russell Egan. The Director of Nursing is Ms Karlene Prasser.

**Continence Aids Assistance Scheme**

(Question No. 3041)

**Senator McLucas** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Ageing, upon notice, on 1 March 2007:

Given that the Minister announced on 4 February 2007 an extension of the Continence Aids Assistance Scheme ’to include people aged 5 years and up’, will the scheme be extended to people aged 65 years and over; if so, what criteria will apply to such applicants.

**Senator Ellison**—The Minister for Ageing has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

From 1 July 2007 the Continence Aids Assistance Scheme (CAAS) will be extended to include eligible people aged five and over, including people aged 65 and over.

The eligibility criteria that will apply to those aged 65 and over from 1 July 2007 will be:

1. The applicant must have permanent loss of bladder and/or bowel function (incontinence) due directly to a permanent neurological condition such as paraplegia, quadriplegia, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis or Parkinson’s disease, or a permanent and severe intellectual impairment; and

2. The applicant will need to meet eligibility requirements deemed equivalent to the Disability Support Pension.

Note:

If the applicant is living in an aged care home, and is receiving high care or is in receipt of an Extended Aged Care at Home package, he or she will not be eligible for CAAS, as the home or provider is required to provide appropriate continence aids.
Asylum Seekers
(Question No. 3053)

Senator Nettle asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs, upon notice, on 20 March 2007:
With reference to the decision of the Government of Nauru that asylum seekers on Nauru be processed within a 6 month period and then leave the island:
(1) Has Nauru communicated this decision to the Australian Government; if so, when and how was this communicated.
(2) Will the Australian Government comply with the 6 month dateline.

Senator Coonan—The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the honourable senator’s question:
(1) No.
(2) There is no legislated Australian timeframe for the processing of asylum seekers in Nauru. While an earlier Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) provided for processing within a particular time frame, paragraph 3 of the current MOU between Australia and Nauru on the management of asylum seekers states that: “Australia will ensure that each asylum seeker will be processed and will depart Nauru within as short a time as is reasonably possible”.

Ministerial Speeches
(Question No. 3055)

Senator Robert Ray asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs, upon notice, on 20 March 2007:
With reference to the speeches written for the Minister by Mr Christopher Pearson for: (a) an economist roundtable in June 2005 relating to the economy and the environment; and (b) the Hillsong annual convention in July 2005:
(1) Have either of the speeches ever been made available: (a) on the Minister’s website; or (b) anywhere else on the public record.
(2) Can details be provided for each speech delivered by the Minister in relation to: (a) the date and time of its delivery; and (b) the location of its delivery.

Senator Coonan—The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the honourable senator’s question:
(1) (a) No. (b) No.
(2) (a) and (b) The Eighth Foreign Investor Roundtable with the Government of Australia arranged by Economist Conferences was held in Canberra on 21 June 2005.

The Hillsong annual convention was held in Sydney on 4 July 2005. The Minister attended the function but, due to unforeseen circumstances, did not deliver a speech.

Overseas Aid Program
(Question No. 3056)

Senator Robert Ray asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs, upon notice, on 20 March 2007:
With reference to Australia’s overseas aid program, managed by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAid), for each of the financial years 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 to date:
(1) How many investigations into the alleged illegal use of Commonwealth funds, assets and property including theft, fraud and bribery were: (a) initiated; (b) ongoing from previous years; and (c) completed.

(2) Of the investigations that were completed, how many resulted in: (a) prosecution; and in each case: (i) what sums were involved, and (ii) what was the outcome of the prosecution; (b) administrative action; and in each case: (i) by what type, and (ii) what sums were involved; and (c) no action being taken.

Senator Coonan—The Minister for Foreign Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Cases</th>
<th>Number Cases ($A)</th>
<th>Number Cases ($A)</th>
<th>Total AUD</th>
<th>Amounts Recovered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initiated</td>
<td>Smaller than $10,000</td>
<td>$10,000 - $100,000</td>
<td>$100,000 - $300,000</td>
<td>Total Value of potential Loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 - 05</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>212,881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 - 06</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>515,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 - 07</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>209,114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

(#i) Most of the reported cases are of small value and have occurred overseas at the local level.

(#ii) The average of the “Total value of potential Loss” of reported cases compared to the total of AusAID’s expenditure over the three years concerned represents 0.02%.

(b) and (c)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1(b) Ongoing from previous years (#iii) and (#iv)</th>
<th>1(c) Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004 - 05</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 - 06</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 - 07</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

(#iii) The majority of these cases are in the hands of local authorities for follow up / prosecution in the respective countries.

(#iv) These cases are not exclusive between years. Some cases therefore will appear in more than one year until resolved.
(2) Of investigations completed how many resulted in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sums involved (AUD)</th>
<th>Outcome of prosecution</th>
<th>Administrative Action</th>
<th>What type?</th>
<th>What sums involved?</th>
<th>No action being taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004 - 05</td>
<td>3 PNGKina 7,165 $2,866</td>
<td>3 Convictions</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
<td>NIL loss to AusAID</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 - 06</td>
<td>0 N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 - 07</td>
<td>0 N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Papua

(Question No. 3057)

Senator Allison asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs, upon notice, on 21 March 2007:

With reference to the statement by Reverend Socratez Sofyan Yoman, President of the Fellowship of Baptist Churches of West Papua, on 1 March 2007 regarding progress for West Papua following the passage in 2001 of Special Autonomy Law (No. 21/2001), which was supported by the Australian Government:

(1) Does the Government consider that special autonomy under this law has achieved its objectives to date; if not, why not; and if so, why.

(2) Is it the case that Indigenous West Papuans are still subjected to torture and cruelty.

(3) To what extent has special autonomy: (a) acted to protect the basic rights and the survival of the West Papuans in the future; (b) delivered the opportunity for Indigenous West Papuans in the fields of: (i) education, (ii) health, and (iii) the economy; and (c) ended the operations of the military and the police mobile brigade, Brimob, in West Papua.

(4) Has special autonomy controlled the migration of people from outside of West Papua to West Papua that has been occurring on a weekly basis.

(5) Is the Government aware that there are three 5 000 passenger capacity Royal Line passenger ships that bring a total of 15 000 people to West Papua every week, and that this figure does not include those who travel to West Papua by air.

Senator Coonan—The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Australia strongly supports the development of Papua as a stable and prosperous part of the Republic of Indonesia. We believe this is best done through the implementation of special autonomy and respect for human rights. Implementation of the Special Autonomy Law is ongoing.

(2) We continue to urge the Indonesian Government to investigate any alleged human rights abuses and ensure that the human rights of all Indonesians are respected.

(3) Implementation of the Special Autonomy Law is ongoing.

(4) Formal transmigration programs to Papua ceased in 2000.

(5) Yes.
Family Tax Benefit  
(Question No. 3060)

Senator Stephens asked the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, upon notice, on 21 March 2007:
For each of the financial years 2004-05 and 2005-06, what was the average payment amount, including supplements, to families for: (a) Family Tax Benefit Part A; and (b) Family Tax Benefit Part B.

Senator Scullion—The Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
This information is readily available in departmental Annual Reports. The reference for 2004-05 is page 88, and for 2005-06 it is page 173.

HIV-AIDS  
(Question No. 3065)

Senator Bob Brown asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs, upon notice, on 22 March 2007:
With reference to HIV/AIDS in the Asia-Pacific region:
(1) What are the current figures for the number of people affected with HIV/AIDS in: (a) Papua New Guinea; (b) West Papua; (c) Indonesia as a whole; (d) East Timor; and (e) the South Pacific Islands, excluding Papua New Guinea.
(2) For each the above nations, or group of nations what is: (a) the total number of deaths from HIV/AIDS related causes; and (b) Australia’s contribution towards fighting HIV/AIDS: (i) for the 2006-07 financial year, and (ii) as a projection, for the 2007-08 financial year.
(3) What new strategies does the Minister have to combat HIV/AIDS in the region.

Senator Coonan—The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the honourable senator’s question:
(1) (a), (b), (c) and (d) Information is publicly available in the AusAID research publication: Impacts of HIV/AIDS 2005-2025 in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and East Timor: Final Report of the HIV Epidemiological Modelling and Impact Study which is available on AusAID’s website: http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/impacts_hiv.pdf, (e) Information is publicly available on the Secretariat of the Pacific Community website: http://www.spc.int/hiv/
(b) (i) The Australian Government’s funding for bilateral and regional HIV/AIDS programs in 2006-07 is as follows. Estimates are provided as the 2006-07 financial year is not yet completed.
Papua New Guinea: Estimated $37.4 million
Indonesia: Estimated $12 million (includes support for Papua and West Irian Jaya provinces)
East Timor: Estimated $320,000
Pacific: Estimated $4.3 million
(ii) The Australian Government’s projected funding for bilateral and regional HIV/AIDS programs in 2007-08 is as follows.

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Papua New Guinea: Estimated $43.86 million
Indonesia: Estimated $12 million (includes support for Papua and West Irian Jaya provinces)
East Timor: Estimated: $240,000
Pacific: Estimated $5.1 million

(3) In July 2004 the Australian Government launched *Meeting the Challenge: Australia’s International HIV/AIDS Strategy*. This strategy continues to guide the Australian Government’s approach to reducing the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS in our region, which includes a strong commitment to supporting countries in our region to develop and implement their own national strategies. This approach was reiterated in *Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability - White Paper on the Australian Government’s overseas aid program* and in *Helping Health Systems Deliver: A Policy for Australian Development Assistance in Health*, both of which were released last year.

**Global Fund to Fight AIDS**

(Question No. 3067)

Senator Allison asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs, upon notice, on 22 March 2007:

With reference to the Voluntary Replenishment Mechanism established by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund) and, specifically, to the recent meeting of the Global Fund in Oslo:

(1) Has the Government made any plans for greater resource allocation to the Global Fund in response to the estimated growth in its expenditure; if not, why not.
(2) Has the Government considered the proposal by the Global Fund and Jubilee Australia to exchange part of Indonesia’s debt to Australia for additional funding for tuberculosis programs in Indonesia.

Senator Coonan—The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) The Australian Government is considering its next pledge to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Global Fund is currently conducting the second cycle (for the period 2008-2010) of its Voluntary Replenishment Mechanism and will hold the final meeting for this cycle in Berlin in September.
(2) The Australian Government participates in a number of international debt relief initiatives, including Paris Club debt rescheduling, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. However, we do not support ‘debt swap’ projects, such as the one proposed by the Global Fund and Jubilee Australia for Indonesia. The Australian Government prefers to provide more targeted assistance through its bilateral aid program and agreed international debt relief fora.

**Institute of Chartered Accountants: Not-for-Profit Sector Report**

(Question No. 3071)

Senator Murray asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, upon notice, on 26 March 2007:

With reference to the report of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia, Not-for-profit sector reporting: a research project, published in September 2006:

(1) Does the Government support the thrust of the report’s findings and recommendations for annual and financial reports.
(2) Does the Government propose to assist in the implementation of the report’s recommendations across the not-for-profit (NFP) sector in any way; if so, how.

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(3) In view of the ‘myriad of legislation’ referred to in chapter 6 of the report, does the Government have any plans to initiate simplification, harmonisation or rationalisation of NFP legislation and regulation through the Council of Australian Governments’ process.

**Senator Minchin**—The Treasurer has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) The findings and recommendations outline ways that not-for-profit entities can improve their reporting to members. The Government supports industry-based initiatives to promote best practice reporting in this sector.

(2) The existing statutory reporting requirements for not-for-profit entities reporting under the Corporations Act 2001 contain sufficient flexibility to implement these findings and recommendations.

(3) The Government is considering this issue as part of responding to recommendation 18 of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs’ report entitled Harmonisation of legal systems within Australia and between Australia and New Zealand.

**Australian Tourism Development Program**

(Question No. 3077)

**Senator Stephens** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, upon notice, on 27 March 2007:

(1) Does Tourism Australia have any influence in the funding guidelines that govern the ATDP.

(2) Is Tourism Australia consulted over which projects are selected to receive ATDP grants.

**Senator Minchin**—The Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Tourism Australia was consulted in the development of the Australian Tourism Development Program (ATDP). Ongoing responsibility for the ATDP guidelines rests with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources.

(2) No. Selection of projects for ATDP grants rests with AusIndustry, the program delivery arm of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, which has responsibility for managing the ATDP.

**Grandparent Child Care Benefit**

(Question No. 3085)

**Senator McLucas** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, upon notice, on 28 March 2007:

(1) For each of the past 2 financial years: (a) how many people were eligible to receive the Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB); (b) how many people received payments of GCCB; (c) what was the average amount of GCCB paid to each recipient; (d) what was the average number of hours of GCCB claimed by each recipient; and (e) what was the total expenditure for the GCCB.

(2) What is the budget for the GCCB in the 2006-07 financial year and over the forward estimates period.

**Senator Scullion**—The Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

The very detailed Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB) information requested is not collated by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs in the normal course of program management. Due to the substantial resources required to produce this information it is not possible for this to be provided.
There is no separate appropriation for GCCB. As GCCB is a special rate of Child Care Benefit (CCB), payment is made through the CCB appropriation.

**Human Rights: Darfur**

(Question No. 3090)

Senator Stott Despoja asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs, upon notice, on 29 March 2007:


2. What contribution has the Government made to international efforts to end human rights abuses in Darfur.

3. Is the Minister aware that, at the World Summit held in September 2005, the international community formally embraced the principle of the ‘responsibility to protect’, that is where a state is unable or unwilling to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, it is the responsibility of the international community to do so; if so, to what extent does the Government believe that Australia’s contribution to this crisis, and that of the international community as a whole, has met this obligation.

Senator Coonan—The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the honourable senator’s question:

1. Yes, I am aware of the findings of the report.

   The Australian Government appreciated the thorough research and broad range of consultations undertaken in the preparation of the High-Level Mission’s report. The report outlined clearly that the Government of Sudan has failed to uphold its responsibility to protect its citizens. This is evidenced by numerous, and documented, large scale attacks on civilian communities, continued targeting of humanitarian and human rights actors, rape and sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, repression of political dissent, and a prevailing climate of impunity. Particularly troubling is the fact that these abuses have often occurred with the collusion or direct involvement of Sudanese state actors. Australia supported the endorsement of the report by the Human Rights Council (HRC), and the adoption of strong and effective follow-up steps.

2. The Australian Government has made representations to the Government of Sudan on the humanitarian situation in Darfur.

   Australia has strongly supported the United Nations Security Council’s decisions to apply a range of measures to prevent an end to the conflict and suffering in Darfur, and to bring those responsible for committing atrocities to justice. In particular, we supported the Security Council’s decision (Resolution 1706 of August 2006) to extend the mandate of the United Nations’ Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) from Southern Sudan to include Darfur. Australia also supported the 16 November 2006 agreement in Addis Ababa between the Government of Sudan, the UN and others, on the deployment of a ‘hybrid’ United Nations/African Union force in Darfur. In November 2006 we lobbied key African Union and Arab League states to place pressure on Sudan to accept a more robust peacekeeping effort in Darfur.

   The Australian Government actively supports a range of multilateral measures that have been set in place, including an arms embargo and a no-fly zone over Darfur, as well as travel bans and asset freezes on individuals who impede the peace process or commit crimes or atrocities (Resolution...
1591 of March 2005). The Security Council has also referred crimes committed in Darfur to the Interna-
tional Criminal Court (Resolution 1593 of March 2005) and imposed additional financial and travel sanctions on four individuals because of their activities in Darfur (Resolution 1672 of April 2006). Australia has fully implemented these measures and will continue to do so appropriately.

Australia supported the convening of the HRC Special Session on Sudan in December 2006, which established the High Level Mission. Following the report of the Mission to the HRC session in March 2007, Australia co-sponsored the follow-up resolution, which established a group of UN Special Rapporteurs and tasked them with ensuring effective follow-up, and with fostering the implementation of resolutions and recommendations on Darfur, as adopted by the HRC, the former Commission on Human Rights and other UN human rights mechanisms.

(3) Yes, I am aware that at the World Summit in 2005 governments accepted the “responsibility to protect” concept through a robust statement in the Summit outcomes document. Australia is a strong supporter of the “responsibility to protect” concept and is pleased that the “responsibility to protect” concept has gained growing support amongst the international community.

In response to the High-Level Mission’s report to the HRC in March, Australia’s statement in that session expressed concern that human rights abuses in Darfur have often occurred with the collusion or direct involvement of Sudanese state actors, and referred to the Government of Sudan’s failure to uphold its responsibility to protect its citizens.