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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.

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<td>DARWIN</td>
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FORTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—THIRD 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 Hon. John Joseph Hogg
Deputy President and Chair of Committees—Senator Hon. Alan Baird Ferguson
Leader of the Government in the Senate—Senator Hon. Christopher Vaughan Evans
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate—Senator Hon. Stephen Michael Conroy
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate—Senator Hon. Nicholas Hugh Minchin
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate—Senator Hon. Eric Abetz
Manager of Government Business in the Senate—Senator Hon. Joseph William Ludwig
Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate—Senator Hon. Christopher Martin Ellison

Senate Party Leaders and Whips
Leader of the Australian Labor Party—Senator Hon. Christopher Vaughan Evans
Deputy Leader of the Australian Labor Party—Senator Hon. Stephen Michael Conroy
Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—Senator Hon. Nicholas Hugh Minchin
Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—Senator Hon. Eric Abetz
Leader of the Nationals—Senator Hon. Nigel Gregory Scullion
Deputy Leader of the Nationals—Senator Fiona Joy Nash
Leader of the Australian Greens—Senator Robert James Brown
Leader of the Family First Party—Senator Steve Fielding

Government Whips—Senators Kerry Williams Kelso O’Brien, Donald Edward Farrell and Anne McEwen
Liberal Party of Australia Whips—Senators Stephen Shane Parry and Judith Anne Adams
The Nationals Whip—Senator Fiona Joy Nash
Australian Greens Whip—Senator Rachel Mary Siewert
Family First Party Whip—Senator Steve Fielding

Printed by authority of the Senate
## Members of the Senate

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<th>State or Territory</th>
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<th>Party</th>
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(1) Chosen by the Parliament of South Australia to fill a casual vacancy vice Amanda Eloise Vanstone, resigned.
(2) Chosen by the Parliament of Western Australia to fill a casual vacancy vice Ian Campbell, resigned.
(3) Term expires at close of day next preceding the polling day for the general election of members of the House of Representatives.

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS
AG—Australian Greens; ALP—Australian Labor Party; CLP—Country Liberal 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—A Thompson
Rudd Ministry

Prime Minister: Hon. Kevin Rudd, MP
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion: Hon. Julia Gillard, MP
Treasurer: Hon. Wayne Swan MP
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and Leader of the Government in the Senate: Senator Hon. Chris Evans
Special Minister of State, Cabinet Secretary and Vice President of the Executive Council: Senator Hon. John Faulkner
Minister for Finance and Deregulation: Hon. Lindsay Tanner MP
Minister for Trade: Hon. Simon Crean MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs: Hon. Stephen Smith MP
Minister for Defence: Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP
Minister for Health and Ageing: Hon. Nicola Roxon MP
Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs: Hon. Jenny Macklin MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and Leader of the House: Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate: Senator Hon. Stephen Conroy
Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research: Senator Hon. Kim Carr
Minister for Climate Change and Water: Senator Hon. Penny Wong
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts: Hon. Peter Garrett AM, MP
Attorney-General: Senator Hon. Robert McClelland
Minister for Human Services and Manager of Government Business in the Senate: Senator Hon. Joe Ludwig
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: Hon. Tony Burke MP
Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism: Hon. Martin Ferguson AM, MP

[The above ministers constitute the cabinet]
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<th>Minister for Home Affairs</th>
<th>Hon. Bob Debus MP</th>
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<td>Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Chris Bowen MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Veterans’ Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Alan Griffin MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Housing and Minister for the Status of Women</td>
<td>Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Employment Participation</td>
<td>Hon. Brendan O’Connor MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Science and Personnel</td>
<td>Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy and Minister Assisting the Finance Minister on Deregulation</td>
<td>Hon. Dr Craig Emerson MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Nick Sherry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Ageing</td>
<td>Hon. Justine Elliot MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Youth and Minister for Sport</td>
<td>Hon. Kate Ellis MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education and Childcare</td>
<td>Hon. Maxine McKew MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Procurement</td>
<td>Hon. Greg Combet AM, MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support</td>
<td>Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM, MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Northern Australia</td>
<td>Hon. Gary Gray AO, MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children’s Services</td>
<td>Hon. Bill Shorten MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance</td>
<td>Hon. Bob McMullan MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Duncan Kerr MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>Hon. Anthony Byrne MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector and Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Inclusion</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Ursula Stephens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Trade</td>
<td>Hon. John Murphy MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Jan McLucas</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services</td>
<td>Hon. Laurie Ferguson MP</td>
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SHADOW MINISTRY

Leader of the Opposition
Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Employment, Business and Workplace Relations
Leader of the Nationals and Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and Local Government
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Minister for Defence
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
Shadow Treasurer
Manager of Opposition Business in the House and Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing
Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs
Shadow Minister for Trade
Shadow Minister for Families, Community Services, Indigenous Affairs and the Voluntary Sector
Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Shadow Minister for Human Services
Shadow Minister for Education, Apprenticeships and Training
Shadow Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Urban Water
Shadow Minister for Finance, Competition Policy and Deregulation
Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate and Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
Shadow Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
Shadow Attorney-General
Shadow Minister for Resources and Energy and Shadow Minister for Tourism
Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Water Security

Hon. Brendan Nelson MP
Hon. Julie Bishop MP
Hon. Warren Truss MP
Senator Hon. Nick Minchin
Senator Hon. Eric Abetz
Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP
Hon. Joe Hockey MP
Hon. Andrew Robb MP
Hon. Ian Macfarlane MP
Hon. Tony Abbott MP
Senator Hon. Nigel Scullion
Senator Hon. Helen Coonan
Hon. Tony Smith MP
Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Hon. Peter Dutton MP
Senator Hon. Chris Ellison
Hon. Bruce Billson MP
Senator Hon. George Brandis
Senator Hon. David Johnston
Hon. John Cobb MP

[The above constitute the shadow cabinet]
SHADOW MINISTRY—continued

Shadow Minister for Justice and Border Protection; Assisting Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
Hon. Chris Pyne MP

Shadow Special Minister of State
Senator Hon. Michael Ronaldson

Shadow Minister for Small Business, the Service Economy and Tourism
Steven Ciobo MP

Shadow Minister for Environment, Heritage, the Arts and Indigenous Affairs
Hon. Sharman Stone MP

Shadow Assistant Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Governance
Michael Keenan MP

Shadow Minister for Ageing
Margaret May MP
Hon. Bob Baldwin MP

Shadow Minister for Defence Science and Personnel; Assisting Shadow Minister for Defence
Luke Hartsuyker MP

Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House and Shadow Minister for Business Development, Independent Contractors and Consumer Affairs
Hon. Bronwyn Bishop MP

Shadow Minister for Veterans’ Affairs
Andrew Southcott MP

Shadow Minister for Employment Participation and Apprenticeships and Training
Hon. Sussan Ley MP

Shadow Minister for Housing and Shadow Minister for Status of Women
Hon. Pat Farmer MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Cabinet Secretary
Don Randall MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern Australia
Senator Hon. Ian Macdonald

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Health
Senator Hon. Richard Colbeck

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Education
Senator Hon. Brett Mason

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence
Hon. Peter Lindsay MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure, Roads and Transport
Barry Haase MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Trade
John Forrest MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Citizenship
Louise Markus MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government
Sophie Mirabella MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism
Jo Gash MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Ageing and the Voluntary Sector
Mark Coulton MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs
Senator Marise Payne

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Families and Community Services
Senator Cory Bernardi
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The Senate met at 12 noon.

SENATORS SWORN
His Excellency Major General Michael Jeffery, Companion in the Order of Australia, Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Military Cross, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, entered the chamber and, taking his seat on the dais, said:

Honourable senators:
I am present to administer to senators elected to serve in the Senate from 1 July 2008 the oath or affirmation of allegiance, as required by section 42 of the Constitution.

The Clerk—I lay on the table the certificates of election of senators elected to serve in the Senate from 1 July 2008:

New South Wales—Mark Victor Arbib, Douglas Niven Cameron, Helen Lloyd Coonan, Marise Ann Payne, Ursula Mary Stephens, John Reginald Williams

Queensland—Ronald Leslie Doyle Boswell, Suzanne Kay Boyce, Mark Lionel Furner, John Joseph Hogg, Ian Douglas Macdonald, Claire Mary Moore

South Australia—Cory Bernardi, Simon John Birmingham, Donald Edward Farrell, Sarah Coral Hanson-Young, Penelope Ying Yen Wong, Nicholas Xenophon

Tasmania—Catryna Louise Bilyk, Carol Louise Brown, Robert James Brown, David Christopher Bushby, Richard Mansell Colbeck

Victoria—Jacinta Mary Ann Collins, David Ian Feeney, Mitchell Peter Fifield, Helen Kroger, Gavin Mark Marshall, Scott Michael Ryan, Nicholas John Sherry

Western Australia—Thomas Mark Bishop, Michaelia Clare Cash, Alan Eggleston, David Albert Lloyd Johnston, Scott Ludlam, Louise Clare Pratt

The abovenamed senators (with the exception of Senator Sherry—leave of absence on parliamentary business overseas) made and subscribed the oath or affirmation of allegiance.

His Excellency the Governor-General having congratulated senators and retired—

PRESIDENT
Election

Senator CHRIS EVANS (Western Australia—Leader of the Government in the Senate) (12.18 pm)—Mr Clerk, I remind the Senate that the time has come when it is necessary for the Senate to choose one of its members to be President. I propose to the Senate for its President Senator Hogg, and I move:

That Senator Hogg take the chair of the Senate as President.

The Clerk—Are there any further nominations?

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (12.18 pm)—Mr Clerk, I propose to the Senate as its President Senator Christine Milne, and I move:

That Senator Milne take the chair of the Senate as President.

The Clerk—Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, I invite the candidates to address the chair.

Senator HOGG (Queensland) (12.18 pm)—I submit myself to the will of the Senate.

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (12.19 pm)—Clerk, I draw your attention to standing order No. 6 and seek your advice as to when I may speak to my motion nominating Senator Milne as a candidate.

The Clerk—When the other candidate has addressed the Senate, Senator. Senator Milne, do you wish to speak?
Senator MILNE (Tasmania) (12.19 pm)—Thank you. Fellow senators, I submit myself to the will of the Senate and, in so doing, say that it would be my great pleasure and honour to preside over the Senate, if that was the wish of the Senate. Senator Brown will speak to my credentials for this role, but I would certainly serve the Senate without fear or favour, if it was the will of the Senate that I do so.

The Clerk—Do any senators wish to address the chamber?

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (12.20 pm)—Senator Milne is the clear choice for this position if we are to take seriously this role of President of the Senate, and I do. The role is constitutionally the most important that any parliamentarian in either house can hold. It requires a person with great experience, and that includes public experience and, if possible, national and international experience. And it requires somebody who is going to serve this Senate without fear or favour, and Senator Milne would certainly do that. She is a candidate of enormous integrity and has a fearless ability to be honest and to be fair—qualities which are essential to a chair of the Senate. Senator Milne, besides 10 years parliamentary experience in Tasmania where, amongst other things, she very successfully led the party in the balance of power in the late 1990s, has now been in this chamber for a year more than a term and knows very well how it works and knows more particularly how better it should work. I point out that she was also Vice-President of the World Conservation Union in Switzerland—a United Nations associated body—for some years. She has also been chair of the global council of the World Conservation Union and remains chair of the Oceania chapter of the council. She is also a United Nations Global 500 award recipient.

I ask senators of the government and the opposition to listen carefully to this. This job should not be a sinecure. The arrangement between the government and the opposition whereby one takes the chair and one takes the deputy chair does not serve this Senate properly. The best person should be appointed and voted to the chair, and this should be a free vote. It should not be corralled by a cosy arrangement between the two big parties in this place. It is time that ended. That does not serve this Senate fairly or well, and the Greens—

Honourable senators interjecting—

Senator BOB BROWN—The interjections that I hear, Clerk, are an example of why we need a very strong President to ensure that the standing orders are adhered to by all, because the public gets a better outcome from the strict application of these rules—Senator Milne would do just that. She is the best candidate and I recommend her to all of you as voters with your own right to think individually rather than according to the dictate of party as to how you are going to appoint this chair.

The Clerk—Do any other senators wish to address the question? There being two nominations, in accordance with the standing orders a ballot will be held. Before the Senate proceeds to ballot, the bells will be rung for four minutes.

The bells having been rung—

The Clerk—The ballot will now be held. Ballot papers will be distributed to all senators, who are requested to write upon the ballot paper the name of the candidate for whom they wish to vote. The candidates are Senator Hogg and Senator Milne.

The Clerk—The result of the ballot is: Senator Hogg, 68 votes and Senator Milne, six votes. Senator Hogg is therefore elected as President of the Senate in accordance with the standing orders and will take the chair.

CHAMBER
Senator Hogg having been conducted to the dais—

The PRESIDENT (12.40 pm)—Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners on whose land we meet. I think that is so important. Then I would like to thank the senators who have just placed their trust in me and given their support. I am honest, I am fair, and I am sure that as time progresses those who might not believe that will find it to be true.

On the occasion of being elected to this very high office indeed, I think it is an opportunity to reflect on my path here. In particular, I think that one does not get here by one’s good looks, charm, personality, political skills, wit or any other devices. One really achieves office—whether it be as a senator, whether it be as the President or whether it be as any other officer in this place—by virtue of a wide range of support that has been lent to one over a long period of time.

I think that is something that we should never overlook in our successes in life—that we never get there solely by ourselves. So I want to firstly acknowledge my party and those loyal people in the party who have elected me through our state council process to be a candidate for the party over a long period of time. I have witnessed in this place a number of senators who have not been so successful in their preselection processes, and of course it is a sad occasion indeed. The people who put you here are important, to say the least.

I want to thank my caucus colleagues, and I notice, in particular, that some of the members of the House of Representatives have ventured here this afternoon. Again, without their support, I would not stand before you. From my own state, I want to recognise Anthony Chisholm, the state secretary, and I have enjoyed the support of a number of state secretaries over a long period of time. I owe my success in part to my party. But, next, I want to acknowledge the electors of Queensland. Rightly or wrongly, in the minds of some people, they have returned me now on three occasions to this place, a great honour indeed.

I next wish to acknowledge my union. I am a proud unionist and always have been. In particular, my union, the SDA, has a long and proud tradition which has been fostered in my time with the union particularly by Jim Maher, who unfortunately cannot be here today, and Joe de Bruyn, who is the national secretary. Without my union, without the opportunities that my union gave to me, coming from a very humble background indeed, I would not stand before you. I next want to thank Chris Ketter, who is the current Queensland branch secretary of the SDA, for his long-term friendship and support of me. Also, last but not least from my union, I want to acknowledge Wally Major. Wally is represented by his daughter Joan here today. Wally was the person who fatefully gave me the job with the SDA over 32 years ago.

Again, as I said, one does not get here by one’s own good looks, talents or whatever else, and an enduring friendship with the Australian Workers Union and Bill Ludwig, who represents them here today, has been of great assistance to me in my career over a long period of time. I want to mention ‘Sciaccas’. Con Sciaccia, Sciaccas Lawyers and his former partner, the Hon. Brian Kil- martin, who is now a magistrate, have supported me and given me great counsel over a long period of time.

Now I want to mention a name that will not mean a great deal to people outside of the SDA—a person who has given me great strength and courage over a long period of time by the name of Jim Cosgrave of Cos-
grave Management Consultants, who taught me how to be patient and how to think in a positive way in developing the skills that I may well have. I thank my staff, Julie Christtensen and Hazel Hubbard—who have endured me for 12 years as their employer and without whom my office would not have run successfully over that period of time—Darrell Main and of course Julia Clifford and Meredith Horne in Canberra.

I now turn to my family, because in this game unless you have the support of your family you are not going to make it. I have been extremely blessed with my family and the support that they have given me. It would be a proud moment if my late parents were alive, but obviously they are long gone. But my sister, Mary, is here. I thank you, Mary, for your support. I thank my son, Stephen, my daughter Elizabeth and my daughter Louise. You have been wonderful. You have put up with me through all of my union career and political career. I thank you for that. But the really solid rock has been my wife, Sue. Sue, you are amazing. As I said, this speech is about the people who have supported me over a long period of time; you have been a tower of strength to me and you have enabled me to achieve what I have achieved. I salute you and love you.

It is not possible in a brief speech such as this to thank and encompass everyone. But I think I have made my point that it was not done by me alone and that it was done with the support and cooperation of a wide group of people. Having said that, I make special mention of the two former presidents that I have served under: Alan Ferguson and Paul Calvert. In my time as Deputy President of the Senate they extended a hand of friendship to me that broke down party barriers, not that there were any party barriers in this particular high office. In particular, thank you to you, Alan. This period has not been easy for Alan and me. We knew that there was going to be a transition, but it has worked wonderfully indeed for both of us. I thank you, Alan.

Last but not least, I want to remind people that I come from very humble circumstances. I am proud of my heritage. Those who dig into my background will find that I have a great-great-grandfather who was a politician. He was the subject of Steele Rudd’s notice in Dad in politics, which goes back to the turn of the century. I never thought that I had anyone of that character in my background, but obviously I do and obviously it is reincarnated here today.

I look forward to working with all senators in a cooperative manner in the future. I am sure that we can make this chamber work in spite of the changing dynamics within it. I look forward to the challenges. Thank you very much.

Senator CHRIS EVANS (Western Australia—Leader of the Government in the Senate) (12.49 pm)—Mr President, on behalf of all senators, and particularly on behalf of government senators, I congratulate you on your election to the very important office of President of the Senate. It is one of the most important offices in the Australian democracy. It is important that the person elected to that position takes their function and role very seriously. We know that you will, I think you are superbly qualified for the position. You have served an apprenticeship as Deputy President of the Senate, which I think will serve you well in the role.

More importantly, I think it is because you have a reputation as being a very honest operator, a person of integrity, a person of mature judgement and a person who is balanced and conscientious—all qualities that I think are important for the role of President—that the Senate has shown the good judgement in electing you to this position. Your reputation for those qualities is accepted across the
chamber, despite political differences and arguments. I think people accept you as being a good choice for the position, not just as a reflection of party numbers or convention.

I do acknowledge the role of the opposition in supporting the convention of the President coming from the government party. I congratulate them on honouring that convention. I have yet to check whether Senator McGauran also honoured that convention, but when we go to the ballots later we will see.

Honourable senators interjecting—

Senator CHRIS EVANS—There was one informal vote, I understand! That was not meant as any inappropriate remark in relation to Senator McGauran; it was just a reflection on an earlier event. But, Mr President, I congratulate you on your election. I look forward to you dealing with what I think will be a large challenge for you in the new Senate. It will place pressure on you. But I think your standing in the Senate will serve you well in that role. I am sure you will do the job admirably.

I would also briefly like to mention the service of Senator Ferguson as President. I think he did an excellent job. His humour and openness were a great credit to him. I acknowledge his integrity, in the face of being a member of the government that had the numbers in the Senate. It meant that he was able to do that job despite what I know would have been pressures for him to be more supportive of the government’s position. They are only natural pressures that occur in the job for any President, but I think the fact that he was able to maintain his reputation for impartiality despite those pressures is to his great credit.

So, Mr President, I congratulate you on your election. I think it was in part due to the shortness of your campaign speech! But there are other factors that served you well in this election, and we wish you all the best.

Senator MINCHIN (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (12.52 pm)—Mr President, on behalf of opposition senators I warmly congratulate you on your election to this very high office. Your election, of course, for opposition senators, does reflect the disappointing reality that the Australian people decided to change the government at the last election. But it also reflects, as Senator Evans observed, the fact that our opposition does respect the convention that the government of the day should nominate the President of this chamber. We congratulate the Labor Party on nominating the best possible candidate that they could nominate, in you, Mr President, for this exalted position.

I must say that, for a Labor senator, you have done a remarkably good job as Deputy President of the Senate for the last six years. You have earned widespread respect from across the chamber. I and many others on our side have had the privilege of working closely with you—and, indeed, of voting with you on some of the more significant and difficult moral issues that come before this chamber. Many of us know and respect you personally from that experience. Your carriage of the office of Deputy President stands you in good stead and does reflect the fact that you are an outstanding candidate for President. I have no doubt you will do a great job. We do expect from you, and no doubt will get from you, the independence, the objectivity and the impartiality that is incumbent on the bearer of the great office of President. We do hope very much that you will enjoy this great office until August 2011—when, with great respect, we on this side look forward to you being succeeded by a Liberal senator! But enjoy the time until then. Thank you, Mr President.
Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (12.54 pm)—Mr President, congratulations on your ascendancy to the presidency. We wish you the most rewarding and fulfilling years in that position and offer you every assistance that we can give you during this period. We look forward to working with you and, indeed, with all other members of the chamber in the coming three testing years.

I have one suggestion which you may consider—that is, to reflect the multipartisan nature of this chamber, the chair might recognise not just the government and the opposition but also the crossbench at the beginning of the sittings each day. That is something you may care to look at, Mr President. That said, congratulations. Enjoy the office. We offer you every support.

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (12.55 pm)—Mr President, on behalf of Family First, I congratulate you on your new role as President of the Senate. I have no doubt that you will act without fear or favour and, obviously with the numbers now changed and now we have a Senate that is no longer a rubber stamp and there is a decent chance for decent debate to be held, that there will be a sense of a fair go in debates across the board. We do congratulate you on your position. I made some statements previously about the outgoing President, and I also thank him for the work that he did.

Senator FERGUSON (South Australia) (12.56 pm)—Firstly, Mr President, I congratulate you on achieving this office. As the previous occupier of that chair, I could not have wished for a more loyal and supportive Deputy President than you were. As has been said before, we did comply with the convention that has been in place for some time, that the government should supply the President, but I can also say that you won it on merit. I look forward to working with you and I offer you my wholehearted support. We look forward to your time as President and I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate you on attaining that office, which I am sure you will find is a very enjoyable one.

Senator CHRIS EVANS (Western Australia—Leader of the Government in the Senate) (12.57 pm)—I wish to inform honourable senators that the Governor-General will be pleased to receive Mr President and such honourable senators as desire to accompany him in the Members Hall immediately.

Sitting suspended from 12.57 pm to 2.00 pm

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. John Hogg) took the chair and read prayers.

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER THE OATH OR AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT (2.01 pm)—I have to report that, accompanied by honourable senators this afternoon, I presented myself to the Governor-General as the choice of the Senate as President. The Governor-General congratulated me upon my election and presented me with a commission to administer to senators the oath or affirmation of allegiance. I table the commission.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Election

Senator CHRIS EVANS (Western Australia—Leader of the Government in the Senate) (2.01 pm)—Mr President, I remind the Senate that it should now choose one of its members to be Deputy President and Chair of Committees.

Senator MINCHIN (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (2.01 pm)—Mr President, I propose to the Senate
for its Deputy President and Chair of Committees Senator Ferguson, and I move:

That Senator Ferguson be appointed Deputy President and Chair of Committees.

The PRESIDENT—Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, I declare Senator Ferguson elected Deputy President and Chair of Committees in accordance with the standing orders.

Honourable senators—Hear, hear!

The PRESIDENT (2.02 pm)—You got an easier ride than I did, Senator Ferguson, so you must be better looking or more popular or whatever it might be! I congratulate you on your election as Deputy President and Chair of Committees. It is an honour that you deserve and it is a reflection of your ability to know the tone and tenor of this place from your time as President and from your long service and long standing as a member of this Senate. I congratulate you and I wish you all the best. I look forward to working together harmoniously, as we have done now over a long period of time.

Senator CHRIS EVANS (Western Australia—Leader of the Government in the Senate) (2.03 pm)—On behalf of government senators, I congratulate Senator Ferguson on his election as Deputy President. I am sure he will carry out the duties with the same level of professionalism he did as President. I think it best not to say anything further nice about him—before I ruin both our reputations! Congratulations, Senator.

Senator MINCHIN (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (2.03 pm)—On behalf of opposition senators, I warmly congratulate Senator Ferguson on his unopposed election as Deputy President. I should note for the record that it reflects well on Senator Ferguson and the stature that he has in this chamber that he was unopposed as both the Liberal nominee for the position of Deputy President and indeed, I am pleased to say, as the chamber nominee for Deputy President. I thank the government for respecting the convention to which we earlier referred that has as its flipside that the opposition nominates the person for the deputy chair. We thank the Labor Party for respecting that convention.

Of course, we are on our side, as I said in June, disappointed that Senator Ferguson was not able to continue in the position of President. He had but 12 months in that high office in which he demonstrated great dignity, impartiality and presence. He has of course been superbly trained for the position of Deputy President, having served as President. Indeed, as I understand it, there are only four senators in the history of this chamber who have served in both positions, and Senator Ferguson creates history today by being the first to go from President to Deputy President! So your name will be in the history books, Senator Ferguson. I have no doubt that across the chamber we all understand and expect that he will serve with great dignity and professionalism in the position of deputy chair.

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (2.05 pm)—Mr President, first let me thank you for acknowledging the crossbench. There is a little bit of history there, and I think that is a very positive start to your period as President—and I congratulate you on that. On that matter, I also congratulate Senator Ferguson on being elected Deputy President. Senator Minchin, however, tempts me to comment on this so-called convention: it is nothing of the sort. It is a cosy arrangement between the two big parties and—

Honourable senators interjecting—

Senator BOB BROWN—let me just say this—if we do not have an open vote on the best people to be elected to these important chairs, we are devaluing the currency of
those positions. If the first act of a Senate is to make an arrangement in party rooms, behind closed doors, between the two big parties—

Honourable senators interjecting—

Senator BOB BROWN—then it does not bode—

The PRESIDENT—Order! Senator Bob Brown is entitled to be heard in silence. I call those interjecting to order.

Senator BOB BROWN—It is a very important and grievous matter that I am discussing here. This is not a ‘convention’. There are other words I could use. It is a matter of convenience between the big parties, to the exclusion of the best interests of the Senate and the Australian people, and it ought to be stopped. There ought to be more judicious and sensible thinking coming from the leaders of both the big parties so that, in future, we get a fair and proper and individually based assessment of who will make the best President and Deputy President.

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (2.07 pm)—On behalf of Family First, I congratulate Senator Ferguson on his election to Deputy President and Chairman of Committees. It is the tag team of Senator Hogg and Senator Ferguson—just a change in roles.

Senator FERGUSON (South Australia) (2.07 pm)—Thank you, Mr President, for your good wishes. Thank you also to Senator Evans and Senator Minchin. I think, Senator Brown, that yours was a congratulation.

Senator Bob Brown—It was.

Senator FERGUSON—I am not quite sure. Thank you, Senator Fielding. I look forward to sharing in this role. As I said earlier today, I have worked closely with Senator Hogg now for a number of years, both prior to me becoming President and since that time. I will enjoy working with Senator Hogg in the future for the betterment of this chamber, Senator Brown. I think that anyone who is elected to the position of a presiding officer or a deputy presiding officer does have the interests of this chamber at heart. I certainly have, as I hope I displayed when I was President. When we talk about a convention or, as you choose to use the term, a ‘cosy arrangement’, it represents the strength of the various parties in this chamber.

Senator Bob Brown—It does not.

Senator FERGUSON—It does represent the strength of the various parties in this chamber. Senator Hogg was elected on a vote based on merit. I certainly voted for Senator Hogg because I thought he was the best man for the job, and I think many people over here did as well. I look forward to working with Senator Hogg. I look forward to working with the members of the Greens party, with Senator Xenophon and with Senator Fielding, and I will do so in the same manner as I have in the past.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Senator CHRIS EVANS (Western Australia—Leader of the Government in the Senate) (2.09 pm)—I advise the Senate that Senator Sherry will be absent from question time today. He is in the United States of America, where he has just signed a landmark agreement with the United States on the mutual recognition of securities arrangements. I think he is actually in the air flying back and will be with us tomorrow. I apologise for the fact that he will be absent today. In his absence, Senator Conroy will take responsibility for superannuation, corporate law, finance and deregulation; Senator Wong will take responsibility for agriculture, fisheries and forestry; and Senator Carr will demonstrate his strong grasp of the Tourism portfolio if required.
AUSTRALIAN GREENS

Leadership and Office Holders

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (2.10 pm)—by leave—I table the list of portfolio responsibilities that the five Greens are sharing.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Inflation

Senator COONAN (2.10 pm)—Mr President, I formally congratulate you on your appointment, and I also congratulate Senator Ferguson. I think we are very well served by senators of the calibre that we have elected today.

I ask a question of the Minister representing the Treasurer, Senator Conroy. Does the government agree that, as a general rule, price increases fuel inflationary pressures?

Senator CONROY—I add my congratulations, Senator Hogg, on your elevation to President. The government has a very simple approach to trying to rein in inflation, unlike those opposite. This is a government that has inherited the highest level of inflation in 16 years. Those opposite remain in denial about the legacy that they have left ordinary Australians. Those opposite’s solution in the fight against inflation is to irresponsibly blow holes in the budget surplus. That budget surplus has helped the Reserve Bank to indicate that interest rates will possibly be reduced in the future. The Reserve Bank have done that because they have confidence that they have a government that is not asleep at the wheel. They are confident that they have a government that is up to the challenge of tackling interest rates and inflation. They are confident that they have a government that has introduced a responsible budget surplus that has taken some of the pressure off inflation and off interest rate increases. That is why they have given an indication that the interest rate environment is softening in this country. That is because of the responsible economic management adopted by those on this side of the chamber, not the cheap and populist panderings that are going on on the other side from those who have completely walked away from any pretence that they were responsible economic managers. I appreciate that, given that they had allowed the interest rates and inflation to grow and grow and grow—

Senator Ian Macdonald—Now can you answer the question?

Senator CONROY—The question, I understood, was about inflationary pressures. That is what I understood that the question was about. So let me be clear about this: the Reserve Bank have acknowledged in their recent statements that there is a softening in the interest rate environment because they are confident that they have a government that is facing up to the challenge of the highest inflation rate in 16 years, left to this country by those opposite. So the Reserve Bank have indicated that they agree with the budgetary outcome. Let those opposite, at their peril, decide that they want to blow holes in the budget surplus, because they will then once again be responsible.

Senator Coonan—Mr President, on a point of order: the question that Senator Conroy was asked, which he has not addressed at all, was about the impact of price increases on inflation. He has not come to that yet and, given the length of time that has elapsed since the question, his answer is so far not material. Could you direct him to the question.

The PRESIDENT—I will follow the traditional ruling in this chamber. It is not possible for the President to instruct a minister to answer a question in a specific way, and I will adhere to that. I draw the question to the attention of Senator Conroy. There is no
point of order at this stage. Senator Conroy, continue to answer the question.

Opposition senators interjecting—

Senator CONROY—It is not online. I know you continue to think this. It is actually just a document holder. I am saying that just because you seem to be confused by this, Senator McGauran. It is actually not online—never has been.

The PRESIDENT—Senator Conroy, address your comments through the chair.

Senator CONROY—I return to the issue of inflationary pressures, which is at the heart of the question. This is an opposition that has abandoned any pretence of economic responsibility. It is adopting any cheap, populist line it thinks might harvest votes out there in the broader community. The Australian public will not be fooled by those seeking to make short-term political gains at the expense of the longer term interests of all of Australia and Australians. They recognise and support a government that made some hard choices in the last budget, that put forward to this country a responsible budget which has assisted to take the pressure—(Time expired)

The PRESIDENT—Senator Coonan, before I ask you for the supplementary question that I believe will come, I say to those on my left that it will assist the chamber immeasurably if they will be quiet during the answers that are being given. You might not like the answer, but that is not what question time is about. If you want to hear an answer you can get one from the minister.

Senator COONAN—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. I listened carefully to the answer. Given that the minister has not disagreed that price increases fuel inflationary pressures as a general rule, can the minister explain why increasing the tax on and hence the prices of alcopops, cars and gas is not inflationary?

Senator CONROY—Economics 101 will indicate to those opposite that it is the total size of the budgetary surplus that impacts on inflation. It is those issues. If those opposite want to irresponsibly talk about blocking the ready-to-drinks, the luxury car tax—

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Senator Conroy, resume your seat. I know people get a little bit excited on the first day back, but I would like a bit of quiet time when Senator Conroy is answering this question.

Senator CONROY—As I was saying, for those opposite to try to suggest that the ready-to-drink tax, the luxury car tax, the crude oil excise on condensate and the Medicare levy surcharge threshold can be wantonly opposed in the Senate without having an inflationary impact just shows the level of economic illiteracy of the rabble that is in opposition. You cannot blow out the size of the surplus, have it massively reduced and not actually put pressure on and cause the Reserve Bank to start to revise its thinking, because that is what this chamber is faced with. Does it actually want—(Time expired)

Beijing Olympic Games

Senator LUNDY (2.18 pm)—Mr President, I too congratulate you. My question is to the Minister representing the Prime Minister, Senator Evans. Can the minister update the Senate on the outstanding achievements of the Australian Olympic team in Beijing?

Senator CHRIS EVANS—I thank Senator Lundy for her question, given her long interest in sport and the lot of work she did for the Labor Party in opposition in that field. I know of her particular interest in rowing, and I am sure that she and Senator Bernardi followed keenly the tremendous results of the rowing team.

The Prime Minister and the opposition leader, Mr Nelson, had the pleasure this
morning of welcoming home Australia’s Olympic team from Beijing. Senators would be aware of the tremendous success that those athletes enjoyed at the games. As I understand it we finished sixth in the gold medal count and fifth overall, a sign of Australia’s continuing serious contribution to outstanding results in athletic endeavours. It is a great credit to the team, the coaches and all those who supported the team. Australians rightly take great pride in the results of our Olympic team and all senators will join me in congratulating them on their performance and the way they represented Australia.

While I am sure we all had many highlights during the last few weeks, for me Matthew Mitcham in the diving was a fantastic thing to watch, along with Steve Hooker in the pole vault and Anna Meares in the cycling, as much for the courage as for the performance, taking into account the history of her struggle. One of my favourite moments was also of Grant Hackett winning the silver medal. The sportsmanship and style that he displayed was a credit to him and to the country and to his role as a captain of the team.

I am sure that, like me and my family, a lot of senators have been glued to the television in recent weeks. My family have had discussions and they are now particularly expert in diving. They all have a view on the points awarded in diving. They did not know anything about it two weeks ago, but we now have very strong arguments. We were convinced that Matthew Mitcham should have won the gold, so we got that one right.

While we have a focus on the results, and it is a tremendous day to congratulate the team, I think we also ought to focus on the whole team’s contribution—the sacrifice, the dedication and the honour they brought to Australia in their performance in representing the country. I would also like to recognise all those who tried out for the team, those who provided the competition in allowing us to field the best possible team.

As the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship I want to note that more than 40 athletes who competed for and represented Australia were born overseas. Athletes born in Algeria, Iran, the USA, China, England, Yugoslavia and Malawi all competed on behalf of Australia and did us proud. I think that is a great recognition of Australia’s capacity to receive immigrants and make them part of our country. We are actually very quick to give citizenship to good athletes in this country.

I want to particularly mention the fact that the elite sportspeople are nurtured not only by our sporting systems and the investment we place in them but also by parents, family, friends and coaches who contribute at the junior level. Every weekend when I am down watching my sons play soccer I see people giving of their time to junior sporting teams and associations and who usually do not get much recognition. The Olympics is the end product of the sort of effort they all make in encouraging our children to compete in sport.

I would like to congratulate, on behalf of the government and I think the whole Senate, all those who participated in representing Australia. They did do us proud and we are all very grateful for their efforts. (Time expired)

**Budget**

Senator FIFIELD (2.22 pm)—Mr President, my question is to the Minister representing the Treasurer, Senator Conroy. Minister, what is the forecast size of the budget surplus over the forward estimates?

Senator CONROY—Thank you for that question, Senator Fifield. As you know, the size of the deficit depends—
Senator Fifield—Surplus!

Senator CONROY—The size of the surplus—

Opposition senators interjecting—

Senator CONROY—It will be a deficit if you vandals get in charge of it! That will entirely depend on whether or not this chamber decides to accept that this government was elected to tackle the target of inflation. It absolutely depends on whether or not—

Senator Faulkner—It’s in your hands, George!

Senator CONROY—Exactly! As Senator Faulkner says, it is entirely in the hands of those opposite and this chamber. It is entirely in the hands of those opposite whether or not these surpluses that are forecast are achieved. This is entirely dependent on whether those opposite want to—

Senator Fifield—Mr President, I rise on a point of order on relevance. It was a very specific question to the minister. The question was what the government’s own forecast is over the forward estimates for the budget surplus.

The PRESIDENT—Senator Fifield, Senator Conroy is less than one minute into the answer to your question. He is developing an answer and I am sure that he will get to the question that you have asked. There is no point of order.

Senator CONROY—Thank you, Mr President. I know those opposite do not want to accept that they left this country with the highest level of inflation in 16 years. That is why this government introduced a budget in May that was able to attack inflation, that fought inflation. Let us be clear: the surpluses that are being forecast were about—

Senator Abetz—Mr President, I rise on a point of order. Senator Ludwig can slip the bit of paper—

Opposition senators interjecting—

Senator CONROY—Those opposite might want to try and play games about their intentions about various pieces of legislation, but they have one simple choice to make: are they going to assist Australians and help take pressure off interest rates and inflation by passing the government’s budget, or are they going to continue to play the role of spoilers? That is the choice that they have to make a decision on. I appreciate that this is caught up in a whole range of leadership debates on the other side. Who can take a shot—whether Mr Turnbull or Mr Nelson can win the battle, that is what this debate has turned into on their side. No thought for all of those Australians who have been struggling because of rising interest rates, rising petrol prices, rising grocery prices—all because of an electoral binge and a burst in government spending by those on the other side.

Let us be clear: those on the other side have caused this in no uncertain terms. Now they do not want to face up to some of the tough choices. This is a government that is prepared to face up to those tough choices, Mr President. It is not going to squib, it is not going to play cheap political games, it is not going to spend its time undermining—

Senator Ian Macdonald—Mr President, I rise on a point of order on relevance. Senator Conroy was asked for a figure. He did not have it. We saw it was passed to him. All he
has to do to answer the question that was asked of him is to now give us the figure. Mr President, if question time is going to be at all meaningful or relevant, ministers must attempt to answer the question, not go off on a frolic of their own.

The PRESIDENT—There is no point of order.

Senator CONROY—The size of the budget surplus, as I said, is dependent on the responsibility of those opposite.

Senator Fifield—Here it comes!

Senator CONROY—It is forecast to be 1.8 per cent—much higher—

Senator Abetz interjecting—

Senator CONROY—I will get to the rest of them! I appreciate how keen you are, Senator Abetz, but I will get there.

The PRESIDENT—Senator Conroy, address your comments to the chair!

Senator CONROY—I just morphed Lance Barnard and Jim Cairns together for the purpose of the whole government, but those opposite outspent them. You had the highest level of spending and taxation in 40 years—well beyond the Whitlam government—and the former minister for finance sits there and turns away because of their fiscal vandalism before the last election.

(Time expired)

Senator FIFIELD—Mr President, I ask Senator Conroy a supplementary question. I thank him for giving us the surpluses as a percentage of GDP, but I think the figure he was actually searching for, the dollar figure, is $96 billion. Minister, isn’t it a fact that, if the government’s unconscionable tax grabs on alcopops, gas and cars do not go ahead, the forecast budget surplus will still be almost $90 billion?

Senator CONROY—There were unconscionable tax grabs from those opposite, who had the highest taxing government in Australian history. We had the former minister for finance, known as Dr Yes, who had to fiddle the figures to exclude the GST, just to hide the fact that that government outspent Gough Whitlam’s government. You made Jim Barnard look responsible! That is what you lot did. You made Jim Barnard look responsible.

Opposition senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Order! On my left, order! Senator Macdonald and others!

Senator Abetz—Lance Cairns used to play cricket.

The PRESIDENT—Senator Abetz, the longer this proceeds—

Senator Conroy interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Senator Conroy, there should not be banter across the chamber on these issues. Question time is question time and that is how it shall proceed. You should not refer to senators on the other side of the chamber. You should address your comments to the chair, otherwise it is only natural that people will respond.

Senator CONROY—I accept your admonishment, Mr President. As I was saying, I just morphed Lance Barnard and Jim Cairns together for the purpose of the whole government, but those opposite outspent them. You had the highest level of spending and taxation in 40 years—well beyond the Whitlam government—and the former minister for finance sits there and turns away because he knows the truth. (Time expired)

Budget

Senator MOORE (2.31 pm)—Thank you, Mr President. I share in the congratulations to you and Senator Ferguson. My question is to the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Carr. Can the minister inform the Senate how blocking the government budget measures will affect Australian industry?

Senator CARR—Mr President, may I extend my congratulations to you and to Sena-
tor Ferguson on your election. The Labor Party makes no apology whatsoever for putting working families first. The centrepiece of our first budget, a budget which we now see those opposite seeking to destroy, was a $55 billion family package. We also have to recognise that one of the best ways of supporting Australian families is by laying a strong economic foundation for Australian industry. That is why we are so determined that the budget should be fiscally responsible. And that is why we have offset new spending measures with savings of $33 billion over four years. That is why we are ready to ensure that we do tackle the growing and glaring anomalies on the revenue side which are increasing the excise exemption on condensate, which has long outlived the purpose for which it was originally given. That is why we have lifted the luxury car tax—a measure which is expected to raise an additional $555 million over four years.

This budget demonstrates this government’s willingness to take tough decisions in the national interest. That is why we achieved the $22 billion surplus Australia needed to put downward pressure on inflation. The previous government—this is the legacy of those opposite—left this country with the great parting gift of an inflation rate running at some four per cent: a 16-year high. One can understand that they do not care about that, because they never look beyond tomorrow.

This is a government that does care. Our focus is on Australia’s long-term future. We understand that inflation is bad for Australian business. It makes costs unpredictable and planning for the future very difficult. It does increase risks. It also increases prices. It increases the price of capital. The point appeared to have been lost on the member for Higgins when he engineered 10 interest rate hikes in five years. High interest rates do not just hurt homebuyers and families; they also hurt business. They directly affect every firm’s bottom line and they put upward pressure on the Australian dollar, which makes our exporters less competitive.

The government has been making tackling inflation a policy priority because we want to give Australian families a fair go. We want to give Australian business a fair go and we want to give the Australian economy a fair go, too, in an uncertain international environment. We want to ensure that while allowing our businesses to prosper in these difficult times. And that is at the heart of this government’s budget strategy. What the opposition are trying to do is to destroy that strategy. They are displaying the same indifference to Australian industry in opposition that they showed in government. This is the time when we should stop trying to score short-term political points and start thinking about this country’s future.

Murray-Darling River System

Senator MINCHIN (2.35 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Wong. I ask the minister: given the dire situation facing local communities dependent on the Lower Lakes and the Coorong in our home state of South Australia, will her government support the coalition’s proposal to establish a $50 million emergency assistance fund to provide immediate assistance to the local people, businesses, community and wildlife of the Lower Lakes?

Senator WONG—Thank you, Mr President. I, also, congratulate both you and Senator Ferguson on your election and add my strong support for both of those results. I thank Senator Minchin for his question and start by making the point that the situation in the Lower Lakes is extremely serious. The government is acutely aware of that. It is a situation which is driven by three factors.
The first is a history of overallocation—a history of inaction by governments such as the one comprised of those opposite. There was a failure to address the overallocation of the Murray-Darling Basin while they were in government. There was not a single drop of water purchased by the Howard government for the purposes of restoring the health of the Murray-Darling. That is the first situation.

The second factor is the unprecedented drought we are experiencing. The third factor is climate change, where unfortunately we are seeing historic low inflows and historic low rainfall, although I am sure we are all grateful there has been some rainfall around the Lower Lakes region in recent weeks. But we have had a period of extremely low rainfall and even lower inflow—that is, water flowing into the River Murray—which is exacerbating this problem. And this really presages what will happen if this country fails to deal with climate change. Just a statistic that emphasises where we are at: the two years prior to the Rudd government’s election had the lowest inflows into the River Murray in the nation’s history and they were in excess of 40 per cent lower than the previous lows.

So, what are we doing for the Lower Lakes? Well, we are not simply offering $50 million; we have put down $200 million for the South Australian government to develop an enduring response to the long-term environmental problems facing the Coorong and the Lower Lakes; we have already announced, in addition to that, $120 million for an integrated network of pipes to deliver water to irrigators and communities and to service townships. So $120 million is already announced and will be able to be rolled out as this project is developed, and $320 million is what this government has already put on the table.

Could I just make one point. I say to Senator Minchin, as a senator for South Australia—and I have no doubt, because I know Senator Minchin, that, despite the fact I disagree with him on many things, he generally puts his view very clearly—that I think it is incumbent upon him as the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate to be very clear with people in South Australia about precisely what the opposition’s position on this is. What is your position when it comes to the Lower Lakes? Is it as Dr Stone, in her press release on 2 July 2008, said:

The Rudd Labor Government and the State Labor Premiers must also come to grips with the reality of the drought: open the barrages to the Lower Lakes, restore that environment ...

What this exposes is the way in which those opposite yet again tell one thing to people down the river, downstream, and another thing to communities upstream—playing politics with people’s fears and refusing to address the problem. Senator Minchin, if that is not the opposition’s position, you should get up today in this question time and indicate absolutely that that is not your position. (Time expired)

Senator MINCHIN—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. The minister failed completely to answer my question, so I will ask it again: will the minister support the coalition’s proposal to provide immediately a $50 million emergency assistance fund to provide immediate assistance to the local people, businesses, community and wildlife of the Lower Lakes, which her party and government are treating with absolute contempt by the decision to not even bother running a candidate in the Mayo by-election?

Senator WONG—I suggest to the Senate that treating communities with contempt is telling them on the one hand, when Senator Birmingham goes down to the Lower Lakes and Coorong, that you want all this environmental water bought while upstream Dr
Stone is saying it should be flooded with salt water. We are already providing $320 million to the Lower Lakes. We are already doing that. We have already announced that, and we will work with that community—

Senator Minchin—Mr President, I rise on a point of order. Senator Wong knows that the coalition is totally opposed to the flooding of the Lower Lakes with sea water. I ask her to, instead of avoiding the question, answer the question: will she support our $50 million proposal for emergency assistance?

The President—There is no point of order. As you know, I cannot direct a minister on how to answer a question. Senator Wong, you are aware of the question. You have 29 seconds to answer the question.

Senator Wong—And the answer is: we are providing $320 million to these communities. We are providing $320 million to deal with these urgent issues. We are also attempting to deal, over the longer term, with the purchase of water, unlike those opposite, to ensure environmental flows. Again I say: those opposite, as the alternative government, should do better than giving one message to people downstream, in Adelaide, while telling those upstream something different. (Time expired)

Emissions Trading Scheme

Senator Bob Brown (2.42 pm)—My question is also to the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Wong. I draw her attention to the report in today’s Financial Review that the minister for resources, Senator Martin Ferguson, is hosting a meeting of some 60 vested interests in this place on Friday so that they can complain about and lobby for their exemptions from a carbon-trading scheme. I ask the minister: will she or the Prime Minister be present at that meeting? Will she release to the Senate the names of the corporate heavies who have been invited? And will she be establishing a meeting of 50 representative Australians, including those from small business, tourism, rural and regional Australia and the public sector so that the wider public interest and the long-term interests of this nation are not lost under the weight of this biggest-end-of-town lobbying arranged by the minister?

Senator Wong—I thank Senator Bob Brown for his question. As the Senate would be aware, we released over the break a green paper which outlined in a fair amount of detail the government’s proposals on the design of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. It was a comprehensive green paper. The reason we have undertaken this process is to enable consultation across a whole range of sectors of the community, including industry but also other sectors of the community. In case Senator Brown wishes to suggest otherwise, he should be aware that consultations have been held with a whole range of businesses and members of the community at both ministerial level and departmental level. It is the case that this is a whole-of-economy reform. We on this side of the chamber absolutely understand that, for the first time, placing a price on carbon to reflect—

Senator Brandis—A tax?

Senator Wong—I will take that interjection. It is very interesting, Senator Brandis, that it took about two minutes for the same sorts of scare tactics from the opposition on this issue. I would have thought, after your extraordinary shadow ministry meeting, where we had one, two or three positions beforehand and goodness knows what position thereafter, that maybe you would keep your head down, Senator Brandis, but I am happy to have the debate.

The President—Senator Wong, address your comments to the chair.

Senator Wong—I will return to the question, Mr President. This is a whole-of-economy reform and there is a whole-of-
government response. We are absolutely up-front about the fact that ministers from a range of portfolios will be consulting their sectors about the issues in relation to the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. Senator Carr will be consulting people within his portfolio. I know Minister Albanese is consulting the transport sector. Certainly I have been consulting widely, and Minister Ferguson, as a relevant minister, is also consulting with the sectors with which he deals. That is perfectly normal government business, Senator Brown.

I want to make it very clear that those of us on this side do understand that it requires extensive consultation with business in order to ensure we get the balance right. We also will continue to talk to environmental groups, as I have done, and to other members of the community about this important issue. This is a very substantial economic reform, it is a very substantial environmental reform and it is a complex reform. It is extremely important that we take a methodical approach to considering the options before government. As you know, these are matters on which we have canvassed an extensive amount of detail for the green paper and it is only appropriate that ministers across a range of portfolios consult closely with both business and members of the community about their views on this issue.

Senator BOB BROWN—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. The minister’s asseveration that government will be consulting widely means nothing. I ask the minister, as she left out the minister for the environment, Peter Garrett: will he be consulting 50 key environmental groups from across this nation in this parliament? Will the minister for small business be having a similar conference to look after the interests of the renewable energy and small business sector, and ditto for tourism? Where are these conferences, I ask the minister?

Senator WONG—Senator Brown, I thought I made it very clear to you that there is a whole-of-government approach and that ministers will be consulting within their portfolios on a whole range of issues associated with the scheme. You left out, for example, the minister for families, who I know has an interest in these issues as well. I have met with environmental groups; I told you that in my primary answer. The reality is that ministers across a range of portfolios will consult as is appropriate on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. If Senator Brown’s suggestion is that somehow there is something wrong with government consulting with industry to ensure we get this important economic reform right, we will simply have to part company there, because we on this side understand the substantial economic reform—(Time expired)

Emissions Trading Scheme

Senator BOSWELL (2.48 pm)—Thank you, Mr President. I congratulate you. I can tell you that you carried the National Party to a man and a woman. They supported you—as they did you, Senator Ferguson. My question is addressed to Senator Carr, the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. I ask Senator Carr: is the New South Wales Labor Minister for Energy correct when he says that the Rudd Labor government’s emissions trading scheme could double power prices in the eastern seaboard electricity market, hence adversely affecting Australian industry?

Senator CARR—I thank Senator Boswell for the question. I am not familiar with the
remarks of the New South Wales minister that he refers to. What I can say is that the government’s proposals in regard to this important initiative mean that we as a country are for the first time actually able to prepare ourselves for the inevitability of climate change and to do so in a manner which will actually preserve jobs, provide opportunities for Australians and mean that we are able to meet the challenges that we are confronting head-on.

Inevitably, there will be cost increases as a result of these changes. But there have equally been measures taken by this government to consult widely, as we have heard from Senator Wong, to ensure that there is a proper consideration of these matters in a timely manner without pretending that we can give some sort of renaissance to the climate change sceptics in a manner which seeks to avoid the inevitability of these issues. What we are dealing with here is a matter of profound importance to this country, to this society and, of course, to this economy. Members of the opposition are unable to meet their responsibilities to the Australian people by fronting up squarely to the energy needs of this country or by dealing with the questions of climate change.

This government has moved rapidly to implement a Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme from 2010. We will do so on a responsible basis to ensure that the industrial capacity of this country is protected and in such a manner as preserves jobs and ensures that living standards are maintained. The key to the prosperity of this country is ensuring that new investment takes place. We simply cannot pretend that these are problems which will go away and that do not require urgent action by the whole community.

Senator BOSWELL—I find it very difficult to believe that you did not receive a briefing note on what your counterpart in the New South Wales parliament said. It is either ignorance or arrogance—

The PRESIDENT—It is not debating time, Senator Boswell. If you have a supplementary question, you may ask it.

Senator BOSWELL—Mr President, I do have a supplementary question. If you do not understand this question, if you have not read what the minister said—

The PRESIDENT—Senator Boswell, it is not debating time.

Senator BOSWELL—I will tell you. The Labor minister also said: I shudder to think how the wealth and job-creating industries of NSW will cope. Have you done any studies on this, and how many more manufacturing industry jobs will be lost under the government’s so-called Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme?

Senator CARR—Thank you, Senator Boswell. I am not familiar with the remarks of every minister in every state government across the country, particularly in an area of government responsibility for which I only represent the minister, Minister Ferguson, in this chamber. What we have now in this country is a government that is actually committed to ensuring that this country is prepared for the future, a government that is actually committed to ensuring that the energy sector is able to secure supply for the future in a manner that means that costs can be kept down and that the opportunities for future industrial development can be advanced. What we have had is the Ministerial Council on Energy recently agreeing to consider in more detail the impact of the arrangements that Senator Wong has outlined in the green paper. I look forward to the further consultations that this sector will have with the government, as will every other sector of the economy. (Time expired)
Budget

Senator STERLE (2.53 pm)—May I truly extend my congratulations to you, Mr President, on your election to the presidency today and to Senator Ferguson as the Deputy President. My question is to Senator Conroy, the Minister representing the Treasurer. Is the minister aware of threats to block key budget measures? Can the minister outline to the Senate the impact of these plans on the budget strategy of fighting inflation and putting downward pressure on interest rates?

Senator CONROY—I have been intrigued by the line of argument being developed by those opposite, because the Rudd government is implementing responsible economic policies to address the economic challenges that we face. We inherited, as I have already said, domestic inflation rates at 16-year highs—this the result of the reckless spending by those opposite—and now global uncertainty and market turmoil are creating considerable uncertainty in the global economy. As IMF managing director Lipsky warned on just Saturday, ‘This turmoil is not going away quickly and will require serious efforts to overcome it.’ That is why the Rudd government brought down a budget with a strong surplus of $22 billion. At a time of global economic uncertainty, and after inheriting inflation at 16-year highs, we need a strong surplus. We need to provide a buffer against uncertain global economic conditions. We need to fight inflation today, to take pressure off the Reserve Bank on monetary policy and to finance critical nation-building investments for the future. Despite these clear economic imperatives, those opposite are intent on opposing key budget measures. Their plans would blow a $6.2 billion hole in the budget surplus. This is the height of economic irresponsibility—vandalising the budget at a time of increased international global uncertainty. No responsible economic manager would choose to increase uncertainty at home when we face significant uncertainties from abroad. No responsible economic manager would choose to vandalise the surplus, making it harder for the Reserve Bank to cut interest rates.

It has become readily apparent, if it was not already, that the opposition have no understanding of the economic challenges that we face. It has been nine months now, and the opposition’s only economic policy is to irresponsibly blow a $6.2 billion hole in the surplus that Australia needs. We have had an opposition member, Senator Fifield, who has already asked a question on this very matter, on Sky News just yesterday arguing that their budget-blocking policies should simply be absorbed into a lower budget surplus—the ‘magic pudding’. A time of heightened global economic uncertainty is not time to be vandalising the budget surplus. It is not time to be putting our economy at risk, including the vital investments in nation-building infrastructure that will guarantee the future economic growth of this country. When the Australian economy was crying out for responsible economic management, the Liberal Party offered irresponsible, knee-jerk, politically motivated spending. That is the legacy of those opposite, from ‘Dr Yes’ to their entire cabinet. They are at fault. (Time expired)

Emissions Trading Scheme

Senator JOHNSTON (2.57 pm)—I congratulate you, Mr President, upon your election and I congratulate the Deputy President upon his election. My question is to the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Wong. Is the minister aware of the Business Council of Australia’s warning that the minister’s emissions trading scheme as set out is a company killer? Has the minister seen reports that the jobs of up to one million Australians who work in trade exposed emissions intensive industries are at risk from a rushed and poorly designed emissions trad-
ing scheme? Why is the government putting Australian jobs at risk to this extent by rush-
ing its emissions trading scheme?

Senator Wong—Yes, I am aware of the work that the BCA has done. We have had quite a number of discussions with the Business Council as well as with other industry groups, and that is as it should be. We are very conscious as a government of the im-
portance of striking the right balance when it comes to the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and that is why we are taking a very careful and methodical approach to its design. I do want to make this point, and I hope those opposite at some point get beyond their current confusion on this issue: this is an extremely important issue in terms of prepar-
ing this nation for future challenges and it is not an easy policy debate. It certainly re-
quires consideration of a range of factors. Ultimately what government will have to do is to find the right balance, to strike the right balance, in terms of the contribution to redu-
ducing emissions and tackling climate change. We need to strike the right balance and we need to ensure that that effort is spread fairly across the economy.

In February I spoke about the need to en-
sure that we recognise the competitivenes-
ss issues associated with introducing such a scheme for our trade exposed emissions in-
tensive industries, and we have had a signifi-
cant amount of discussion with business on this issue. We recognise that there are impor-
tant competitiveness issues which arise from introducing this scheme prior to there being a global carbon price. That is why in the green paper we proposed that 30 per cent of all permits to be issued be given free to emis-
sions intensive trade exposed industries in recognition of their need for support. In addi-
tion, the government also outlined in the green paper the intention to establish a Clima-
te Change Action Fund to again assist business to make the transition to a lower carbon economy.

There are obviously a range of views across different sectors of the economy and different industries about the best way to develop and to structure that assistance to the emissions intensive trade exposed industries. We will continue to have a constructive dialogue with business on this issue. I hope down the track we can also have a construc-
tive engagement by the opposition with this issue, an issue which is critical to Australia’s future in terms of both the environmental challenge and also the economic challenge that climate change presents. So we are very conscious as a government of the issues af-
fecting the emissions intensive trade exposed businesses, just as we are also conscious of the need to ensure that the costs of this tran-
sition are fairly spread across the economy.

Of course, what Senator Johnston fails to acknowledge in the way he poses the ques-
tion is that there is no menu of easy options when it comes to tackling climate change. The reality is the more sectors of the econ-
omy you shield, the higher the cost, poten-
tially, for the rest of the economy. That is the public policy issue here. We will work very closely with industry to find the best out-
come. The whole purpose of putting out the green paper was to enable this sort of de-
tailed consultation. As I said, I have certainly had discussions with the Business Council, as with other business groups, and we will continue to do so as we look to work through the issues which have been put forward.

Senator Johnston—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. My supple-
mentary question to the minister is with re-
gard to the Minister for Resources and En-
ergy being so concerned about her emissions trading plan that he is convening a crisis meeting with 50 companies on Friday to dis-
cuss alternative options. Can I ask the minis-
ter: has she been invited? Secondly, will she listen to and adopt any of the recommendations from that meeting?

**Senator Wong**—I think I addressed the issue of consultation across a whole range of different sectors in response to the question from Senator Bob Brown. The fact is, there are consultations across sectors with a whole range of ministers—

**Senator Faulkner**—As there should be.

**Senator Wong**—so this is not a surprise. I take Senator Faulkner’s interjection—as there should be. There should be, and that is the whole purpose of the process we have outlined—issuing a green paper and working methodically through that and the economic modelling which will be issued and made public in October as well as Professor Garnaut’s report. That whole process is a methodical, careful process of determining the best outcome for this country. I hope that the opposition over time will stop the sort of scaremongering that we have seen in recent months on this issue. (Time expired)

**Budget**

**Senator Hutchins (3.03 pm)**—Congratulations, Mr President, on your election and Deputy President Ferguson’s election. My question is to the Minister representing the Prime Minister, Senator Evans. At this time of global economic uncertainty, can the minister update the Senate on why it is so important that the government’s budget measures are passed in full?

**Senator Chris Evans**—I thank Senator Hutchins for his question. He rightly points to what are some troubling developments in the global economic environment and signals that that leads to some uncertainty in terms of people making judgements about what the future holds, which makes it even more important than normal that we have a very certain, controlled and conservative economic management strategy in place to ensure the best outcomes for Australian citizens as these international factors impact on Australia.

We as a government brought down a very responsible budget in May which sought to provide the tax relief we promised to Australian families but at the same time provide a $22 billion surplus, which created the economic parameters around which people could have certainty that we would be offering strong economic management to keep downward pressure on inflation and keep downward pressure on interest rates. So we delivered on our election commitments to help ease the pressure on families and those on fixed incomes and we sought to ensure that in the broader context we had the measures in place to put downward pressure on interest rates and inflation.

In this new Senate we find that the opposition, dispirited and beaten, decide that their response to the internal fights is to abandon all responsibility, to abandon any claim to being fiscally responsible. Today they have accused the Labor Party of being too fiscally conservative. That is our problem: we are too responsible! They say we ought to spend more. They say us having a huge surplus is an outrage. They think it is economically irresponsible at this time for the Labor Party to provide a large budget surplus. That is how far they have fallen. They actually think a large budget surplus is a bad thing. They actually think we ought to be more risky. Well, we do not agree. We promised that we would deliver responsible economic management and we are delivering it, and the opposition’s response is to say: ‘No, no, no—this isn’t right. We shouldn’t have large budget surpluses. We’ve decided that we shouldn’t do that. We ought to take the risk.’

That is not what this government is going to do. We are not going to respond to that sort of approach. We are going to provide
responsible economic management. We are going to try to assist Australian families and those on fixed incomes to fight the scourge of inflation and to fight high interest rates. And we are going to keep the pressure on those economic factors by running a large budget surplus. We would like to see the opposition join us in passing the budget bills that deliver that surplus—not play the role of wreckers but accept their responsibilities, accept that this is the economically responsible thing to do and let the government pass its budget measures, because their economic credibility is on the line. If they continue to behave like this, the Australian public will continue to reject them.

People do not understand why you are in favour of binge drinking. They do not understand why you are opposed to tax on luxury cars. They do not understand why you do not want oil companies to pay appropriate taxation. They just do not understand where you are at. What they want is for the government to be able to pass its budget, to govern responsibly and to put downward pressure on interest rates and inflation. I urge the opposition to join the government and pass the budget bills.

Employment: Manufacturing Industry

Senator ABETZ (3.08 pm)—Mr President, I congratulate you on your election and also Mr Deputy President Ferguson on his election. My question is to Senator Carr, the Minister for Industry, Innovation, Science and Research. How many working families with breadwinners in the manufacturing sector have become unemployed families since the Rudd Labor government was elected to office?

Senator CARR—It is unfortunate that there have been a number of business closures in recent times which have lead to job losses in the Australian manufacturing sector. These job losses are very much regretted. In an open economy such as ours, we are not immune to the pressures of global competition. In such an environment, business continues to restructure and to rationalise to remain competitive.

The Australian manufacturing sector, I remind the senator opposite, employs 1.1 million Australians. Over the past 12 months some 22,300 new jobs have been created in the manufacturing sector. The value of the manufacturing sector in 2007 was at a record level of $103 billion in real terms, representing some 10.05 per cent of GDP. Manufacturing exports remain strong and have increased by an average annual rate of five per cent over recent years and, in 2007, increased by 7.2 per cent to a record of $87.1 billion.

The government has in place a range of measures to assist affected workers find alternative employment. For example, Job Search Support provides jobseekers with practical job search assistance, including advice on job search techniques and placing their resume on Job Search, one of Australia’s largest job networks. It is also about creating opportunities for new business to open, and this has occurred in such areas as food and beverage, renewable energy and IT. The Australian manufacturing industry has a positive future.

I recognise that Australian manufacturing is facing increasing costs as a result of higher interest rates and a strong dollar, but the government is working to turn that around. This is a government that is focused on managing the economy to ensure that the operating environment is conducive to the long-term viability of the Australian manufacturing sector. Lowering inflation is critical to that objective.

We saw in the previous government’s term essentially a policy of ‘set and forget’ being the order of the day. This government, how-
ever, has taken an entirely different view. We have established a series of reviews which will be instrumental in guiding innovation and manufacturing industry policy. In this regard, the government is optimistic that the future of manufacturing sectors such as the automotive industry will be bright if the right investment decisions are made now. I look forward to hearing something positive from the opposition with regard to the importance of the Australian automotive industry.

Senator ABETZ—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. I note that the minister did not tell us the number of people that had been thrown out of work and so I ask: is the government’s inability to tell us the number of job losses indicative of Labor’s callous disregard for the human tragedy that is flowing from Labor’s deliberate slowing of the economy, which is turning many working families into hurting families?

Senator CARR—What I did indicate to the shadow minister was that the manufacturing sector continues to be a significant employer in Australia. The sector employs well over 1.1 million Australians, largely in high-wage, high-skilled jobs, largely in quality jobs, largely in full-time jobs, which stands in stark contrast to the attitude of the previous government, which sought to drive down wages, sought to drive down job security and, through its Work Choices legislation, sought to undermine the confidence of working people and their capacity to actually put themselves forward in terms of the future prosperity of this country.

What we have actually seen in the last 12 months is 22,300 new jobs created. There have been a series of highly regrettable announcements with regard to job losses across a range of—(Time expired)

Senator Chris Evans—Mr President, I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: ADDITIONAL ANSWERS

Kurdistan

Senator FAULKNER (New South Wales—Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary) (3.13 pm)—Mr President, I have some further information in relation to a question that was asked of me by former Senator Lightfoot at the end of the last sitting period, and I seek leave to incorporate that in Hansard.

Leave granted.

The document read as follows—

Question asked by Senator Lightfoot of Senator Faulkner, 26 June 2008, regarding travel advisories for Kurdistan:
The current level and content of the travel advice for Iraq is based on the best assessments of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). DFAT’s travel advisories are designed to provide information to all Australians—including those who do not have the benefit of special security arrangements provided by their hosts or by private security firms.

There is still a significant threat from terrorist groups across Iraq, including in the Kurdistan Region. Terrorist attacks are indiscriminate, occurring without warning anywhere and at any time in Iraq. There is also still a significant threat on major roads in Iraq from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and there are ongoing threats to civilian contractors.

The travel advice for Iraq also notes that due to the difficult security environment, the Australian Embassy’s ability to provide consular and passport services is limited, particularly outside Baghdad.

The information on Avian Influenza is standard language in all travel advisories where the WHO has confirmed human cases or deaths. We consult closely with the Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA) on all Avian Influenza matters.
That the Senate take note of the answers given by the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (Senator Conroy) to questions without notice asked by Senators Coonan, Fifield and Sterle today relating to inflation.

I wish to take note of the answers—or should I say ‘non-answers’—given by Senator Conroy today. I am very pleased to see that Senator Conroy has gone scuttling out of the chamber because today we have seen the most pitiful display by the senator purporting to represent the Treasurer. He was incapable of answering straightforward economic questions; namely, he could not explain how his government’s higher taxes will not put up prices. He totally avoided the question. Even though he represents the Treasurer in the Senate, he did not even know the projected surplus over the forward estimates. You can always tell a senator on the other side of the chamber is having trouble answering a question when the best they can do is resort to false and tired rhetoric about the coalition.

We are here looking at what the government is doing. The key test the government set itself in the budget was whether it would strengthen the economy and whether it would put maximum downward pressure on inflation and interest rates. Regrettably, it has failed miserably on both accounts. The Treasurer, Mr Swan, and Senator Conroy have comprehensively failed to explain how increasing taxes on alcopops, gas and cars will somehow reduce inflation. The Treasurer is directly increasing the taxes on cars, alcohol and gas, and by increasing taxes on those goods the prices will go up.

The budget papers also very clearly show that the government expects people to drop out of private health insurance, which will put upward pressure on premiums. Families want to know how increasing the price of these goods and services reduces inflation. Families must be scratching their heads at this. Labor have not lifted a single finger since they have come into government to help those battling with the rising costs of living—with petrol, with groceries, with private health insurance and with home interest rates. Instead, we have these nonsensical policies of watching things go up: watching petrol prices go up, watching grocery prices, watching people leave private health insurance and watching people battle with increased interest rates.

It is a matter of record and it is indisputable—no matter how much those on the other side would like to have it differently—that the former coalition government left the economy in the best shape it has ever been in with real wages increasing by more than 20 per cent, real GDP per capita growing by 32 per cent, unemployment halved, inflation kept at 2.5 per cent on average over the cycle and Labor’s infamous $96 billion debt eliminated so that there was no net debt. Since Labor came to office, increasingly and worryingly there have been signs that they have no plan to strengthen the economy and put downward pressure on inflation. This is affecting business confidence and consumer confidence, which are at the lowest levels we have seen in something like 30 years. Business confidence has plummeted because there is no certainty about Labor’s direction for this economy, apart from the fact that it is slowing. The economy is starting to flag under the Labor government and the signs are they simply have no idea how to handle it and what they are going to do. Labor are wedded to the old ways of managing the economy. We have seen writ large higher
spending, higher taxes and higher unemployment, which will all contribute to lower economic growth.

The coalition believes there should be no increase in taxes in a flagging economy where there is a bulging surplus. Labor on the other hand are poor economic managers. It is Australian families who will be paying for Labor’s mismanagement. What hope is there for families struggling with higher prices when the government’s only strategy is to increase taxes? We will continue to hold Labor accountable. We will not be a party to the passage of tax increases that hurt Australian families, put up prices and increase inflation. During the election campaign Labor never mentioned that they would increase taxes. Labor never mentioned that they would raise taxes to build a large slush fund to be used by them before the next election. They offer us nothing but policies like Fuelwatch, a policy so bad their own departments condemned it. (Time expired)

Senator HURLEY (South Australia) (3.20 pm)—It is almost painful to see the opposition desperately seeking a way to justify their irresponsible decisions to oppose the government’s budget measures. Who knows why they are doing this. Obviously, there are leadership tensions, faction tensions within the party and tensions between the Liberal and the National parties within the coalition. Nobody wants to say no to anyone else. Nobody in the Liberal Party is prepared to take leadership and say that the government should be permitted to pass its budget—a budget that is designed to put downward pressure on inflation.

This is sheer short-term opportunistic behaviour and the kind of knee-jerk reaction that we saw over and over again from the coalition parties in government. It is that same old pattern of behaviour when dealing with crises. They go around them and do not deal with them head-on and with long-term responsible economic management. What did we inherit from that kind of behaviour by the Liberal Party when they were in power? The highest inflation in 16 years, 10 interest rate rises in five years and decreased productivity. That is the kind of short-term, opportunistic government that left this government in the situation where we have to have a tight, tough budget to have a surplus that will put downward pressure on inflation.

Now we have the situation where, because they cannot deal with the pressures within their party, because they cannot compete with competing factions, competing Treasurers and competing leaders, they have agreed to oppose budget measures that will put additional taxes on luxury cars and on alcopops. I am amazed—

Senator Cormann interjecting—

Senator Bushby interjecting—

Senator HURLEY—Stop and listen to yourselves: the battlers who cannot afford to pay increased taxes on luxury cars. Surely even the opposition can see the problem in that. The battlers, the working families in Australia, who cannot afford to pay increased taxes on luxury cars, the battlers in Australia who have to do without ready-to-drink drinks and who cannot afford an increase in tax on them—

Opposition senators interjecting—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Order on my left!

Senator HURLEY—This is the platform upon which you as an opposition are going to go forward into the future, opposing taxes that are reasonable. Senator Coonan kept referring to a tax on gas. It is a tax on condensate, which is not a gas at all. It is the condensate; it is the liquid by-product.

Senator Abetz—What is it used for?
Senator HURLEY—It is used for fuel but it is not gas. This is how the opposition is ducking and twisting and turning and trying to create a story for itself where there is none. This is simply a totally irresponsible—

Opposition senators interjecting—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Order! There is far too much noise in the chamber.

Senator HURLEY—It is a totally irresponsible reaction to test out your numbers in the Senate and it does not benefit the Australian public, who are struggling under the inflation and higher interest rates that were caused by the Liberal government. It is the current government that is trying in a tough but fair budget to sort out the problems that were left behind, to put downward pressure on inflation so that people are not dealing with rising prices and so that only those who can afford it are going to be paying the extra tax on luxury cars and on alcopops. It is the gas companies that will have the incentive for gas exploration and development removed. I think the opposition had better have a look at their own policy positions; otherwise they are going to find the polls are not going to improve for them at all.

Senator FIFIELD (Victoria) (3.25 pm)—I should not admit this but I am actually becoming a little misty-eyed today. I am feeling a little bit wistful because I have been reminiscing during question time about a time in our recent history when banks respected and maybe even feared the Treasurer, when the Treasurer of the day did more than watch and when the Treasurer used to speak about economic fundamentals rather than genies and bottles. It was a time when Australia was called the ‘miracle economy’ and the ‘wonder down under’ and a time when a series like The Hollowmen would have been considered satire rather than a documentary. I think fondly back to those days.

In the nine months that this government has been in power things have changed. This government has transformed the Australian economy into one which is slowing and where unemployment is forecast to increase, according to the government’s own budget forecast, by 150-odd thousand. The Reserve Bank of Australia have also predicted a further 100,000 on top of that. Inflation is rising, confidence is at record lows and the economy is on the verge of a swan dive.

Senator Conroy must have been watching too many episodes of The Hollowmen because he tried a bit of satire today. He spoke about punching holes in budget surpluses and black holes. I have to say that the concept of a black hole has certainly changed from my recent experience. Black holes certainly are not what they used to be. I well remember that in 1996 the Labor government left the nation a $10 billion budget deficit. A deficit is a black hole. I well remember Labor leaving us, the nation, $96 billion in Commonwealth government debt. Debt is a black hole. How much help did we get from the Labor Party? None. If you listen to Labor’s view of what a responsible opposition should do, what a responsible Senate should do, you could be forgiven for thinking that Labor in opposition created some sort of Senate nirvana for the coalition government. It was anything but. Labor opposed each and every savings measure we presented to this parliament to repair the budget and to pay down Labor’s debt. But we balanced the budget. We repaid every cent of Labor debt despite that opposition and, at the election, we passed to Labor a government with an asset position, a government that was debt free, a government that was in surplus. Also, we left Labor with record low unemployment and a strongly growing economy.

Clearly that is not a crisis—you would be grateful to inherit that sort of economy—so Labor had to manufacture a crisis. Labor
turned an inflation challenge into a crisis. Wayne Swan talked down the economy, talked up inflation and egged on the Reserve Bank to increase interest rates, which is exactly what they did. Having created this sense of crisis, Labor hold out their budget as the only economic hope for the nation. There are a few points to bear about Labor’s budget. On a no-policy-change basis from the previous government, the budget would be in surplus in the order of magnitude of about what Labor have.

Labor’s budget is not built on savings; it is built on new taxes. And Labor have done something that we have not seen before. They are counting revenue—tax—as a saving. This budget is not based on savings; it is based on new taxes. And these taxes were not flagged before the election. Labor cannot claim any sort of mandate theory here. Worse than that, these taxes are inflationary. They are not needed because we left the budget in a strong position in surplus. They were not flagged, they are not needed and they are inflationary.

We have a pretty simple approach to budget matters. Once you have provided for schools, hospitals, defence and security and paid down debt, if you have money left over you should return it because, if you have money left over after providing for services and paying down debt, it means that you are taxing too much. Rather than doing that, this government is increasing taxes. They should be condemned. These taxes were not flagged and they should be opposed.

Senator MARSHALL (Victoria) (3.30 pm)—I congratulate you, Mr Deputy President, on your election. In the six years that I have been here it has always been Senator Hogg in that position, so I am pleased to see you in it instead. After having heard Senator Fifield, I see an opposition that while in government must have simply believed its own spin. It got so caught up in spinning itself as an economic manager that it forgot to manage the economy. Now that they are in opposition they want to simply continue that spin with a whole range of nonsense about a slowing economy.

I want to address a couple of issues to do with the economy. Senator Fifield blatantly misled the Senate about the state of the economy. I want to get back to the tax cuts that were just delivered by this government. I want to get back to the state that you left the economy in for this government. You did not mention the many interest rate rises that you had. You did not mention the record inflation rate that we had when you left government. Your spin and the couple of issues that you want to rely on do not paint the full picture.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Senator Marshall, I think that you should address the chair.

Senator MARSHALL—I am sorry, Mr Deputy President. I note that Senator Hogg would not have let me get away with that either. Let us look at some of the examples. Let us look at the figures for people employed. If we are going to talk about an economy which they say is slowing, let us look at some of the statistics. In December 2007 there were 10,607,100 people employed. The latest figures that we have available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that in July 2008 10,721,500 were employed—a substantial increase in employed persons. That is not the sign of a slowing economy.

The average weekly time earnings in the December quarter 2007 was $1,111. In the June quarter of 2008 it was $1,131.40. Those figures are taken from the ABS statistics. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November 2007, when we were elected to government, was 4.5 per cent. In July 2008 it was 4.3 per cent. The long-term unemploy-
ment rate in November 2007 was 14.1 per cent. In July 2008 it was 13.7 per cent. The number of long-term unemployed persons in November 2007 was 70,300. In July 2008 it was 68,200—tracking down.

Senator Fifield wants to get up and mislead the Senate with this general spin that they learnt when in government, when they did not have to do anything of substance but just spun the line that they were great economic managers. What they did was take their foot off the accelerator; they took their eye off the ball—and we can use a million sporting analogies as we have just been through the Olympics; they could be endless. What they did was forget to manage the economy. They started to believe their own rhetoric and spin. Even though they had been warned by the Reserve Bank, they left us with record high inflation. We have to address that, and so it was a tough budget.

But let us not forget that that budget also delivered $46.7 billion in tax cuts to working families. Senator Fifield comes in here and says that we give nothing back and it is just about some tax grabs—which are in a number of very small areas and are really about tax equalisation and some adjustments, and if I have time I will get into some of the detail of that—but there were $46.7 billion in tax cuts to working Australians. Do not come in here and tell us that it is all about a tax grab. Nothing could be further from the truth.

This government has built a strong budget surplus of $22 billion to help put downward pressure on interest rates. And what is happening? It has been flagged by the RBA that interest rates should start to drop. We cannot wait for the day that we will reap the benefits of our tough budget and our $22 billion surplus. We are responsible economic managers and are starting to put that downward pressure on interest rates. (Time expired)

Senator BUSHBY (Tasmania) (3.35 pm)—It has been interesting listening to the government senators today.

Senator Marshall—I am going to stay for your speech.

Senator BUSHBY—I am glad you are, because there are some things that I have to say that might help Senator Marshall understand a little bit better what has been going on in the Australian economy over the last nine months. I was very interested to hear some comments that were made by Senator Hurley. She is a senator whom I have a lot of respect for. I am with her on the economics committee, and she is a very sensible and capable woman. However, over the last six or seven weeks I have been travelling with her and hearing evidence from all over the country about many of the budget measures that we are discussing today. I could see her constantly cringing as the overwhelming evidence that was presented quite clearly proved that the government’s budget measures were not the way to be going. I almost felt sorry for her as she tried to defend the government’s position on condensate, Fuelwatch, the luxury car tax, the Medicare levy and so on. But despite that, she came in here today and tried once again to valiantly defend the government’s position.

Senator Marshall tried to talk the economy up, and I will have more to say on that in a minute. But even Treasury, in their government budget papers, noted a prediction that 185,000 job losses would result from the budget measures. The reality is that big companies are already shedding jobs. You just have to look at the major announcements that have been made in the last couple of months by Ford, and by Cadbury which is in my own state. The list goes on.

By any measure, the Rudd Labor government inherited a strong, resilient and flexible economy. The Australian economy remains
robust and resilient but it is showing clear signs of weakening since Mr Rudd took office. I heard an analogy which I think was quite appropriate. You think of a very well-maintained, modern plane which is flying along and then you hit a rough patch in the air. In the past, when we have had the rough patches in this well-maintained plane, we have had some very experienced pilots up the front who actually took us through and you had a sense of confidence as you went forward. But now we have the inexperienced pilots straight out of flight school up the front and although we have a nice, solid, resilient plane we have these inexperienced people at the front as we go through this rough patch. It worries me where we are heading. You just have to have a look at what has happened already in nine months to see that we really are facing some problems.

The S&P 200 index for the Australian stock market has fallen from 6,330.2 to 4,981.1, a fall of 21.3 per cent compared with a fall of only 12.6 per cent on the US S&P 500. So we are doing worse than they are in the US, contrary to what most people would think. The Reserve Bank has increased official interest rates by 0.5 percentage points since the Rudd government came in. Under the Rudd government mortgage interest rates have risen to levels not seen since Labor was last in office. Small business overdraft rates, now at around 12 per cent, are at levels not seen since 1992. They have increased 1.15 percentage points since the election. Inflation has increased to 4.5 per cent, a rate not seen since the last Labor government, if you exclude the one-off GST effect.

The Melbourne Institute’s most recent survey results show that consumer inflationary expectations are high with the median expected inflation rate at 4.9 per cent. They are expecting it to go up even further. The proportion of survey respondents expecting annual inflation to fall within the Reserve Bank’s target band of two to three per cent is only 8.8 per cent, which is lower than the average over the last year of 12 per cent. During the coalition’s term in office median inflationary expectations averaged 3.1 per cent, which was the best average performance of any government since the survey began. In contrast, since the Rudd government has taken office, median inflationary expectations have averaged 4.9 per cent. That is the highest nine-month average since 1991 when Labor was last in office.

The Reserve Bank also conducts a survey of inflationary expectations and publishes the results in its Statement on Monetary Policy. The RBA’s data shows that, between August and November 2007 expectations among market economists of 2008-09, inflation actually fell. Market economists expected inflation to be going down late last year yet union officials expected inflation to remain steady. Since Mr Swan started talking up inflation back at the beginning of February, expectations of inflation among market economists have increased in every RBA survey. (Time expired)

Question agreed to.

Emissions Trading Scheme

Senator MILNE (Tasmania) (3.40 pm)—I congratulate you, Mr Deputy President, on your election. I move:

That the Senate take note of an answer given by the Minister for Climate Change and Water (Senator Wong) to a question without notice asked by the Leader of the Australian Greens (Senator Bob Brown) today relating to an emissions trading scheme.

I would like to start by saying that it is quite obvious that Mr Ferguson, the Minister for Resources and Energy, is undermining Minister Wong at a fast rate. I am surprised that, with the attack on her, she is not in here actually holding her own position. It is very
clear that the Minister for Resources and Energy, Martin Ferguson, is out to undermine the emissions trading scheme and the integrity of that scheme. The fact that his department has circulated to business a proposal which is supposedly more industry friendly than the green paper is a split in this government and they need to come clean on it straightaway. We would like to see immediately Minister Ferguson’s proposal that he has circulated to these businesses which are coming to Canberra for what the minister is describing as a ‘crisis meeting’.

Nobody is in crisis except those industries who have known the problem of climate change and who have done everything in their power to support the former Howard government doing nothing on climate change. They have been on every delegation to UNFCCC meetings undermining any potential for a global agreement. Now they are in Canberra with Minister Ferguson and will be doing their level best on Friday to undermine even the position that the government has taken. Minister Wong was careful not to say whether or not she had been invited to Minister Ferguson’s meeting. It is very clear from her answer that she was not. Was she even consulted when Minister Ferguson rushed out to these 50 big polluters and set up a so-called crisis meeting? They are here to do the biggest theatrical performance of the rent seekers you could ever wish to see. That is what will be happening in Canberra on Friday. And what is the aim of it? The aim of it is to try and bring pressure to bear. They want more money for their so-called clean coal and so-called carbon capture and storage. They already have a minister out there saying that the long-term liability should be carried by the community and the taxpayers and now, not content with that, here they are lining up because they want more free permits and a more friendly proposal in terms of compensation that they might get from permit sales.

I think it is extraordinary that nobody is picking up on the fact that the Minister for Climate Change and Water is being actively undermined by the Minister for Resources and Energy in her own government, and he would not be doing it without the Prime Minister’s wink-wink, nod-nod. We know this Prime Minister is a control freak. We know that he is looking over the shoulder of every single one of his ministers. He knows exactly what they are doing. While we have Minister Wong running around with her green paper consultations, we have Minister Ferguson out there inviting the key polluters to Canberra to enable them to put more pressure on to make the rest of the community pay so that they get off as scot-free as they possibly can. These are the people who have prevented action in the past. These are the very same companies that refused, for example, to implement the energy efficiency opportunities that they have been required to identify under the legislation. They were the people who lobbied to say, ‘No, we should not be forced to implement those opportunities. We should just know about them and decide ourselves.’ And deciding not to implement the energy efficiency opportunities when they could have done so, they now come with their hands out to get compensated, which is even more against the public interest. I have a real concern about what is going on with this government.

The second thing is that, in consultation, we had Minister Ferguson inviting 50 business leaders of the major polluters to Canberra to have their whinge for 10 minutes about what is wrong with the emissions trading system and put forward their solutions, which—surprise, surprise—are, ‘Give us more money, give us more free permits, slow it down, have a low cap and try and take it out.’ But where is the roundtable for the 50...
environmentalists, the 50 scientists, to have a crisis meeting to say how bad climate change is and how it is getting worse?

Just this week we have had reports that a 160-square-kilometre piece of the Greenland ice shelf is just hanging on. We have every scientist out there saying that things are worse. Last week we had Professor Will Steffen saying that we are probably looking at a four-metre sea level rise this century. Where is Minister Wong’s climate crisis meeting for the environment movement? Where is her crisis meeting for the scientists? Why do we have the government bringing here those who wish to destroy the planet in terms of climate change and not take any action on their emissions and not having the other side of the argument? I do not know of 50 environment groups that have been consulted. (Time expired)

Question agreed to.

CONDOLENCES

Signaller Sean Patrick McCarthy

Senator CHRIS EVANS (Western Australia—Leader of the Government in the Senate) (3.46 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the Senate records its deep regret at the death of Signaller Sean Patrick McCarthy on 8 July 2008 while on combat operations in Afghanistan and places on record its appreciation of his service to his country and tenders its profound sympathy to his family in their bereavement.

On behalf of all government senators, and I am sure on behalf of all senators, I wish to express my heartfelt condolences to Signaller McCarthy’s mother and father, Mary and David, and to his sisters, Leigh and Clare, and to express our sympathy to his whole extended family and friends including, of course, his fellow service men and women.

Signaller McCarthy was a patriotic Australian, an outstanding soldier and a valued member of the Special Air Service Regiment and the Royal Australian Corps of Signals.

The Special Air Service Regiment, as we all know, has a long tradition of exceptional service to the defence of Australia, and Signaller McCarthy was the embodiment of the courage, professionalism and endurance that are hallmarks of this elite unit. He displayed great strength, determination and courage while serving in the challenging environments of East Timor and Afghanistan.

Unfortunately Signaller McCarthy lost his life serving his country and is owed a special debt of gratitude that can never be fully repaid. Members of parliament, and I think members of both the previous government and this government, understand the huge responsibility of asking our service personnel to serve their country in war zones, and we all feel very deeply the cost that our service men and women sometimes pay in carrying out those duties. I think it always a useful reminder to us all of the responsibilities we have in terms of trying to ensure that they are not put in harms way but that when they are we provide them with the best support we can.

Signaller McCarthy served his country admirably in a number of zones. His work with his comrades in spreading security in Oruzgan province is noble and enduring. Through his work the Taliban were weakened, the reach of the Afghan government was extended and the environment in which our troops undertake vital reconstruction work was made secure. His comrades continue that vital work. They continue to honour his memory and to honour his commitment to the task.

Signaller McCarthy’s sacrifice will not be forgotten. On behalf of the Australian government, we offer our prayers and our support to Signaller McCarthy’s family and friends and thank them for his sacrifice and service to his nation.
Senator MINCHIN (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (3.49 pm)—I rise on behalf of the coalition to strongly support the motion moved by Senator Evans, and I endorse all the remarks made by Senator Evans in support of this very important motion. It is critical that the Senate does unanimously express its deep regret and profound sorrow at the death of Signaller Sean McCarthy on 8 July. He was someone who was on his second tour of duty in Afghanistan, and of course all our best wishes and thoughts are with his family and friends.

It does remind us of the extreme danger which Australian personnel face in Afghanistan, but it is also a reminder of the importance of that struggle, and I think his family and friends should take comfort from the fact that there is in this country bipartisan support for our engagement in Afghanistan and that Sean McCarthy died for a noble cause—the cause of containing terrorism and of trying to bring peace and stability to the nation of Afghanistan to enable the people of Afghanistan to live in peace and security. It is an important cause, and we should all renew our commitment to that cause. It is with profound regret and sadness that we record our sorrow at the death of Sean McCarthy.

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (3.51 pm)—On behalf of the Australian Greens I support this motion of condolence and send our commiseration, our great respect and our concern for and comfort to the family, the friends and the fellow unit members of Signaller Sean McCarthy. We all have to aspire to a future when the world will be rid of violence, war and destruction. It is no way for human affairs to be handled. But, in the meantime, it is still part of the way in which the world does malfunction.

On behalf of this nation, Signaller Sean McCarthy was in Afghanistan and died in Afghanistan. His body has now been brought home to this nation, which he served bravely and courageously. He was honoured by Australia’s Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, with the words:

On his previous tour in Afghanistan he was recognised by the Special Operations Commander for his courage and mission focus, including a specific commendation for maintaining his presence of mind and excellent soldier skills while in contact with the enemy.

Signaller McCarthy was a sterling and honourable Australian and we regret his loss.

Question agreed to, honourable senators standing in their places.

Mr Donald Michael Devitt

The PRESIDENT (3.53 pm)—It is with deep regret that I inform the Senate of the death, on 10 July 2008, of Donald Michael Devitt, a senator for the state of Tasmania from 1965 to 1978.

Senator CONROY (Victoria—Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate) (3.53 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the Senate records its deep regret at the death, on 10 July 2008, of Donald Michael Devitt, former senator for Tasmania, and places on record its appreciation of his long and meritorious public service and tenders its profound sympathy to his family in their bereavement.

Donald Devitt was born in 1921, at Launceston, Tasmania, and went to Smithton District High School. He grew up on the north-west coast of Tasmania, the same area in which Senator Nick Sherry and the member for Lyons, Dick Adams, grew up. Don was a good friend of Senator Sherry’s father, Ray.

Don served in both the Army and the RAAF during World War II. He enlisted in the AMF in 1942 and transferred to the 2nd AIF seven months later. In 1944 he enlisted
in the RAAF, where he served for just under a year. Don also joined the Citizen Military Force from 1951 to 1952.

He spent many years working as a council clerk in Tasmania. During this period Don was a member of the Council Clerk Municipality of Queenstown, Scottsdale and Beaconsfield. He was also an associate of the Institute of Municipal Administration and a member of the state executive of the Council Clerks Association of Tasmania. From 1956 until 1964, Don worked as a farmer.

Don joined the ALP in 1955. He served as president and secretary of his local branch and was also a member of the state and federal executive in 1969. Don was a well-known figure in the Tasmanian ALP. I am told that he loved to sing and play the guitar. He apparently entertained many after-dinner get-togethers at ALP conferences.

Don was elected as a Labor senator for Tasmania at the 1964 election. Don was known as a hard working senator and during his 14 years here he served on many parliamentary committees. These included the Senate Standing Committee on Regulations and Ordinances, from 1967 to 1976; a legislative and general purpose committee, the Senate Finance and Government Operations Committee, from 1971 to 1975; the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, from 1973 to 1975; the Constitutional and Legal Affairs Committee from 1976 to 1978; and the Joint Committee on the Australian Capital Territory from 1967 to 1975. Don also participated in many parliamentary delegations including the parliamentary delegations to Anzac Day celebrations in Papua New Guinea in 1966 and 1969, and the parliamentary delegation to the USSR, Sweden and Denmark in 1973.

Don had a strong interest in Tasmanian shipping and the Antarctic. In the summer of 1976-77, he had the distinction of being the first senator in the history of the Commonwealth to visit Macquarie base and Mawson’s Hut in Antarctica.

After his retirement in 1978, Don remained very active in the Tasmanian ALP and was very supportive and encouraging of up-and-coming candidates. He and his wife, Dorothy, were members of the Devonport branch, and Don remained a member until his death. He is remembered with enormous affection, in particular by those in the party who knew him.

In his retirement, Don also immersed himself in lapidary. He had a workshop at home and would participate in gemstone associations. Don also loved sailing and did a lot of sailing out of Devonport.

Don passed away on 10 July this year on the eve of his 87th birthday. His funeral was held on 16 July. On behalf of the government I offer our condolences to his wife, Dorothy, and their children and grandchildren.

Senator MINCHIN (South Australia) (3.57 pm)—On behalf of the coalition I am pleased to have the opportunity to offer our sincere condolences to the family of former senator Donald Devitt. As Senator Conroy mentioned, Don commenced in the Senate as a representative for the Labor Party from Tasmania. I think it is worth noting that one of the great things about our Constitution and the make-up of this chamber is that a state like Tasmania has equal representation with all the other states, which enables people like Don Devitt to have the opportunity to serve in this place.

It is recorded that he was a quiet but very conscientious senator. He came here with much administrative experience in local government in Tasmania, and I think that is a good background for service in this chamber. As I understand it, he was passionate about local government and, in his first speech, highlighted his concerns about the financial
support for that level of government, which no doubt is an ongoing and perennial issue, but one that we must all be conscious of.

As someone who also served on the Senate Regulations and Ordinances Committee, I think it is also worth noting Don’s long service as a member of that committee, which, I think, is one of the most important and perhaps undervalued committees that we have in this place. He was a member of the committee from 1967 to 1976 and he chaired it from 1973 to 1975. He was a long-serving member of the very important Joint Committee on the Australian Capital Territory and a member of the Joint Select Committee on the New and Permanent Parliament House, from 1967 to 1969, but those of us who have our doubts about this place should not blame him. I also understand that in 1976-77 he became the first senator ever to visit Macquarie base and Mawson’s Hut in Antarctica, which was a great achievement.

He was of course also in the Senate during the three extraordinarily turbulent years leading up to the dismissal of the Whitlam government, and thus was one of those privileged or otherwise to be part of the most controversial and dramatic period in Australian political history, and one I am sure we will never see repeated. Therefore he witnessed the tumultuous changes of government that occurred in 1972 and 1975 from the perspective of the Senate.

I am advised he remained active in the Labor Party after his retirement and was very well respected in his home state of Tasmania. I think it is worthy for former senators to continue to serve their parties after their service in this chamber. To Don’s wife, Doro-

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lia, and places on record its appreciation of his long and meritorious public service and tenders its profound sympathy to his family in their bereavement.

Peter Durack was one of Western Australia’s longest serving senators, retiring from the Commonwealth parliament after 22 years in federal politics and a political career that spanned almost three decades. He was highly respected across the political divide and was known as a kind, mild-mannered man of great integrity who made a remarkable contribution to law reform in this country.

Peter was born in Perth in 1926 into one of Western Australia’s pioneering families, the Duracks. He was educated at Christian Brothers College and Aquinas College in Perth and went on to study law at the University of Western Australia. It was during his time at UWA that Peter first became politically active. Peter was very quick to nail his political colours to the mast. In 1944, at the age of 18, Peter co-founded the UWA Liberal Club, just a few months after Sir Robert Menzies established the Liberal Party. Widely acknowledged as a great debater and a brilliant student, Peter was awarded the 1949 Rhodes Scholarship for Western Australia and completed a Bachelor of Civil Law degree at Oxford. After graduating he practised law in London and then continued working as a lawyer upon his return to Perth. He had a highly successful legal career which culminated in his appointment as QC in 1978. However, by then his career as a lawyer had already given way to his passion for politics. Peter was elected to the Western Australian Legislative Assembly in 1965 as the Liberal member for the seat of Perth in the WA Legislative Assembly. He served in state parliament only until 1968, which is when he was elected President of the Western Australian Liberal Party, a position he held until he entered the Senate in 1971.

Peter’s early years in the Senate coincided with the period of the Whitlam Labor government. Peter was part of the block of coalition senators that caused the Whitlam government so much agony and eventually he formed part of the new Fraser government that came to power in the wake of the 1975 dismissal. After just four years in the Senate, Peter was appointed to the ministry of the new Fraser government. He was initially made Minister for Repatriation in 1976, which was renamed Veterans’ Affairs three months later. Peter served in this position for another year until Bob Ellicott resigned as Attorney-General in 1977. He held that position until the election of the Hawke Labor government in 1983.

As Attorney-General, Peter Durack steered one of the most significant periods of law reform in Australian history, particularly in the area of human rights and civil rights. His best known achievement was the introduction of the Commonwealth freedom of information legislation in 1981, which for the first time gave Australians legally enforceable rights to access information held by government. The legislation represented a significant expansion of civil liberties for Australians.

As well as being heralded as the father of FOI, as Attorney-General, Peter was involved in preparing the two-airline agreement and the broadcasting and television legislation. He brought changes to copyright law, administrative appeals and the powers of Federal Police and ASIO and he was involved in the settlement with the states on offshore sovereignty. He worked on the Acts Interpretation Act aimed at instructing the judiciary to take into account the purpose of legislation when interpreting it, and played an important role in the ending of appeals to the Privy Council. Peter also oversaw the appointment to the High Court of Sir Ronald Wilson, former Governor-General Sir Wil-
liam Deane, and Sir Gerard Brennan, who went on to become Chief Justice.

During his time as a senator Peter also served as Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate from 1978 to 1983 and as Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate from 1983 to 1987 and again from 1990 to 1992. He was also a member of a long list of parliamentary committees which included Regulations and Ordinances, Publications, Scrutiny of Bills, Privileges, Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Industry and Trade, National Resources, Finance and Public Administration, Securities and Exchange, Civil Rights of Migrant Australians, and Foreign Ownership and Control. Peter retired from the Senate in 1993, but he continued to play an important role in mentoring the next generation of Liberal politicians.

Peter passed away on 13 July this year. He leaves a long legacy of public service. In tributes to Peter Durack from former political colleagues he has been remembered for his central role in one of the most constructive periods of law reform and human rights protections in Australian history. On behalf of the government I offer condolences to his family, in particular his wife, Isabel, their children, Anne and Philip, and their grandchildren.

Senator MINCHIN (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (4.08 pm)—On behalf of the coalition, I join with Senator Conroy and the government in extending our sincere sympathies to the family of Peter Durack upon his death on 30 July at the age of 81. Regrettably, I did not have the opportunity to actually serve with Peter in this place—his term ceased on 30 June 1993 and mine started on 1 July that year—but I certainly knew Peter personally and held him in extraordinarily high regard. He was one of the most accomplished senators the Liberal Party has produced and I think was held in the utmost respect right across the political divide. His contribution to Australian politics and the Senate are significant, are valued and should be honoured today.

He made a very big contribution, as Senator Conroy has noted, to the Liberal Party in his home state of Western Australia and was a member of one of the most significant and well-known families in that state. He co-founded the University of Western Australia Liberal Club while studying law in the middle of 1945, stemming from his strong and understandable admiration for Robert Menzies. He contested and won the seat of Perth in the WA Legislative Assembly in 1965 and held that seat until 1968, when he became President of the Liberal Party in Western Australia until entering this place in 1971. So he is one of those few Australians who have served at both state and federal parliamentary levels. He was, as Senator Conroy noted, a very successful barrister and was appointed Queen’s Counsel in 1978. He did make a huge contribution to the Liberal Party in Western Australia, both in his service to the organisation and as a mentor to party members in that state, and to Liberal parliamentarians right across the country. Indeed, I knew him in my capacity as an official of the party’s federal secretariat and knew well of his mentoring role.

As has been noted, he entered the Senate in July 1971, having been elected in 1970 at one of those very rare things, a separate half-Senate election. He was to become one of the most outstanding Western Australian Liberal senators, serving for the lengthy period of 22 years in this place. He held numerous front-bench positions for our party, in both government and opposition, and was one of the most senior figures for much of his time in the Senate. He saw the change of government in 1975 and then, of course, opposition in 1983. But in both opposition and government he was a very senior figure. He was a
member of the opposition shadow ministry from only three years after he came here, in 1974, until we came into government in 1975. He served as Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate from 1978 to 1983, as deputy to the great John Carrick. Then after the defeat of the Fraser government he continued as deputy leader—in this case in opposition—from 1983 to 1987, under the great leadership of Fred Chaney, his colleague from Western Australia: a rare double act from the state of Western Australia. Then, with an interregnum, he again became the deputy leader, from 1990 to 1992, under the leadership of then Senator Robert Hill.

I certainly remember well the occasion on which, after the 1990 election, it was widely expected that Peter Durack would become the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate. But, to everyone’s surprise, my South Australian friend and colleague Robert Hill won that leadership, and Peter was elected the deputy. Fred Chaney, his friend and colleague from Western Australia, has described Peter as having ‘a wonderful combination of a great depth of legal knowledge with a terrific understanding of the political system’.

Peter Durack was a Senate man: he really understood and respected the role of this place. In particular, having entered the Senate when the committee system was in its infancy, he was a strong advocate of the importance of estimates committees and the very thorough examination by this place of government legislation. He did have many achievements in the Senate as a minister. He held, in all, four ministerial positions in the Fraser government. But, as Senator Conroy has noted, he is most particularly remembered for his service for six years, no less, as Attorney-General from 1977 until our defeat in 1983. He will be remembered, I think, as one of the most accomplished Attorneys-General and the most significant in our nation’s history, particularly, as Senator Conroy has noted, for his record and his historic act of introducing the Freedom of Information Act in 1981. Former Prime Minister John Howard has said of Peter Durack, his former cabinet colleague in the Fraser government, that he was ‘a terrifically thoughtful contributor’ in cabinet meetings and in shadow cabinet meetings. Anyone who knew Peter would understand exactly what former Prime Minister John Howard meant when he said that.

Peter’s contribution to parliament and public life was significant. All those who encountered him in the chamber speak of his strong intellect and his great integrity. He was indeed a great asset to the Senate and to the Liberal Party in Western Australia. I am pleased to extend to his wife, Isabel, and their children, Anne and Philip, and their families, our great appreciation of his long and meritorious public service. We tender our sympathy to the family in their bereavement.

Senator JOHNSTON (Western Australia) (4.14 pm)—With the death of former senator Peter Durack, the Liberal Party in Western Australia has lost one of its most influential parliamentarians. Peter Durack was an outstanding Western Australian senator whose 23 years of dedicated service included more than six years as Attorney-General and almost a decade as a senior opposition figure. For those of us from Western Australia, that carries with it an enormous amount of commitment not just to the parliament but to the party in Western Australia.

Peter Durack was a brilliant student. He was a Rhodes scholar in 1949. He completed a Bachelor of Civil Law at Oxford University before practising in London. Peter Durack participated in many national debates during his time in the Senate and since his retirement from parliament. I should pause to
say that his contribution to our party in Western Australia was enormous, beyond the days of his service in this place. He is one of the few parliamentarians to have also held the state seat of Perth—from 1965 to 1968. He was state president of the Liberal Party in Western Australia from 1968 to 1971. He was one of Australia’s longest serving senators, as I have said, with more than 22 years to his credit. He was shadow minister for defence from 1990 to 1992 as well as shadow minister for resources and energy—a job that I am reasonably familiar with—between 1984 and 1987.

Peter Durack will be remembered as one of Australia’s most accomplished attorneys-general. He was a reformist. One of his first tasks as Attorney-General was to support the freedom of information bill. It was a new concept then, one that has evolved and developed but which commenced under his stewardship. When enacted, it gave a legal enforceable right for Australians to access information held by government, a concept which we all very much take for granted to a great extent today. That legislation was one of the biggest changes to civil liberties and was a foundation stone of civil liberties in this country.

Peter Durack mentored a generation, me included, of Liberal parliamentarians throughout Australia and was widely regarded as a person of great integrity and intellect. I can certainly affirm that. Peter Durack is survived by his wife, Isabel, who is a historian, their two children, Anne and Philip, who are both lawyers, and four grandchildren. His wise counsel, I must say, will be greatly missed, but his positive influence over the Liberal Party and this parliament will survive.

Senator IAN MACDONALD (Queensland) (4.17 pm)—My congratulations to you, Mr President, on your election. I guess that little more can be said about Peter Durack than has already been said by the previous speakers, all of whom have gone through his very long and distinguished record. I just wanted to associate myself with the condolence motion for the late Peter Durack on the basis that I was here when Peter was our deputy leader on the second occasion in the Senate. I remember Peter when I first came here. He seemed to be a 44-year-old a rather old man at the time. I suspect, looking back now, that he was only a young fellow! He was a very kindly man, although clearly he had a very quick mind and decisive wit that was able to be used by all of his then colleagues when they needed some information, a good thought or some wise counsel on a particular matter. He nurtured me and others in our early stages in this Senate. It was clear to see then why he had had such a distinguished career in law and in the service of the Liberal Party over many years.

I, like others, want to mention his contribution to the freedom of information laws, which, as has been said, he introduced. I had heard of him well before I came to the Senate because of the work he had done on freedom of information. His long and distinguished career is justifiably recognised today in the Senate. As I said, I want to be associated with the comments about him and to extend my condolences to his wife, Isabel, and family.

Senator ELLISON (Western Australia) (4.19 pm)—Congratulations, Mr President. This is my first opportunity to congratulate you and I do so. It was a very good result. I associate myself with the comments made by the previous speakers in relation to Peter Durack. Peter Durack was a senator who I succeeded in this place and who I paid tribute to in my first speech when I came to this place. In my maiden speech I recorded then the great contribution that Peter Durack had

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made to the parliament and to Australia, and I do so again on his passing.

Peter Durack was an outstanding lawyer. He came from a family that was well respected in Western Australia and, indeed, in politics. As Senator Johnston previously indicated, he made an outstanding contribution to the Liberal Party in Western Australia. In fact, it is quite significant that he was a member for the state seat of Perth. I do not think we have ever held the seat since. We held it for one term. When you look at the demographics of Perth, it was no mean feat that he won that seat. He then went on to excel in the Senate and as Attorney-General. Mention has been made of the freedom of information legislation which he championed, but I think that he was also regarded as an extremely safe pair of hands for the government of the day. That was due to his judgement, wisdom and sound legal intellect.

I mentioned his contribution to the Liberal Party in Western Australia. I saw firsthand that contribution at our state council as a younger member of the Liberal Party. I can say that when there was a great deal of turmoil, debate and controversy Peter Durack always came through with a calm, cool head to provide wise advice to those who were there. I certainly think that on more than one occasion he provided sound direction for the party at its meetings. Of course, he was state president, as Senator Johnston mentioned, and he had extensive involvement in the party as such.

He was a great Western Australian and a great credit to his family. They can all be very proud of him. I know both his son and his daughter, Pip and Anne. To them and the wider family I convey my condolences and say to them on his passing that they can be very proud of his achievements.

Senator FERGUSON (South Australia) (4.22 pm)—I rise to speak briefly to associate myself with this condolence motion for former Senator Durack. Strange as it may seem, my very first day in this place was the day he resigned as Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in the Senate. So, on my very first day here I was involved in the ballot for the deputy leadership. I did not have a clue who I was voting for because I did not know any of the people that were standing.

Senator Brandis—You would have been given some guidance.

Senator FERGUSON—Yes, Senator Brandis, I was given some good guidance.

Senator Minchin interjecting—No, Jim Short won.

Senator FERGUSON—He wasn’t here either, then.

Senator Ian Macdonald—Richard Alston won.

Senator FERGUSON—No, Jim Short won it. Peter Durack was a very good mentor in that first year and a bit that I was here in the parliament. He was regarded, along with Brian Archer, as a father of the party. They were the two people who had been here from 1975 onwards—and I think in the case of Senator Durack it was even earlier than that. The whole family life of Senator Durack, coming as he did from that great Western Australian family, meant that he was held in some awe by some people here not only because of his contribution to the Senate and to the government of the day but because he was a very thoughtful person as I—a young senator coming into this place—remember him.

Peter Durack’s contributions have been well documented here today, so I am not going to go over those again. An enormous number of new senators have entered this place today—and in the past three years there has been, I think, something like 37 new senators—but to new senators coming into this place I would say that the amount of
experience that you can get by talking to people who have been in this place for some time is invaluable. I counted Peter Durack as a very wise mentor. He only ever offered advice when you asked for it. He was not one who thrust his views or opinions on you. He was indeed a gentleman. Certainly the people I remember most from my early days in the Senate were those who had been in this place for a long time and who were prepared to share their experiences both in government and in opposition with those of us who were new. Who could forget Shirley Walters, Brian Archer, Peter Durack and a whole range of people who were finishing their Senate careers? I think they all finished in 1993 or thereabouts. But I do want to associate myself with this condolence motion because senators who make the sort of contribution that Senator Peter Durack made do not come past every day. I certainly offer my sympathy to his family; they can be sure in the knowledge that Peter Durack will be well remembered for his contribution to the Senate.

Senator BRANDIS (Queensland) (4.25 pm)—I commence my remarks by joining others in congratulating you, Mr President, upon your election to the very high office which you have achieved today. I think there would not be a dissenting voice in the Senate to the proposition that you are eminently equipped for this task and have earned great respect and deep personal affection among all of us.

I wanted to make a few remarks on the passing of the late Peter Durack. Unlike other Liberal senators who have spoken on this condolence motion, I did not particularly know Peter Durack, although I had the pleasure of meeting him a couple of times, albeit briefly, when I was very young. Peter Durack will be remembered in particular for three things. First of all, he represented a very old-fashioned ethic of public service. He was a person who chose to devote the prime years of his life to service in parliament and to involvement in politics—three years, as we have heard, in the Western Australian state parliament; 22 years in the Senate and, in between those two terms of parliamentary service, as a party officer as the state president of the Western Australian Liberal Party. It is a theme I have elaborated upon several times, but I think it is very sad—particularly, if I may say so, for my side of politics—that that ethic of public service, of which the late Peter Durack was so obviously an exemplar, seems to be lacking from the professions today. Too few people turn away from professional life, whether as lawyers, doctors or whatever among the learned professions, to give their lives to public service as Peter Durack did. I think that the professions have been the poorer for it and I think that the parliament has been the poorer for it. The ethic of public service represented by Peter Durack is something that I hope we have not completely lost but it is certainly more a feature of an earlier age than it is of the current age. An aspect of that ethic of public service, as we have heard from all the Liberal senators who have spoken so far in this debate, was the role of Peter Durack as a mentor to younger senators. I remember my old friend former senator Chris Puplick telling me once about how Peter Durack had mentored him when he was a firebrand young Liberal senator in the 1980s.

The second thing for which Peter Durack should be remembered and celebrated, particularly on my side of politics, is that he was a Menzies Liberal. He was a representative, an exemplar and a champion of what I have always considered to be the mainstream position of the Liberal Party—the Menzian tradition. In fact, his first involvement in the Liberal Party came in 1944, the year in which Sir Robert Menzies—Mr Menzies as
he then was—founded the Liberal Party. Peter Durack, then a student at the University of Western Australia, co-founded the University of Western Australia Liberal Club. The year in which he was first elected to parliament as the state member for Perth in 1965 coincided with the last year of Sir Robert Menzies’ second prime ministership. He was a Menzies Liberal in the sense that he represented the liberal values which have always been the pride of the Liberal Party. In an obituary of Peter Durack that appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald last month, the observation was made:

He said on his retirement: “I accept the fact that I’m a fairly conservative lawyer, I guess.” Yet, at least with hindsight from beyond the Howard government years, much of his work was in the liberal, rather than conservative, tradition. This was a view corroborated by Mr Howard himself, who, in another obituary, described Peter Durack as probably being ‘on the small ‘l’ liberal side of politics on social issues, but an economic rationalist’. So, from my point of view as a small ‘l’ liberal on social issues and as a rationalist on economic issues, the late Peter Durack represented the best of both of the traditions of the Liberal Party.

Thirdly, he will be remembered for his service with distinction as a minister in the Fraser government. As others have said, he was Minister for Repatriation for about a year and then, after the resignation of Bob Ellicott, was Attorney-General for more than six years. The historical reputation of the Fraser government has in recent years suffered something of a devaluation, but I think that, like all reputations, as we achieve greater historical perspective, many of the great achievements of the Fraser government will come to be reconsidered and re-evaluated and perhaps appreciated more both by historians and by people in my own party than they have been more recently.

Peter Durack was associated with many of those achievements. He was, in particular, one of Australia’s most illustrious and longest serving attorneys-general. Others have spoken of the many beneficial law reforms with which he was associated, most particularly as the pioneer of the Freedom of Information Act, although I might point out that he was an opponent of the notion that Australia should have a statutory bill of rights. So his liberalism was leavened by a wise and sceptical conservatism as well, which is a very attractive combination. He was in fact the last Liberal Attorney-General to serve in the Senate.

I conclude my tribute to and appreciation of Peter Durack by saying that the more that Australia’s parliaments, both state and federal, attract people of that calibre and with that ethic of public service and dedication to public life the better we will be. We remember today an exemplary figure in that tradition and we mourn his passing.

Question agreed to, honourable senators standing in their places.

PETITIONS
The Clerk—Petitions have been lodged for presentation as follows:

Marriage Legislation
To the Honourable the President and Members of the Senate in Federal Parliament assembled: The petitioners and citizens of Australia draw to the attention of the Senate that

(1) In 2004, the Commonwealth Parliament amended the Marriage Act 1961 to define marriage as “the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life”.

(2) This reinforced the Biblical norm of heterosexual marriage, which has been the cornerstone of every civilization since the beginning of humanity.

(3) The word ‘marriage’ is thus appropriate only for legally united heterosexual couples, who
are able to model dual-parenting that is balanced (providing both father and mother role models), natural (as to male-female physical union), and morally acceptable to God (bringing up children within the marriage bond).*

(4) The establishing of Relationship Registers in the States and Territories will inevitably expand the above definition of marriage (para. 1) into meaninglessness, and so compromise the purpose of the Marriage Act.

Your petitioners therefore pray that, with the powers vested exclusively in the Federal Parliament under Section 51 (xxi and xxii) of the Australian Constitution, you amend the Marriage Act 1961 to invalidate any present or future States’ or Territories’ Relationship Registers.

*Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4-6; Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:18-27

by Senator Boyce (from 12 citizens)

Racial Discrimination

To the Honourable President, Members of the Senate in Parliament assembled.

The petition of the undersigned shows concern for the suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act in the Northern Territory.

Your petitioners request that the Senate support the Reinstatement of the full Racial Discrimination Act in the Northern Territory in line with the recommendations made to government by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commissioner, Tom Calma, in his Social Justice Report of 2007.

by Senator Ferguson (from nine citizens)

Age Pension

To the Honourable the President and Members of the Senate in Parliament assembled:

The Petition of the undersigned shows that:

(a) we believe the Age Pension does not reflect the true cost of living for Pensioners;

(b) we believe many Age Pensioners are living on the poverty line and going without essentials such as food, dental and medical needs.

Your Petitioners request that you put pressure on the Federal Government and support any legislation introduced to increase the Age Pension, particularly the Single Pension, to enable Age Pensioners to maintain a better standard of living.

by Senator Parry (from 2,670 citizens)

Asylum Seekers

To the Honourable the President and the Members of the Senate in Parliament assembled:

Whereas the 1998 Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne carried without dissent the following motion:

“That this Synod regrets the Government’s adoption of procedures for certain people seeking political asylum in Australia which exclude them from all public income support while withholding permission to work, thereby creating a group of beggars dependent on the Churches and charities for food and the necessities of life;

and calls upon the Federal government to review such procedures immediately and remove all practices which are manifestly inhumane and in some cases in contravention of our national obligations as a signatory of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.”

We, therefore, the individual, undersigned attendees at the Bayside Deanery Meeting of the Mother’s Union, Mentone Victoria, petition the Senate in support of the above mentioned motion.

AND we, as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Senator Ronaldson (from 51 citizens)

NOTICES

Withdrawal

Senator WORTLEY (South Australia) (4.34 pm)—Pursuant to notice given on the last day of sitting on behalf of the Regulations and Ordinances Committee, I now withdraw business of the Senate notices of motion Nos 2, 3, 4 and 5 standing in my name for nine sitting days after today.

Presentation

Senator Polley to move on the next day of sitting:

That the time for the presentation of the report of the Finance and Public Administration Com-
Senator McEwen to move on the next day of sitting:
That the time for the presentation of the report of the Environment, Communications and the Arts Committee on waste management in Australia and the Drink Container Recycling Bill 2008 be extended to 3 September 2008.

Senator Ian Macdonald to move on the next day of sitting:
That the time for the presentation of the report of the Select Committee on State Government Financial Management be extended to 17 September 2008.

Senator Xenophon to move (contingent on the President presenting a report of the Auditor-General on any day or notifying the Senate that such a report had been presented under standing order 166):
That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the senator moving a motion to take note of the report and any senator speaking to it for not more than 10 minutes, with the total time for the debate not to exceed 60 minutes.

Senator Xenophon to move (contingent on the Senate on any day concluding its consideration of any item of business and prior to the Senate proceeding to the consideration of another item of business):
That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the senator moving a motion relating to the conduct of the business of the Senate or to provide for the consideration of any matter.

Senator Xenophon to move (contingent on the Senate proceeding to the consideration of government documents):
That so much of the standing orders relating to the consideration of government documents be suspended as would prevent the senator moving a motion relating to the order in which the documents are called on by the President.

Senator Xenophon to move (contingent on a minister moving a motion that a bill be considered an urgent bill):
That so much of standing order 142 be suspended as would prevent debate taking place on the motion.

Senator Xenophon to move (contingent on a minister moving a motion to specify time to be allotted to the consideration of a bill, or any stage of a bill):
That so much of standing order 142 be suspended as would prevent the motion being debated without limitation of time and each senator speaking for the time allotted by standing orders.

Senator Xenophon to move (contingent on the chair declaring that the time allotted for the consideration of a bill, or any stage of a bill, has expired):
That so much of standing order 142 be suspended as would prevent further consideration of the bill, or the stage of the bill, without limitation of time or for a specified period.

Senator Xenophon to move (contingent on the moving of a motion to debate a matter of urgency under standing order 75):
That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the senator moving an amendment to the motion.

Senator Xenophon to move (contingent on the President proceeding to the placing of business on any day):
That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the senator moving a motion relating to the order of business on the Notice Paper.

Senator Xenophon to move (contingent on a minister at question time on any day asking that further questions be placed on notice):
That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the senator moving a motion that, at question time on any day, questions may be put to ministers until 28 questions, including supplementary questions, have been asked and answered.
Senator Xenophon to move (contingent on any senator being refused leave to make a statement to the Senate):

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent that senator making that statement.

Senator Xenophon to move (contingent on any senator being refused leave to table a document in the Senate):

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the senator moving that the document be tabled.

Senator Hanson-Young to move on the next day of sitting:

That the Senate—

(a) notes that:

(i) 26 August marked the 8th anniversary of the rescue of 433 asylum seekers by the MV *Tampa*,

(ii) this rescue was followed by the refusal of the Coalition Government to allow the ship to enter Australian shores in direct violation of both maritime conventions and human rights obligations, and

(iii) the majority of the refugees, including children, were detained indefinitely on Nauru, as part of the Coalition’s ‘Pacific Solution’; and

(b) calls on the Government, as part of the inquiry into immigration detention in Australia, to look into the psychological harm mandatory detention has caused children and their families as a matter of urgency.

Senator Wong to move on the next day of sitting:

That the following matters be referred to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee for urgent inquiry and report by 30 September 2008:

(a) the urgent situation facing the Coorong and Lower Lakes, and options for both immediate and long-term responses to prevent acidification and enable sustainable management of these sites;

(b) options and issues associated with the sourcing and delivery of water to the Coorong and Lower Lakes, including:

(i) the availability of water in the Murray-Darling Basin and its potential to be redirected to the Coorong and Lower Lakes, including likely transmission losses and arrangements needed to ensure effective delivery of any water,

(ii) any potential impacts of such redirection on communities in the basin, including Adelaide, and regional economies and communities,

(iii) the relevance and significance of other priority environmental needs for environmental water in the basin, including in relation to identified icon sites and other Ramsar wetlands,

(iv) the purchase of water on the permanent and temporary markets,

(v) possible financial incentive schemes to enable a one-off donation by irrigators and/or state governments,

(vi) any legislative or regulatory impediments to implementing available options, including the current 4 per cent limit of permanent water trade out of irrigation districts, and

(vii) likely availability of water into the future, including the impact of climate change on the long-term Coorong and Lower Lakes environment; and

(c) any other related matters.

Senators Bernardi, Birmingham, Ferguson, Fisher and Minchin to move on the next day of sitting:

That there be laid on the table, no later than noon on Thursday, 28 August 2008, the ‘urgent advice’ prepared for the Minister for Climate Change and Water by her department as requested on 18 June 2008 on ‘what we can do in the short-term’ to address the dire situation confronting the Coorong and Lower Lakes in South Australia.

Senator Minchin to move on the next day of sitting:

That the Senate—
(a) records its deep regret and sadness at the death of Signaller Sean McCarthy who died as part of a roadside bomb attack in Afghanistan on 8 July 2008;
(b) commends his loyal and dedicated service to the Australian Defence Force since 2001, including a tour to East Timor and two tours to Afghanistan; and
(c) expresses its sincere condolences to Signaller McCarthy’s parents, sisters and all loved ones for their tragic loss.

Senator Siewert to move on the next day of sitting:
That the Senate—
(a) notes:
(i) that the week beginning 24 August 2008 is National Hearing Awareness Week, and the theme for 2008 is ‘one in six’, which highlights the fact that around 3.55 million Australians experience some form of hearing impairment;
(ii) threats to the hearing of younger people, for whom the major cause of hearing loss is recreational activities, particularly the misuse of ear phones,
(iii) the continuing risk to hearing in industrial workplaces, farming activities, and from the use of do-it-yourself electrical equipment in the home,
(iv) measures emerging in Europe to address volume control of personal sound systems and to limit noise in public venues frequented by young people,
(v) the need for more research to increase public knowledge and awareness of these issues, and
(vi) the absence of legislation to better protect the hearing of young Australians; and
(b) calls on the Government to further investigate the need for national legislation to address these important hearing issues.

Senator Milne to move on the next day of sitting:
That there be laid on the table, no later than 4 pm on 28 August 2008, the report prepared for the Federal Government by Dr Michael Herzfeld, a Coastal Environmental Modeller with the Marine and Atmospheric Research section of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation in conjunction with the Gunns Pulp Mill Independent Expert Group on the potential marine impact of effluent from the Gunns pulp mill.

Senator Crossin to move on the next day of sitting:
That the time for the presentation of the report of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee on the provisions of the Family Law Amendment (De Facto Financial Matters and Other Measures) Bill 2008 be extended to 28 August 2008.

Senator Ludwig to move on the next day of sitting:
That consideration of the business before the Senate on the following days be interrupted at 5 pm, but not so as to interrupt a senator speaking, to enable senators to make their first speeches without any question before the chair, as follows:
(a) Wednesday, 27 August 2008—Senators Pratt, Xenophon and Bilyk;
(b) Monday, 1 September 2008—Senators Cameron, Hanson-Young and Feeney;
(c) Tuesday, 2 September 2008—Senators Furner and Cash;
(d) Wednesday, 3 September 2008—Senators Farrell and Arbib;
(e) Monday, 15 September 2008—Senators Williams and Kroger; and
(f) Tuesday, 16 September 2008—Senators Ryan and Ludlam.

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (4.34 pm)—I give notice that on the next sitting day, I shall move:
That the Senate—
(a) Four years ago, more than 100 fishermen in Queensland were deemed criminals by the Federal Government for innocently dropping a fishing line in water which is part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. These fish-
Men had a criminal conviction recorded against them and were fined $2500 each.

(b) These fishermen are your ‘average Joes’. They’re recreational fishermen; granddads taking their kids fishing or group of mates in a ‘tinnie’. What they have done, usually through ignorance or a lack of navigation skills, is simply drop a line in the wrong place, which does not warrant a criminal conviction.

(c) Two years ago the Federal Government admitted it was wrong to give criminal convictions and downgraded the offence to an infringement, with an $1100 fine and no criminal conviction. However, the more than 100 fishermen originally convicted still have a criminal conviction recorded against their name.

(d) Having a criminal record can seriously damage a person’s life. You’re deemed in the eyes of the law to be a criminal which can make it impossible to get a job, insurance or a home loan. You can’t travel to certain countries and can’t get a licence for occupations like being a real estate agent or publican. Every government form requires you to declare if you have a criminal conviction.

The Senate calls on the Federal Government to fix this mess by making sure these fishermen are given a pardon and do not have the permanent stain of a criminal record to their names.

Senator Ferguson—Madam Acting Deputy President, I rise on a point of order. Without wishing to detract from the importance of the issue that Senator Fielding raised, I think you should look carefully at that notice of motion because I do not believe it conforms to the type of wording that we would normally associate with a notice of motion. In fact, it almost included debating issues.

The Acting Deputy President (Senator Moore)—Senator Ferguson, we will refer Senator Fielding’s notice of motion to the President for consideration and report back.

The amended notice of motion read as follows—

That the Senate:

(a) notes that:

(i) 4 years ago more than 100 fishermen in Queensland had criminal convictions recorded against them and were each fined $2500 for innocently dropping a fishing line in water which is part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and

(ii) 2 years ago the Federal Government downgraded the offence to an infringement with a $1100 fine and no criminal conviction, however, the fishermen still have a criminal conviction recorded against their name; and

(b) calls on the Federal Government to fix this anomaly by making sure these fishermen are given a pardon and do not have the permanent stain of a criminal record to their names.

Notice amended by Mr President pursuant to standing order 76.

Senator Siewert to move on 28 August 2008:


Senators Hanson-Young, Bob Brown, Siewert and Xenophon to move on the next day of sitting:

(1) That the following matters be referred to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee for inquiry and report no later than 30 September 2008:

(a) the volume of water which could be provided into the Murray-Darling system to replenish the Lower Lakes and Coorong;

(b) options for sourcing and delivering this water, including:
(i) possible incentive and compensation schemes for current water holders who participate in a once-off voluntary contribution of water to this national emergency,
(ii) alternative options for the acquisition of sufficient water,
(iii) likely transmission losses and the most efficient and effective strategies to manage the delivery of this water,
(iv) Commonwealth powers to obtain and deliver water and possible legislative or regulative impediments, and
(v) assessment of the potential contribution of bringing forward irrigation infrastructure spending under the Council of Australian Governments agreement to deliver water to save the Coorong and Lower Lakes;
(c) the impact of any water buybacks on rural and regional communities and Adelaide including compensation and structural adjustment; and
(d) any other related matters.
(2) That the following matter be referred to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee for inquiry and report no later than 4 December 2008:
The implications for the long-term sustainable management of the Murray Darling Basin system, with particular reference to:
(a) the adequacy of current whole-of-basin governance arrangements under the Intergovernmental Agreement;
(b) the adequacy of current arrangements in relation to the implementation of the Basin Plan and water sharing arrangements;
(c) long-term prospects for the management of Ramsar wetlands including the supply of adequate environmental flows;
(d) the risks to the basin posed by unregulated water interception activities and water theft;
(e) the ability of the Commonwealth to bind state and territory governments to meet their obligations under the National Water Initiative;
(f) the adequacy of existing state and territory water and natural resource management legislation and enforcement arrangements; and
(g) the impacts of climate change on the likely future availability of water.

Senator Siewert to move on 1 September 2008:
That the following bill be introduced: A Bill for an Act to prohibit the addition of synthetic trans fatty acids to food, and for related purposes.
Food Safety (Trans Fats) Bill 2008.

Senator Bob Brown to move on the next day of sitting:
That the Senate—
(a) recognises that the desalination plant planned for Victoria’s Bass Coast near Phillip Island:
(i) will produce 1.4 million tonnes of greenhouse gases annually during construction and a further 1.2 million tonnes annually during operation,
(ii) will discharge 280 billion litres of saline concentrate effluent into the ocean annually,
(iii) may adversely affect several nationally protected species including the orange-bellied parrot, the growling grass frog and the giant Gippsland earthworm, and
(iv) may damage the rocky reef habitat directly off the proposed plant site and Aboriginal artefacts; and
(b) notes, amongst other options, that the installation of rain water tanks in every Melbourne property would save an estimated 50 billion litres of water a year with no such environmental cost.

Senator Fielding to move on the next day of sitting:
That the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2008 be re-
That the Senate endorse the recommendation contained in paragraph 1.10 of the Community Affairs Committee report on the 2008-09 Budget estimates that:

Future estimates hearing programs include a separate time to conduct an estimates hearing on Indigenous matters that would include all the portfolios with budget expenditure or responsibility for Indigenous issues.

Question agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

World Trade Organisation

Senator McLUCAS (Queensland—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing) (4.41 pm)—I table a ministerial statement on the World Trade Organisation—the July ministerial talks.

DOCUMENTS

Tabling

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Moore)—Pursuant to standing orders 38 and 166, I present documents as listed below which were presented to the President, the Deputy President and temporary chairs of committees since the Senate last sat. In accordance with the terms of the standing orders, the publication of the documents was authorised. In accordance with the usual practice, and with the concurrence of the Senate, I ask that the government responses be incorporated in Hansard. I also present various documents as listed at item 22 (a) and (b) on today’s Order of Business.

The list read as follows—

Committee reports

(1) Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee—Interim report—Administration of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and related matters (presented to temporary chair of committees, Senator Fieravanti-Wells, on 9 July 2008).

(2) Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories—Report—The way forward—Inquiry into the role of
the National Capital Authority (presented to temporary chair of committees, Senator Fierravanti-Wells, on 16 July 2008).

(3) Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee—Interim report—Australia’s involvement in peacekeeping operations (presented to temporary chair of committees, Senator Barnett, on 31 July 2008).

(4) Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee—Final report, together with documents presented to the committee—Australia’s involvement in peacekeeping operations (presented to temporary chair of committees, Senator Barnett, on 1 August 2008).


(6) Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee—Interim report—Implementation, operation and administration of the legislation underpinning Carbon Sink Forests (presented to the Deputy President on 22 August 2008).

(7) Community Affairs Committee—Report, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and submissions received by the committee—National Health Amendment (Pharmaceutical and Other Benefits—Cost Recovery) Bill 2008 (presented to the Deputy President on 22 August 2008).

(8) Environment, Communications and the Arts Committee—Final report, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee—Save Our Solar (Solar Rebate Protection) Bill 2008 [No. 2] (received 25 August 2008)

Government responses to parliamentary committee reports


Government documents

(1) Estimates of proposed expenditure for 2008-09—Portfolio budget statements—Defence portfolio—Correction (presented to temporary chair of committees, Senator Troeth, on 4 July 2008).


Reports of the Auditor-General

(1) Audit report no. 46 of 2007-08—Performance audit—Regulation of commercial broadcasting: Australian Communications and Media Authority (presented to the Deputy President on 27 June 2008).

(2) Audit report no. 1 of 2008-09—Performance audit—Employment and management of locally engaged staff: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (presented to temporary chair of committees, Senator Barnett, on 5 August 2008).

(3) Audit report no. 2 of 2008-09—Performance audit—Tourism Australia (presented to temporary chair of committees, Senator Moore, on 6 August 2008).

Documents as listed on today’s Order of Business

(a) Business of the Senate: 1 January to 30 June 2008

(b) Questions on notice summary: 12 February to 30 June 2008
The government responses read as follows—

**Australian Government Response to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee Report:**

Indigenous Art—Securing the Future Australia’s Indigenous visual arts and craft sector August 2008

This is the Australian Government’s response to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Inquiry into the Indigenous visual arts and craft sector, Indigenous Arts—Securing the Future, as tabled on 20 June 2007.

The Government acknowledges the importance of the committee’s research into the Indigenous visual arts sector, and the value of its findings in contributing to the growth and stability of the sector into the future. The report highlights the economic, social and cultural benefits of the Indigenous visual arts sector to local communities and its wider impact on other sectors and the nation generally. As stated in the report, these benefits can be reinforced and developed through a coordinated whole of government response to the recommendations.

The Government recognises the success of the Indigenous visual arts sector including the creation of an internationally acclaimed art movement, representing a dynamic living culture that helps define Australia’s identity. This sector affords economic opportunities for Indigenous artists and communities while playing a fundamental role in building a dialogue between Indigenous and other Australians in the reconciliation process. The Government also acknowledges that the Indigenous visual arts sector faces a number of challenges.

The Government considers it has an important ongoing role in the building of a strong and sustainable Indigenous visual arts sector which is reflected in this response to the committee’s recommendations.

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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 1</td>
<td>Agreed in principle.</td>
<td>The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) administers the Australian Harmonised Export Commodity Classification (AHECC) Guide. In general terms, all export cargo above $A2,000 is required to be declared to Customs and must be classified using the correct AHECC code. The ABS will consider the incorporation of classification codes which allow separate identification of ‘Australian Indigenous art’ from other art exports. This will occur in the context of the review of AHECC codes which is to take place in 2009. Subject to the agreement of the ABS and the creation of the new codes, Customs will commence implementation of the recommendation in accordance with their role in collecting data on current export cargo under categories identified in the AHECC Guide. The Government recognises that there are already a number of tertiary courses aimed at preparing individuals for work in art centres. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has initiated discussions with selected tertiary institutions about the feasibility of working in partnership to ensure flexible opportunities for training are available to current prospective art centre managers and employees. DEEWR will consult with the Department of the Envi-</td>
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| Recommendation 2 | Agreed. | }
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<td>3</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
<td>The committee recommends that DCITA, in cooperation with the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination [OIPC], ensure that art centres in the Northern Territory are aware of opportunities to apply for funding from the Aboriginal Benefits Account [ABA], and that ANKAAA and Desart assist art centres to apply for funding from this source. The committee encourages the ABA Advisory Committee to support applications from art centres, noting the competing demands on the ABA from different types of funding requests.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Subject to consideration in a future Budget process.</td>
<td>The committee recommends that the Commonwealth establish a new infrastructure fund to assist Indigenous visual arts and craft; that this fund complement existing NACIS [National Arts and Craft Industry Support] program funding; that this infrastructure fund be for a sum in the order of $25 million, made available over a period of five years; and that the fund be administered by DCITA.</td>
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</table>
Recommendation 5
The committee supports the roles of DEWR [the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations] and Indigenous Business Australia [IBA] programs in assisting where appropriate the transition to economic independence for art centres, and recommends that these initiatives be further promoted by DEWR and IBA and utilised by art centres.

Agreed in principle.

DEEWR and IBA will utilise and promote current programs to assist where appropriate to transition art centres to economic independence. This will include encouraging commercial art centre operations and developing employment outcomes, and working with other agencies where appropriate. It may also necessitate a review of current programs to fit with this purpose. The Government also recognises that tourism is a vehicle to assist in commercialising art centre operations.

Recommendation 6
The committee recommends that the Commonwealth further expand funding under the existing NACIS scheme and consider revising its guidelines to confine its use to non-infrastructure projects.

Subject to consideration in a future Budget process.

The Australian Government has committed to increase funding for the NACIS program through an additional $7.6 million over four years. The Government agrees to consider revising NACIS guidelines to confine support to non-infrastructure projects, subject to Budget consideration of the proposal under Recommendation 4.

Recommendation 7
The committee recommends that the Commonwealth consult with stakeholders in the industry, particularly Desart and ANKAAA, on reforms to NACIS funding criteria, so that funding decisions are guided in part by the aim of ensuring operation of art centres in accordance with best practice principles. These standards may include (but not be confined to): staffing requirements that meet the operational needs of art centres, and ensure flexibility to accommodate any particular requirements of such centres; governance and reporting systems; and training commitments, in-
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<td>Recommendation 8</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
<td>The Government considers the first step in addressing these issues is to undertake a scoping study. The Government notes the committee’s view that Alice Springs is widely regarded as an area where significant issues exist regarding the fair treatment of Indigenous artists. The Government notes the committee’s comments that the establishment of an arts facility in Alice Springs would have significant resource implications and that considerable negotiation and planning would be required to ensure its effectiveness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 9</td>
<td>Agreed.</td>
<td>DEWHA and the Australia Council are reviewing their documentation and processes across relevant programs to progress this recommendation. DEWHA, with the Australia Council, will raise the issue within the context of the Cultural Ministers Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 10</td>
<td>Agreed.</td>
<td>The Government has committed to introduce three yearly operational funding to improve financial certainty.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 11</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
<td>The Government will reform the CDEP (Community Development Employment Projects) program as part of its broader Indigenous Economic Development Strategy and supports the ongoing conversion of CDEP positions into real jobs where possible, including those in the arts industry.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 12</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
<td>The Government notes that the Directory has not been regularly produced since its first publication in 1987. Should a new edition be considered, and an appropriate code of conduct be in operation, then the Government will consider the feasibility of limiting entries to code compliant organisations at that time.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 13</td>
<td>Agreed in principle.</td>
<td>The Government recognises that this recommendation covers a range of portfolio areas and requires a whole of government engagement that recognises that states and territories are responsible for the delivery of education and training. DEWHA and DEEWR, in consultation with other relevant agencies, are examining appropriate ways to address the recommendation. This includes looking at building on existing initiatives and scope for establishing new approaches to education and training. The resources required to develop any new proposals would be subject to a future Budget process.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 14</td>
<td>Agreed.</td>
<td>The Government notes that these activities are already eligible for support under the current program guidelines, insofar as such activities contribute to the development and sustainability of the industry. As part of its regular review of the program’s guidelines, DEWHA will continue to ensure that the eligibility of these activities is clear.</td>
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| Recommendation 15 | Not agreed. | The Government considers the ACCC to be appropriately resourced to enforce the provisions of the Trade Practices Act 1974 (TPA), including engaging in education campaigns as appropriate. The decision for the ACCC to pursue complaints is not constrained by resource considerations. As an independent statutory authority the ACCC sets its own enforcement priorities and can direct those resources to Indigenous art if appropriate. Under the current funding arrangements, the ACCC conducts a range of education and information activities for Indigenous communities as part of its disadvantaged
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<td>with a goal of increasing successful prosecutions of illegal practices in the industry.</td>
<td></td>
<td>and vulnerable consumer program and is a signatory to the National Indigenous Consumer Strategy. While the ACCC’s education activities are focused on general compliance initiatives and education campaigns to raise awareness of the ACCC and its functions, this does not preclude the ACCC from pursuing specific efforts targeted at this sector. In representations to the Inquiry, the ACCC stated its willingness to investigate any conduct that would constitute a potential breach of the TPA. Investigative work is currently underway into a number of matters raised during the Senate Inquiry pertaining to complaints about conduct in this sector.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 16</td>
<td>Agreed in part.</td>
<td>The Government agrees to undertake further work to examine: - the operation of international schemes; and - current and former schemes in Australia. Subject to the outcomes of these processes, the Government will consider options to address issues around authenticity and labelling schemes in the future.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 17</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
<td>The Government supports the development of an industry wide code of conduct to enhance the industry’s sustainability and to protect artists from unscrupulous conduct. The Government notes the recommendation and the work to progress the effective development of the Code. The Government also notes that the ACCC has been consulted by the Indigenous Art Commercial Code of Conduct reference group (see response to Recommendation 19). The Government looks forward to the completion of the Code.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 18</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
<td>The Government notes the recommendation and, subject to an appropriate code of conduct being in operation, will raise the recommendation in appropriate Commonwealth and state fora.</td>
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| Recommendation 19 | Noted. | The Government notes the recommendation. The Gov-
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<td>The committee recommends that the NAVA [National Association of the Visual Arts] Reference Group and other stakeholders include input from experts on industry codes of practice, particularly the ACCC, during and after the preparation of the Indigenous Art Commercial Code of Conduct.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
<td>The Government considers that effective voluntary industry codes potentially deliver increased protection to consumers and other stakeholders as well as reduced regulatory burdens for business. The Code of Conduct has benefited from input from a wide range of stakeholders, including the ACCC, which has significant experience in the application of codes of conduct. The Government notes that the ACCC has consulted with the Australia Council, NAVA and key industry bodies ANKAAA and Desart in relation to the draft Indigenous Art Commercial Code of Conduct and supports this collaboration. The ACCC has provided advice to the Code of Conduct Reference Group on the major issues to be considered in the development of an industry code and is providing further assistance to the Reference Group to ensure the effectiveness of the Code in achieving compliance with the TPA.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 20</td>
<td>The committee recommends that, once completed, all stakeholders in the industry examine, disseminate and adopt where relevant the Indigenous Art Commercial Code of Conduct.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 21</td>
<td>The committee recommends that the industry be given the opportunity to self-regulate. If after two years persistent problems remain, consideration should be given to moving to a prescribed code of conduct under the Trade Practices Act.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 22</td>
<td>The committee recommends that all public and private collecting institutions implement the Indigenous Art Commercial Code of Conduct as appropriate, and that all such institutions aim to purchase</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 23</td>
<td>Agreed in principle.</td>
<td>The Government is supportive of practical initiatives which aim to enhance the integrity of the Indigenous art market but notes that it is generally the responsibility of the industry itself to give effect to a self-regulatory initiative. The Government does not generally play a significant role in giving effect to self-regulatory industry codes of conduct. Where appropriate, the ACCC works collaboratively with other agencies and industry organisations to ensure compliance with the TPA and enhance market conduct in all industry sectors, including the Indigenous arts and craft sector. Subject to the finalisation and implementation of the Code of Conduct, the Government will consider examining further measures to enhance the integrity of the Indigenous art market, including dealer accreditation.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 24</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
<td>The Attorney-General’s Department is preparing briefing on the Indigenous communal moral rights (ICMR) issue for the Attorney-General. No decision has been made on whether the Government will proceed with the ICMR legislation.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 25</td>
<td>Not agreed.</td>
<td>Australia’s current intellectual property legislation can be used to protect Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights. Customs has existing powers at the border (under the Notice of Objection Scheme) to detain and deal with imported goods suspected of infringing intellectual property rights. Australian Government officials actively participate in the work being undertaken in the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) through the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore. Relevant Government agencies will continue to work closely together to develop approaches to address these complex issues at both the domestic and international level.</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Not agreed.</td>
<td>The Government has committed to implementing a resale royalty scheme for visual artists. The Government considers that artists stand to gain both additional rights in their work and the prospect of future income into the longer term where their works are on-sold. Relevant government agencies will be working closely together to implement the scheme through a proposed cross-Government working group. The detail of the scheme will be fleshed out following targeted consultation with the visual arts and art market sectors. Legislation will then be developed once the parameters of the scheme are finalised.</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Agreed.</td>
<td>Data supporting the reporting of international Indigenous arts and crafts sales are not currently collected. The ABS, in cooperation with other agencies (Customs, Tourism Australia, Austrade, DEWHA, Treasury), will look at the feasibility of developing statistical information relating to international exhibitions, sales and exports of Indigenous arts and crafts. See also Recommendation 1.</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Not agreed.</td>
<td>Austrade is bound by the provisions of the Australian Trade Commission Act 1985 (the Act) to encourage trade between Australia and foreign countries. Restricting assistance to those businesses that have agreed to any code of conduct is not consistent with the provisions of the Act. The Government does support ethical buying and selling practices and acknowledges the positive impacts of such practices in creating a sustainable and respected export market for Indigenous art. An appropriate code could, therefore, be used as an educational tool and means to promote such practices. Further, Austrade would encourage exporters to be aware of and comply with such a code.</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
<td>The Australian Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) actively promotes a positive and accurate image internationally of Australia’s Indigenous cultures. The showcasing of Indigenous</td>
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efforts to showcase Indigenous visual arts and craft internationally.

visual arts, craft and design is integral to this promotional effort. In addition to the touring internationally of Indigenous visual art exhibitions through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program, DFAT’s funded grants program will continue to consider for support worthwhile applications aimed at acquainting overseas audiences with Australia’s diverse Indigenous cultures. Where possible, DFAT’s focus country programs, aimed at enhancing awareness of Australian culture in targeted countries, will include an Indigenous visual arts component; and the International Cultural Visits program will continue to host visits to Australia of international arts decision-makers who have an interest in Indigenous art and craft.

At the same time, the Australia Council’s program Showcasing the Best has played an important role in profiling high quality art abroad, in particular by leveraging international opportunities such as the Musée du quai Branly project in Paris. The success of the Australian contribution to the quai Branly was based on strong collaboration between various agencies, including the Australia Council and DFAT. The Government sees this project as an example of effective cross-Government cooperation.

Relevant agencies, including DFAT, the Australia Council and Austrade, will investigate how the promotion of Indigenous art on the world stage can be better targeted and coordinated across Government into the future. They will take advantage of the synergies between DFAT’s cultural diplomacy programs and the Australia Council’s efforts to promote artists and their work internationally. Austrade support for international commercial activities will also be considered.
The Government agrees with the Committee’s recommendations supporting the rationalisation of procurement reporting regimes. Recommendations 1 and 9 will allow for procurement reporting to be delivered through the improved AusTender system, removing overlap that exists across current regimes and improving the quality and consistency of data reported. The Government also supports Recommendation 13, as this will allow the Committee to amend the Order over time in response to changes in agency behaviour and the wider contracting environment.

The Government supports in principle Recommendation 2 which recommends that the Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance), in consultation with the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), relevant parliamentary committees and stakeholders, consider options for centralised reporting of non-procurement contracts. The Government is currently reviewing the administration of grants. An appropriate framework for public reporting of relevant grant payments will be considered as part of the review, taking into account the experience gained in operating the enhanced reporting arrangements through AusTender.

The Government does not support the extension of the Order to cover Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 (CAC Act) bodies. The Government has taken this position as CAC Act bodies are financially and legally separate from the Commonwealth, operating under separate legislative and governance arrangements than those of FMA Act agencies.

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| 1   | The Committee recommends the order be retained while the new AusTender system for reporting procurement contracts is implemented, with departments and agencies tabling statements through their ministers in accordance with paragraph (1) of the order, that they had fulfilled their reporting obligations by placing the information required under paragraph (2) of the order in the AusTender system. | The Government supports this recommendation  
By meeting the requirements of the Senate Order through the improved AusTender system, the quality and consistency of contract information available to stakeholders will improve.  
In line with Recommendation 2 of Australian National Audit Office Audit Report No.27 2005-2006 – Reporting of Expenditure on Consultants, this arrangement is likely to improve the quality of data reported and achieve efficiencies for agencies due to the decreased number of reporting regimes.  
Note that as the Committee was informed during the hearings AusTender does not capture amendments under $10,000. |
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<td>2</td>
<td>The Committee recommends DOFA, in consultation with ANAO, relevant parliamentary committees and stakeholders, consider reporting arrangements for non-procurement contracts and explore the development of a reporting mechanism comparable to the new AusTender system for this category of contract, and report to the Committee the outcome of this process within six months of the tabling of this report.</td>
<td>The Government supports this recommendation. The Government is committed to implementing accountability and transparency mechanisms across the whole financial management framework. In this regard, a review of the administration of grants has been commenced. An appropriate framework for public reporting of relevant grant payments will be considered as part of the review, taking into account the experience gained in operating the enhanced reporting arrangements through AusTender. It is envisaged that the review will report to the Minister for Finance and Deregulation in June 2008. Subsequently, guidance on the administration of grants can be expected to be issued by Finance by the end of 2008. This review will involve consultation with the ANAO. The Minister for Finance and Deregulation will consult with the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration. The Government has, separate from its consideration of this recommendation, also already implemented requirements for agencies to report approvals of grants on their websites within two days of a decision being announced. This measure applies to grants where the Minister or agency has discretion in determining whether or not a particular grant application receives funding.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>The Committee recommends agencies, if they have not done so already, implement ANAO recommendations to improve the accuracy and completeness of contract information with stronger internal controls and quality assurance for checking data, and report that they have done so through their ministers’ tabling statements made under paragraph (1) of the order.</td>
<td>The Government supports this recommendation. By improving internal processes and controls, the quality of data input into Senate Order listings will improve, as will the accuracy and completeness of Senate order listings.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The Committee recommends that to improve data quality and internal governance, agencies include procurement and contract activity in regular business and management reporting to agency executives and, where necessary, internal audit and governance committees.</td>
<td>The Government supports this recommendation. Under the devolved financial management framework, agency chief executives are responsible for the management of their resources, which extends to the proper management and reporting of contracts.</td>
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5 The Committee recommends DOFA and agencies consult ANAO on examples from compliance audit testing which illustrate provisions that are classified appropriately and those that are not, for inclusion in guidance and training in relation to the order.

The Government supports this recommendation. Finance will consult with the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) and agencies to formulate further examples of correctly classified confidentiality provisions for inclusion in both the revised guidance on confidentiality in procurement and other guidance.

6 The Committee recommends all agencies provide adequate training and education to staff responsible for managing contracts and complying with the order, either through internal training or programs provided externally.

The Government supports this recommendation. Finance will promote this recommendation to agencies in its regular dealings with them on procurement policy.

7 The Committee recommends DOFA include in guidance advice to the effect that, in relation to a refusal to disclose information based on a claim of commercial confidentiality for a contract, the Parliament, and its committees and members, may: test the validity of any claim by reference to DOFA’s process chart for agency staff dealing with confidentiality of information in contracts; and refer the contract to the Auditor-General for examination.

The Government supports this recommendation. The Finance guidance on confidentiality has been revised to indicate that contracts should generally not include confidentiality clauses that limit the Commonwealth’s ability to disclose information to the Parliament. The guidance requires agencies to test the validity of confidentiality claims before including confidentiality clauses in contracts.

8 The Committee requests ANAO consider including ASIO and ASIS regularly in its compliance audits under the order on a three-yearly basis.

The Government supports this recommendation. The ANAO will include ASIO and ASIS in an audit of compliance with the Order in 2008 or 2009. The Auditor-General will take into account the outcomes of that audit, together with providing broad coverage across all other agencies, in determining when ASIO and ASIS will be included in a future audit.

9 The Committee recommends the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), in the next set of guidelines for annual reporting, include a requirement for agencies to include a note in their annual reports referring readers to the AusTender site for information on contracts and consultancies. Depending on the outcome of any decision on the DOFA proposal to rationalise procurement reporting, it may be necessary for agencies to also include a note explaining changes to reporting requirements for procurement contracts.

The Government supports this recommendation (subject to the approval of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit). The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet updated the Requirements for Annual Reports, as approved by the JCPAA, in June 2007 to reflect this recommendation.
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<td>10</td>
<td>The Committee recommends that the order be extended to cover CAC Act bodies from 1 July 2007.</td>
<td>The Government does not support this recommendation. The Government is not in favour of extending the coverage of the order to cover CAC Act bodies as they operate under a different legislative and governance framework than those agencies that operate under the <em>Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997</em>. CAC Act bodies are also financially and legally separate from the Commonwealth. The majority of CAC Act bodies are also not bound by the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines, and the requirement for them to abide by the Senate Order through the use of the AusTender system could create confusion among agencies.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>The Committee reaffirms its suggestion that the Department of the House of Representatives comply voluntarily with the order. If the Senate agrees with this suggestion, the Committee requests the President of the Senate convey its suggestion to the Speaker of the House of Representatives.</td>
<td>The Government notes this recommendation. This is a matter for the House of Representatives and the Senate.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>The Committee recommends DOFA provide a general report on the implementation of the recommendations in this report and the performance of the new single reporting mechanism, by not later than the last day in September 2007.</td>
<td>The Government supports this recommendation. The Government agrees but notes that due to the election the timing requires adjustment. The Minister for Finance and Deregulation will write to the Committee about progress made implementing the committee’s 13 recommendations by September 2008. Finance will provide a report on the performance of the new single reporting mechanism (AusTender) by September 2008.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>The Committee recommends the Senate amend paragraph (7) of the order, to read: ‘The Finance and Public Administration Committee consider the ongoing operation of the order and report on relevant developments from time to time’.</td>
<td>The Government supports this recommendation. Although this is a matter for the Senate, the Government supports the recommendation as it is appropriate for governance mechanisms to be regularly reviewed.</td>
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Ordered that the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee and the Environment, Communications and the Arts Committee and the Community Affairs Committee reports be printed.
COMMITTEES

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

Extension of Time

Senator O’Brien (Tasmania) (4.42 pm)—by leave—At the request of the Chair of the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, Senator Sterle, I move:

That the final report of the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee on the implementation, operation and administration of the legislation underpinning Carbon Sink Forests be presented by 28 August 2008.

Question agreed to.

AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS

Report No. 2 of 2008-09

Senator Nash (New South Wales) (4.43 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the Senate take note of the document.

I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

SAVE OUR SOLAR (SOLAR REBATE PROTECTION) BILL 2008 [No. 2]

Report of Environment, Communication and the Arts Committee

Senator McEwen (South Australia) (4.33 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the Senate take note of the report.

I will try not to speak too long on this. I understand some other senators may wish to speak on this matter as well. I am pleased to note the tabling of the report of the inquiry into an opposition private member’s bill entitled Save Our Solar (Solar Rebate Protection) Bill 2008 [No. 2], which was considered by the Senate Standing Committee on the Environment, Communications and the Arts. The bill requires new rebate guidelines to be determined via a legislative instrument subject to parliamentary scrutiny and potential disallowance by either house of parliament but effectively by the Senate.

The opposition hoped that the inquiry from this bill would uncover some kind of approaching Armageddon in the PV solar panel industry in Australia. However, the inquiry found that the industry, while changing, is in fact very robust because Australian consumers and domestic households in particular are taking up rebates offered under the government’s rebate program at higher rates than before the budget announcement about the means test.

The committee received 150 submissions from witnesses in this inquiry and we heard evidence in Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane and telephone evidence from other states and territories. The majority report is supportive of the government’s handling of the rebate program and it recommends that the opposition bill does not proceed.

The report’s main findings include the increased uptake of the Solar Homes and Communities Plan since the budget. A recommendation addresses the fact that households are installing systems of around one kilowatt that are largely affordable within the maximum rebate allowable of $8,000, while perhaps larger sized systems would be preferable. The committee also found that the industry itself would much prefer the introduction of a feed-in tariff scheme that offers more certainty over a longer period of time than rebate schemes which can be vulnerable to government policy or, as this bill anticipated, vulnerable to the whim of the Senate.

I note in that context that several states and territories are putting in place, have considered or are considering feed-in tariff schemes to further support the use of solar PV systems and possibly other forms of microrenewable energy. The government recognises that fact and agrees that adopting an approach that is as consistent as possible across the country can go a long way in help-
ing reduce the regulatory burden and costs on the electricity market as well as on consumers. I am pleased to note that COAG will consider options for a harmonised approach to feed-in tariffs at its October meeting this year. The committee that inquired into this bill will also be examining such a scheme during our coming inquiry into the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment (Feed-in-Tariff) Bill 2008.

The opposition has put in a fairly predictable dissenting report which projects gloom and doom in the industry, an industry that is actually showing signs of moving from being a cottage industry to being a very mature industry. Yes, there are some adjustments. But we are also seeing potential investment in the industry from companies operating in the global market.

The opposition, throughout this inquiry, did nothing to address the repeated calls of the industry in Australia for certainty about what was going to happen in the future, and instead we had the opposition, throughout this inquiry, whipping up fear and uncertainty in the PV industry by alleging—like Chicken Little—that the world was going to end, the sun was going to stop shining and that everything was going to be disastrous when, in fact, there was no good evidence to support that at all.

It was intriguing that earlier on today in this chamber we heard, on a number of occasions, other senators on this side noting that the opposition could have different opinions on the same topic on different days, depending on which different members of the opposition were speaking. We heard that certainly in the context of the River Murray during question time. It is not unusual for this opposition to support something one day and then reject it the next, and perhaps that is why they were rejecting a policy that, with regard to the means test on the rebate scheme, is in fact a policy very similar to their own. I wonder whether they have forgotten about the $100,000 means test on solar hot water rebates that was implemented by the then Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Mr Malcolm Turnbull, when that program was introduced in July 2007. It is probably worth reiterating that on the 17 July 2007, Mr Turnbull issued a press release stating:

The rebate is available to eligible applicants who are replacing existing electric storage hot water systems with eligible solar or heat pump systems purchased and installed after today and verified by a registered agent. The home must be a principal place of residence and the applicant’s taxable family income must be less than $100,000.

That sounds very familiar. Never let the facts and history get in the way of a good story when it comes to the opposition!

Our change to the Solar Homes and Communities Plan rebate brings it into line with the Solar Hot Water Rebate Program. That program, as I said, was introduced by the previous government. So we have brought those two programs into line but, more importantly, we have greatly increased the funding available for the program per year. Whereas the previous government’s plan was to budget $150 million over five years for 15,000 rebates, I am proud to say my government dedicated $150 million over three years for 15,000 rebates in the recent budget and we doubled the number of rebates available from 3,000 to 6,000, doubling our election commitment and doubling what the previous government had budgeted for this year.

With the ongoing success of this program, we have now said that we will continue to meet demand for the program—a fact that the opposition chooses not to throw into the mix of scaremongering when it is whipping up the industry to be afraid of the future of government support for renewable energy.
It is clear that the driving force behind the opposition bill was that it hoped for—a decrease in the number of solar rebate applications following the introduction of the means test. That is what it wanted, and it was very disappointed when the numbers did not stack up and the number of rebates increased.

As of a couple of weeks ago, an average of 522 applications per week had been lodged since the budget for the rebate available under this excellent program. That is 150 more applications per week than were made prior to the budget and way beyond the 30 weekly applications at the time of the last coalition budget. In one week alone we noted that there were 794 applications for the rebate, post the budget change which included a means test so that this program could be targeted at low-income Australian families who most need assistance to install alternative energy sources in their homes.

Of course, I could go on about other excellent measures that the government has taken to improve the uptake of renewable energy sources, not just in people’s homes but in our communities and schools, but perhaps I will leave that for another day, given the time. The committee did note, as I said, the trend to smaller systems as people use the maximum amount of rebate to buy what they can afford, and the committee realise that that trend is not new. In fact, it started when the previous government increased the rebate to $8,000, and that information was verified by the federal Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. The department alerted us to that fact.

The fact that solar systems are becoming more affordable for low-income families is an excellent thing, a great thing for our nation. Actually, that is exactly what a former environment minister, Ian Campbell—they have had a few former environment ministers over there—called for in 2006 when he said that the solar rebate scheme should be targeted at low-income families. But, of course, that was another day and another position from the opposition on this very important issue.

In closing, I would like to thank the other members of the committee, who participated in this inquiry with goodwill and cooperation. Also, I would like to thank the secretariat and the many people who made an effort to contribute to the inquiry into this bill.

Senator BIRMINGHAM (South Australia) (4.53 pm)—I am pleased to rise to speak on the committee report of the inquiry into the Save Our Solar (Solar Rebate Protection) Bill 2008 [No. 2] and related matters. I am amazed to have heard Senator McEwen wanting to talk about certainty for the industry in regard to this inquiry. I am quite amazed because Senator McEwen knows all too well that this is an industry desperate for certainty, desperate for clarity, and it is finding absolutely none of it from the current government.

What was very clear through this inquiry was that the introduction of means testing came with absolutely no consultation with the industry beforehand. They had every belief, every high hope going into the budget this year, that the new Rudd government would, if anything, expand support for their industry. They believed quite strongly that the new Rudd government would actually deliver for the solar industry, because they had seen all the hype. They had heard all the noise. They had seen the now Prime Minister go and stand alongside solar operators just outside Canberra. They saw him actually stand beside Phil May at his business, SolarTec, praise the industry and talk about the potential of the solar industry.

They had every reason to believe that the new government was going to be a friend of
the industry, and yet instead what happened on 13 May this year with absolutely no hint, no consultation, nothing at all, was of course that the government—the government that had with much fanfare signed Kyoto, the government that had spent the entire election campaign talking about climate change at every opportunity—just suddenly introduced a means test on the solar panels rebate. It did so at a time when the industry itself was just starting to gain some confidence, was just really taking off. It did so at a time when the industry was looking forward to the future, having built strong capacity in that sector.

Having seen the rebate increase from $4 per watt to $8 per watt up to a maximum of $8,000 early in 2007, the industry had confidence in its future. It had confidence that the rebate was there to stay to meet demand, and it had that confidence because the coalition government had given a five-year commitment and appropriation to the rebate. It had confidence that the funds would be there because the then Prime Minister himself gave a public and personal commitment that, if demand outstripped the funds that had been allocated, more funds would be made available. That was the type of certainty the industry had enjoyed. It enjoyed the clear certainty of a five-year program, an $8,000 rebate with funding committed by the then Prime Minister.

Instead, we get the change of government. Despite all their rhetoric around climate change, they come in and pull the rug of certainty out from underneath the solar industry. They pull that rug of certainty out and leave the industry with a program radically diminished. It is radically diminished because they cut the length of the program from five years down to three years. It is radically diminished because they cut off at the knees the types of installations happening in this sector that were going to give it the capacity and strength it needed for the long term. By that I particularly mean the size of the installations that were occurring.

The most damning evidence we received during this inquiry came quite clearly from those who said that the size of solar systems being installed was now much smaller than had been the case previously. In fact, when the government officials finally appeared at this inquiry—and I will come back to the government’s approach to the inquiry in a moment—we saw evidence given that the size of the systems had reduced by more than 20 per cent. It is not that the government is actually giving smaller rebates—the government is still giving the maximum $8,000 rebate for each of these systems—but it is doing so and getting 20 per cent less renewable energy as a result. I would love to hear Mr Garrett try to tell us how it is a good policy outcome to spend $8,000 a pop to generate 20 per cent less renewable energy thanks to his policy of means testing. What he has done by introducing the means test is he has cut out all of those households who could actually afford to put in larger systems—households that were looking at putting in three-kilowatt or four-kilowatt systems, households that would have put in systems that would have met their own energy consumption and fed into the national grid. They have been cut out of the system as a result of this means testing.

Instead, we hear the government wanting to crow about the fact that applications have continued to increase. Yes, applications have continued to increase. They have increased for a number of reasons. One of those reasons is the surge in bulk purchase schemes of the smallest possible system. The Queensland government themselves introduced a bulk purchase scheme for 1,000 systems of one kilowatt in size—so the smallest system to get $8,000. We saw them introduce that scheme in a manner that has artificially propped up the number of applications for
the smallest possible system. They are one-kilowatt systems that will not meet the energy demands of most of the households, certainly will not feed into the grid, and are a long way short of actually delivering the type of growth in renewable energy, the type of growth in capacity in the industry, that is needed. So one reason we see the surge in numbers is certainly this surge in bulk purchase schemes.

Another reason we see this surge in numbers is actually the very lack of that certainty that Senator McEwen was speaking of before, because the industry and consumers are concerned that, having seen a means test implemented, having cut off a large swathe of the population—all households with a gross income over $100,000—from being eligible for this rebate, people are understandably concerned that maybe the whole rebate will go sometime soon. Of course, as speculation mounts that that whole rebate could be cut off, people are getting in while they still can. They are getting the applications in. They are scared at the lack of certainty given by this government and so they are getting in and boosting those short-term applications.

There are also concerns because you are now dealing with a much smaller marketplace. We did not have one industry operator come to us and tell us that this was good policy—far from it; every industry operator who came to us and said they thought this was a bad policy decision. They came and told us that they had lost sales as a result. Most told us that in fact they had not managed to sell a single photovoltaic system to a household which was over the means test threshold. So that entire section of the community has been cut off from purchasing systems because there is no incentive.

Many people came to us and said to us that they were happy to spend a little bit more on a system—that, indeed, if they had to dip into their pockets a little deeper, they would have done so. But for households who were looking at contributing between $5,000 and $15,000 of their own hard-earned towards buying a system, suddenly discovering that it was going to cost them an extra $8,000 on top of that was just too big a burden to bear. So it is little wonder that that sector of the population now are not purchasing systems.

There is a concern, with a rush in households under the threshold but no market in households over the threshold, about what is going to happen. Slowly but surely there is concern in the industry that that rush in the marketplace will dry up. Many people put it to us that the government had messed up its priorities on this—that it had confused what is an environmental objective with social policy objectives. As one witness put it to us quite clearly, ‘Carbon emissions are not means tested.’ Far from it. In fact, of course, a lot of those larger households with larger household incomes are emitting more—they are using more energy. So, far from it being that their emissions are means-tested, it is quite the reverse. Yet the government for some reason wants to meanstest an environmental policy—and they did so in the crudest and bluntest of possible ways: a $100,000 household means test. (Time expired)

Senator MILNE (Tasmania) (5.04 pm)—I rise to comment on the Save Our Solar (Solar Rebate Protection) Bill 2008 [No. 2] report. One of the problems with a government-dominated committee system is that the report does not actually reflect the evidence that came before the committee. The overwhelming majority of submissions came out saying strongly that the means test was a bad idea, that it had not worked, and that, quite apart from how many were taking it up, what it did do was reinforce the stop-start-stop nature of government support, or lack of support, for solar. As a result, accountants
were saying to businesses: ‘We are not prepared to have a five-year business plan or a 10-year business plan because we have no certainty. This could be cut off again next year.’ What they overwhelmingly said was that, whilst they want the rebate reinstated in the way it was and to get rid of the means test, what they really wanted was a gross feed-in tariff to give certainty into the long term for industry. Overwhelmingly, businesses came before us and said that they had been planning on putting on more staff, expanding the business and so on and have not been able to do it because they now have no certainty.

The really interesting thing with this is that the government is facing an embarrassing situation. My understanding is that, since the budget, they have had around 6,000 applications and all the money that was budgeted is effectively gone—in four months what was effectively a year’s allocation is gone. What is the government going to do now? Is it going to say, ‘Our intention at the start was that it is overheating—that is, we are spending too much money on this’? It is actually the planet that is overheating, not anything else. So the upshot here is that the government has a situation where they have so many applications they have run out of 12 month’s budget in four months. What next? When are we going to have the announcement from the government saying that the rebate is over for this year? Or are we going to see an announcement from the government saying, ‘Next year’s budget allocation is going to be brought forward,’ which is clearly one thing they could do and should do in order to make sure that there is no stop-start again, because you will have a stop in a minute if you have spent all the money allocated in the first four months since the budget. What are we going to do? Wait eight months before the rebate starts again? What is the government going to do?

I put to the government, and particularly Minister Garrett: what are you going to do now? The solar rebate was overheating and now it has boiled over completely. They have spent the money and they have run out of their allocation for this year. Bring forward next year’s allocation at the very least so that things do not stop. More particularly, there has to be a huge amount of effort going into getting a national gross feed-in tariff because it is very clear the community wants to be enabled to take up photovoltaics. The community also wants to be enabled to go beyond rooftop solar and to have, for example, utility size solar thermal facilities.

I welcome Premier Carpenter’s announcement yesterday in Western Australia that he is bringing in a gross feed-in tariff, but again it is only at residential scale. We need it to be for utility scale as well. We need this to be rolled out on a large scale because the lie has been put absolutely to the claims that have gone on around this place for years that renewable energy is only a fringe dweller and cannot produce the kinds of loads we need. It not only can but would, if it were enabled to do so.

I respect the fact that the government have at least acknowledged that the submissions have overwhelmingly said a gross feed-in tariff is where people want to go. I am glad the government have acknowledged that the changes have simply meant that there are smaller systems and so we are not getting the maximum uptake of renewable energy that we could from the rebate that is being paid. But the big question hanging in the air for every solar business is: what is going to happen now that the rebate is fully taken up?

Could the government and Minister Garrett tell us: has the full amount been expended—applied for and effectively allocated? If so, what are you going to do about it? Is next year’s allocation going to be
brought forward? Please announce it soon, because every one of the small businesses whom we have spoken to and who have put in submissions wants to know. If you have this massive application load now and they are refused on the basis that the allocation has run out, then that will dry up and these small businesses will be stuck for the next eight months—going out of business, having to put people off. It will just be reinforced that, as long as the solar industry is dependent on the whims of government ministers deciding on the basis of budget allocations whether they want to stoke or choke renewable energy, we are just going to have a situation where investors, venture capitalists in particular, are going to back away.

I think it is unfortunate that this report does not reflect the evidence that came before the committee more accurately. Nonetheless, I look forward to a gross feed-in tariff. I have a bill in front of the Senate and I am looking forward to the inquiry into it. But what we need right now is not only an acknowledgement from the government that there have been a lot of applications but the acknowledgement that the money has been expended. The question we want the answer to is: what is going to happen for the next eight months?

Senator IAN MACDONALD (Queensland) (5.10 pm)—I start my contribution with a quotation: The Rudd Government does not appear to be serious about tackling global warming. Rudd’s claim that ‘climate change is the great moral challenge of our age’ has clearly been forgotten or blatantly disregarded.

That quote comes not from a Liberal Party fancier but from none other than Mr Dean Mighell, the State Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union, Southern States Branch, in his submission to the inquiry. This act by the Rudd Labor government at budget time, without any consultation—simply introducing a means test for the subsidy—clearly shows how hypocritical the Rudd government is in relation to climate change and alternative energy.

Unfortunately, I was only able to attend one day of the hearings. Somewhere along the line it got difficult for the participating members to find out when the committee was sitting. The day of hearings that I sat through in Melbourne clearly showed that the industry, environment groups, community groups, councils and individuals from the general public were absolutely aghast at a government that many of them conceded they had voted for because, amongst other things, they liked Mr Rudd’s ideas about Kyoto and saving the planet’s environment. They went with him in the election in 2007, and they more than others felt absolutely betrayed by the action in relation to the means test on this rebate. We heard witness after witness in Melbourne and we read submission after submission of those that came in—small businesses, industry people and tradesmen whose lifelong ambition to have a successful small business was shattered by Mr Rudd overnight on budget night.

The submissions we got mirrored the response I got the day after the budget in Townsville in North Queensland, where I have my office—a city that boasts 300 days of sunshine every year and, because of that, a city that is very keen on the use of solar energy. Two small business men in Townsville came to me almost in tears. One of them admitted that for the first time ever he had voted Labor because he had liked Mr Rudd’s approach to the environment and to alternative energies in particular. They were almost in tears because the businesses they had been building up over the last two to three years were shattered overnight. They gave facts of people ringing up the day after the budget saying: ‘I’m sorry. I know I have a contract...
with you, but I simply cannot afford to go through with it.’ I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

COMMITTEES
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee

Senator MARK BISHOP (Western Australia) (5.14 pm)—I seek leave to return to a prior item on the agenda—namely, the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade report on Australia’s involvement in peace-keeping operations.

Leave granted.

Senator MARK BISHOP—I move:

That the Senate take note of the report.

I want to talk to the tabling of a rather important report into Australia’s more recent involvement in peace-keeping operations. It is an important report because, over time, the nature of our peace-keeping missions has changed quite dramatically. In the early years, Australia served in small contingents, primarily as military observers monitoring truce lines with the consent of the host countries, particularly in the Middle East, Syria and Egypt. In recent times, though, Australia has engaged in peace-keeping missions that have been both complex and broad in scope. Most of these operations now involve intra-state conflict, internal conflict, and have been difficult and at times quite dangerous undertakings. Australians deployed to these complex missions have included more recently not only military personnel but also active representatives from agencies such as DFAT, AusAID, the Australian Electoral Commission and Treasury, to name a few, as well as large numbers of police and, increasingly, scientific experts.

Regional engagement is a major element in Australia’s current involvement in peace-keeping. Indeed, Australia’s significant commitment and lead role in operations in the region is one of the more recent notable developments. For example, as we all know, Australia commands the International Force for East Timor and leads the regional mission to the Solomon Islands. These operations indicate the growing importance of Australia engaging in peacekeeping and leading peace-keeping missions in this part of the world. They also show that the scope of today’s peace-keeping operations has expanded and continues to expand to focus on helping to create long-term stability in what is properly described as a set of fragile states.

The committee’s inquiry centred on Australia’s whole-of-government, whole-of-nation approach to peace-keeping operations—that is, from the earliest decision making and planning stages to the final reporting and evaluation stages that occur. The committee’s two key recommendations were directed at developing and improving whole-of-government policy on Australia’s engagement in peacekeeping. The committee found a most compelling argument for a white paper on Australia’s involvement in peacekeeping. Despite dramatic changes to peace-keeping operations, particularly over the last 10 or 12 years, and Australia’s increased and broadening engagement in such missions, there is, to date, no policy document that presents a whole-of-government approach to peacekeeping. The committee believes it is time for such a document to be put together and published by government. The production of a white paper would provide government and its agencies with the opportunity to review their policies and practices and would enable a better understanding of how each group’s activities contribute to the whole-of-government effort.

The committee welcomed the government’s decision to establish an Asia-Pacific centre for civil-military cooperation. Based
on the evidence, however, the committee could see advantages in expanding the scope of the institution’s mandate. It was concerned that important decisions were being made about the role, the function and structure of the centre without a proper scoping study. There are now a number of highly regarded overseas institutions in this field. The committee recommended that a specially selected task force conduct such a scoping study. The team would visit existing peace-keeping institutes to help them formulate recommendations on the centre’s design to ensure that it becomes the hub of a national network of institutions, a national repository of information and learning on peacekeeping, a regional centre of excellence and a vital part of the international web of similar institutes throughout the world.

The committee made recommendations about the fundamental elements that should be articulated in a mission’s mandate. In this regard, the committee emphasised the importance of having an exit strategy. The committee argued that an exit strategy would provide a road map—that is, a structured plan for achieving the stated purpose—and contain benchmarks against which progress toward those objectives can be measured. It recommended that, when considering a proposed peace-keeping operation, the government examine in detail the mission’s exit strategy to ensure Australia’s contribution is part of a well-planned and structured approach to achieving clearly stated objectives.

A number of recommendations were made to ensure peacekeepers are better prepared to meet the challenge of today’s mission. In particular, the committee emphasised the importance of interoperability at all levels and between all elements of an operation. It found the ADF and the AFP have not always been able to operate smoothly together in the field. This is due in some measure to a lack of familiarity and important differences in work culture. It also found current peace-keeping training programs for Australian public servants could be better structured in keeping with the whole-of-government approach. Australian NGOs could also improve their standard of training for their people who are sometimes involved in peace-keeping operations. The committee recommended that defence review its CIMIC doctrine and consider ways to strengthen its CIMIC capability. The committee also noted that NGOs could facilitate better coordination with the military through better organisation and liaison amongst themselves. DFAT and AusAID could also assist cooperation and coordination between government and NGO sectors by extending activities beyond briefings to joint training and collaborative planning.

The committee recognised that the relationship with the host country and other partners in a peace-keeping operation is critical to the success of a mission. However, building a constructive coalition sometimes presents quite large challenges. The committee found that to produce effective peacekeepers Australia must prepare its personnel to be part of an Australian force, a partner of the host country and a member of a coalition of participating countries.

The committee stressed the importance of predeployment language and cultural awareness training. It also recommended that exchange programs and joint exercises with personnel from countries in the region continue as a high priority. It suggested that such activities form part of a broader coherent whole-of-government strategy to build a greater peacekeeping capacity in this part of the world.

In considering the health, safety and well-being of Australian peacekeepers, the committee identified a number of concerns. They related to the accessibility of data on the
health of Australian peacekeepers. There are inadequacies in the ADF’s health records management and postdeployment care of peacekeepers with respect to mental health problems. The report made a number of recommendations to rectify these identified deficiencies.

I have referred to the committee’s recommendations for a white paper and for an expanded and more ambitious Asia-Pacific centre for civil-military cooperation. They are the means to inculcate a culture of continuous learning and continuous improvement in Australia’s peacekeepers. The committee noted that if government agencies are to learn from and build upon their experiences in peacekeeping then they need to strengthen their evaluation and lessons-learnt processes.

Last year marked the 60th anniversary of Australia’s commitment to peacekeeping. I take this opportunity to acknowledge all who have contributed to a series of peace-keeping missions over the years. Finally, I wish to place on the public record my thanks for the invaluable assistance provided by Dr Dermody and her staff on the relevant Senate committee. I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

National Capital and External Territories Committee Report

Senator LUNDY (Australian Capital Territory) (5.24 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the Senate take note of the report. On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, I have pleasure in speaking to this report, which was tabled out of sittings on 16 July 2008. It is entitled The way forward: inquiry into the role of the National Capital Authority.

The committee, through this inquiry, has examined the current planning arrangements with a view to reducing red tape and confusing duplication in the Australian Capital Territory but at the same time ensuring that the Commonwealth has a direct and enduring role in the future of Canberra. The committee focused on the administration of the National Capital Plan and the role that the National Capital Authority has within its charter and the act.

Canberra is one of very few planned cities, and everyone who comes here is struck by the beauty of the landscape architecture—the way in which the city is built into the landscape. This is, of course, the specific design by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony, who won a competition to design Australia’s national capital. One of the issues that were traversed very well in the inquiry was: what is the Commonwealth’s relationship with the national capital and what role do they have in ensuring that its particular design, unique as it is, continues long into the future?

The mechanism by which this is ensured is the National Capital Plan and the act, which is currently administered by the National Capital Authority. So, many of the recommendations associated with this report look to the way forward in the operation of the National Capital Authority in the administration of the plan. The vision that we have expressed in this report identifies the need for a significant upgrade. Since self-government of the ACT in 1989 we have had almost a demarcation organised between the territory government and the Commonwealth government, and the committee felt that that needed to be renewed and some structural changes made to the National Capital Authority to allow the Commonwealth to truly assert its interests in the national capital and for the territory government to gain the clar-
ity it is seeking in its role with both land administration and planning jurisdiction.

Unfortunately for the National Capital Authority, the organisation endured cuts that, according to the committee’s findings, were not commensurate with the overlap that we foreshadowed and identified as part of our deliberations. The committee’s findings were that those cuts went too deep and have not permitted the National Capital Authority to discharge its duties in accordance with both the aspiration of reducing red tape and the decision to make the organisation more effective and more focused on its role. So obviously we have made recommendations in relation to the necessary resources for it to discharge its role and, perhaps more importantly with an eye to the future, the resources necessary to upgrade the National Capital Plan and have it work effectively with the territory planning authorities and other organisations to allow the upgrade to proceed. I am sure senators will appreciate that planning in the ACT raises the intense interest and passions of many different stakeholder groups and individuals in our community. It is a truly worthy project to get right, and the recommendations contained in this report point to a very comprehensive agenda to achieve those outcomes.

The committee identified three objectives that we would like to achieve as part of this upgrade plan in *The way forward*. The committee’s first objective is to ensure that the Commonwealth protect and promote the unique design of Canberra because it represents the intrinsic character of the national capital. The committee’s second objective is, where possible, to align land administration with planning jurisdiction, provided the first objective is achieved. The third objective is to foster greater cooperation and collaboration between the Commonwealth and the ACT governments on planning and related matters.

With these objectives in mind we have put forward a series of recommendations that look at the different roles of the National Capital Authority and how they ought to be constructed in the future. In particular, the emphasis has been on governance and administration. The committee have recommended that we overhaul the governance and administration arrangements for the National Capital Authority, choosing the model of stronger statutory independence with much more stringent reporting lines to the Commonwealth parliament to ensure the appropriate level of Commonwealth oversight in what is truly the national capital interest in planning in the ACT.

Another area of great concern, which I am sure my colleagues can relate to, is the way that transport planning has not been a feature of consideration of the function of the National Capital Plan in recent times. This is partly a product of the overlap between the two planning systems but it also points to a need for far greater integration into the National Capital Plan of planning, transport issues and transport sustainability. What we found in the course of this inquiry is that we were not able to resolve the final planning matters; hence our recommendations for an upgrade. And it was further made difficult by the fact that the National Capital Authority came forward with some pretty comprehensive suggestions and quite interesting ideas, but of course other submitters and participants in the inquiry were not able to fully analyse the proposals that had been put forward because it was at the committee hearings that they first received a public airing.

I would like to acknowledge the secretariat and the amazing work that they did in preparing the report and supporting the public hearings. I would like to mention them all by name: Stephen Boyd, Stephanie Mikac, Justin Baker, Margaret Atkin, Frances Wilson and Natasha Petrovic. Thank you very
much for your hard work. I would also like to acknowledge other members of the committee: my deputy chair Mr Patrick Secker and particularly mention Annette Ellis and Senator Gary Humphries, who I think is going to be speaking to the report as well. This was a bipartisan report, and I would particularly like to acknowledge the time that Senator Humphries put in to achieving this result. It is quite an extraordinary thing, given the controversial nature—the cross-government nature of planning in the ACT—that we were able to reach a bipartisan conclusion on a way forward. I think it is a great credit to the process of the committee system that we were able to do that.

I would like to also thank everyone who participated in the inquiry. We had many submissions from many organisations which had to come forth with their thoughts without too much notice. It was a pretty tight time frame for a committee inquiry that covered such complex issues, so I would particularly like to thank all of those concerned citizens not just here in Canberra but from around the country whose passion and interest in the national capital is unfailing for the insights and inspiration that they gave us as committee members to help us find a way forward to resolve the problems and issues and to take planning in the ACT to the next level of maturity 20 years after self-government. I commend the report to the Senate.

Senator HUMPHRIES (Australian Capital Territory) (5.32 pm)—by leave—The National Capital Authority, as anybody who has observed ACT planning over a period of time will note, has been something of a political football. Headlines have regularly been generated around its activities and its role, and questions about the planning of the city, particularly in its national capital manifestation, have been very much argued over and fought over throughout the years. Yet, as Senator Lundy has noted as the chair of the committee, what the joint standing committee has produced in this case is a unanimous report which is designed to attempt to take a step away from that divisive and acrimonious approach to the planning of Canberra. I think it is because all the members of the committee saw very clearly that it is a nonsense to have a single, relatively small city of 330,000 people or so run by two separate planning systems which are in conflict, or perceived to be in conflict, with each other. It was the view of the committee that some better way needed to be found to ensure that the city was planned in a way which did not pit the national capital role and the community of Canberra role against each other.

I also commend to the Senate and to the government the scheme which the committee has put forward to attempt to resolve that very difficult problem. The committee has essentially recommended that we attempt for the first time to integrate the two planning regimes. We have two plans: a national capital plan and a territory plan. We have two planning systems around those two plans, and we have two planning authorities administering each of those plans. We have not proposed the integration of all three of those components or elements but we have certainly suggested that there be a single, integrated planning document with clear boundaries between the two areas of planning responsibility. We suggest that planning responsibility be aligned with ownership of the land—where the Commonwealth owns land, essentially it should have planning responsibility for that land and, where the ACT government owns the land, it should have planning responsibility. Those who are familiar with the present system would know that that, unfortunately, is not the case—that there are areas of territory land which are effectively controlled by the Commonwealth and vice versa.
We hope that this is an opportunity to re-align those planning responsibilities and to establish a clearer, more workable system of running a national capital with the values that Canberra clearly has, and the chair has talked about those values. I expect that this would involve—as this process goes forward—some retreat by the NCA geographically speaking away from some areas of the territory which it has had primary planning responsibility for in favour of the ACT government. But the report strongly suggests that that be achieved by ensuring that the ACT planning process builds in very strongly those national capital values which are so important to the planning of the whole city. In a sense, those values imbue the planning of the city from the top to the bottom of the territory. It is not just about the Parliamentary Triangle; the whole city is an example of fine, world-class planning, and those values need to be understood and adopted by each planning authority no matter what its actual responsibility for particular geographical areas might be.

I also want to touch on the question of the cuts to the NCA’s budget. The inquiry heard persistent and loud complaints about the effect of those cuts on the operations of the NCA and the capacity of the NCA to plan a world-class city in those circumstances. We saw a combination of the increased efficiency dividend and quite specific cuts to the NCA resulting in some very serious and concerning developments. We saw that public facilities—like the Carillon, Blundells’ Cottage and the National Capital Exhibition Centre, which is where people get a sense of what the planning of Canberra is all about—have been adversely affected by those very serious cuts. We were told before the cuts were implemented—indeed, we were told before the last election—that there were inefficiencies in the way in which government ran those areas, that their structures were top-heavy in their administration and that overlapping responsibilities between the federal and territory planning roles would account for an amount that could be saved in terms of rationalising that role. That was all found to be essentially bunkum. What the report found is that there were serious compromisings of the capacity of Canberra to be planned well by virtue of those cuts. Particularly, the committee focused on the $46.3 million cut to the Griffin legacy project, which has a huge impact on the planning of that northern part of the Parliamentary Triangle which abuts Constitution Avenue. I welcome very strongly the committee’s encouragement to the Commonwealth to restore those funds. That would be crucial to the capacity of the ACT government to be able to make decisions about the planning of that part of Canberra in a proactive and effective way into the future.

I must also say that claims which have been made in the past about the National Capital Authority being some kind of political tool, particularly of the former government, were claims that were not substantiated or borne out by this inquiry. The evidence—and it was very strongly asserted by the NCA itself—is that it always made decisions on the basis of what was best planning practice, not what was dictated by political masters. It is true that the committee has recommended that the board of the NCA should be restructured: it should be larger and it should be appointed in a more transparent way to reflect particular skills in planning and design that need to be present on a board like that. It also recommended a need to have a more national focus, with people from outside the ACT, but the committee did not find that the board had been previously used as a political tool and that this process needed to end.

I want to finish my remarks by saying that one of the possible by-products of this in-
query was that the Chief Executive of the NCA, Ms Annabelle Pegrum, chose to announce her retirement during the inquiry. I want to say that it is perhaps not very helpful at this point in time to reflect on the circumstances which might have led her to make that decision, but I will say that I think her legacy to the NCA was one of enormous quality. She had held that role for a number of years, through a number of different chairs of the NCA. The commitment and dedication that she brought to that role as a practising architect are reflected in the quality of so many things that the NCA was able to achieve. I do not want this opportunity to go past without being able to record the great contribution she made as the Chief Executive of the NCA to the high-quality national capital that we see around us today. Many things happened during the life of the previous government to enhance the vision of Canberra, and the NCA was responsible for the delivery of most of those things. The tribute to her, the success of her contribution in that role as CEO, is the great national capital we see around us, particularly with those enhancements.

I want to indicate that the committee unanimously felt that there should be a world-class national capital in Canberra and that the planning authority should be resourced to maintain the excellent planning values of the city, and the NCA was affirmed in this process as the custodian of those very high-quality values. We did not find, as some thought we might find, that the NCA should be replaced or subsumed; we affirmed the role of the NCA. I think that members of this place would do well to focus on the need to make sure that this body is capable in the future of delivering the kind of high-quality national capital that all Australians should be proud of. I think that the effect of the recommendations made by the committee will be that there is a strengthening of that role by the National Capital Authority. If we remove the tensions and friction which have been characteristic of the relationship in the past, we will certainly achieve that goal into the future.

Question agreed to.

DOCUMENTS

Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Parry)—I present the report of the 39th Conference of Presiding Officers and Clerks which was held in Adelaide, South Australia, from 5 to 11 July 2008.

COMMITTEES

Community Affairs Committee
Additional Information

Senator McEWEN (South Australia) (5.43 pm)—At the request of the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs, Senator Moore, I present additional information received by the committee relating to the committee’s inquiries on the National Health Amendment (Pharmaceutical and Other Benefits—Cost Recovery) Bill 2008 and the Alcohol Toll Reduction Bill 2007 [2008].

TAX LAWS AMENDMENT (2008 MEASURES No. 4) BILL 2008
Report of Economics Committee

Senator McEWEN (South Australia) (5.43 pm)—Pursuant to order and at the request of the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Economics, Senator Hurley, I present the report of the committee on the Tax Laws Amendment (2008 Measures No. 4) Bill 2008, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee.

Ordered that the report be printed.
TRADE PRACTICES (CREEPING ACQUISITIONS) AMENDMENT BILL 2007 [2008]

Report of Economics Committee

Senator McEWEN (South Australia) (5.43 pm)—Pursuant to order and at the request of the Chair of the Standing Committee on Economics, Senator Hurley, I present the report of the committee on the Trade Practices (Creeping Acquisitions) Amendment Bill 2007 [2008], together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee.

Ordered that the report be printed.

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (5.44 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the Senate take note of the report.

I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

TRADE PRACTICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2008

Report of Economics Committee

Senator McEWEN (South Australia) (5.43 pm)—Pursuant to order and at the request of the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Economics, Senator Hurley, I present the report of the committee on the Trade Practices Legislation Amendment Bill 2008, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee.

Ordered that the report be printed.

COMMITTEES

Membership

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Parry)—I have received letters from party leaders seeking variations to the membership of committees.

Senator CARR (Victoria—Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research) (5.46 pm)—by leave—I move:

That Senator Fielding be appointed as a participating member of the following committees:

Select Committee on the National Broadband Network
Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities.

Question agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 5) 2007-2008
APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 6) 2007-2008
FISHERIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (NEW GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AUSTRALIAN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2008
CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (TOBACCO CONTENT) BILL 2008
TAX LAWS AMENDMENT (2008 MEASURES No. 2) BILL 2008
FARM HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT AMENDMENT (ADDITIONAL DROUGHT ASSISTANCE MEASURES) BILL 2008
LAW OFFICERS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2008
DENTAL BENEFITS BILL 2008
DENTAL BENEFITS (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2008
HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT AMENDMENT (2008 BUDGET MEASURES) BILL 2008
FIRST HOME SAVER ACCOUNTS BILL 2008
FIRST HOME SAVER ACCOUNTS (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2008
INCOME TAX (FIRST HOME SAVER ACCOUNTS MISUSE TAX) BILL 2008
INDIGENOUS EDUCATION
(TARGETED ASSISTANCE)
AMENDMENT (2008 BUDGET
MEASURES) BILL 2008
VETERANS’ ENTITLEMENTS
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (2007
ELECTION COMMITMENTS)
BILL 2008
NATIONAL HEALTH AMENDMENT
(PHARMACEUTICAL BENEFITS
SCHEME) BILL 2008
HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT
(90 DAY PAY DOCTOR CHEQUE
SCHEME) BILL 2008
HEALTH CARE (APPROPRIATION)
AMENDMENT BILL 2008
FAMILY ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT (CHILD CARE BUDGET
AND OTHER MEASURES) BILL 2008
PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
BILL 2008
APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1)
2008-2009
APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)
2008-2009
APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENTARY
DEPARTMENTS) BILL (No. 1) 2008-2009
PASSENGER MOVEMENT CHARGE
AMENDMENT BILL 2008
TAX LAWS AMENDMENT (BUDGET
MEASURES) BILL 2008
AUSTRALIAN ENERGY MARKET
AMENDMENT (MINOR
AMENDMENTS) BILL 2008
GOVERNANCE REVIEW
IMPLEMENTATION (AASB AND
AUASB) BILL 2008
GOVERNOR-GENERAL AMENDMENT
(SALARY AND SUPERANNUATION)
BILL 2008
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY
SERVICES AND INDIGENOUS
AFFAIRS AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT (2008 BUDGET AND
OTHER MEASURES) BILL 2008
SOCIAL SECURITY AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
(EMPLOYMENT ENTRY PAYMENT)
BILL 2008
WHEAT EXPORT MARKETING
BILL 2008
WHEAT EXPORT MARKETING
(REPEAL AND CONSEQUENTIAL
AMENDMENTS) BILL 2008
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL 2008
QUARANTINE AMENDMENT
(NATIONAL HEALTH SECURITY)
BILL 2008
CLASSIFICATION (PUBLICATIONS,
FILMS AND COMPUTER GAMES)
AMENDMENT (ASSESSMENTS AND
ADVERTISING) BILL 2008
CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
(MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS)
BILL 2008
JUDICIARY AMENDMENT BILL 2008
COMMUNICATIONS LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS
MEASURES) BILL 2008
STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL 2008
CUSTOMS AMENDMENT
(STRENGTHENING BORDER
CONTROLS) BILL 2008
CUSTOMS LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT (MODERNISING)
BILL 2008
PROTECTION OF THE SEA (CIVIL LIABILITY FOR BUNKER OIL POLLUTION DAMAGE) BILL 2008
PROTECTION OF THE SEA (CIVIL LIABILITY FOR BUNKER OIL POLLUTION DAMAGE) (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2008
COMMONWEALTH SECURITIES AND INVESTMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2008
CIVIL AVIATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (1999 MONTEREAL CONVENTION AND OTHER MEASURES) BILL 2008
MILITARY MEMORIALS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE BILL 2008
VETERANS’ AFFAIRS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND OTHER MEASURES) BILL 2008
LANDS ACQUISITION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2008
SYDNEY AIRPORT DEMAND MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2008

Assent

Messages from His Excellency the Governor-General were reported informing the Senate that he had assented to the bills.

COMMITTEES

Community Affairs Committee

Reference

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (5.47 pm)—I move:

That the following matters be referred to the Community Affairs Committee for inquiry and report by 26 November 2008:

(a) exemptions for the Exclusive Brethren and its members from Australian laws or administrative decisions;
(b) public funding, tax or other arrangements which do or may advantage the Exclusive Brethren over other community organisations;
(c) the activities of the Exclusive Brethren or its members which threaten or harm families, in particular, the best interests of children;
(d) the covert, as against overt, activities of the Exclusive Brethren or its members in the political process in Australia; and
(e) any related matters.

There has been a great deal of public disquiet about the Exclusive Brethren sect, which now Prime Minister Rudd as shadow foreign affairs minister commented upon back in September 2006 when he called for a review of federal funding of Exclusive Brethren schools. He said:

On their role in politics ... they are such a secret society and secret sect ... But my broader concern goes to the extent that the Exclusive Brethren-run schools. The Exclusive Brethren, based on my advice, actively discourages children from using information technology, from learning how to use computers properly because they will provide avenues of contact with the outside world.

As opposition leader in August last year, when stating that he had refused to meet with Exclusive Brethren members and calling on then Prime Minister John Howard to come clean on his links with the Exclusive Brethren, Mr Rudd said:

I believe this is an extremist cult and sect. I also believe that it breaks up families, I also believe that there are real problems with the provision of modern education to kids under their system where they, for example, are not given full range of access to the full range of information technology ...

I can add to that the fact that some thousands of Australian children who happen to have grown up within the Exclusive Brethren sect are denied their proper and free opportunity to tertiary education in this country. I cannot imagine any religious—or other sect, for that
matter—getting away without a thorough inquiry into their denying thousands of Australian children their basic and fundamental right to tertiary education. It simply would not happen.

The Exclusive Brethren, who are prodigious lobbyists right across the political spectrum and in all parliaments in Australia, state and territory as well as federal, manage to deny these kids—thousands of them—their right to a tertiary education. It is as if they have some other right as part of the Australian community and are able to withdraw, quite arbitrarily, this fundamental right of those children who happen to have been brought up within the sect.

The inquiry I am proposing would look at such matters. It perhaps would also look at the $10 million paid to five Exclusive Brethren schools around Australia in January this year. Those schools have a combined population of just 2,000 students. Over the next four years, these same schools will collect almost $50 million in taxpayer subsidies. An additional $502,000 in funds under the federal Investing in Our Schools Program will go to them, and that program allows smaller grants for the construction of projects costing less than $75,000.

The Prime Minister is quite right about the way in which the Exclusive Brethren orders its education program. He has referred in particular to the difficulty in the past of children in those schools getting access to computers and technology. They were banned for a long time. That has changed more recently under an arrangement whereby the Elect Vessel of the Exclusive Brethren, who is a multimillionaire, has set up a company to specifically give or sell computers within the Exclusive Brethren sect that are particularly dealt with to prevent the essential outside contact that computers give to children generally in this nation.

The Australian Federal Police are still investigating the Exclusive Brethren’s $370,000 donation to then Prime Minister Howard’s coalition in the 2004 federal election. I think the Senate has every right to ask why, four years after a large donation was made to a political party in this parliament, the Australian Federal Police have not completed that inquiry and reported publicly. What is it that has taken so long about that inquiry, which was initiated after concerns were expressed by the Australian Electoral Commission? Then in April this year, after 33 ex-brethren members called on Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to support this inquiry that we are now dealing with in the Senate, a letter came from Mr Rudd’s chief of staff, David Epstein, to Mr Peter Flinn, who had sent that letter on behalf of the 33 ex-brethren members. In that letter Mr Epstein said:

The Prime Minister has asked me to acknowledge and respond to your letter dated 25 February written for and on behalf of 33 ex-members of the Exclusive Brethren.

I acknowledge, in particular, the moving personal accounts contained in the thirteen ‘life stories’ appended to that letter. I am not able to provide the Senate with those life stories, for two reasons. Firstly, they are very harrowing and personal. However, I invite any senator who wants to, to see those stories. Secondly, and more importantly and of greater concern, the people who wrote those stories fear punitive action from the Exclusive Brethren hierarchy against them or their loved ones, particularly those who are still in the brethren, were their identities to be revealed. The letter from Mr Epstein went on to say:

The Prime Minister does not resile from the views he expressed last year about the Exclusive Brethren. In particular, the Prime Minister remains concerned about the reported imposition of doctrines that weaken family bonds. He also re-
mains concerned about reported doctrines that prevent children accessing online learning tools.

The letter goes on:

I note your observations on the role played by Exclusive Brethren members in recent Australian electoral campaigns. The Government is committed to enhancing transparency in our electoral system and has recently announced reforms related to the disclosure and sources of donations. A Green Paper on electoral reform will be released for comment later this year.

While appreciating your deeply held concerns, the Prime Minister cannot agree to your request for a wide-ranging inquiry into the Exclusive Brethren. The Government believes that such an inquiry could unreasonably interfere with the capacity of members of the Exclusive Brethren to practise their faith freely and openly.

Religious observance should not be regarded as a shield behind which breaches of the law can be hidden.

It then goes on to say:

Any alleged breaches ... should be brought to the attention of the appropriate agency for investigation.

Beyond that, the fact is that the Prime Minister knows very well, and has expressed it in the matters I have just brought before the Senate, the alarming opinion that so many people have formed about the way in which people within this sect are deprived of their liberties, are threatened, are harassed and are denied the opportunities that other Australians have. It is very much proper that there should be a Senate inquiry into this matter.

I have circulated to party leaders a copy of the letter that was sent to Prime Minister Rudd which evinced Mr Epstein’s response. I am hoping that overnight the parties will look at that letter and provide any amendments or deletions they wish to make, because I wish to incorporate it into Hansard. I will do that, hopefully, when the debate continues. This is a very important inquiry. It is one about the lost rights of some thousands of Australians who deserve to have their plight opened to the light of day. I put it to honourable senators that this inquiry should proceed. It is the bailiwick of this Senate to look at just matters like this when there are citizens suffering and being manipulated and deprived of their rights.

Senator MILNE (Tasmania) (5.57 pm)—I rise today to support this motion to refer this matter to a committee. There have been many debates in this chamber relating to this matter and it is very disappointing to me that the government has backed away from an inquiry. The matter I would particularly like to speak on this evening is education. I think it is a terrible thing that we have got Commonwealth funding going to schools where there is an active prohibition on young people going on to further education. Exclusive Brethren young people are not allowed to attend university. Girls are not allowed to do manual arts subjects. They know that there will be an arranged marriage for them within the Exclusive Brethren community, and that is their fate whether they like it or not.

When I taught at Devonport High School back in the early 1980s, at that stage there were no Exclusive Brethren schools as such and some of the students came to Devonport High. I had a particularly bright young woman in my class, and I urged her to go on to the Don College and I talked to her about the opportunities in higher education and so on. Her parents complained to the principal of the school that I was filling her head with ideas that were contrary to their aspirations for her, that she would not be going on to further education, that she would be married and that when she got married she would not be working again because married women in the sect are precluded from working.

So I had a situation where this young girl with her life ahead of her, with huge potential, was being shut down in terms of any
aspirations other than an arranged marriage within the sect and, once the arranged marriage took place, no working life thereafter.

Debate interrupted.

**Senate adjourned at 6.00 pm**

**DOCUMENTS**

**Tabling**

The following government documents were tabled:


_Treaties—_

_Bilateral—_


_Multilateral—_

Agreement between Australia and the European Union on the Processing and Transfer of European Union-Sourced Passenger Name Record (PNR) Data by Air Carriers to the Australian Customs Service, Done at Brussels, 30 June 2008—Text, together with national interest analysis and annexure.

Agreement between the Government of Australia and the European Community on certain aspects of Air Services, done at Brussels, 29 April 2008—Text, together with national interest analysis and annexures.


**Tabling**

The following documents were tabled by the Clerk:

[Legislative instruments are identified by a Federal Register of Legislative Instruments (FRLI) number]


A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act—

A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Child Care Benefit—Children in respect of whom no-one is eligible) Amendment Determination 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02443]*.

A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Child Care Benefit—Circumstances in which activity requirements do not apply) Amendment Determination 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02444]*.

A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Child Care Benefit—Recognised Work or Work Related Commitments) Amendment Determination 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02445]*.
Child Care Benefit (Hours of Eligibility Rules) Amendment Determination 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02401]*.

Family Assistance (Exemption from Immunisation Requirements) Amendment Determination 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02403]*.

A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act—

A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) (Exempt Taxes, Fees and Charges) Determination 2008 (No. 2) [F2008L02269]*.

Goods and Services Tax: Classes of Recipient Created Tax Invoice Determination (No. 3) 2008 [F2008L02399]*.

Aged Care Act—

Aged Care (Amount of Flexible Care Subsidy—Multi-Purpose Services) Determination 2008—ACA Ch. 3 No. 21/2008 [F2008L02238]*.

Aged Care (Amount of Flexible Care Subsidy—Transition Care) Determination 2008—ACA Ch. 3 No. 22/2008 [F2008L02239]*.

Aged Care (Flexible Care Subsidy—Innovative Care Services provided by Specified Approved Providers) Determination 2008—ACA Ch. 3 No. 12/2008 [F2008L02308]*.

Aged Care (Residential Care Subsidy—Amount of Viability Supplement) Determination 2008—ACA Ch. 3 No. 17/2008 [F2008L02234]*.

Aged Care (Residential Care Subsidy—Basic Subsidy Amount) Determination 2008 (No. 2)—ACA Ch. 3 No. 11/2008 [F2008L02228]*.

Determinations under sections—

44-13—Oxygen Supplement—ACA Ch. 3 No. 13/2008 [F2008L02229]*.

44-14—Enteral Feeling Supplement—ACA Ch. 3 No. 14/2008 [F2008L02231]*.

44-16—Conditional Adjustment Payment—ACA Ch. 3 No. 15/2008 [F2008L02232]*.

44-19—Adjusted Subsidy Reduction—ACA Ch. 3 No. 16/2008 [F2008L02233]*.

48-1—Community Care Subsidy—ACA Ch. 3 No. 18/2008 [F2008L02235]*.

Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act—

Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Rules Amendment Instrument 2008 (No. 4) [F2008L03047]*.

Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Rules Amendment Instrument 2008 (No. 5) [F2008L03048]*.


Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2007-2008—Determination to reduce appropriations upon request (No. 1 of 2008-2009) [F2008L03040]*.

Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2007-2008—Determination to reduce appropriations upon request (No. 15 of 2007-2008) [F2008L02327]*.


Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2007-2008—Determination to reduce appropriations
upon request (No. 2 of 2008-2009) [F2008L03041]*.

Appropriation Act (No. 3) 2003-2004—
Determination to reduce appropriations
upon request (No. 9 of 2007-2008)
[F2008L02328]*.

Appropriation Act (No. 4) 2003-2004—
Determination to reduce appropriations
upon request (No. 10 of 2007-2008)
[F2008L02321]*.

Appropriation Act (No. 4) 2006-2007 and
Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2007-2008—
Determination to reduce appropriations
upon request (No. 13 of 2007-2008)
[F2008L02324]*.

Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2005-2006 and Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2007-2008—Determination to reduce appropriations upon request (No. 14 of 2007-2008) [F2008L02326]*.

AusLink (National Land Transport) Act—
Variations of AusLink Roads to Recovery List Instruments Nos—
2008/4 [F2008L02398]*.
2008/5 [F2008L02821]*.

Australian Bureau of Statistics Act—
Proposals Nos—
7 of 2008—Goods and Services Produced and Used Survey.
8 of 2008—Vegetables Survey.


Australian Film, Television and Radio School Act—Determination of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates No. 2008/2 [F2008L02744]*.

Australian National University Act—
Programs and Awards Statute 2006—
Graduate Coursework Awards Rules (No. 2) 2008 [F2008L02871]*.

Australian Prudential Regulation Authority Act—
Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (Commonwealth Costs) Determination 2008 [F2008L02365]*.

Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (Confidentiality) Determinations Nos—
7 of 2008—Information provided by locally-incorporated banks and foreign ADIs under Reporting Standard ARS 320.0 [F2008L02245]*.
8 of 2008—Information provided by locally-incorporated banks and foreign ADIs under Reporting Standard ARS 320.0 [F2008L02610]*.
9 of 2008—Information provided by general insurers under certain reporting standards [F2008L02950]*.

Select Legislative Instrument 2008 No. 169—Australian Prudential Regulation Authority Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02947]*.

Australian Research Council Act—Linkage Learned Academies Special Projects (LASP) Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2009 [F2008L03076]*.

Authorised Deposit-taking Institutions Supervisory Levy Imposition Act—
Authorised Deposit-taking Institutions Supervisory Levy Imposition Determination 2008 [F2008L02369]*.

Authorised Non-operating Holding Companies Supervisory Levy Imposition Act—
Authorised Non-operating Holding Companies Supervisory Levy Imposition Determination 2008 [F2008L02382]*.

Banking Act—
Banking (Prudential Standard) Determinations Nos—
1 of 2008—Prudential Standard APS 510 Governance [F2008L02287]*.
2 of 2008—Prudential Standard APS 520 Fit and Proper [F2008L02288]*.

Banking (Foreign Exchange) Regulations—Variation of Direction relating to Foreign Currency Transactions and to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia—
Variation of Variations of Exemption [F2008L02419]*.

Broadcasting Services Act—Variations to the Licence Area Plans for—
Nowra Radio—No. 1 of 2008 [F2008L02155]*.
Riverland (Television and Radio)—No. 1 of 2008 [F2008L02395]*.

Christmas Island Act—Applied Laws (Implementation) Amendment Ordinance 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02041]*.

Civil Aviation Act—
Civil Aviation Regulations—
Civil Aviation Orders—
40.3.0 Amendment Order (No. 1) 2008 [F2008L02154]*.
82.6 Amendment Order (No. 2) 2008 [F2008L02495]*.

Instruments Nos CASA—
319/08—Instructions—for approved use of P-RNAV procedures [F2008L02063]*.
332/08—Approval and directions—flight data recorders [F2008L02118]*.
333/08—Instructions—for approved use of P-RNAV procedures [F2008L02161]*.
379/08—Permission and direction—helicopter special operations [F2008L02512]*.
389/08—Direction—number of cabin attendants in certain aircraft carrying 50 or fewer passengers [F2008L02712]*.
390/08—Direction—number of cabin attendants in certain aircraft carrying more than 50 passengers [F2008L02713]*.
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167—Migration Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 4) [F2008L03027]*.
168—Migration Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 5) [F2008L03024]*.

Statements for period 1 January to 30 June 2008 under sections—
33.
48B [63].
91L.
91Q.
195A [17].
197AB [15].
351 [83].
417 [167].


Motor Vehicle Standards Act—
Vehicle Standard (Australian Design Rule 10/01—Steering Column) 2006 Amendment 1 [F2008L02386]*.
Vehicle Standard (Australian Design Rule 10/02—Steering Column) 2008 [F2008L02387]*.
Vehicle Standard (Australian Design Rule 11/00—Internal Sun Visors) 2006 Amendment 1 [F2008L02391]*.

National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act—

National Health Act—
Amendment Rules under subsection 99AAA(8) No. PB 85 of 2008 [F2008L02898]*.

Instruments Nos PB—

70 of 2008—Amendment determina-
tion—pharmaceutical benefits [F2008L02299]*.
71 of 2008—Amendment determina-
tion—responsible persons [F2008L02300]*.
72 of 2008—Amendment Special Arrangements—Highly Specialised Drugs Program [F2008L02301]*.
73 of 2008—Amendment determina-
tion—exempt items [F2008L02302]*.
74 of 2008—Declaration and deter-
mination—drugs and medicinal preparations [F2008L02611]*.
75 of 2008—Determination—pharmaceutical benefits [F2008L02612]*.
76 of 2008—Determination—responsible persons [F2008L02615]*.
77 of 2008—Price determinations and special patient contributions [F2008L02616]*.
78 of 2008—Determination—prescription of pharmaceutical benefits by authorised Optometrists [F2008L02617]*.
79 of 2008—Determination—conditions [F2008L02618]*.
80 of 2008—Special Arrangements—highly specialised drugs program [F2008L02619]*.
81 of 2008—Special Arrangements: Special Authority Program—Trastuzumab [F2008L02620]*.
82 of 2008—Special Arrangements—Chemotherapy Pharmaceuticals Access Program [F2008L02621]*.
83 of 2008—Determination—drugs on F1 and drugs in Part A of F2 [F2008L02622]*.
84 of 2008—Amendment determina-
tion—exempt items [F2008L02623]*.
86 of 2008—Amendment declaration and determination—drugs and medicinal preparations [F2008L03059]*.
87 of 2008—Amendment determina-
tion—pharmaceutical benefits [F2008L03060]*.
88 of 2008—Amendment determina-
tion—responsible persons [F2008L03061]*.
89 of 2008—Amendment determina-
tion—conditions [F2008L03062]*.
90 of 2008—Amendment Special Arrangements—Highly Specialised Drugs Program [F2008L03063]*.

National Health (Immunisation Program—Designated Vaccines) Determination 2008 (No. 2) [F2008L02742]*.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Amendment Determinations under—

Paragraph 98B(1)(a) No. 12 [F2008L02513]*.

Subsection 84C(7) Nos—

2 [F2008L02685]*.
3 [F2008L03067]*.

National Transport Commission Act—

Select Legislative Instruments 2008 Nos—

128—National Transport Commission (Model Heavy Vehicle Charges Act) Regulations 2008 [F2008L02216]*.
152—National Transport Commission (Model Act on Heavy Vehicle Speeding Compliance) Regulations 2008 [F2008L02558]*.
154—National Transport Commission
(Model Amendments Regulations: Australian Road Rules—Package No. 7) Regulations 2008 [F2008L02559]*.

155—National Transport Commission
(Road Transport Legislation—Australian Road Rules) Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02560]*.

156—National Transport Commission
(Road Transport Legislation—Australian Road Rules) Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 2) [F2008L02561]*.

157—National Transport Commission
(Road Transport Legislation—Australian Road Rules) Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 3) [F2008L02562]*.

Native Title Act—
Recognition of Representative Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Body 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02303]*.
Variation of Area of Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Representative Bodies 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02404]*.

Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act—
Northern Territory National Emergency Response (Arnhem Land) Declaration 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02624]*.
Northern Territory National Emergency Response (Bonaparte Gas Pipeline Camp) Declaration 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L03191]*.

Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2008 No. 136—Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02217]*.

Parliamentary Entitlements Act—
Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations—Advice of decision to pay assistance under Part 3, dated 30 July 2008 [3].

Parliamentary Service Act—
Determinations Nos—
2 of 2008—Clerk of the Senate—Remuneration and other conditions of employment.
3 of 2008—Clerk of the House of Representatives—Remuneration and other conditions of employment.
4 of 2008—Parliamentary Librarian—Remuneration and other conditions of employment.

Parliamentary Service Amendment Determination 2008/1 [F2008L02869]*.

Private Health Insurance Act—
Private Health Insurance (Benefit Requirements) Amendment Rules 2008 (No. 2) [F2008L02625]*.
Private Health Insurance (Prostheses) Amendment Rules 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02424]*.
Private Health Insurance (Prostheses Application and Listing Fees) Act—Private Health Insurance (Prostheses Application and Listing Fee) Rules 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02524]*.

Public Service Act—Determination under section 24, dated 24 June 2008 [F2008L02222]*.

Quarantine Act—
Quarantine Amendment Proclamation 2008 (No. 2) [F2008L02459]*.
Quarantine Service Fees Amendment Determination 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02068]*.
Quarantine Service Fees Amendment Determination 2008 (No. 2) [F2008L03042]*.

Radiocommunications Act—
Radiocommunications Devices (Compliance Labelling) Amendment Notice No. 1 of 2008 [F2008L02156]*.
Radiocommunications (Devices Used in the Inshore Boating Radio Services Band) Standard 2008 [F2008L02134]*.
Radiocommunications (HF CB and Handphone Equipment) Standard 2008 [F2008L02151]*.

Remuneration Tribunal Act—Remuneration Tribunal Determinations—
2008/11: Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Public Office [F2008L02342]*.
2008/12: Members of Parliament—Travelling Allowance [F2008L02496]*.
2008/13: Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Public Office [F2008L02738]*.
2008/14: Official Travel by Office Holders [F2008L02739]*.
2008/16: Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Public Office [F2008L03044]*.

Research Involving Human Embryos Act—Declarations of Corresponding State Laws—
Australian Capital Territory, dated 16 July 2008 [F2008L02727]*.
Queensland, dated 26 March 2008 [F2008L02675]*.
Tasmania, dated 26 March 2008 [F2008L02677]*.


Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act—Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Specified Rate per Kilometre) Notice 2008 (3) [F2008L02335]*.
Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Weekly Interest on the Lump Sum) Notice 2008 (2) [F2008L02336]*.
Select Legislative Instrument 2008 No. 126—Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 2) [F2008L02212]*.

Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act—Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation (Specified Rate per Kilometre) Notice 2008 (1) [F2008L02333]*.

Social Security Act—
Social Security (Classes of Refugee Visa) Declaration 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L03043]*.
Social Security (Declaration of Subclass 851 of Resolution of Status (Class CD) Visa Holders as Refugees) Determination 2008 [F2008L03045]*.
Social Security (Personal Care Support—NSW Attendant Care Program Direct Funding Model) (FaHCSIA) Determination 2008 [F2008L03083]*.

Social Security (Administration) Act—
Social Security (Administration) (Declared relevant Northern Territory area—Wutunugurra) Determination 2008 [F2008L03195]*.
Social Security (Administration) (Declared relevant Northern Territory areas—Kybrook Farm and Pine Creek Compound Town Camp) Determination 2008 [F2008L02613]*.
Social Security (Administration) (Declared relevant Northern Territory areas—Lingara and Yarralin) Determination 2008 [F2008L02357]*.
Social Security (Administration) (Declared relevant Northern Territory areas—Various (No. 23)) Determination 2008 [F2008L02358]*.
Social Security (Administration) (Declared relevant Northern Territory areas—Various (No. 24)) Determination 2008 [F2008L02410]*.
Social Security (Administration) (Declared relevant Northern Territory areas—Various (No. 25)) Determination 2008 [F2008L02502]*.
Social Security (Administration) (Declared relevant Northern Territory areas—Various (No. 26)) Determination 2008 [F2008L02504]*.
Social Security (Administration) (Declared relevant Northern Territory areas—Various (No. 27)) Determination 2008 [F2008L02732]*.

Social Security (Administration) (Declared relevant Northern Territory areas—Various (No. 28)) Determination 2008 [F2008L02733]*.

Student Assistance Act—Student Assistance (Public Interest Certificate Guidelines) Determination 2008 [F2008L02294]*.

Superannuation Act 1976—
Select Legislative Instrument 2008 No. 165—Superannuation (CSS) (Superannuation Guarantee) Regulations 2008 [F2008L02866]*.

Superannuation (CSS) Approved Authority Amendment Declaration 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02276]*.


Superannuation Act 1990—

Superannuation (PSS) Approved Authority Inclusion Amendment Declaration 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02281]*.

Thirty-first Amending Deed to the Public Sector Superannuation Scheme Trust Deed [F2008L02863]*.

Superannuation Act 2005—
Superannuation (PSSAP) Approved Authority Inclusion Declaration 2008 [F2008L02728]*.

Superannuation Benefits (Supervisory Mechanisms) Act—
Superannuation Benefits (Prescribed Requirements) Amendment Determination 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02373]*.

Superannuation Benefits (Prescribed Requirements—Screen Australia) Determination 2008 [F2008L02277]*.

Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2008 No. 132—Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02259]*.

Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act—Select Legislative Instruments 2008 Nos—
133—Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Amendment Regulations 2007 (No. 5) Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02174]*.

134—Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 2) [F2008L02173]*.

171—Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 3) [F2008L02956]*.

Superannuation Supervisory Levy Imposition Act—Superannuation Supervisory Levy Imposition Determination 2008 [F2008L02384]*.

Sydney Airport Curfew Act—Dispensation Report 09/08.

Taxation Administration Act—
Lodgement of statements by superannuation providers in relation to superannuation plans (other than self managed superannuation funds) for each income year ended 30 June in accordance with the Taxation Administration Act 1953 [F2008L02318]*.

Select Legislative Instruments 2008 Nos—
135—Taxation Administration Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L02186]*.

142—Taxation Administration Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 2) [F2008L02290]*.

Telecommunications Act—
Telecommunications (National Broadband Network—Designated Information) Determination 2008 (No. 1).
subsection 531H(4) 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L03034]*.

Telecommunications (National Broadband Network—Restricted Recipients and Storage, Handling and Destruction of Protected Carrier Information) Rules 2008 (No. 1) [F2008L03035]*.

Therapeutic Goods Act—
Poisons Standard 2008 [F2008L03081]*.
Therapeutic Goods (Listing) Notices 2008—
(No. 3) [F2008L02425]*.
(No. 4) [F2008L02820]*.

Trade Practices Act—
Determination under section 152AQA—Pricing principles for the Local Carriage Service (LCS) & the Wholesale Line Rental (WLR) Service [F2008L03054]*.
Direction No. 32 of 2008—Monitoring of the prices of unleaded petroleum products [F2008LO1125]*.
Select Legislative Instrument 2008 No. 137—Trade Practices Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 3) [F2008L02295]*.

Veterans’ Entitlements Act—Statements of Principles concerning—
Acquired Cataract No. 40 of 2008 [F2008L02191]*.
Bipolar Disorder No. 50 of 2008 [F2008L02204]*.
Cut, Stab, Abrasion and Laceration No. 49 of 2008 [F2008L02203]*.
Diverticular Disease of the Colon No. 51 of 2008 [F2008L02205]*.
Eating Disorder No. 47 of 2008 [F2008L02200]*.
Eating Disorder No. 48 of 2008 [F2008L02202]*.
Haemorrhoids No. 41 of 2008 [F2008L02192]*.
Haemorrhoids No. 42 of 2008 [F2008L02195]*.
Relapsing Polychondritis No. 45 of 2008 [F2008L02198]*.
Relapsing Polychondritis No. 46 of 2008 [F2008L02199]*.
Sickle-cell Disorder No. 43 of 2008 [F2008L02196]*.
Sickle-cell Disorder No. 44 of 2008 [F2008L02197]*.


Wool Services Privatisation Act—Wool Services Privatisation (Research Body) Declaration 2008 [F2008L02725]*.

Governor-General’s Proclamation—Commencement of Provisions of an Act
Offshore Petroleum Act 2006—Sections 3 to 5—1 July 2008 [F2008L02273]*.

* Explanatory statement tabled with legislative instrument.

Departmental and Agency Contracts
The following documents were tabled pursuant to the order of the Senate of 20 June 2001, as amended:
Departmental and agency contracts for 2008—Letters of advice—
Attorney-General’s portfolio agencies.
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio agencies.
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.
Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio agencies.

Indexed Lists of Files
The following documents were tabled pursuant to the order of the Senate of 30 May 1996, as amended:
Indexed lists of departmental and agency files for the period 1 January to 30 June 2008—Statements of compliance—
Australian Public Service Commission.
Australian Trade Commission.

CHAMBER
Workplace Authority.

**Unproclaimed Legislation**

The following document was tabled pursuant to standing order 139(2):

Unproclaimed legislation—Document providing details of all provisions of Acts which come into effect on proclamation and which have not been proclaimed, including statements of reasons for their non-proclamation and information relating to the timetable for their operation, as at 31 July 2008, dated August 2008.
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
The following answers to questions were circulated:

**Human Services: Media Staff**

**(Question No. 32)**

Senator Minchin asked the Minister for Human Services, upon notice, on 12 February 2008:

As at 26 November 2007, with reference to the department and all agencies in the Minister’s portfolio:

1. How many employees are engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring.
2. What are the responsibilities of these staff.
3. What are the Australian Public Service classifications of these positions.
4. For each of the financial years 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11, what is the current operating budget for these media-related sections within the department or agency.

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

The information provided below relates to the Human Services portfolio after the machinery of government changes which took place on 3 December 2007.

**Core Department (excluding the Child Support Agency and CRS Australia)**

1. At 4 December 2007, there were 17 staff in communications and media functions.
2. These staff were responsible for a range of activities including corporate communications, media liaison and media monitoring work.
3. Classifications for these positions include staff from APS 6 through to SES Band 1. There are no employees classified as Public Affairs Officers.
4. The budget for 2007–08 is $2.6 million. This includes allocated budgets for the former Office of Access Card Communications Branch and the Marketing and Communication Branch. There is no forward budget yet determined for the Marketing and Communication Branch in the core department.

**Child Support Agency**

1. As at 4 December, there were 12 staff engaged in communications and media functions.
2. These staff were responsible for a range of activities including corporate communications, media monitoring, stakeholder engagement events and event liaison activities.
3. Classifications for these positions include staff from Customer Service Officer 4 to Executive Level 2. There are no employees classified as Public Affairs Officers.
4. Operating budget relevant only to media activity for the relevant section within the CSA for 2007-08 is $579,919. The CSA’s budgets for 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 are yet to be determined.

**CRS Australia**

1. As at 4 December, there were 5 staff engaged in communications and media functions.
2. Responsibilities include management of CRS Australia branding, publications, website, internal communications, advertising, media monitoring and events.
3. Classifications for these positions include staff from APS 4 to Executive Level 1. There are no employees classified as Public Affairs Officers.
4. **Current Operating Budget Estimates**
Tuesday, 26 August 2008

Centrelink

(1) As at 4 December 2007, 64 full time and 7 part time equivalent employees were engaged in positions responsible for communications and media functions.

(2) The responsibilities of Centrelink Public Affairs Officers include:

Centrelink Public Affairs 4

- Providing strategic advice to the General Manager Communication and National Manager Communication & Marketing on all marketing communication developments and priorities.
- Providing high level representation for the National Manager and wider Communication Division at Centrelink and inter-agency forums.
- Brokering and responding to issues for Centrelink within the corporate media, Government and political arenas.
- Identifying and managing communications issues (proactive and reactive).
- Providing effective strategic communication advice and support on major projects.
- Aligning and executing strategies, reports and plans for the Division’s business planning, performance reporting and wider Centrelink strategic goals and directions.
- Collaborating with key stakeholders to ensure holistic marketing communication solutions, engaging on complex communication matters as required.
- Working as a member of the Strategic and Leadership Team and deputise for and represent both the General Manager and other senior managers as required.
- Managing and being accountable for expenditure, reporting and associated decisions and performance for a section budget, overall Division budget and wider Centrelink funds.
- Leading and managing a section to strategically develop marketing communication solutions including undertaking complex, novel and critical public affairs work.
- Providing mentoring, training and support to team members.

Centrelink Public Affairs 3

- Developing, implementing and evaluating innovative marketing and communication strategies and solutions to ensure the Australian community is informed about Centrelink’s payments and services.
- Providing leadership and support to team members and contributing to creating a positive team environment. This includes supervising employees, mentoring and managing workloads.
- Managing relationships with internal and external stakeholders including Centrelink’s Executive, the Minister’s Office, a range of teams for whom Centrelink Communication Division delivers communication activities, state communication units and Centrelink’s network of Customer Service Centres and Call Centres.
- Liaising and working strategically with other teams within the Communication Division.
- Managing aspects of project management including resource planning, negotiation, implementation, monitoring, reviewing and tracking.
Centrelink Public Affairs 2

- Under limited supervision, developing, implementing and evaluating marketing and communication strategies and solutions to ensure the Australian community is informed about Centrelink’s payments and services.
- Event management, editing and proofreading.
- Providing leadership, or working as a member of a small project team. Supporting team members and contributing to creating a positive team environment. These positions do not have direct management responsibility but may be required to coordinate a group of employees working on the same project.
- Managing relationships with internal and external stakeholders including Centrelink’s Executive, the Minister’s Office, a range of teams for whom Centrelink Communication Division delivers communication activities, state communication units and Centrelink’s network of Customer Service Centres and Call Centres.
- Liaising and working strategically with other teams within the Communication Division.
- Managing aspects of project management including resource planning, negotiation, implementation, monitoring, reviewing and tracking.

Centrelink Public Affairs 1

- Assisting in developing, implementing and evaluating marketing and communication strategies to inform the Australian community about Centrelink’s payments and services.
- Event management, editing and proof reading.
- Liaising with a range of internal and external stakeholders for whom the Communication Division delivers communication activities.
- Liaising and working strategically with other teams within the Communication Division.
- Managing competing priorities and balancing workloads to achieve outcomes within tight deadlines.
- Supporting other team members and contributing to creating a positive team environment.

(3) The Australian Public Service classifications of these positions are Public Affairs Officers grades 1 to 4.

(4) The operating budget for the Centrelink Media section in the 2007-08 financial year is $1,712,000. The operating budgets for 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 are yet to be determined.

Medicare Australia

(1) As at 4 December 2007, there were 17.5 employees engaged in positions responsible for communications and media functions.

(2) Medicare Australia has Media, Public Communications & Provider Communications sections.

The Public Communication Section promotes and educates the Australian public about Medicare Australia’s products and programs through multiple channels including the internet and our Branch Office network.

The Provider Communication Section communicates to and educates health professionals, aged care providers and software vendors in respect to our products and programs and associated changes to these programs. The section produces respected industry publications such as Mediguide, Bulletin Board and Forum.

Both sections prepare forms, brochures and posters.

The Media Section is responsible for monitoring and responding to issues in the media. The majority of their time is spent in responding to information requests about our programs especially from
industry publications such as Medical Observer. They also develop positive media opportunities to promote and educate the public and providers about our programs eg Australian Organ Donor Register.

(3) Classifications for these positions include staff from APS 5 to SES Band 1. There are no employees classified as Public Affairs Officers.

(4) The operating budget for the Media, Public Communications & Provider Communication sections for 2007-08 is $2,887,146. Budgets for 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 are yet to be determined.

Australian Hearing

(1) As at 4 December 2007, there were 2 employees were engaged in positions responsible for communications and media functions.

(2) Responsibilities of these staff include public relations, issues management, media relations, media monitoring and internal communications.

(3) Australian Hearing falls under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 and therefore Australian Public Service classifications are not relevant to Australian Hearing staff.

(4) The current operating budget for 2007-08 is $66,560. Operating budgets for 2008-09, 2009-10 are based on inflation of 3%. Australian Hearing works on a two to three year budgetary cycle and therefore the operating budget for 2010-11 has not yet been set.

Health Services Australia

Health Services Australia Group has no employees engaged in public affairs, media management, liaison with the media or media monitoring activities.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: Media Staff

(Question No. 33)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 12 February 2008:

As at 26 November 2007, with reference to the department and all agencies in the Minister’s portfolio:

(1) How many employees are engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring.

(2) What are the responsibilities of these staff.

(3) What are the Australian Public Service classifications of these positions.

(4) For each of the financial years 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11, what is the current operating budget for these media-related sections within the department or agency.

Senator Sherry—The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

The information provided below relates to the minister’s portfolio after the machinery of government changes that took place on 3 December 2007.

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

(1) The number of employees engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring is 54.5 full-time equivalents.

(2) The responsibilities of these staff include:

- develop and implement communication strategies
- provide communication advice to internal clients
- organise ministerial and departmental launches and special events

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
• write and edit departmental and ministerial print and on-line communications materials
• write and edit departmental and ministerial speeches and media releases and ministerial fore-words
• identify media opportunities for minister and department
• respond to and coordinate responses to media requests
• provide advice and support for handling media issues
• manage media monitoring contract; develop media reports and analysis
• prepare articles for external publications
• crisis communications preparedness and response
• manage departmental publishing requirements
• manage publication distribution, subscriptions and mailing list databases
• respond to web, email or phone requests for information from the general public
• maintain and manage departmental websites content and links
• provide communications, media, and writing training for departmental staff.

(3) The APS classifications of these staff are:
DAFF Band 1 Level 1 0.6
DAFF Band 1 Level 4 5.6
DAFF Band 2 Level 5 6.6
DAFF Band 2 Level 6 14.3
DAFF Band 3 Level 7 14.8
DAFF Band 3 Level 8A 7.2
DAFF Band 3 Level 9 4.0
DAFF Science Band 3 Level 3A 1.0
SES Band 1 0.4

(4) The current operating budget (all figures GST exclusive) for these media-related sections is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Fisheries Management Authority</td>
<td>7,157,540</td>
<td>8,066,102</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
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</table>

(1) The number of employees engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring is 2.8 full-time equivalents.

(2) The responsibilities of these staff include:
• manage agency public affairs staffing requirements
• develop agency strategic communications plans and project specific campaigns
• media liaison and spokesperson
• media monitoring
• maintain website and intranet
• manage stakeholder communications
• plan and execute communications campaigns
• manage staff and industry communications.

(3) The APS classifications of these staff are:
AFMA Band 3 (APS Level 6 equivalent) 1.0
AFMA Band 4 (Executive Level 1 equivalent) 0.8
AFMA Band 5 (Executive Level 2 equivalent) 1.0

(4) The current operating budget (all figures GST exclusive) for these media-related sections is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
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<tr>
<td>AFMA</td>
<td>550,900</td>
<td>576,522</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

(1) The number of employees engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring is 4.0 full-time equivalents.

(2) The responsibilities of these staff include:
  - manage agency public affairs staffing requirements
  - develop agency communications strategy
  - manage agency media liaison and issues requirements
  - manage agency web and intranet
  - develop and manage agency publications.

(3) The APS classifications of these staff are:
  - APS Level 4 1.0
  - APS Level 5 1.0
  - Executive Level 1 1.0
  - Executive Level 2 1.0

(4) The current operating budget (all figures GST exclusive) for these media-related sections is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
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<tr>
<td>AFMA</td>
<td>642,066</td>
<td>661,148</td>
<td>684,985</td>
<td>709,697</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation

(1) The number of employees engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring is 1.0 full-time equivalents.

(2) The responsibilities of these staff include:
  - coordinate and deliver external communication and public relation functions
  - develop agency communication strategies.

(3) These staff are not employed against APS classifications.

(4) The current operating budget (all figures GST exclusive) for these media-related sections is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
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<tr>
<td>AWBC</td>
<td>125,500</td>
<td>128,150</td>
<td>133,300</td>
<td>138,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Biosecurity Australia

(1) The number of employees engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring is 1.7 full-time equivalents.

(2) The responsibilities of these staff include:
  - develop and implement communication strategies
  - provide communication advice to internal clients
  - write and edit agency and ministerial print and online communications
  - write and edit agency and ministerial media releases
  - respond to and coordinate responses to media requests

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
• provide advice and support for handling of media issues
• prepare articles for external publications
• produce and manage agency publications, including distribution, subscriptions and mailing list databases
• respond to web, email or phone requests for information from the general public
• maintain and manage agency website content and links.

(3) The APS classifications of these staff are:
  DAFF Band 3 Level 7  0.7
  DAFF Band 3 Level 8A  1.0

(4) The current operating budget (all figures GST exclusive) for these media-related sections is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>226,419</td>
<td>222,222</td>
<td>229,311</td>
<td>236,684</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cotton Research and Development Corporation**

(1) The number of employees engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring is 1.1 full-time equivalents.

(2) The responsibilities of these staff include:
  - public affairs management
  - media liaison
  - produce corporate publications and reports.

(3) These staff are not employed against APS classifications.

(4) The current operating budget (all figures GST exclusive) for these media-related sections is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>280,301</td>
<td>286,573</td>
<td>296,801</td>
<td>307,401</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Export Wheat Commission**

(1) The number of employees engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring is 1.2 full-time equivalents.

(2) The responsibilities of these staff include:
  - manage and develop agency communication strategies and operational plans
  - identify and manage agency media issues
  - produce and distribute agency reports and publications
  - develop corporate reports and publications including the agency annual report
  - media monitoring.

(3) The APS classifications for these staff are:
  - APS Level 6  1.0
  - Executive Level 2  0.2

(4) The current operating budget (all figures GST exclusive) for these media-related sections is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>148,506</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Export Wheat Commission will cease operations on 30 June 2008.

**Fisheries Research and Development Corporation**

(1) The number of employees engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring is 2.0 full-time equivalents.
(2) The responsibilities of these staff include:
- develop and implement communication policy and related activities
- respond to media requests and provide an organisation spokesperson
- develop communications media
- stakeholder management
- project extension (outreach)
- publications development and management.

(3) These staff are not employed against APS classifications.

(4) The current operating budget (all figures GST exclusive) for these media-related sections is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>450,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grains Research and Development Corporation

(1) The number of employees engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring is nil.

(2) not applicable.

(3) not applicable.

(4) not applicable.

Grains Research and Development Corporation

(1) The number of employees engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring is 1.0 full-time equivalents.

(2) The responsibilities of these staff include:
- develop and implement corporate communication strategies
- public affairs
- media liaison
- media monitoring
- issues management
- internal communications.

(3) These staff are not employed against APS classifications.

(4) The current operating budget (all figures GST exclusive) for these media-related sections is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land and Water Australia</td>
<td>444,015</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Land and Water Australia

(1) The number of employees engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring is 9.2 full-time equivalents.

(2) The responsibilities of these staff include:
- develop and implement strategies for engagement of key stakeholders and the transfer of knowledge to a range of audiences for the adoption of findings of research funded by Land and Water Australia
- assess knowledge and adoption plans incorporated in research proposals, and the implementation of those plans
develop and manage both the corporate website and websites focused on particular research programs
• write and edit a range of publications produced to further the adoption of LWA-funded research
• manage publication processes and distribution of publications
• arrange and manage events held to increase adoption of LWA-funded research
• write and distribute media statements and respond to media questions

(3) These staff are not employed against APS classifications.
(4) The current operating budget (all figures GST exclusive) for these media-related sections is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation</td>
<td>2,250,000</td>
<td>2,250,000</td>
<td>2,250,000</td>
<td>2,250,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) The number of employees engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring is 3.0 full-time equivalents.
(2) The responsibilities of these staff include:
• develop, implement and monitor agency communications strategy
• prepare and distribute media releases; respond to media enquiries
• organise public launches and events
• manage agency web content
• manage agency publications
• prepare briefing material, speeches and presentations for management, board members and minister
• design and production of publications, brochures, leaflets, newsletters and display material
• sale and distribution of research publications
• assist in adoption of agency research by farmers and other stakeholders

(3) These staff are not employed against APS classifications.
(4) The current operating budget (all figures GST exclusive) for these media-related sections is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Research and Development Corporation</td>
<td>822,000</td>
<td>834,000</td>
<td>766,000</td>
<td>739,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) The number of employees engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring is 1.0 full-time equivalents.
(2) The responsibilities of these staff include:
• manage communication channels with agency stakeholders and audiences.
(3) These staff are not employed against APS classifications.
(4) The current operating budget (all figures GST exclusive) for these media-related sections is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Research and Development Corporation</td>
<td>130,050</td>
<td>130,050</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not Known</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Health and Ageing: Government Appointments and Grants
(Question Nos 127, 150 and 152)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health and Ageing, upon notice, on 12 February 2008:

With reference to Senator Minchin’s letter to the Minister representing the Prime Minister, dated 1 February 2008, can the following information be provided prior to each round of Estimates and for Additional Estimates by 13 February 2008:

(1) (a) What appointments have been made by the Government (through Executive Council, Cabinet and ministers) to statutory authorities, executive agencies and advisory boards within the Minister’s portfolio; and (b) for each appointment, what are the respective appointee’s credentials.

(2) How many vacancies remain to be filled by ministerial (including Cabinet and Executive Council) appointments.

(3) What grants have been approved by the Minister from within the Minister’s portfolio.

(4) What requests have been submitted to the Department of Finance and Deregulation to move funds within the Minister’s portfolio.

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

As at the time the question was asked, the following applied to the Health and Ageing portfolio:

(1) (a) and (b) Senator the Hon Chris Evans as Minister representing the Prime Minister will respond on my behalf.

(2) Vacancies which remained to be filled in the Health and Ageing portfolio are:

Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd: Four.
Australian Community Pharmacy Authority: One.
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: Five.
Australian Sports Commission: Four.
Australian Sports Drug Medical Advisory Committee: Two.
Cancer Australia: Two.
General Practice Education and Training Ltd: Two.
National Health and Medical Research Council: Five.

(3) Grants approved by the Minister from within the portfolio are listed in the table at Attachment A.

Senator the Hon Nick Sherry as Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Deregulation in the Senate will respond on my behalf.

The honourable senator is welcome to attend Estimates hearings in future and request the information sought in this Question on Notice.
### ATTACHMENT A

**GRANTS APPROVED BY MINISTER FROM WITHIN PORTFOLIO**

In the Health and Ageing Portfolio, funding grants were approved for allocation as follows:

### Mental Health and Workforce Division:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Grant Purpose</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Western Australia</td>
<td>Dental Training, Expanding Rural Place-ments</td>
<td>701,333.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Melbourne</td>
<td>Dental Training, Expanding Rural Place-ments</td>
<td>302,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisters of Charity Community Care Ltd</td>
<td>Provision of grief and trauma counselling</td>
<td>1,250,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population Health Division:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Grant Purpose</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian General Practice Network</td>
<td>Enhancing common understanding of models of rural</td>
<td>6,700,632.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Ageing Research Inst. Inc.</td>
<td>Sponsorship of the Third ANZ Falls Prevention</td>
<td>35,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Medical Benefits Division:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Grant Purpose</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW Health (RPAH)</td>
<td>Purchase and establish Linac for Sterotactic Radio Surgery and Bunker to House the Linac</td>
<td>7,120,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Health</td>
<td>Better Access To Radiation Oncology - Lismore Cancer Care Facility</td>
<td>8,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services</td>
<td>Contribute towards the Capital Works associated with a radiation oncology facility</td>
<td>19,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### National Health and Medical Research Council:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Grant Purpose</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian National University</td>
<td>Career Development Awards</td>
<td>762,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
<td>1,504,030.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Scholarships</td>
<td>2,297,071.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>Australia-EU Collaborative Research</td>
<td>250,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career Development Awards</td>
<td>1,524,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dementia Research</td>
<td>895,506.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Scholarships</td>
<td>2,721,028.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Scholarships</td>
<td>1,020,929.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of NSW</td>
<td>Career Development Awards</td>
<td>2,286,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dementia Research</td>
<td>3,123,065.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program Grant</td>
<td>17,734,213.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Scholarships</td>
<td>2,562,728.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Scholarships</td>
<td>1,529,464.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Technology Sydney</td>
<td>Dementia Research</td>
<td>1,473,725.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Macquarie University</td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Scholarships</td>
<td>137,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Hospital Westmead</td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Scholarships</td>
<td>274,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Scholarships</td>
<td>360,706.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Medical Research Institute</td>
<td>Career Development Awards</td>
<td>362,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Scholarships</td>
<td>266,040.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garvan Institute of Medical Research</td>
<td>Career Development Awards</td>
<td>1,524,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Grant Purpose</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The George Institute for International Health</td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Scholarships</td>
<td>1,078,806.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career Development Award</td>
<td>362,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney West Area Health Service</td>
<td>Career Development Award</td>
<td>362,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wollongong</td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowships</td>
<td>538,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Newcastle</td>
<td>Dementia Research</td>
<td>792,180.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowships</td>
<td>548,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Institute of Medical Research</td>
<td>Australia-EU Collaborative Research</td>
<td>439,124.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career Development Awards</td>
<td>1,486,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
<td>1,859,314.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mater Medical Research Institute Ltd</td>
<td>Career Development Award</td>
<td>362,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
<td>274,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Career Development Award</td>
<td>4,096,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dementia Research</td>
<td>1,712,308.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program grant</td>
<td>4,568,853.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
<td>2,044,812.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Scholarships</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Travelling Awards</td>
<td>14,833.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffith University</td>
<td>Career Development Award</td>
<td>362,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dementia research</td>
<td>148,475.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
<td>548,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer Council of Queensland</td>
<td>Career Development Award</td>
<td>362,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Charles Hospital</td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
<td>303,816.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Adelaide Hospital</td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Scholarships</td>
<td>1,002,816.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Adelaide</td>
<td>Career Development Awards</td>
<td>1,886,000.00</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
<td>1,236,370.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Scholarships</td>
<td>125,688.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of South Australia</td>
<td>Career Development Award</td>
<td>362,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Scholarships</td>
<td>1,554,265.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Melbourne</td>
<td>Career Development Award</td>
<td>2,610,000.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
<td>6,677,780.00</td>
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<td>Postgraduate Scholarships</td>
<td>724,813.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monash University</td>
<td>Career Development Awards</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dementia Research</td>
<td>1,051,265.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INSERM</td>
<td>72,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowships</td>
<td>6,098,140.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Scholarships</td>
<td>41,345.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Program Grant</td>
<td>6,501,507.00</td>
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<td>Melbourne Health</td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
<td>427,140.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Henry Institute of Medical Research</td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowships</td>
<td>548,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deakin University</td>
<td>Career Development Award</td>
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<tr>
<td>La Trobe University</td>
<td>Dementia Research</td>
<td>551,452.00</td>
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<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
<td>274,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter and Eliza Hall Institute</td>
<td>Career Development Awards</td>
<td>1,524,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowships</td>
<td>2,341,292.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: Government Appointments and Grants
(Question No. 137)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 12 February 2008:

With reference to Senator Minchin’s letter to the Minister representing the Prime Minister, dated 1 February 2008, can the following information be provided prior to each round of Estimates and for Additional Estimates by 13 February 2008:

(1) (a) What appointments have been made by the Government (through Executive Council, Cabinet and ministers) to statutory authorities, executive agencies and advisory boards within the Minister’s portfolio; and (b) for each appointment, what are the respective appointee’s credentials.

(2) How many vacancies remain to be filled by ministerial (including Cabinet and Executive Council) appointments.

(3) What grants have been approved by the Minister from within the Minister’s portfolio.

(4) What requests have been submitted to the Department of Finance and Deregulation to move funds within the Minister’s portfolio.

Senator Sherry—The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

Senator the Hon Chris Evans as Minister representing the Prime Minister in the Senate responded to this question in answering part (1) of Senate Question on Notice No. 117.

In addition to information provided in the senator’s response, the following Ministerial appointments were made over the period November 2007 to February 2008. These appointments were not required to be considered by the Cabinet.

- Presiding Member of the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation Selection Committee.

### Table: Institutions, Grants, and Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Grant Purpose</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baker Heart Research Institute</td>
<td>Postgraduate Scholarships</td>
<td>593 242.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career Development Awards</td>
<td>1 562 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowships</td>
<td>1 284 258.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INSEMER</td>
<td>72 500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
<td>274 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Vincent’s Institute of Medical Research</td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowships</td>
<td>822 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travelling Award</td>
<td>7 500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdoch Children’s Research Institute</td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowships</td>
<td>274 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travelling Award</td>
<td>7 500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research</td>
<td>Program Grant</td>
<td>19 611 956.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Eye Research Australia Ltd</td>
<td>Postgraduate Scholarship</td>
<td>94 266.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSIRO Division of Livestock Industries</td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowship</td>
<td>274 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Western Australia</td>
<td>Career Development Award</td>
<td>362 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dementia research Grant</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowships</td>
<td>548 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travelling Awards</td>
<td>15 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edith Cowan University</td>
<td>Postgraduate Scholarships</td>
<td>1 076 049.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menzies Research Institute</td>
<td>Career Development Awards</td>
<td>1 124 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowships</td>
<td>548 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menzies School of Health Research</td>
<td>Training Postdoctoral Fellowships</td>
<td>959 000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Industry nominated members of the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation Selection Committee.

Industry nominated members of the Sugar Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee.

Chair and six members of the Wheat Industry Expert Group.

A brief outline of each appointee’s credentials is included in the table below.

Ministerial appointments completed November 2007 to February 2008, other than those going through Cabinet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointee</th>
<th>Name of body</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Credentials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Robert Granger</td>
<td>Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation Selection Committee</td>
<td>Presiding Member</td>
<td>Mr Granger is the principal of a management consulting firm. He is a former General Manager of the Queensland Fruit &amp; Vegetable Growers Ltd (1980-2001) and former Chairman of the Sugar Research and Development Corporation (2002-2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Stephen Couche</td>
<td>Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation Selection Committee</td>
<td>Industry nominated members</td>
<td>Mr Couche – Managing Director, Orlando Wines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Stephen Shelmerdine AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Shelmerdine – Managing Director, Shelmerdine Vineyards Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Robert Hill Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Smith – Managing Director, The Yalumba Wine Company and member of the WFA board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Alf Cristaudo</td>
<td>Sugar Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee</td>
<td>Industry nominated members</td>
<td>Mr Cristaudo has a long history in the sugar industry as an active grower, industry and community representation. He is currently President, World Association of Beef and Cane Growers, Chairman, Australian Cane Growers’ Council Ltd, Chairman, Qld Canegrowers Organisation Limited as well as numerous other positions on canegrower organisations. Mr McMaster is currently Chairman, Australian Sugar Industry Alliance, Director Australian Sugar Milling Council, Chairman, Emperor Gold Mines and Director, CRC for Sugar Innovation. Mr Walker has been involved in the sugar industry for many years holding positions on many R&amp;D committees. He is currently member of the Central Region Sugar Industry Regional Advisory Group. Ms Story is currently self-employed as a consultant in horticulture and has had many years experience in on boards and councils in the horticulture industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ian McMaster AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ross Walker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Anne Story</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appointee Name of body Position Credentials
Mr John Crosby (Chair) Wheat Industry Expert Group Chair and six members Mr Crosby is a grain grower from Lucindale. He is currently Chairman of QEAC, President of the Agribusiness Association of Australia.
Ms Gail Dowie Wheat Industry Expert Group Chair and six members Ms Dowie is a grain, pulse and oilseed grower from Central Qld. She has extensive experience in the grains industry and has held senior positions in logistics, storage and handling and marketing.
Mr Geoff Honey Wheat Industry Expert Group Chair and six members Mr Honey is currently CEO of the National Agricultural Commodities Marketing Association. He has extensive experience in the grains industry.
Mr Dan Mangelsdorf Wheat Industry Expert Group Chair and six members Mr Mangelsdorf is a farmer from West Wyalong in NSW and has significant knowledge and experience in the east coast grains industry. He is currently Chairman of the Grain Growers Association and Deputy Chairman of GrainCorp Ltd.
Mr Geoff Nalder Wheat Industry Expert Group Chair and six members Mr Nalder operates a dryland farm at Swan Hill in Victoria. He is currently President of the Victorian Farmers Federation Grains Group, having held various positions within the organisation. He is a long standing member of the industry with extensive knowledge in public policy and the wheat industry.
Mr Dan Mangelsdorf Wheat Industry Expert Group Chair and six members Mr Mangelsdorf is a farmer from West Wyalong in NSW and has significant knowledge and experience in the east coast grains industry. He is currently Chairman of the Grain Growers Association and Deputy Chairman of GrainCorp Ltd.
Mr Graham Shields Wheat Industry Expert Group Chair and six members Mr Shields is a grain grower from WA, with 40 years experience in grain production on his family farmer businesses. He is also a former principal of a grain trading company.
Mr David Thomas Wheat Industry Expert Group Chair and six members Mr Thomas is currently Chairman of Barley Australia and previously held positions with major grain companies including AusBulk and AWB Ltd. He has worked in the grain industry for over 30 years.

(2) Vacancies to be filled by Ministerial appointment are set out in the table below, as at February 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporation/body</th>
<th>Position(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statutory Fishing Rights Allocation Review Panel Selection Committee</td>
<td>Industry and other nominated members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grape and Wine R&amp;D Corporation Selection Committee</td>
<td>Presiding Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarantine and Exports Advisory Council</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and Water Australia Selection Committee</td>
<td>Presiding Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Landcare Council</td>
<td>5 Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticulture Code Committee</td>
<td>1 Member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) On 1 February 2008, the Hon. Tony Burke MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry approved the grants for the following organisations from the Equine Influenza Non Government, Not for Profit Equestrian Organisation Grants program:

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Senator the Hon Nick Sherry as Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Deregulation in the Senate will respond on my behalf.

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: Western Australia**

(Question No. 245)

Senator Cormann asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 12 February 2008:

1. (a) Since 24 November 2007, what federal funding, programs and/or services to Western Australia have been cut and/or discontinued in any of the Minister’s portfolio agencies; and (b) what savings have been made from these cuts.

2. (a) What plans does the Government have to cut and/or discontinue federal funding, programs and/or services to Western Australia in any of the Minister’s portfolio agencies in the coming period; and (b) what estimated savings would be made from these cuts.

**Senator Sherry**—The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

1. (a) The Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio has ceased a number of programs since 24 November 2007 which would have been open to applicants from Western Australia as part of a national delivery mechanism. These include the Agriculture Advancing Australia – FarmBis, FarmHelp and Advancing Agricultural Industries programs, National Food Industry Strategy – Food Innovation Grants and the New Industries Development Program.

(b) Total savings from these programs at a national level as published in the 2007-08 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements at pages 11-13 and in 2008-09 Budget paper No. 2 at pages 39-40 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>2007-08 ($m)</th>
<th>2008-09 ($m)</th>
<th>2009-10 ($m)</th>
<th>2010-11 ($m)</th>
<th>2011-12 ($m)</th>
<th>Total ($m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAA – FarmBis</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAA – FarmHelp</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>97.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAA – Advancing Agricultural Industries</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Food Industry Strategy – Food Innovation Grants</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Industries Development Program</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**
(2)  (a) No further savings were identified as part of the 2008-09 Budget process from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio which would impact on funding or services to Western Australia.
    (b) Nil.

Kimberley Region
(Question No. 270)

Senator Murray asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, upon notice, on 12 February 2008:

(1) With reference to the Treasurer’s statement of 27 June 2007 on the release of the 2006 census information that ‘the Census forms the basis for our electoral system, the provision of services and policy to meet the challenges that we face’: does this mean that the effects of fly-in and fly-out workers who record their domicile elsewhere, or of transient/tourist numbers, will not be sufficiently taken into account for the provision of services in shires such as Roebourne and Wyndham East Kimberley; if not, how are fly-in fly-out or transient/tourist requirements factored in.

(2) Given that, according to the recently released Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census figures, in the Kimberley Region, between 2001 and 2006, the population of Broome has risen by only 1.8 per cent, or 1 240 people, and in the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley, by just 0.4 per cent, or 133 people: (a) why do these figures differ from the shires’ views as to significant real population growth; and (b) how were these figures arrived at, given, for instance, that school student numbers, a good indicator of permanency, in the region have risen by more than this amount in absolute terms (e.g. at Kununurra District High School, by at least 13 per cent).

(3) Do census collectors obtain accurate figures from Indigenous communities in the Kimberley; if not, what is the degree of error.

(4) Has the ABS investigated its figures to determine how such apparent small rises in overall population in the Kimberley can be possible, given the rise in housing demand and construction in these areas since the 2001 census and the overall increase in numbers of children enrolled in the local schools, in some areas, up at least 10 per cent.

(5) Given that, according to an ABS seminar in Kununurra in 2007, the community was advised that the figures for the 2006 census were collated based on ‘place of enumeration’ while the method used in the 1996 census and the 2001 census was ‘usual place of residence’: (a) what impact has this change had on the census outcome; and (b) have Australians still continued to identify their usual place of residence (e.g. Perth) rather than place of enumeration (e.g. Argyle Mine).

(6) Can the Treasurer confirm that any funding allocations from the Commonwealth, which are aligned to population numbers based on the census, will take into account other factors, such as housing demand and school enrolments in the East Kimberley, when considering funding allocation.

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

(1) The 2006 Population Census asked about each person’s place of usual residence and determined their place of enumeration. Questions were also asked about each employed person’s location of work. The information on place of usual residence and location of work is provided by respondents and reflects their interpretation of the questions. However, it might be expected that fly-in fly-out workers would give a place of usual residence different to their location of work. Thus, information from the census can be used to analyse the numbers of people whose place of enumeration was different from their usual residence (which would include tourists), or the number who work in an area but have a usual residence in another region (which would include fly-in fly-out workers).
Following each census, the ABS undertakes a Post Enumeration Survey (PES) to measure the over and under count that occurs during the census. The results from this survey are used in the determination of the official Estimated Residential Population (ERP).

The ERP takes into account the census usual resident count for a region, estimates of net undercount in the census from the PES, and other population factors such as the number of Australian residents temporarily overseas on census night. Use of ‘place of usual residence’ as the criteria for geographic distribution in population estimates is consistent with international recommendations for estimating population statistics. It is the official ERP for a region that is used to determine funding through the Grants Commissions.

The ABS is not in a position to comment on how fly-in fly-out or transient/tourist numbers are factored in when determining provision of services.

(2) (a) The percentages quoted in the question are the annual average growth rate for the ERP over the 5 years between 2001 and 2006, and not the overall growth rate between 2001 and 2006.

The percentages for the overall growth rate between 2001 and 2006, for preliminary ERP estimates, show the population for Broome has increased by over 9 per cent during the 5 year period, while Wyndham-East Kimberley has grown by 1.8 per cent (see the ABS publication Regional Population Growth, Australia, 1996-2006 (cat. no. 3218.0) published on 24 July 2007, which is available on the ABS website).

(b) The ERP figures are arrived at using the methodology established for determining the resident population of an area at 30 June each year. Information on this methodology is available in the explanatory notes of the publication mentioned in 2(a).

(3) The ABS has, after consultation with representatives from a range of organisations associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, developed an Indigenous enumeration strategy. This strategy is a collection of procedures that allows for potential barriers to the effective enumeration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the census to be addressed. The ABS believes that this strategy is also effective in minimising undercount, although there will inevitably be some error.

The PES undertaken after the census includes Indigenous communities, however, estimates of net undercount are not available for small areas. The estimated net undercount for Indigenous Australians in the 2006 Census was 59,178, representing a net undercount rate of 11.5 percent with a standard error of 2.3 percentage points (see the ABS publication Census of Population and Housing - Details of Undercount, Australia (cat no. 2949.0)).

(4) See the answer to question 2.

(5) (a) and (b) There was no change in the way census information was collected about ‘place of enumeration’ and ‘place of usual residence’. The only change was in the timing of the release of census data. Prior to the 2006 Census, the first figures released from the census were based on ‘place of enumeration’. For the 2006 Census, the census counts for both ‘place of enumeration’ and ‘place of usual residence’ were released at the same time.

(6) As discussed in (1) above, Commonwealth funding allocations to states and territories are based on the ERP figures published by the ABS. The state level ERPs are compiled using Population Census results, estimates of net undercount from the Post Enumeration Survey, estimates of Australian residents overseas on census night, birth and death registrations, net overseas migration, and net interstate migration statistics. They are not compiled using housing demand and school enrolments directly. However, counts of building approvals and other administrative data are used in estimating population growth between censuses in areas below the state/territory level (see the answer to question 2).
The ABS understands that the Commonwealth funding allocations to states and territories are determined based on the ERP, combined with adjustment factors compiled by the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

Banking
(Question No. 281)

Senator Webber asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, upon notice, on 13 February 2008:

Are banks with an Australian banking licence permitted to hold data or records on accounts in associated banks or subsidiaries domiciled in known tax havens.

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

National Privacy Principle 9 in Schedule 3 to the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) restricts Australian Authorised Deposit-Taking Institutions (ADIs, which includes banks, credit unions and building societies) from transferring personal information in relation to bank accounts and other records to associated banks or subsidiaries in a foreign country, except in the following circumstances:

- the organisation reasonably believes that the related bank or subsidiary is subject to an information privacy regime comparable to the National Privacy Principles (NPPs);
- where the individual has provided consent to the transfer;
- the transfer is for the benefit of the individual, obtaining consent is impracticable and the organisation can show grounds for a belief that if it were practicable to obtain consent the individual would be likely to give it;
- the transfer is necessary for the conclusion or performance of a contract concluded in the interest of the individual between the organisation and a third party; or
- the organisation has taken reasonable steps to ensure that the transferred information will not be held, used or disclosed by the recipient inconsistently with the NPPs.

The NPPs do not prevent the transfer of personal information outside Australia by an Australian licenced ADI to a branch of that same organisation located in a foreign country. In these circumstances, the Privacy Act 1988 operates extra-territorially.

Licensed Builder Home Warranty Insurance
(Question No. 283)

Senator Webber asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, upon notice, on 13 February 2008:

(1) Did the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) ever place any restrictions, formally or informally, on Murray Nugent or the companies he was involved with, specifically Reward Insurance Ltd and Australian Home Warranty Pty Ltd, on writing licensed builder home warranty insurance (LBHWI) from 1 July 1999 onwards.

(2) Can the Minister confirm that Mr Nugent continued to write LBHWI through Reward Insurance Ltd after 1 July 1999.

(3) Can the Minister confirm that APRA has the power to disqualify an individual from holding roles within the Australian insurance industry; if so why has APRA never moved to disqualify Mr Nugent from operating in the insurance industry.

(4) If Reward Insurance Ltd was under the minimum capital requirements for insurance companies from 2001 onwards, why did not APRA shut the company down.
(5) Can an outline be provided of all investigations, recommendations and directions undertaken and instigated into Reward Insurance Ltd since 1999 by (a) APRA; and (b) the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC).

(6) Can the Minister confirm that investigations by APRA and ASIC into Reward Insurance Ltd and Mr Nugent have stalled since May 2005; if so, why.

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

(1) The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) has advised that the information sought in the question includes protected information under the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority Act 1998 (APRA Act). In ordinary circumstances the provision of protected information would constitute a criminal offence. While parliamentary privilege provides a defence to such a charge, APRA notes the public interest arguments in maintaining confidentiality over protected information provided to it by regulated entities. APRA further notes that there is litigation between third parties traversing the same or similar subject matter. For these reasons, APRA prefers not to respond to this question publicly beyond providing material already in the public domain.

Australian Home Warranty Pty Ltd is not and never has been an APRA regulated entity. Mr Murray Nugent has only ever been subject to APRA regulation to the extent that he was a senior manager of Reward Insurance Ltd (RIL), which was a regulated entity until its authorisation was cancelled on 22 March 2004.

APRA did not at any time place a formal restriction on RIL on writing licensed builder home warranty insurance (LBHWI) from 1 July 1999 onwards. APRA provided non-binding advice to RIL on 20 June 2001 that it should not write LBHWI until its reinsurance program included an approved reinsurance program for its builders warranty insurance.

(2) APRA has advised that the information sought in the question is protected information under the APRA Act. In ordinary circumstances its provision would constitute a criminal offence. While parliamentary privilege provides a defence to such a charge, APRA notes the public interest arguments in maintaining confidentiality over protected information provided to it by regulated entities. APRA further notes that there is litigation between third parties traversing the same or similar subject matter. For these reasons, APRA prefers not to respond to this question publicly beyond providing material already in the public domain.

(3) Currently, APRA does have the power to disqualify an individual from holding positions such as a director and senior manager in general insurers. However, the Financial Sector Legislation Amendment (Review of Prudential Decisions) Bill 2008 which was introduced in the Senate on 13 February 2008 will introduce a court-based disqualification regime for responsible persons, including a director and senior manager in general insurers, under which the Federal Court may, on application from APRA, disqualify a responsible person.

APRA is aware of serious allegations regarding the conduct of Mr Nugent. However, APRA has advised that the parties making the allegations are not disinterested, and APRA has formed the view that neither the limited material provided by those persons, nor other material in its possession, is sufficient to warrant any action against Mr Nugent.

However, APRA notes that three individuals have referred material on an ongoing basis to a number of other Regulators, State Police Departments and various Ministers and that material included various written allegations against a number of individuals, including Mr Nugent. APRA has offered to provide assistance to other relevant agencies on request.

(4) APRA has advised that RIL was not under its Minimum Statutory Capital requirements from late 2001 until 30 June 2002.
Following the enactment of the General Insurance Reform Act 2001, all authorised Australian Insurers who wished to continue underwriting insurance risks were required to be re-authorised by 30 June 2002. RIL was reauthorised under the Insurance Act 1973 (Insurance Act) on 26 June 2002. A condition on the re-authorisation was that RIL maintain a Minimum Capital Ratio of at least $6.0 million in net assets. It satisfied that condition at that time.

On 10 October 2003, as a result of work conducted by APRA a decision was taken to initiate a formal investigation. This decision resulted from APRA’s concerns about a probable breach of RIL’s Minimum Statutory Capital and concerns that it may not be able in the long to sustain the commitments it had made to its policyholders. The investigation confirmed the breach of statutory capital requirements.

In November 2003, APRA accepted a public enforceable undertaking from RIL that resulted in it entering into a Heads of Agreement in December 2003 for the commercial sale of its policyholder liabilities and associated assets to another existing authorised Australian insurer. The sale was concluded in March 2004 and on 22 March 2004, APRA revoked RIL’s authority to carry on insurance business.

As a result of APRA’s intervention, and consistent with its mandate to act to protect the interests of policyholders, no RIL policyholder lost any insurance benefit.

(5) (a) APRA has advised that the information sought in the question is protected information under the APRA Act. In ordinary circumstances its provision would constitute a criminal offence. While parliamentary privilege provides a defence to such a charge, APRA notes the public interest arguments in maintaining confidentiality over protected information provided to it by regulated entities. For these reasons, APRA prefers not to respond to this question publicly beyond noting matters which are already public. It is in the public domain that:

• In July 2001, APRA discovered that an asset held by RIL may have been pledged as security to a bank, and would therefore be excluded from assets by section 30 of the Insurance Act. If the asset were excluded by section 30, then RIL may not have met the minimum solvency requirement under the Insurance Act. APRA therefore issued a letter to RIL, asking it to show cause why APRA should not commence an investigation. RIL responded to APRA’s concerns in such a way that no investigation was commenced at that time.

• As a result of insurance reforms, all authorised Australian insurers which wished to continue underwriting insurance risks were required to reapply to APRA to remain an authorised Australian insurer. RIL submitted an authorisation application and APRA advised it by letter dated 26 June 2002 that it was re-authorised under subsection 12(2) of the Act and that a number of conditions were imposed under paragraph 13(1) (a).

• On 10 October 2003, APRA commenced an investigation into RIL – see response to question 4 above.

• In November 2003, APRA accepted a public enforceable undertaking from RIL – see response to question 4 above.

(b) The Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) is an independent statutory authority responsible for the administration of the Corporations Act 2001 and related legislation. As an independent statutory authority, the conduct of ASIC’s investigations and enforcement activities is generally a matter for its discretion. In seeking to protect the integrity of its operations, ASIC does not generally comment on its investigations.

ASIC has advised that it has conducted an assessment of the issues raised in relation to RIL and has exercised its discretion not to commence a formal investigation under section 13 of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001 into the company or its directors. In addition, ASIC advises that it has considered the conduct of the company in the past in

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
response to complaints it has received; however, the complainants involved have repeatedly failed to provide evidence to support their allegations.

(6) APRA concluded its investigation into RIL shortly after the transfer of its policyholder liabilities and associated assets had been completed and its authority to carry on insurance business had been revoked. APRA does not have the power to investigate an unauthorised entity under the Insurance Act. See also the response to Question 3 above.

See the response to question 5(b) above in relation to ASIC.

**Formation Water**

(Question No. 397)

Senator Siewert asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, upon notice, on 7 April 2008:

In regard to formation waters produced from offshore facilities:

(1) Can detailed information on waste waters (total produced formation waters) discharged into the ocean during 2005 and 2006 from all production platforms around the north west coast of Australia be provided, including: (a) the following Timor Sea producing platforms, feeding Darwin (off the North Kimberley Coast): Puffin, Jabiru, Challis/Cassini, Blacktip (Bonaparte Basin, close to the Kimberley Coast near Berkeley), Bayu Undan, Buffalo and Laminaria East; and (b) the following Pilbara producing platforms: Mutineer, Exeter, Hermes, Lambert, Angel, Cossack, Wanaea, Legendre North, Legendre South, Wandoor, Stag, North Rankin, Perseus, Echo/Yodel, Goodwyn South/Pueblo, John Brookes, East Spar, Woollybutt, Chinook/Scindian, Griffin, Yammaderry, Cowle, Crest, Saladin, Skate, Roller, Novara, Enfield, Vincent, Eskdale, Skybarrow, Campbell, Wonnich, Endymion/Sinbad, Bambra, Linda, Harriet/Gudrun, Lee/Rose, North Alkimos, Agincourt, Gipsy, Monet/Simpson/Tanami, S. Plato, Little Sandy/Pedirka/North Pedirka/Hoover, Victoria and Double Island.

(2) What is the total volume of waste water discharged per year.

(3) What is the breakdown and concentration, in milligrams per litre, of heavy metal pollution index (HPI) substances in the formation water.

(4) What mass of HPI substances, in kilograms per year, was emitted from each platform listed in paragraph (1) during 2005 and 2006.

**Senator Carr**—This question was transferred to the Minister for Resources and Energy and he has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Volumes of PFW discharged by facilities located around the North-west coast of Australia are provided in Table 1 below.

**TABLE 1 – VOLUMES OF PFW BY FACILITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Actual Discharge Location / Status</th>
<th>2005 Total PFW Volume (KL)</th>
<th>2006 Total PFW Volume (KL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>Buffalo Venture (Decommissioned in 2004)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutineer, (ii)Exeter Hermes, Lambert, Cossack, Wanaea</td>
<td>Venture 11 FPSO (start-up was in may 2005)</td>
<td>332899</td>
<td>1911669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel</td>
<td>Not yet operating</td>
<td>1036836</td>
<td>1193422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Actual Discharge Location / Status</th>
<th>2005 Total PFW Volume (KL)</th>
<th>2006 Total PFW Volume (KL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legendre North, Legendre South</td>
<td>Legendre Platform</td>
<td>2748276</td>
<td>2830015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wandoop</td>
<td>Wandoop B Platform</td>
<td>6457082</td>
<td>6194140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stag</td>
<td>Stag Platform</td>
<td>1556485</td>
<td>1100988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Rankin, Perseus</td>
<td>North Rankin A Platform</td>
<td>86416</td>
<td>88205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodwyn, South/Pueblo</td>
<td>Not a known facility/field name</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodwyn Alpha, Echo Yodel</td>
<td>Goodwyn A Platform</td>
<td>118410</td>
<td>189619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Brookes</td>
<td>All formation water is re-injected</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Spar</td>
<td>All formation water is re-injected</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollybutt</td>
<td>Four Vanguard FPSO</td>
<td>1329097</td>
<td>1307910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinook/Scindian, Griffin</td>
<td>Griffin Venture FPSO</td>
<td>3388187</td>
<td>2977055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yammadery, Cowle, Crest, Saladin, Skate, Roller</td>
<td>All formation water is re-injected (in WA State waters)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novara</td>
<td>Non-producing well</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enfield</td>
<td>Was not Producing in 2005/06 – Is now re-injecting</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincent</td>
<td>Not yet operating - Will re-inject</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eskdale, Stybarrow</td>
<td>Was not Producing in 2005/06 – Is now re-injecting</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbell, Wonnich, Endymion/Sinbad, Bambra, Bambra, Linda, Harriet, Lee/Rose, North Alkimos, Angincourt, Gipsy, Monet/Simpson/Tanami, S. Plato, Victoria, Double Island</td>
<td>All formation water is re-injected (in WA State waters)</td>
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<td>Harriet Alpha Platform (in WA State waters)</td>
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<td>Jabiru Venture</td>
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<td>2,073,007</td>
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<td>Challis Venture</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>662,586</td>
<td>378,434</td>
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<td>Northern Endeavour</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,793,874</td>
<td>4,100,360</td>
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</table>
Facility | Actual Discharge Location / Status | 2005 Total PFW Volume (KL) | 2006 Total PFW Volume (KL)
--- | --- | --- | ---
Puffin | Was not producing in 2005/2006 | - | -
Blacktip | Was not producing in 2005/2006 | - | -
Bayu Undan | Administered by Joint Petroleum Development Authority, figures not available | - | -

**TOTAL**

25,296,597 25,938,395

(2) The total volume of PFW discharged per year varies. Volumes of PFW discharged into the ocean for the year 2005 from the facilities mentioned was approximately 25,296,597 KL. Volumes of PFW discharged into the ocean for the year 2006 from the facilities mentioned was approximately 25,938,395 KL.

(3) The National Pollutant Inventory (NPI) is the only nationwide, publicly accessible inventory of substance emissions in Australia.

For NPI reporting purposes, emissions are defined as the release of an NPI substance to the environment – whether in pure form or contained in other matter and/or in solid, liquid or gaseous form. All emissions are separated into emissions to air, land and water. Reported emissions are aggregated by substance from a facility, and facilities are not required to provide data in any more detail other than “emissions to water”. The proportion of an emission from formation waters is not required to be reported, under the NPI National Environment Protection Measure (NEPM), neither is the breakdown and concentration in milligrams per litre.

(4) Every year, Australian industrial facilities that exceed specified thresholds of the 93 NPI substances must estimate and report their emissions directly to their state or territory environment agency. These agencies review all NPI reports for accuracy and forward the data to the Australian Government. The reports are then displayed on the NPI public website.

In 2005-06, the following oil production platforms reported emissions of individual heavy metal substances to water:

**Northern Territory**

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<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Substance to water and amount in kg per year</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arsenic</td>
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<td>Challis</td>
<td>63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jabiru</td>
<td>343</td>
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</table>

Challis and Jabiru rigs did not report emissions of mercury to water.

**Western Australia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Substance to water and amount in kg per year</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Arsenic</td>
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<td>Cossack Pioneer</td>
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<td>Stag Operations</td>
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<td>Wandoo</td>
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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
As NPI substances have differing properties and toxicities, it is meaningless to add together emissions of different substances. The NPI is made up of emissions that have been estimated using a variety of techniques. The accuracy of these estimates may vary according to the technique used.

**Temporary Retirement Visas**

(Question No. 409)

Senator Ellison asked the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, upon notice, on 9 April 2008:

1. As at 1 March 2008, how many people hold a current 410 visa.
2. Has the department undertaken, or received from any other department, an estimate costing of a change to the 410 visa to enable holders to be eligible to take up permanent residency; if so, what is the estimate cost.

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

1. As at 1 March 2008, there were 8689 Retirement visa holders (Subclass 410). At that time 6384 visa holders were in Australia and 2305 were outside of Australia.
2. The Department has commissioned the Australian Government Actuary to prepare a costing on the impact of granting permanent residence to all Retirement visa (Subclass 410) holders, based on a ten year eligibility period. This costing has not yet been finalised.

**Power Station Emissions**

(Question No. 416)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Resources and Energy, upon notice, on 16 April 2008:

Since the Australian Labor Party formed Government, has the Minister or the department made any statements or published any material indicating the year in which it is expected that the first commercial-scale power station will be operating with carbon capture and storage; if so: (a) when and where were the statements made or the material published; and (b) what was the year or years indicated.

Senator Carr—The Minister for Resources and Energy has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(a) No.
Energy Efficiency
(Question No. 420)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, upon notice, on 16 April 2008:

(1) In relation to commitments the Government made in its election policy fact sheet, ‘A national energy efficiency goal’, what work has been undertaken to:

(a) ‘accelerate the development and implementation of a nationwide tool for reducing water and energy usage in new homes’;

(b) ‘accelerate the roll out of smart meters, and develop and implement national standards for these meters to ensure that compatible technologies are used across Australia’;

(c) ‘implement compulsory point-of-sale sustainability scorecards, based on a transparent and nationally consistent protocol for home energy and water efficiency ratings, and work with the housing and real estate industry to encourage point-of-lease scorecards on a voluntary basis’; and

(d) ‘establish a new ten-star appliance rating system and Greenhouse and Energy Minimum Standards to fast track smart efficient technology and work with industry and State and Territory Governments to gradually phase out greenhouse intensive hot water systems’.

(2) What key performance indicator will be used to assess whether Australia is ‘on track to being at the forefront of OECD energy efficiency improvement’.

Senator Wong—The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) In relation to the Government’s commitments made in the policy fact sheet ‘A national energy efficiency goal’, the Australian Government is both progressing the implementation of specific election commitments and has established an Energy Efficiency Sub-Group of the COAG Working Group on Climate Change and Water to advise COAG on options to accelerate or expand the uptake of energy efficiency measures, including the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach. In relation to the specific election policy commitments, the following work has been undertaken:

(a) The Energy Efficiency Branch of the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts has contracted the development of various parts of the nationwide tool, and commenced the procurement process for other parts. The Department is ensuring that the implementation builds on existing systems such as the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme.

(b) The Government is conducting a national cost benefit analysis on the roll out of smart meters. Public comments on costs and benefits have been received and will be taken into account in finalising the analysis. In December 2007, the Ministerial Council on Energy agreed that under any rollout plan, a consistent National Minimum Functionality is necessary to maximise the benefits of smart meters across all stakeholders, and referred an initial set of functions to further work by a technical stakeholder group.

(c) The Australian Government has refocused the work being carried out under the National Framework for Energy Efficiency on mandatory point-of-sale disclosure to include a broader range of energy, greenhouse and water assessments.

(d) A series of focus groups have been held in Australia and New Zealand to develop the ten star energy rating label, which would enable consumers to identify super efficient products. State and Territory governments are being consulted on the appropriate mechanism for rolling out
these labels. Consultation has also commenced with State and Territory governments and other key stakeholders regarding the phasing out of greenhouse intensive hot water systems.

(2) The Energy Efficiency Branch of the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts is currently reviewing international energy efficiency measures, to determine the most appropriate performance indicators to benchmark Australia’s performance against other OECD nations.

Taxation: Imported Refrigerant Gas
(Question No. 424)

Senator Allison asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, upon notice, on 30 April 2008:
Has a decision yet been made to increase the levy on the import and sale of new refrigerant to cope with the increasing volume now required to be reclaimed; if so, what was that decision.

Senator Conroy—The Treasurer has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
On 15 May 2008, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission issued a final determination allowing Refrigerant Reclaim Australia to increase the industry agreed levy on refrigerant gas imported and sold in Australia from $1.50 to $2 per kilogram, until 31 December 2010.

Illegal Immigration
(Question No. 434)

Senator Ellison asked the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, upon notice, on 5 May 2008:
(1) For each year since 2000, how many people have been found to be working illegally in Australia, and in each case: (a) what was their nationality; and (b) in which state were they found to be working.
(2) For each month since July 2007, how many people have been found to be working illegally in Australia, and in each case: (a) what was their nationality; and (b) in which state were they found to be working.

Senator Chris Evans—The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:
The figures provided in the attached tables in response to the honourable senator’s question reflect the number of persons located by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) where there was evidence that they were working illegally. The Department locates many other visa overstayers who may have worked illegally in Australia. However, where illegal work cannot be established, such people are not recorded in DIAC’s systems as being illegal workers.
The figures show a significant decline in the number of illegal workers located since 2004-05. This is a result of a combination of factors:
• Reduced field activity with the requirement for compliance staff to undergo enhanced training post the Palmer and Comrie Reports;
• an increased focus on prevention and deterrence activities to encourage employers to only engage people with work entitlements; and
• targeting enforcement activity towards high risk cases.
Based on data to the end of March 2008, the Department is on track to locate around 1600 illegal workers for the full 2007-08 year. This represents an increase of 25 per cent on the number for 2006-07.

(1) (a) Illegal Workers located by Nationality/Year since 2000

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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*NB Figures to 31 March 08

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Projections suggest that numbers of illegal workers located are increasing this year by 20% and should continue to increase in future years.

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### Agricultural Research

**Senator Milne** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 5 May 2008:

1. Is the Minister aware of the recently-released global report on agriculture (International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development, www.agassessment.org) which indicates that support for agro-ecological approaches is essential for the world to continue to be able to feed the world and to optimise sustainability and productivity.

2. Is the Minister aware of the 2007 report of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization which concluded that systems-based agro-ecological approaches could improve ecological sustainability, increase farming productivity, minimise fertiliser costs and increase resilience of the agriculture sector to the environmental impacts of climate change.

3. What action, if any, will the Government take in response to these reports.
(4) Will the innovation review address the question of agro-ecological innovation in Australia; if so, how.

(5) What were the reasons for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) rejecting funding support for two bids for an organic cooperative research centre.

(6) (a) What level and proportion of departmental appropriation revenue is allocated to agricultural research; (b) what level and proportion of this revenue is spent on farm-based research; and (c) of the departmental budget for farm-based research, what proportion is from external funding.

(7) (a) What level and proportion of CSIRO appropriation revenue is allocated to agricultural research; (b) what level and proportion of this revenue is spent on farm-based research; (c) of the CSIRO budget for farm-based research, what proportion is from external funding; (d) what level and proportion of the CSIRO Plant Industry’s appropriation revenue is spent on farm-based research; and (e) to what research is the remaining revenue allocated.

(8) What level and proportion of the farm-based research funding in (6)(b) and (7)(b) is allocated to studying agro-ecological systems (please provide both figures).

(9) What level and proportion of the farm-based research funding in (6)(b) and (7)(b) is allocated to comparing different farm management practices and their impact on the ecology (please provide both figures).

(10) What level and proportion of the farm-based research funding in (6)(b) and (7)(b) is allocated to long-term trials, comparing the impact of organic, biological and conventional farming systems on various indicators of sustainability (please provide both figures).

(11) What are the changes in budget allocation and expenditure for the areas of research referred to in paragraphs (8) to (10) over the past decade (please provide figures).

(12) What proportion of CSIRO’s collaborations with research and development (R&D) organisations include research areas referred to in paragraphs (8) to (10) (please provide figures).

(13) What plans are there to carry out long-term comparative field trials that identify how different farming practices, including organic, biological and conventional approaches, impact on the ecology that underpins sustainable farming.

(14) With reference to the statement by Mr TJ Higgins of the CSIRO on the Special Broadcasting Service’s Insight program on 22 April 2008 that CSIRO spends 2 per cent of its total research budget on genetically modified (GM) related research and less than a tenth of this comes from multinational companies: (a) what is the total research budget for GM related research; (b) what percentage of CSIRO’s appropriation revenue allocated to agricultural research is spent on GM-related research; (c) how is the rest allocated; (d) how is GM-related research defined; and (e) does the total research budget include money from research and development corporations or is it appropriation revenue.

(15) (a) What percentage of CSIRO’s appropriation revenue allocated to agricultural research is spent on laboratory-based biotechnologies; and (b) how is the rest allocated.

(16) Is it the case that CSIRO’s agriculture research is increasing laboratory based work and decreasing on-farm research.

(17) Does the Minister consider on-farm research to have been neglected by the previous government, leaving the CSIRO without agro-ecological research insights and putting the ongoing sustainability of Australian agriculture at risk.

(18) What percentage of CSIRO Plant Industry’s appropriation revenue allocated to agricultural research is spent on laboratory based biotechnologies; and (b) how is the rest allocated.
(19) What arrangements and plans, if any, does the Government and/or CSIRO have for intellectual property agreements and alliances with global agribusiness which control the path to market for agriculture-based products.

(20) (a) What formal and informal arrangements does CSIRO currently have with global agribusiness that facilitates research in the area of biotechnology; and (b) can a list of these organisations and the arrangements be provided.

(21) What proportion of the Government’s $130 million initiative to help farmers adapt to climate change (Australia’s Farming Future Initiative) will be allocated to an examination of the possible contribution of organic and biological approaches to agriculture.

Senator Sherry—The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Australia welcomed the reports from the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD). Australia was an active participant and supporter of the IAASTD process and acknowledges many of the key observations in the reports. The wide range of observations and assertions in the reports, some of which were contradictory, meant that Australia could not accept or approve the reports in their entirety. Nevertheless, there is a large amount of material which the government will use as input to future deliberations on agricultural knowledge, science and technology and its capacity to reduce poverty and hunger in developing countries.

The Government welcomes research undertaken by the FAO (both in this report and in others) and takes account of FAO recommendations when developing agricultural policies. The Government regards the FAO as the lead UN agency for advancing the comprehensive range of issues relating to agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

(4) I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that the Review of the National Innovation System has broad terms of reference, namely:

‘The government is committed to building a strong national innovation system, in recognition of the vital role innovation plays in productivity and economic growth, and in meeting the challenges Australia faces.

In this context, the government has appointed an expert panel to review the national innovation system and the coherence and effectiveness of existing government support for innovation.

The Panel will identify gaps and weaknesses in the innovation system and develop proposals to address them. In particular, it will:

• Identify a set of principles to underpin the role and participation of the public sector in innovation.
• Develop a set of national innovation priorities to complement the national research priorities, ensuring the objectives of research programs and other innovation initiatives are complementary.
• Identify regulatory and other barriers to innovation and recommend ways to minimise these.
• Examine the scope for simplifying and reducing program duplication and ensuring that any support provided is well-targeted and easy to access.

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- Consider the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the research and development tax concession scheme in promoting innovation and make recommendations to improve innovation outcomes.
- Consider ways to improve the governance of the national innovation system to support higher expectations of government agencies and industry.
- Assess the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program and make recommendations to improve innovation outcomes.

In conducting the review the panel is to have regard to relevant reports and studies, including the Productivity Commission’s report on public support for science and innovation.

The Review is now well underway. The panel has consulted nationally and received over 630 submissions. Approximately five per cent of submissions comment specifically on rural innovation issues.

The panel is also hosting nine invitation workshops to address particular issues. One workshop is rural innovation and this will include agro-ecological innovation.

The panel will provide a green paper to the government detailing policy options by 31 July 2008. The green paper will be released for public comment and used as the basis for the development of a government white paper.

(5) I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that CSIRO has been a strong supporter of the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) program and has participated in 122 of the 167 CRCs established since the commencement of the program. CSIRO is co-investing in 38 of the 58 current centres. The decision by CSIRO to support and be part of a CRC is based on strong strategic alignment with its own strategic plan, particularly where there are opportunities to build large-scale projects to address significant national challenges, as well as consideration of whether joining a particular centre is the optimal arrangement for use of CSIRO capabilities in a particular area. These principles are applied uniformly to all CRC applications. CSIRO staff can only recall the circumstances around one bid for an Organic CRC in 2004. The reasons for not participating in the Organic CRC bid were twofold. First, the responsible lead Division was heavily involved in two other bids in that round, and the relevant staff were already overcommitted. Secondly, the bid did not align with CSIRO’s research strategy.

(6) (a) The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry funds agricultural research through its two portfolio bureaus, the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) and the Bureau of Rural Sciences (BRS). In 2007-08, $18.6 million (5.1 per cent) of departmental appropriations revenue was allocated to agricultural research with $6.2 million provided to ABARE and $12.4 million to BRS.

While outside the scope of the Senator’s question, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry also receives administered and special appropriations revenue which is allocated to agricultural research. The largest proportion of this revenue was provided to the 16 Rural Research and Development Corporations and Companies (RDCs). In 2006-07 the total expenditure by the RDCs was $525 million, which included industry levies of $232 million and a government contribution of $209 million. It is not possible to determine the relative proportions of research monies spent on- or off-farm.

Agricultural research on helping primary industries adapt to, and mitigate the impact of, climate change is being funded through administered appropriations under the $46.2 million Climate Change Research Program, a component of the $130 million Australia’s Farming Future initiative. This program, launched on 8 July 2008, will fund research projects and on-farm demonstration pilots that assist primary industries to manage emissions and encourage on-farm adaptation and adjustment to climate change.
Administered appropriations funding for agricultural research aimed at protecting and improving the sustainable management of Australia’s natural resources will be available through the $2.25 billion Caring for our Country program.

(b) Nil – ABARE and BRS do not currently undertake farm-based research. ABARE does not undertake research at the farm level but does survey farmers to produce sector, state and national wide financial and other statistics.

Projects funded through the Climate Change Research Program or Caring for our Country may undertake agricultural research on-farm, but have not yet commenced.

(c) Nil – this question relates to question 6 (b) above.

(7) I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that:

(a) CSIRO allocates its budget through an enterprise-wide Science Investment Process that involves both broad direction setting and a strategic investment process around research project aggregates called ‘themes’. For the financial year 2006-07, CSIRO has invested $105.3 million of its appropriation to themes focused on plant and animal production and products. However, there are a significant number of other funded activities which are inherently linked to agricultural research, for which the dollar value cannot be determined without a significant level of analysis undertaken by research scientists.

(b) Theme budgets are framed around delivery of research outcomes across the organisation and do not differentiate between field based and laboratory work. Accordingly, this information is not available.

(c) This question relates to question 7 (b) for which the information is not available from CSIRO.

(d) CSIRO Plant Industry is responsible for managing appropriation funds of $36.2 million allocated through themes. Without a significant level of analysis by research scientists, it is not possible to advise the amount spent on farm based research.

(e) Without knowing the above value of farm based research, the value for other research cannot be determined.

(8) For the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio, nil – this question relates to question 6 (b) above.

I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that as the information relating to question 7 (b) above is not available from CSIRO, a further breakdown of expenditure is not possible.

(9) For the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio, nil – this question relates to question 6 (b) above.

I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that the information relating to question 7 (b) above is not available from CSIRO; a further breakdown of expenditure is therefore not possible.

(10) For the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio, nil – this question relates to question 6 (b) above.

I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that the information relating to question 7 (b) above is not available from CSIRO; a further breakdown of expenditure is therefore not possible.

(11) For the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio, no change – this question relates to questions (8) to (10) above.
I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that as the information relating to question 7(b) above is not available from CSIRO, a further breakdown of expenditure is not possible.

(12) I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that CSIRO has established an agricultural sustainability initiative with an annual budget of $42 million, which includes Government appropriation, investments from external groups such as the Research and Development Corporations and other sources of funds.

(13) The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has no plans to carry out field trials as described in the Senator’s question. I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that it is not part of CSIRO’s research strategy to undertake such trials.

(14) I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that:

(a) In 2006/07 CSIRO spent an estimated $18.2 million on research related to GM crops out of a total budget of $973 million.

(b) This expenditure on GM crops equates to 1.87 per cent of CSIRO’s budget.

(c) As outlined in the response to question 7(a), CSIRO’s entire budget is allocated towards ‘themes’ as research outcomes.

(d) Research expenditure on GM crops relate to field trials; there is a significant, but unquantifiable amount of laboratory-based gene technology research work primarily aimed at the discovery and understanding of plant genetics.

(e) Of the total research expenditure of $18.2 on GM crops, only $1.6 million was received from multinational companies, the majority of funds were from Government appropriation, R&D Corporations, Cooperative Research Centres and non-profit organisations.

(15) I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that CSIRO Theme budgets are framed around delivery of research outcomes and do not differentiate between field based and laboratory work. Accordingly, this information is not available.

(16) I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that CSIRO continues to place strong emphasis on agricultural research. World-wide trends are seeing a shift in the kind of research conducted away from extensive field based work to more laboratory work and computer-based modelling. These trends are as apparent in agricultural sciences as well as other disciplines in science. The CSIRO strategic plan recognises the need to focus its research investments on the wider challenges to food production viability in Australia resulting from climate change, water availability, environmental footprint and global competition in commodity production costs, rather than near-to market research activities. Adjustments to CSIRO’s overall budget for 2008–09 has resulted in some redirection of its agricultural research portfolio, leading to growth in investments for research that underpins work in these areas, such as transformational biology; while redirecting some funding from incremental research and management overheads.

(17) No.

(18) I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that this information is not available.

(19) For the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, none.

I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that an objective of CSIRO’s Strategic Plan is to accelerate science and technology transfer. This includes a framework of principles for effective and appropriate management of intellectual property rights that is capable of adapting to sectoral needs. Accordingly, CSIRO enters into a wide array of arrangements with its customers in order to maximise benefits to Australia. This ranges from co-investments to-
wards particular research outcomes where generated intellectual property rights might be shared between the parties, to direct delivery of research services on a cost recovery basis with the customer retaining the intellectual property rights. CSIRO carefully evaluates each proposal based on a consistent framework of principles in order maximise the benefit to Australia from technology transfer and commercialisation, while maintaining appropriate patent protection of its own inventions.

(20) I am advised by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research that:

(a) CSIRO has a broad set of commercial arrangements with companies involved in agricultural biotechnology. These are often multiple arrangements that provide access for these companies to CSIRO technology through licensing, access for CSIRO to company-owned technology, or access to jointly developed biotechnologies. Many of these arrangements are for scientific purposes, (e.g. selectable markers used in plant breeding), but some involve partnerships aimed at commercialisation of GM crops such as the genetically modified Bt cotton that is now widely used.

(b) Due to the commercial arrangements entered into by CSIRO in some of these arrangements, a full list cannot be provided without significant analysis and the consent of commercial partners.

(21) Australia’s Farming Future includes a research, development and demonstration component for priority research projects and demonstration pilots that help primary producers to manage emissions and improve their capacity to adapt to unavoidable impacts of climate change. Funds will be directed to identified priorities which are based on decisions of the Primary Industries Ministerial Council, the work of the Climate Change Research Strategy for Primary Industries and consultation with the Department of Climate Change and the CSIRO. It is not possible to determine the farming systems to which funding will be directed.

**Carbon Emissions**

(Question No. 439)

Senator Milne asked the Minister for Climate Change and Water, upon notice, on 28 May 2008:

(1) Where is the carbon content of harvested logs reported, other than the portion estimated to be added to the durable wood products carbon store under the Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry category in Australia’s: (a) Kyoto accounts; and (b) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change accounts.

(2) Where will the carbon content of biomass feedstocks (e.g. pulp) and biomass energy from non-annual crops be reported under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting System (NGERS).

(3) Where will the on-site emissions from logging be reported under NGERS (i.e. the upstream emissions of carbon dioxide which result from logging, excluding the carbon in the logs themselves).

(4) Under NGERS, which entity or entities will have responsibility for reporting and abating logging emissions including on-site emissions (from above-ground biomass, below-ground biomass and soil carbon) and emissions from the logs removed from the site, for example, will it be: (a) the land managers (public forestry agencies and private landowners); (b) the logging companies; (c) the processing companies; and/or (d) some other entity.

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

(1) The Kyoto Protocol accounting rules determine that when a relevant forest is harvested, the carbon stocks, including those of the logs removed from the forest, are reported as an emission of greenhouse gases at the point of harvest. Relevant forests are plantations established since 1990 on previously unforested land.
The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change accounting rules provide for reporting of greenhouse gas emissions from wood products harvested from all managed native forests and plantations. Carbon dioxide emissions from harvested wood that occur when it is processed and during the service life of all wood products are reported in the Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry component of the National Inventory Report. Emissions from wood products in landfill are reported under the Waste section of the inventory. The non-carbon dioxide emissions from the combustion of wood products for energy generation are reported under the Energy section.

(2) The quantities of biomass fuel sources are reportable under NGERS when combusted for energy production. There is no mandatory reporting requirement within NGERS for reporting the carbon content of biomass fuels pre-combustion.

(3) Greenhouse gas emissions from within a facility from stationary plant operation, transport or other mobile plant operation, or from on-site energy generation or other sources are reportable under NGERS as direct, or scope 1, emissions. Indirect, or scope 2, emissions from the consumption within the facility of energy, heat or steam produced outside the facility are also reportable under NGERS. Scope 3, or lifecycle, emissions are not reportable under NGERS’ mandatory reporting obligations. Reporting corporations may voluntarily choose to report scope 3 information as contextual data.

(4) Under NGERS, reporting obligations rest with the corporation taken to have operational control over the facility in question. Section 11 of the Act defines operational control in terms of which entity has authority to introduce and implement operating, safety and environmental policies, as follows:

(1) A controlling corporation or another member of the corporation’s group has operational control over a facility if:

(a) it has the authority to introduce and implement any or all of the following for the facility:

(i) operating policies;
(ii) safety policies;
(iii) environmental policies;
and meets the requirements of the regulations; or

(b) the Greenhouse and Energy Data Officer declares the corporation or member to have operational control of the facility under section 55.

No regulations have been made under s 11(1)(a) of the Act. If there is doubt as to who has operational control in particular circumstances, s 11(4) of the Act provides a test as follows:

(5) If more than one such corporation or member could satisfy paragraph (1)(a) at any one time, then the corporation or member with the greatest authority to introduce and implement the policies mentioned in subparagraphs (1)(a)(i) and (iii) is taken, for the purposes of the Act, to have operational control over the facility.

NGERS does not require corporations to undertake abatement activities. It is a reporting system which collects data to support other programs. Further, NGERS does not mandate reporting of land use, land use change and forestry emissions.
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Tintern Anglican Girls Grammar School and Southwood Boys Grammar School

(Question No. 440)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Education, upon notice, on 29 May 2008:

For each of the years from 2000 to 2006, for which data is available, can the following be provided in respect of Tintern Anglican Girls’ Grammar School in Ringwood East, Victoria and the associated Southwood Boys’ Grammar School:

(a) the number of: (i) female primary enrolments, (ii) female secondary enrolments, (iii) male primary enrolments, and (iv) male secondary enrolments;

(b) per capita funding in respect of: (i) female primary enrolments, (ii) female secondary enrolments, (iii) male primary enrolments, and (iv) male secondary enrolments;

(c) the number of students who were below the national benchmark for literacy or numeracy and therefore attracted federal funding to the schools under the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program for: (i) female primary students, (ii) female secondary students, (iii) male primary students, and (iv) male secondary students; and

(d) total funding to the schools under the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program for students who were below the national benchmark for literacy or numeracy, in respect of: (i) female primary students, (ii) female secondary students, (iii) male primary students, and (iv) male secondary students.

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

(a) The number of female and male full time equivalent enrolments (FTE) at Tintern Anglican Girls’ Grammar School and the associated Southwood Boys’ Grammar School are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tintern Girls Grammar School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Female - FTE</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Female - FTE</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Male - FTE</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Male - FTE</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School TOTAL</td>
<td>1084</td>
<td>1057</td>
<td>983</td>
<td>978</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwood Boys Grammar School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Female - FTE</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Female - FTE</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Male - FTE</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Male - FTE</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>150.8</td>
<td>203.6</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School TOTAL</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>289.8</td>
<td>359.6</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) The per capita funding in respect to Tintern Girls Grammar School and the associated Southwood Boys’ Grammar School is as follows:

QUESTIONs ON NOTICE
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**Per Capita Rates Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$794</td>
<td>$1,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>$1,144</td>
<td>$1,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>$1,478</td>
<td>$2,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$1,852</td>
<td>$2,417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$2,382</td>
<td>$3,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$2,457</td>
<td>$3,256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$2,613</td>
<td>$3,374</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) The Australian Government does not have data for individual schools on the number of students who were below the national benchmark for literacy or numeracy. Each school is required under Commonwealth funding requirements to publish this information itself for the school (refer Regulation 3.6 of the Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Regulations 2005) in at least two of five possible forms. While this information is not provided to the Commonwealth, in the case of the Tintern Schools one of the forms of reporting is on the internet at: http://www.tintern.vic.edu.au/school_management/statutory_report_2006. The relevant part of the Tintern Schools Statutory Report 2006 is reproduced here:

Proportion of years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students meeting national reading, writing, spelling and numeracy benchmarks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Literacy</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Girls Grammar</td>
<td>87.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys Grammar</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Girls Grammar</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys Grammar</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Girls Grammar</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys Grammar</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Girls Grammar</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys Grammar</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) Funding under the Department’s Literacy and Numeracy Special Learning Needs initiative are not paid directly to schools by the Commonwealth. Funding is allocated to state, territory and non-government education authorities to facilitate direct payments and therefore, no specific data is kept by the Commonwealth for Tintern Anglican Girls’ Grammar and Southwood Boys’ Grammar Schools.

**Education, Employment and Workplace Relations: Media Management Contract**

(Question Nos 442, 443, 470 and 475)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

Senator Wong—The Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
Neither the department nor any agency in the Minister’s portfolio has engaged either CMAX Communications, Maximum Communications, Mr Christian or Ms Tara Taubenschlag.

**Education, Employment and Workplace Relations: Media Management Contract**  
(Question No. 444)

**Senator Minchin** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Education, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

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

Neither the department nor any agency in the Minister’s portfolio has engaged either CMAX Communications, Maximum Communications, Mr Christian or Ms Tara Taubenschlag.

**Prime Minister and Cabinet: Media Management Contract**  
(Question No. 446)

**Senator Minchin** asked the Minister for Climate Change and Water, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

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

The Department of Climate Change has not engaged CMAX Communications, Maximum Communications, Mr Christian or Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag.

**Foreign Affairs and Trade: Media Management Contract**  
(Question No. 447 and 448)

**Senator Minchin** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.
Senator Faulkner—The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade to the honourable senator’s question:

DFAT
(a) (i-v) No
(b) (i-vi) Not Applicable

EFIC
(a) (i-v) No
(b) (i-vi) Not Applicable

ACIAR
(a) (i-v) No
(b) (i-vi) Not Applicable

AusAID
(a) (i-v) No
(b) (i-vi) Not Applicable

Austrade
(a) (i-v) No
(b) (i-vi) Not Applicable

Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs: Media Management Contract
(Question No. 451)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

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

Since 1 July 2006, neither the Department nor any agency in the Minister’s portfolio has engaged any of the persons or companies listed in Question on Notice No. S451.

Finance and Deregulation: Media Management Contract
(Question No. 452)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the en-
engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

Senator Sherry—The Minister for Finance and Deregulation has supplied the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(a) i-v and (b) i-vi The Department of Finance and Deregulation and portfolio agencies (Australian Electoral Commission, Australian Rewards Investment Alliance, ComSuper and the Future Fund Management Agency) have not engaged:

(i) CMAX Communications;
(ii) Maximum Communications;
(iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag;
(iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag; or
(v) Any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag.

Finance and Deregulation: Media Management Contract
(Question No. 454)

Senator Minchin asked the Special Minister of State, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

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

(a) i-iv and (b) i-vi Please refer to the response to QON 452 asked of the Minister for Finance and Deregulation.

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government: Media Management Contract
(Question No. 455)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

(a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (2) (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement,(iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

Senator Conroy—The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(a) (i) No
(ii) No
(iii) No
(iv) No
(v) No
(b) Not applicable

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy: Media Management Contract
(Question No. 456)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

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

Department

From 1 July 2006 – June 2008, financial records indicate that the former Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts and the current Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy did not engage:

(i) CMAX Communications,
(ii) Maximum Communications,
(iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag,
(iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag.

In terms of (a)(v), from available records it is not possible to determine with any accuracy whether Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag were in any way involved with any vendors engaged by the Department.

Portfolio Agencies

From 1 July 2006 to June 2008, the Australian Communications and Media Authority; Special Broadcasting Service Corporation; Australian Broadcasting Corporation; and Australian Postal Corporation did not engage:

(i) CMAX Communications,
(ii) Maximum Communications,
(iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag,
(iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or
(v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag.

Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts: Media Management Contract
(Question No. 457)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement,
(iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

Senator Wong—The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(a) No.
(b) Not applicable.

**Attorney-General’s: Media Management Contract**

(Question No. 458)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

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

(a) (i) No
(ii) No
(iii) No
(iv) No
(v) To the best of our knowledge, the Attorney-General’s portfolio has not engaged any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag.

(b) (i) Not applicable
(ii) Not applicable
(iii) Not applicable
(iv) Not applicable
(v) Not applicable
(vi) Not applicable

**Immigration and Citizenship: Media Management Contract**

(Question No. 459)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) the en-
gagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

Senator Chris Evans—The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:
The Department can confirm that as at 12 June 2008 it has not engaged CMAX Communications, Maximum Communications, Mr Christian Taubenschlag, Ms Tara Taubenschlag or any company operated by them.

**Resources, Energy and Tourism: Media Management Contract**
(Question Nos 461 and 462)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister for Resources and Energy and the Minister for Tourism, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:
Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

Senator Carr—The answer to the honourable senator’s question for both the Resources and Energy and the Tourism portfolios is as follows:
The Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism and Agencies has not engaged CMAX Communications, Maximum Communications, Mr Christian Taubenschlag, Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag.

**Attorney-General’s: Media Management Contract**
(Question No. 463)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Home Affairs, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:
Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

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

(a) (i) No
(ii) No
(iii) No
(iv) No
(v) To the best of our knowledge, the Attorney-General’s portfolio has not engaged any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag.

(b) (i) Not applicable
(ii) Not applicable
(iii) Not applicable  
(iv) Not applicable  
(v) Not applicable  
(vi) Not applicable

Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs: Media Management Contract  
(Question Nos 467 and 468)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Housing and the Minister representing the Minister for the Status of Women, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

Senator Wong—The Minister for Housing and the Minister for the Status of Women has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

Since 1 July 2006, neither the Department nor any agency in the Minister’s portfolio has engaged any of the persons or companies listed in Questions on Notice Nos 467 and 468.

Human Services: Media Management Contract  
(Question No. 469)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister for Human Services, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

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

(a) (i) No  
(ii) No  
(iii) No  
(iv) No  
(v) Records within the Human Services portfolio indicate that companies associated with Mr Christian Taubenschlag and Ms Tara Taubenschlag have not been engaged.

(b) Not applicable
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research: Media Management Contract
(Question Nos 472 and 473)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research and the Minister representing the Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy, upon notice, on 30 May 2008:

Since 1 July 2006: (a) has the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio engaged: (i) CMAX Communications, (ii) Maximum Communications, (iii) Mr Christian Taubenschlag, (iv) Ms Tara Taubenschlag, or (v) any company operated by Mr Christian Taubenschlag or Ms Tara Taubenschlag; and (b) if so, in each case: (i) when was the engagement, (ii) what was the nature of the engagement, (iii) what was the value of the engagement, (iv) what was the term of the engagement, (v) was the engagement entered into after a competitive process; if not, why not, and (vi) did the Minister or any of his/her staff have a role in recommending this engagement.

Senator Carr—The Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research will provide a Portfolio response to Questions 472 and 473. The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:
(a) No.
(b) Not applicable.

Tasmania: Weld River
(Question No. 478)

Senator Bob Brown asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, upon notice, on 3 June 2008:

With reference to the answer to question on notice No. 272 (Senate Official Hansard, 13 May 2008, p. 1660) regarding the decision to destroy the ancient forest in Weld River coupe WR15F:

(1) Has the Minister flown over or visited the area; if not, why not.
(2) Is the 100 metre buffer adequate to protect the World Heritage Area values from logging, chemical application and fire bombing of coupe WR15F and nearby coupes.
(3) What impact has road construction, logging and burning in coupe WR15F had on wilderness values in the adjacent World Heritage Area.

Senator Wong—The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) The Minister has not specifically flown over or visited the Weld Valley, but has flown over southwest Tasmania and has a good understanding of World Heritage issues relating to the Tasmanian wilderness.
(2) Yes.
(3) None.

Marriage Celebrants Program
(Question No. 480)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 13 June 2008:

With reference to the Marriage Celebrant Program:

(1) Since it’s commencement in 1996, to what extent have the reforms that were put in place following the review of celebrancy delivered: (a) raised standards of services provided by marriage celebrants
appointed under the program; (b) a broadening and enhancement of the role of celebrants by including the provision of information on pre-marriage and other relationship services; and (c) a more important role for celebrants in developing longer-lasting family relationships and therefore stronger communities.

(2) Is the Minister satisfied that the Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges accredited by state and territory governments employ suitably qualified trainers for the purposes of training celebrants.

(3) Are state and territory government accreditation agencies required to report on the qualifications of their trainers; if not, why not.

(4) Does the Government require that state and territory governments audit RTOs and TAFE college celebrancy training courses; if not, why not.

(5) Is the Government aware of any circumstances where non-celebrants are teaching people to be celebrants; if so, how many do not have celebrancy qualifications and is this acceptable under the Marriage Celebrants Program.

(6) How many persons have been appointed to deliver compulsory ongoing professional development in celebrancy since the commencement of the requirement for same.

(7) On what basis are appointments made for ongoing professional development trainers.

(8) (a) What is the level of training required for qualification as ongoing professional development trainers; and (b) what is the cost of such training.

(9) (a) How many celebrants are 2 years or more overdue with their compulsory ongoing professional development; and (b) what is being done about this.

(10) Is there a shortage of ongoing professional development trainers; if so, will more be trained and when.

(11) (a) Why have the ongoing professional development requirements been changed each year for the past 5 years; and (b) how many training organisations have withdrawn from this training because of these changing requirements.

(12) Is it the case that there is a shortage of celebrancy trainers; if so, what is being done to provide training for more trainers.

(13) Is the Government satisfied that RTO and TAFE college courses are of a sufficiently high standard; if so, how is this judged by the Minister.

(14) What is the minimum number of hours of training for a celebrant.

(15) Is the Government satisfied that training courses cover not just the Marriage Act 1961, but also the skills required to perform ceremonies for couples that are a meaningful alternative to Registry Office and mainstream church weddings.

(16) Do accreditation agencies and assessors apply a ‘fit and proper’ person criteria to ensure that persons who seek to become celebrants have adequate communication skills, can conduct dignified celebrations, are reasonably well dressed, are professional and are aware of modern technology and communication media; if not, why not.

(17) Will the minimum standard for celebrants be raised to a full Certificate IV in Celebrancy; if so, when.

(18) Has the Government yet established an advisory group with practising celebrants to ensure optimal advice and thus optimal policies and programs for celebrants; if not, why not.

(19) Why is it that the rules and policies applicable to civil celebrants do not also apply to other celebrants such as the clergy.
(20) How many complaints have been made to the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages concerning celebrants and trainers who breach the pecuniary interest criteria and what is the outcome of such complaints, including those from the Australian Federation of Civil Celebrants.

(21) Will the planned new training via Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) allow for any questioning or clarification by the Attorney-General’s staff.

(22) How many civil celebrants are there in Australia.

(23) How many additional civil celebrants will be registered by the end of September 2008.

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

(1) (a) A review of the Marriage Celebrants Program commenced in 1996 and reforms to the Program resulting from that review took effect 1 September 2003. The standards of services provided by Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants have improved to some extent since 2003 as their knowledge of their obligations has increased. However, I am advised that poor practices do still continue with some celebrants who were appointed both prior to and after introduction of the 2003 reforms. This is demonstrated, for example, by celebrants’ understanding of the form of marriage ceremony to take place, and their understanding of their obligation to explain the nature of the marriage relationship to the marrying parties (sections 45 and 46 of the Marriage Act 1961 refer). On the other hand, the number of formal complaints about celebrants has been low, indicating relative satisfaction from the public. One of the objects of the review of the training required to apply for marriage celebrant registration, and marriage celebrants’ annual ongoing professional development obligation is to address these shortcomings over time.

(b) & (c) Since introduction of the 2003 reforms, Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants have been obliged to conduct themselves according to the Code of Practice for marriage celebrants prescribed by the Marriage Regulations 1963. Clause 6 of this Code of Practice obliges those marriage celebrants to maintain an up-to-date knowledge about appropriate family relationship services in the community, and to inform marrying couples about the range of information and services available to them to enhance and sustain them throughout their relationship (s. 39G of the Marriage Act, Regulation 37L of the Marriage Regulations refer). This obligation did not exist prior to 2003. The aim of this obligation is to ensure marrying couples are equipped with information about the services that can assist them in their relationship – even if couples choose not to avail themselves of this type of service at the time they are marrying, they may wish to do so at a future stage in their relationship.

The 2003 reforms to the Program also introduced a requirement for a person aspiring to become a marriage celebrant to demonstrate that they have specific qualifications and/or skills for the role. In most cases, this means an aspiring marriage celebrant must complete a particular unit of competency through an appropriate training organisation. The unit of competency includes training in this family relationship service obligation, and in all aspects of marriage celebrants’ obligations under their Code of Practice.

Once an aspiring celebrant has completed the appropriate training or assessment of their skills, they need to fill in an application form and provide certain documents to the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants, so they can be considered for registration as a marriage celebrant. One aspect of this process requires applicants to provide information to establish their commitment to advising couples of the availability of relationship support services. To complete this part of the process, an applicant must list a number of such relationship support services for couples in their area, including the services’ contact details. They must also describe the major relationship support services offered by those organisations, including the availability of the services they have described.
Since 2003 Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants have been obliged to complete five hours of ongoing professional development each year. Activities that have been listed as appropriate for this purpose have included several aimed at enhancing celebrants’ knowledge and skills in order to fulfil their obligation regarding family and relationship services. Since 2003 there have been 69 such activities available that would assist in this area.

(2) I am advised that registered training organisations (RTOs) offering training for work as a marriage celebrant must comply with the national guidelines and quality standards that apply to all vocational and educational training (VET). The standards are set by the National Quality Council and published in the Australian Qualifications Training Framework, which stipulates that the minimum qualification for all VET sector trainers is a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered. Marriage celebrancy trainers may possess a variety of qualifications in addition to these minimum requirements.

(3) I understand that registering authorities require evidence that an RTO meets the standards I have referred to in (2) above before it can be registered to deliver a particular course. State and Territory government registering authorities are not required to report to the Attorney-General’s Department because they report to the National Quality Council. The Government is represented on the National Quality Council, as are State and Territory governments, peak industry bodies and peak training organisations. The Ministerial Council of Vocational and Technical Education, which includes all Ministers for Training in Australia, has approved these quality arrangements.

(4) The auditing of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and TAFE college Celebrancy courses is the responsibility of State and Territory registering bodies under VET sector requirements and I am advised that these bodies do audit RTOs if issues of performance or compliance arise.

(5) There is a range of skills required to perform the role and fulfil the obligations of marriage celebrant. State and Territory bodies assess registered training organisations on their expertise to train marriage celebrants in all of the skills necessary to perform their roles.

(6) Since 2003 there have been 67 individuals approved to deliver compulsory ongoing professional development activities. Several of these have been approved for more than one year.

(7) I am advised that non-compulsory ongoing professional development activities have been approved through an application process, and that part of that process has included consideration of proposed activity presenters’ qualifications, skills and experience to deliver the particular activity concerned. The Attorney-General’s Department has taken a broad view in considering proposed presenters. Until the current year, a similar process was adopted for applications to deliver compulsory ongoing professional development activities – this process included consideration of proposed presenters’ qualifications, skills and experience to deliver the compulsory activity concerned. Because the current year’s compulsory ongoing professional development activity had very complex content and required several different modes of delivery apart from the lecture style adopted in previous years, a more stringent selection process was employed. This process included an expression of interest stage, and a preparation and assessment stage.

(8) (a) There is no particular level of training required for qualification as a provider of compulsory or non-compulsory ongoing professional development activities; rather, a presenter’s qualifications, skills and experience relevant to the activity concerned are considered as part of the ongoing professional development activity application process. The current year’s more stringent process for consideration of compulsory ongoing professional development activity providers required facility and experience with various modes of training delivery as well as in-depth knowledge of complex legal material.

(b) N/A
(9) (a) 1,312 marriage celebrants did not undertake the compulsory element of the ongoing professional development in at least two of the first four years of the requirement. The years in which such marriage celebrants failed to complete this requirement may not be consecutive.

(b) This is a matter that is assessed as part of the performance review of marriage celebrants required by section 39H of the Marriage Act. As a result of such reviews there are disciplinary measures available to the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants if marriage celebrants are found not to have met various of their obligations including undertaking ongoing professional development. The available disciplinary measures are set out in section 39I of the Marriage Act and range from a formal caution to deregistration. One of these available measures may be applied to a marriage celebrant if appropriate following a performance review.

(10) No, there is no shortage of ongoing professional development presenters.

(11) (a) Marriage celebrants’ ongoing professional development requirements have not changed – these are set out in the Marriage Regulations (Regulation 37M refers). The content and extent of the compulsory ongoing professional development activities has changed in line with the assessed needs of marriage celebrants. This assessment has been based on the performance of marriage celebrants in consultation with Registries of Births, Deaths and Marriages, enquiries from celebrants and issues raised by celebrant representative associations. The requirements for presenters delivering compulsory and non-compulsory ongoing professional development activities have been described in response to question (7) above.

(b) I am not aware of any providers of ongoing professional development that have withdrawn their provision of activities because of perceived changes to requirements.

(12) There is no shortage of marriage celebrancy trainers either for accredited courses or for ongoing professional development.

(13) The quality of training for the VET sector is the responsibility of State and Territory registering bodies.

(14) I am advised that it is not customary to set a minimum number of hours for vocational education training but nominal hours are specified and for the current unit of competency these were set at 120 hours. However, I am advised that the actual number of hours undertaken varies considerably. This is an issue that has been considered in the current review of the Community Services Training Package, of which marriage celebrant training forms a part. The review, which began in July 2006, is being conducted by the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council, and is now approaching the final stage. The third and final draft of the revised training package is expected to be released for endorsement by industry in September 2008. It will then be submitted to the National Quality Council for approval and publication.

(15) The existing training course, the unit of competency Plan, conduct and review a marriage ceremony, does contain all of these elements and I am advised that it was expected that it would satisfactorily cover all the skills and knowledge needed if delivered thoroughly. The training review I referred to in (14) above has considered the components of the required training and has drafted a new course, a Certificate IV in Celebrancy. If adopted as part of the revised Community Services Training Package, it will enhance celebrant skills and knowledge.

(16) The fit and proper person test for marriage celebrants is set out in Section 39C of the Marriage Act. It is part of the application process, not the training process and is applied by the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants in consideration of an application. I am advised that the examples listed in the question would be covered by the trainer who is required, under the unit of competency, to ensure that the learner has knowledge of a celebrant’s obligations under the Code of Practice for marriage celebrants.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
This matter is still to be finally determined as part of the review process. I am advised that if adopted, the new Certificate IV in Celebrancy could be available in 2009.

No, the Government has not established an advisory group of practising celebrants. The feasibility of doing this is limited by the number of associations that represent groups of practising marriage celebrants (18 at 24 July 2008). It is the Attorney’s view that marriage celebrants would benefit from all the representative associations coming together to discuss their roles and responsibilities. The formation of one, national representative body would be a good outcome, but such a move should be initiated by the celebrant sector itself, as this would enhance the credibility and recognition of such a body.

Ministers of religion may be registered as marriage celebrants to perform marriages under two separate appointment processes set out in the Marriage Act.

A minister of religion from a recognised denomination (declared as such by the Governor-General under section 26 of the Marriage Act) is registered under specific criteria set out in sections 29-31 of the Marriage Act. They are registered by Registrars of Ministers of Religion who are the Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages in each of the States and Territories. They are registered solely to perform marriages according to the rites of their religious body or organisation. They are not registered by the Commonwealth. My Department does supply information about important matters such as changes to the law concerning marriage to Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages and to recognised denominations. Such information is then provided to their ministers of religion.

Ministers of religion from independent, non-aligned religious bodies or organisations or no organisation at all (that is, not recognised denominations) may apply to the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants to be registered as a marriage celebrant under the Commonwealth program (sections 39A-39M of the Marriage Act). They must meet the same appointment criteria as all other applicants including undertaking training and satisfying the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants that they are a fit and proper person to be registered.

I am not able to answer this question on behalf of a Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. The question would be better directed to the relevant Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages in the State or Territory concerned. I am advised that very few formal complaints have been received by the Commonwealth’s Registrar of Marriage Celebrants.

The purpose of next year’s compulsory ongoing professional development activity being delivered by DVD is so that each celebrant will have their own reference tool in their own home, to use as a resource to answer many of their basic questions into the future. My Department also has an enquiries phone line in place, which marriage celebrants may use if they have other questions.

As at 24 July 2008, there are 5,428 marriage celebrants registered by the Commonwealth. This includes some celebrants who do not perform civil marriage ceremonies, but perform marriages for non-aligned religious denominations.

As at 24 July 2008, there are 1,344 aspiring marriage celebrants on waiting lists, to be appointed as soon as possible after 1 September 2008. This number also includes some aspiring celebrants who will not perform civil marriage ceremonies, but will perform marriages for non-aligned religious denominations. This number is likely to have increased by 1 September 2008.
Understorey Network
(Question No. 481)

Senator Bob Brown asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, upon notice, on 16 June 2008:

With reference to Tasmania’s Understorey Network:
(1) Why has the organisation been defunded,
(2) does the organisation have three part-time dedicated staff,
(3) is the organisation’s membership increasing,
(4) does the organisation produce more than 20,000 seedlings and 5,000 cuttings each year for revegetation,
(5) are more than 80 people helping with the growing of plants,
(6) was an evaluation of the Understorey Network’s success in environmental repair done before decisions were made about its funding for the 2008-09 financial year.

Senator Wong—The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) The Understorey Network was contracted by the Tasmanian Natural Resource Management (NRM) South regional body to undertake specific projects that finished on 30 June 2008. NRM South has advised that at no stage has core funding been provided to this organisation, nor any commitment made for contracts beyond the end of the 2007-08 financial year. The Understorey Network were advised by NRM South to investigate other sources of funding beyond 30 June 2008, including seeking an economic return from the work undertaken.

(2) I have been advised that the organisation employs:
   Project Coordinator – 4 days a week
   Nursery Manager – 1 day a week
   Program Manager – 1 day a week

(3) I have been advised that the membership of the organisation increased from 90 in 2005 to 270 in 2008. Membership comprises local councils, schools, Landcare groups and individuals.

(4) I have been advised that in the 2007-08 financial year, the organisation produced more than 20,000 tubestock seedlings and 5,000 cuttings for revegetation.

(5) I have been advised that seedlings and cuttings are grown in around 70 separate backyards. The network also runs a community nursery in partnership with People with a Disability. More than 10 volunteers work regularly at the nursery.

(6) An evaluation of the current projects has not yet taken place as the projects officially finished on June 30 2008. The final reports are due within 90 days of this date.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: Presentation Materials
(Question No. 482)

Senator Bob Brown asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 16 June 2008:

(1) Can copies be provided of all the presentation materials for European audiences, in each language, as used by Mr Tony Bartlett of the department’s Forest Industries Branch.

(2) (a) When did the Minister authorise this material and its presentation; and
   (b) why.
Senator Sherry—The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Yes, the department has prepared a package of materials for Senator Brown (available from the Senate Table Office).

(2) (a) The previous Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation authorised the preparation of the material on 19 June 2007. A senior departmental official authorised the content of the promotional materials for European audiences.

(b) To inform stakeholders, including Australian diplomatic staff, relevant government agencies, NGOs and forest industry representatives of Australia’s sustainable forest management systems and practices, including specific information with a focus on Tasmanian forestry.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation
(Question No. 483)

Senator Abetz asked the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, upon notice, on 16 June 2008:

With reference to the answer to question on notice No. 411 (Senate Official Hansard, 23 June 2008, page 3016): Can the Minister provide a printed copy of all the mobile news bulletins that were broadcast during the evening of 24 November 2007.

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

The ABC has advised me that its mobile service allowed users to read stories written for ABC Online News. In addition to this service, users could also subscribe to a package of six text messages, either of the count in a specific electorate or a national update. These updates could also be requested singly, where the user would receive the most recent one.

The content of the six national messages were, in order:

(1) Counting has begun in the 2007 federal election. Labor frontbencher Stephen Smith is predicting a four-seat majority Labor government.

(2) With more than 20% of the vote counted, there is a 5.3% swing to Labor. Labor is predicted to form a majority government. John Howard is set to lose Bennelong.

(3) With nearly 40% of the vote counted there is a national swing of 5.6% to Labor. The ABC’s Antony Green predicts a 14-seat Labor majority government.

(4) With more than half the vote counted, Labor has swept to victory with a predicted 20-seat majority. Postal votes are expected to decide Bennelong.

(5) Prime Minister John Howard has congratulated Kevin Rudd, who has won government with a predicted 24-seat majority. The PM’s seat of Bennelong is undecided.

(6) Kevin Rudd has claimed victory for Labor. There has been a nationwide swing of 5.8% to Labor, which is predicted to have a majority government of 22 seats.

Toyota Grant
(Question No. 484)

Senator Abetz asked the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

With reference to the $35 million Toyota grant which was announced on 10 June 2008: (1) Where is the grant listed in the 2008-09 Budget papers. (2) Is the grant drawn from the Government’s $500 million Green Car Innovation Fund; if so, from which year of the fund has the $35 million been rephased.
**Senator Sherry**—The Minister for Finance and Deregulation has supplied the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

1. In the 2008-09 Budget, provision was made in the contingency reserve for the grant to Toyota. Further information on the contingency reserve can be found in the 2008-09 Budget Paper 1, Statement 6, Appendix B.

2. As announced, the Government provided $500 million over five years in the 2008-09 Budget for the Green Car Innovation Fund with funding commencing in 2011-12. The grant to Toyota will be funded from reductions to allocations for the Green Car Innovation Fund over the period 2012-13 to 2015-16 of $8.75 million per year.

**Toyota Grant**

(***Question No. 485***)

**Senator Abetz** asked the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

With reference to the $35 million Toyota grant which was announced on 10 June 2008:

1. When did the Government formally decide to provide the grant.

2. Which government departments were consulted in the decision-making process.

3. When was Toyota formally advised of the Government’s intention to provide them with this grant.

4. On what date will Toyota receive the $35 million.

5. In detail, what communications did the Minister, his staff, or members of his department have with Toyota between the time of the announcement of the grant in Japan on 10 June 2008 and the time Toyota issued their press statement on 11 June 2008.

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

1. 24 April 2008.

2. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Treasury, the Department of Finance and Deregulation, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Climate Change and the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

3. 3 June 2008.

4. $20 million will be provided in 2009-10 and $15 million in 2010-11.

5. My office has been in regular contact with Toyota on a range of matters, including on the 10th and 11th of June 2008.

**Abalone Industry**

(***Question No. 487***)

**Senator Milne** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

In December 2005 the Abalone Viral Ganglioneuritis (AVG) disease was found in a land-based abalone farm in Victoria, by May 2006 the virus had escaped into the wild surrounding Port Ferry in western Victoria and has since spread eastwards approximately 240 km along the coast towards Melbourne with up to 90 per cent mortality of wild abalone stocks: Has the Minister taken any action to protect the Australian abalone industry from the threat from AVG; if not, why not.

**Senator Sherry**—The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has taken action to protect the Australian abalone industry in collaboration and consultation with Victoria. While there is no constitutional authority for the Commonwealth to direct a state government on management of a disease occurring solely within that state’s borders, national arrangements are in place for managing aquatic animal diseases under certain circumstances and these were utilised in the response to abalone viral ganglioneuritis. These arrangements include consultation through the Aquatic Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Diseases (AqCCEAD – chaired by the Commonwealth) on the national technical response to the emergency, and through the Aquatic Animal Health Committee (AAHC) on on-going management of the disease. The arrangements also include guidance through the Australia Aquatic Veterinary Emergency Plan (AQUAVETPLAN). The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) has engaged in the deliberations of both of these committees.

The department has commissioned an AQUAVETPLAN disease strategy manual for abalone viral ganglioneuritis which will provide an agreed Australian approach to the management of possible future outbreaks of the disease. Once completed, the manual will undergo a rigorous endorsement process including review by technical experts and industry, and endorsement by governments.

The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry considers efforts to limit the spread of the disease to be of significant economic and environmental importance. On 5 May 2008 the Australian Government’s Chief Veterinary Officer met with representatives of the wild-capture abalone industry from Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia in Melbourne to discuss alternative approaches to mitigating the risks posed by this disease.

Officers from the department held further discussions with abalone industry representatives (from Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia) and other users (such as recreational fishers and Victorian National Parks Association) on 12 June 2008. The discussions assisted industry to consider their co-ordinated approach to the development of a national abalone work plan. On 18 June 2008, officers from the department contributed to the further development of a national abalone health work plan at a meeting of industry, state government, and other stakeholder representatives.

The department has clearly indicated its support for the development and implementation of a national abalone health workplan and has lead the implementation of several work plan activities that are considered a high priority by stakeholders. These and other ongoing activities are assisting the abalone industry and jurisdictions to identify and prioritise cooperative measures and actions that may reduce the risk of further disease spread and improve disease management.

The department continues to liaise closely and actively with the Victorian Government and the abalone industry to assist in an active response to this disease.

**Indonesia: International Forest Carbon Initiative**

(QUESTION NO. 489)

**Senator Milne** asked the Minister for Climate Change and Water, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

(1) What specific projects is the Government funding in Indonesia under the Global Initiative on Forests and Climate (GIFC).

(2) In what way does the Government see itself as being involved in a ‘private carbon market’ under the GIFC.

(3) Will Australia and Indonesia seek to have the private carbon market approved by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; if so, what does the Government anticipate will need to be changed in the Kyoto Protocol for such a private carbon market to be approved in the post-2012 commitment period.
(4) Does this private carbon market include a link to the Australian emissions trading scheme; if so, what proportion of Australia’s emissions is the Government considering offsetting on the protected or restored Indonesian forest and peat land.

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

(1) On 23 April 2008, the Australian Government announced the $200 million International Forest Carbon Initiative (IFCI), which replaces the previous Government’s Global Initiative on Forests and Climate. Under this Initiative, the Australian Government is providing $30 million in support of the Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership and a $10 million bilateral package to assist Indonesia in developing forest and climate policy and a national carbon accounting system. Additionally, the Australian Government has a $3 million Research Partnership with the Indonesian-based Centre for International Forestry Research, which will undertake research on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in a number of countries, including Indonesia.

(2) In the initial stages of the IFCI, Australia aims to increase international forest carbon accounting capacity and undertake practical demonstration activities to show that reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation can be included in a future international climate change agreement. Decisions about how these activities may be linked with market-based mechanisms for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries will be made in the future.

(3) The Kyoto Protocol and the UNFCCC do not currently include incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Under the Indonesia – Australia Forest Carbon Partnership, Australia and Indonesia will promote the inclusion of incentives for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in a future international agreement on climate change.

(4) Australia’s national emissions trading scheme is due to commence in 2010. Issues relating to offsets and potential international linkages have yet to be determined.

Huon Valley Regional Water Scheme
(Question No. 490)

Senator Milne asked the Minister for Climate Change and Water, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

With reference to the proposed Huon Valley Regional Water Scheme (HVRWS):

(1) Have flow volumes in times of minimum flow in the Huon River been measured to ensure that there is sufficient water to support the HVRWS.

(2) Have measurements of contaminants released into the Huon River from all sources including forestry, agriculture (including orchards), aquaculture (including fish hatcheries on Russell and Little Denison Rivers) and septic systems been measured by the Department of Primary Industries and Water and reported for waters above the intake for the proposed HVRWS; if so, over what period were these measurements made.

(3) What planning has been done in relation to climate change in the context of the HVRWS, given that rainfall (especially in the autumn) has fallen significantly over the past 40 years.

(4) How many easements, land acquisitions, boundary adjustments etc, will be required to implement the complete HVRWS.

(5) How long is the process for the above planning requirements expected to take.

(6) Does the HVRWS project depend on the acquisition of privately-owned land.

(7) What are the calculated ongoing operating costs of running the HVRWS in terms of maintenance and power.
(8) What processes have been put in place for providing water to all residents in the event of a major power failure which prevents water from being pumped from the Huon River.

(9) What other options, such as an upgrade of the Cygnet Water Scheme, installation of domestic water tanks, education on water conservation or dams to supply untreated water, were investigated.

(10) Given that residents of the Cygnet municipality have a water consumption 3 times the national average (the national average equals 250 kilolitres per annum per household, while Cygnet residents use 769 kilolitres per annum per household), what education programs to encourage conservative water use are proposed to accompany the scheme.

(11) What are the costs that the Huon Valley Council (HVC) will have to pay in the 2008-09 financial year for interest on the proposed loan of $6 million to match the Government funding of $12 million.

(12) What provisions have been agreed with the Southern Tasmanian Regional Water Entity (STRWE) for taking over the project and continuing to fund it into the future.

(13) What provisions have been made in the event of an increase in construction costs since the initial proposal for a regional water scheme was estimated at $17 million in 2002, and would this increase be borne by the STRWE or by the HVC.

(14) What are the ongoing costs agreed to by the STRWE.

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

(1-14) I am advised that the Huon Valley Council is finalising a business case for the Huon Valley Regional Water Scheme. The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts will assess the business case as part of the due diligence process for projects seeking funding under the National Water Security Plan for Cities and Towns.

Forestry

(Question No. 491)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

Given that illegal and unsustainable timber harvesting is a major cause of greenhouse gas emissions in developing tropical countries such as Papua New Guinea and Indonesia and that the Prime Minister made a pre-election promise to ‘restrict’ the importation of illegal timber:

(1) How and when does the Government intend to honour this commitment.

(2) Is the department involved in an inter-departmental committee on illegal timber; if so:

   (a) who are the members; and

   (b) who is the chair or lead agency on illegal timber issues.

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

(1) The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is working with other government departments, industry and other relevant stakeholders to develop a policy framework which addresses the election commitments and is consistent with international approaches to combating and preventing illegal logging and associated trade.

(2) Yes

   (a) The Attorney-General’s Department, AusAid, Australian Customs Service, Australian Federal Police, Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, Department of Climate Change, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Department of Finance and De-
regulation, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Treasury;

(b) The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

**Forestry**

*Senator Milne* asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

Given that illegal and unsustainable timber harvesting is a major cause of greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries such as Papua New Guinea and Indonesia and that the Prime Minister made a pre-election promise to ‘restrict’ the importation of illegal timber:

(1) How and when does the Government intend to honour this commitment?

(2) Is the department involved in an inter-departmental committee on illegal timber; if so:

(a) Who are the members;

(b) Who is the chair or lead agency on illegal timber issues?

*Senator Sherry*—The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is working with other government departments, industry and other relevant stakeholders to develop a policy framework which addresses the election commitments and is consistent with international approaches to combating and preventing illegal logging and associated trade.

(2) Yes;

(a) The Attorney-General’s Department, AusAid, Australian Customs Service, Australian Federal Police, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Department of Climate Change, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Department of Finance and Deregulation, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Treasury;

(b) The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

**Forestry**

*Senator Milne* asked the Minister representing the Minister for Trade, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

(1) In what way would trade restrictions on illegal timber imports breach World Trade Organization (WTO) articles and conventions.

(2) How does the Government intend to avoid breaching WTO articles and conventions when it moves to restrict illegal timber imports.

*Senator Faulkner*—The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Trade to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) WTO rules do not preclude restrictions on imports of illegally logged timber. Such restrictions are permitted, for example, if they are implemented for the conservation of exhaustible natural resources in conjunction with restrictions on domestic production or consumption, or are necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health. In either case, such restrictions must not be applied in a manner which would constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between countries where the same conditions prevail, or be a disguised restriction on international trade.

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**
(2) Australia’s obligations as a WTO Member are being fully considered in the development of Australia’s policy relating to imports of illegally logged timber.

Quarantine

(Question No. 494)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 16 June 2008:

(1) What is the Minister’s long-term intention (for example, to roll over the lease till 2010) regarding the quarantine facility at Eastern Creek.

(2) Is the Minister aware that the New South Wales Government has offered to house the bee quarantine facility at its biosecurity centre at the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute.

(3) Is it the case that the facility, since it has been sold, has on sold on numerous occasions for substantial profits to property developers.

Senator Sherry—The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) On 12 June 2008 the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry announced that all 38 recommendations of the Equine Influenza Inquiry were accepted. Recommendation 19 states ‘That, in the absence of other satisfactory government controlled and operated post-arrival quarantine stations becoming available before the options to renew the leases of Eastern Creek and Spotswood Quarantine Stations expire, those options be exercised.’

The Eastern Creek Quarantine Station lease expires in December 2010 with a further 5 year lease option available to AQIS.

(2) AQIS is not aware of any formal proposal from the New South Wales Government in relation to accommodating a bee quarantine facility.

(3) The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry can advise that there has been one change of ownership since the property was sold by the former Government. We have no information on the sale/purchase price of the property.

Esperance Coast Road Upgrade Project

(Question No. 495)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, upon notice, on 19 June 2008:

(1) Why has additional funding of $800,000 for the ‘Esperance Coast Road Upgrade Project’ been allocated by the Government in the 2008-09 Budget, given that the Government had already provided funding for the upgrade and resurfacing of the Esperance Coast Road from Surges Bay to the junction with Kent Beach Road at Point Esperance in 2007.

(2) What is the contract for this new funding of $800,000, and which sections of the road is it to be spent on.

(3) (a) Has all the previous funding for the Esperance Coast Road from Surges Bay to the junction with Kent Beach Road at Point Esperance been acquitted; and (b) why is the amount of $2,429,049.42 remaining in the Huon Valley Council’s allocation to this project as at 31 May 2008 not sufficient for the balance of the upgrade.
Senator Conroy—The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) & (2) No new funding for the Esperance Coast Road Upgrading project has been provided in 2008-09. The $800,000 being provided in 2008-09 is part of the Australian Government’s total commitment to this project of $2,800,000, as originally announced by the previous Minister on 13 November 2006.

As detailed in the funding agreement between the Australian Government and the Huon Valley Council, the project provides for the reconstruction and sealing of the 8.36km unsealed section of Esperance Coast Road, together with essential rehabilitation of the 6.08km sealed section towards Kent Beach Road towards Dover. This includes the replacement of a 15 metre bridge located on the sealed section on the outskirts of Dover.

(3) (a) No. The project is still under construction. Final acquittal of project funds occurs only on completion of a project. (b) Schedule 1 of the funding agreement specifies that Huon Valley Council, as the proponent for the project (as described in answer 1 & 2), must meet any funding shortfall if the project cost exceeds $4 million. The Council has not advised the Australian Government of any cost increases.

Papua New Guinea: International Forest Carbon Initiative
(Question No. 496)

Senator Milne asked the Minister for Climate Change and Water, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

With reference to the Papua New Guinea - Australia - Forest Carbon Partnership (FCP):

(1) In what way will Australia ‘provide scientific, technical and analytical support to inform Papua New Guinea’s development of its own national carbon accounting system’, in particular, is the intent to assist the Papua New Guinea (PNG) Government in developing its own National Carbon Accounting System, which they will operate independently, or does the department expect that Australia will provide ongoing analytical support.

(2) (a) What proportion of the $200 million Government Initiative of Climate Change and Forests (GIFC) has now been fully allocated and on which programs; and (b) what proportion of these monies have actually been spent.

(3) In 2007, the Government announced that it would be entering into a tropical forests/climate change partnership with BHP Billiton and the Indonesian Government to protect forests and peat lands in central Kalimantan: what is the status of this initiative and what funds did each of the partners agree to contribute.

(4) (a) Does the Government intend to further build on the current GIFC program; and (b) what pilot programs is it intending to initiate in Indonesia (and in the region) in the coming 12 months to protect tropical forests and reduce carbon emissions.

(5) What specific types of clean development system projects does the Australian Government envisage being involved with under the FCP.

(6) In what way does the Government see itself being involved in a ‘private carbon market’ under the FCP.

(7) Will Australia and PNG seek to have the ‘private carbon market’ approved by the United Framework Convention on Climate Change; if so, what does the Government anticipate will need to be changed in the Kyoto Protocol for such a ‘private carbon market’ to be approved in the post-2012 commitment period.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Senator Wong—The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:

(1) Australia intends to assist Papua New Guinea to develop its national carbon accounting system once Papua New Guinea has finalised the specifications for its system.

(2) On 23 April 2008, the Australian Government announced the $200 million International Forest Carbon Initiative (IFCI), which replaces the previous Government’s Global Initiative on Forests and Climate.

(a) To date, approximately 65 per cent of the $200 million has been allocated to programs, including: the Papua New Guinea – Australia Forest Carbon Partnership; Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership; a package of assistance to the Indonesia Government, provided as part of the Indonesia – Australia Forest Carbon Partnership; the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility; the Asia Pacific Forestry Skills and Capacity Building Programme; the Research Partnership with the Centre for International Forestry Research; the support package for International Non-Government Organisations to develop concept models for demonstration activities; the Partnership with the Clinton Climate Initiative; the acquisition of forest carbon monitoring satellite data; and for departmental funding.

(b) Approximately 19 per cent of the allocated monies has been spent to date.

(3) The Australian Government has reaffirmed its $30 million commitment to the Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership (KFCP). A three week design mission was undertaken in March 2008 to progress the design of demonstration activities under the KFCP.

(4) Yes. The Government has already built on activities announced by the previous Government. On 6 March 2008, the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, and the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Sir Michael Somare, agreed to long term cooperation on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. The Papua New Guinea - Australia Forest Carbon Partnership aims to address this challenge by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, improving livelihoods for forest-dependent communities and promoting biodiversity protection. International carbon markets will be important in providing the necessary investment to significantly reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and this Partnership will support both Australia and PNG’s participation in these emerging markets.

On 26 May 2008, the Government announced a $3 million Research Partnership with the Indonesian-based Centre for International Forestry Research and a $1.5 million package of support for international non-government organisations to develop concept models for demonstration activities to reduce emissions from deforestation.

On 13 June 2008, the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, and the President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, announced the Indonesian – Australian Forest Carbon Partnership. The Partnership builds on and formalises existing long-term practical cooperation between Indonesia and Australia on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

Further activities will be announced as they are agreed with partner countries in our region.
(5) Following further progress in Papua New Guinea’s policy framework for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, Australia will consider support for demonstration activities under the Papua New Guinea – Australia Forest Carbon Partnership.

(6) The initial focus of the Papua New Guinea – Australia Forest Carbon Partnership is on Papua New Guinea’s carbon accounting capacity. Decisions about demonstration activities and participation in carbon markets will be made in the future.

(7) The Kyoto Protocol and the UNFCCC do not currently include incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Under the Papua New Guinea – Australia Forest Carbon Partnership, Australia and PNG will promote the inclusion of incentives for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in a future international agreement on climate change.

(8) Australia’s national emissions trading scheme is due to commence in 2010. Issues relating to offsets and potential international linkages have yet to be determined.

(9) The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is a key agency involved in the implementation of the IFCI. The Department of Climate Change and AusAID receive advice from DAFF on a number of forest management related issues, including forest governance.

**Forestry**

**Senator Milne** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

(1) Is the department involved in an interdepartmental committee on illegal timber harvesting; if so: (a) Who are the members; (b) Who is the chair/lead agency on illegal timber issues?

(2) At the Budget, the Government announced $1 million to implement this policy: (a) How and when does the Government intend to honour this commitment; (b) What will the funding be allocated towards; (c) When will the Government be tabling legislation to restrict illegal timber imports?

(3) Given the long-standing issues surrounding illegal and unsustainable timber and concerns about governance in the forestry sector in Papua New Guinea (PNG), how is the department engaged in the development of the PNG - Australia Forest Carbon Partnership (FCP)?

(4) Are they members of an inter-departmental team?

(5) What advice has the department provided to the inter-departmental team working on the PNG-Australia FCP regarding the issues of illegal and unsustainable timber and poor forest governance that may affect the implementation of FCP?

(6) How are these issues being incorporated into the development of the FCP?

**Senator Sherry**—The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Yes;

(a) The Attorney-General’s Department, AusAid, Australian Customs Service, Australian Federal Police, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Department of Climate Change, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Department of Finance and Deregulation, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Treasury;

(b) The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

(2) (a) The $1 million will be used to restrict the importation of illegally logged timber including through building capacity in regional governments, supporting certification schemes for tim-
ber sold in Australia, point of sale disclosure mechanisms, and methods for identifying illegally logged timber;
(b) Funding will be allocated towards the identification and development of options and implementation of these with stakeholders including Australian timber importers;
(c) Work is being undertaken to develop options in compliance with international trade rules and other relevant policy obligations

(3), (5) and (6)
The International Forest Carbon Initiative (IFCI) is consistent with Australia’s policy on illegal logging. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is a key agency involved in the implementation of the IFCI. The department provides advice to the Department of Climate Change and AusAID on a number of forest management related issues, including forest governance.

(4) Yes.

Native Vegetation Clearing
(Question No. 499)

Senator Milne asked the Minister for Climate Change and Water, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

(1) (a) Can the Minister confirm that the current estimate of emissions from native vegetation clearing in 2005 is 74.1 Mt CO2-e; and (b) is this a net figure where emissions from clearing are partially offset by regrowth on previously cleared land; if so, what were the actual emissions from clearing and what was the actual quantity of CO2 sequestered by regrowth in 2005.
(2) Why are the emissions from clearing native vegetation not allocated to either sector in the consultation papers ‘Options for coverage of agriculture’ and ‘Coverage of forestry’. (www.greenhouse.gov.au/emissionstrading/consultation.html)
(3) What options are under consideration for allocating emission liabilities from clearing native vegetation and crediting CO2 uptake through regrowth in an emissions trading scheme.
(4) What measures other than emissions trading are under consideration to eliminate emissions from native vegetation clearing.
(5) In regards to emissions from ‘Forest Land remaining Forest Land’ (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change accounting) can a breakdown be provided of emissions of each subsector for each year since 1990, by each state.

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

(1) (a) Yes. The National Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2006 reports net emissions from Deforestation (reported under Kyoto Protocol rules - also referred to as Land Use Change under UNFCCC accounting) as 74.1 Mt CO2-e in 2005 and 62.9 Mt CO2-e in 2006.

(b) Yes. The net emissions estimate for Deforestation and Land Use Change includes any regrowth on land that was previously deforested. The removals in regrowth are approximately 10 to 15 per cent of gross emissions.

(2) These papers were prepared by the Department of Climate Change, as part of preliminary stakeholder consultations, and do not provide comprehensive coverage of all issues for all industry sectors. Further issues relating to the Agriculture and Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry reporting sectors will be explored in the Green Paper to be released in July 2008.

(3) The Government is currently considering the initial views of a wide range of stakeholders on the potential design of the emissions trading scheme. These views will help inform potential scheme
design options, which will be available for public comment with the release of the emissions trading Green Paper in July 2008.

(4) It is the Government’s intention that the emissions trading scheme provide maximal practical coverage of greenhouse gas emissions and sectors. No decision has yet been taken on the extent of coverage, however where it is not practical the Government will explore alternative mitigation measures.

(5) State emissions estimates for ‘Forest land remaining Forest Land’ (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change accounting) are not available. State greenhouse gas inventories are only compiled according to the Kyoto Protocol accounting rules.

Uranium

(See Question No. 501)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Resources and Energy, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

(1) Does the current Labor Government’s Uranium Industry Framework (UIF) differ in structure and function from that under the previous Government; if so, can an outline be provided of any differences and any changes to the terms of reference.

(2) (a) What is the UIF panel membership; and (b) does it differ to that under the previous Government.

(3) Is the UIF working directly with the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and/or expert independent scientists to ensure environment protection measures are considered in all decision making.

(4) With reference to a paper dated 20 March 2006, circulated within the Australian Labor Party and to unions, in which the Mr Martin Ferguson stated ‘Australia has the opportunity to lead the world as a responsible supplier of uranium for peaceful purposes’, by among other things ‘stewarding uranium from cradle to grave’: (a) is the Government proposing to steward uranium from cradle to grave; and (b) does this mean Australia is going to accept nuclear waste produced in overseas nuclear power reactors which use uranium originally sourced from Australian uranium.

Senator Carr—The Minister for Resources and Energy has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Implementation of the 2006 UIF Steering Group Report recommendations continues, however the focus has changed significantly to align activities with the Australian Government’s commitment to strengthen occupational health and safety requirements for uranium workers and ensure stringent environmental controls on uranium mines, based on world’s best practice standards.

(2) (a) UIF Implementation Group membership as at 30 June 2008:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Mark Chalmers (Chair)</td>
<td>Managing Director</td>
<td>Uranium Equities Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ron Levy</td>
<td>Chief Legal Adviser</td>
<td>Northern Land Council</td>
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<td>Mr Chris Salisbury</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>Energy Resources of Australia Ltd</td>
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<td>Mr Ric Phillips</td>
<td>Managing Director of Operations</td>
<td>Heathgate Resources</td>
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<td>Mr Richard Yeeles</td>
<td>Manager Corporate Affairs, Uranium Customer Sector Group</td>
<td>BHP Billiton</td>
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<td>Mr Frank Boulton</td>
<td>Uranium Logistics Manager</td>
<td>BHP Billiton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b) Organisations represented have remained the same however, organisations nominate alternates to attend meetings from time to time.

(3) Yes, through representation from the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and Geoscience Australia on the UIF Implementation Group.

(4) (a) The Australian Government is working closely with industry to complete recommendation 1 of the UIF Steering Group Report in relation to uranium stewardship. This activity is being led by the Australian Uranium Association (AUA) through the UIF. A set of stewardship principles recognising the shared responsibility by all players in the nuclear fuel cycle has been developed and endorsed by AUA members. The Australian Government was closely involved in the development of these stewardship principles and continues to be involved with ongoing work.

(b) No. It has been the policy of successive Australian Governments that Australia will not accept other countries’ nuclear waste. Countries that have the benefit of using Australian uranium to generate electricity should make their own arrangements for its management and eventual disposal.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Forestry
(Question No. 502)

Senator Milne asked the Minister for Climate Change and Water, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

In response to questions from Senator Milne on 29 May 2008 during an estimates hearing of the Finance and Public Administration Committee, Mr Carruthers said ‘Under the international guidelines for national inventory reporting produced by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, biomass waste is treated as a zero emission. The emission is calculated to have occurred back in the forest’:

(1) Does Australia follow the international guidelines for national inventory reporting of forestry operations; if not, why not.

(2) What was the carbon content of logs harvested in 2005 and 2006 from: (a) native forests; (b) hardwood plantations; and (c) softwood plantations.

(3) Where in Australia’s national inventory report is the carbon in (2) reported.

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

(1) Yes.

(2) & (3) Australia does not report on the carbon content of harvested logs separate from total forest carbon and wood products, as this is not required under international reporting obligations.

Esperance Coast Road Upgrade Project
(Question No. 503)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, upon notice, on 17 June 2008:

With reference to the Esperance Coast Road Upgrade:

(1) Has the Government allocated money from the Roads to Recovery Scheme for the upgrade.

(2) In relation to the AusLink Strategic Regional Programme, on what basis was the funding allocated for this project.

(3) Was the Government aware that the traffic count for the Esperance Coast Road was 185 vehicles per day.

(4) How many development applications for boundary adjustments were required.

(5) Were all required planning processes carried out by the Huon Valley Council (HVC) prior to commencement of work.

(6) Were reports on the planning process sent to the Government as part of the acquittal process.

(7) What was the number of land acquisitions, including Crown Land, required for the construction of the Esperance Coast Road.

(8) Given expenditure on the project to 30 April 2008 by HVC was $2,416,742.20, with total funds available of $3,437,933.89, including $400,000 from 2007-08 federal assistance grants: was federal funding for the project $3,200,000 or $2,800,000.

(9) Was a report submitted to the Government by the HVC outlining how the project up to Surveyors Bay was completed within budget through the daily hire of plants from local contractors and HVC staff.

Senator Conroy—The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) No.
(2) Funding for this project was committed under the former government.

(3) The Council provided traffic usage data in support of its 2006 funding application. This indicated a traffic count of 274 average vehicle movements per day.

(4) The Huon Valley Council is responsible for development applications for boundary adjustments and is not specifically required to report this activity to the Australian Government.

(5) Huon Valley Council is responsible for planning procedures under all statutes, regulations, by-laws and requirements of any Commonwealth, State, Territory or Local Authority under section 25.1 of the funding agreement between the Australian Government and the Council.

(6) The Strategic Regional Program guidelines require proponents to provide the Department with a final acquittal of expenditure against the approved amount of funds on completion of a project. There is no program condition that requires the proponent to provide the Department with specific reports on the planning processes followed.

(7) Huon Valley Council advises that one land acquisition is currently pending.

(8) The Australian Government’s commitment to this project under the funding agreement signed on 23 February 2007 is $2,800,000 to be provided under the Strategic Regional Program. Financial Assistance Grants are separately provided to councils by the Australian Government as untied funding, and can be used by councils according to council priorities. Huon Valley Council has confirmed that it has also applied Financial Assistance Grants to this project.

(9) No.

Forestry
(Question No. 505)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 20 June 2008:

With reference to the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement grants scheme, which is comprised of three grant programs – the Forest Industry development Program, the Country Sawmills Assistance Program and the Softwood Industry Development Program: As of 31 May 2008:

1. What funding in each of the three grant categories had been allocated.
2. How much money had been paid under the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement grants scheme.
3. What funds remain available under the scheme in each category.

Senator Sherry—The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

1. A total of $56 million has been allocated under the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement Industry Development Program. This allocation comprises:
   - Tasmanian Forest Industry Development Program (TFIDP): $42 million
   - Tasmanian Softwood Industry Development Program (TSIDP): $10 million
   - Tasmanian Country Sawmills Assistance Program (TCSAP): $4 million.

At 31 May 2008, the following funding had been committed to approved grants:
- TFIDP: $35 876 891
- TCSAP: $2 496 847
- TSIDP: $4 732 233

2. At the 31 May 2008, a total of $21 695 776 had been paid under the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement Industry Development Program.
(3) At the 31 May 2008, the following funding remain available under each of the grant categories:
  TFIDP: $6 123 109
  TCSAP: $1 503 153
  TSIDP: $5 267 767

**Cluster Munitions**

(Question No. 507)

Senator Bob Brown asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs, upon notice, on 23 June 2008:

(a) When will Australia fully implement its obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions; and
(b) what are those obligations.

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

(a) & (b) The Convention is not open for signature until 3 December 2008. Australia has no obligations at present as it has neither signed nor ratified the draft convention. The Government will review the provisional treaty text closely prior to its opening for signature. The Government is confident that Australia will be in a position to sign the treaty before the end of the year.

**Cluster Munitions**

(Question No. 508)

Senator Bob Brown asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, upon notice, on 23 June 2008:

Are there any cluster munitions held by the department or anyone else in Australia; if so, who holds them and how many are there.

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

Cluster munitions do not form part of the Australian Defence Force’s operational weapons inventory. Defence does hold some cluster munitions and sub-munitions (mostly inert), but these are not held with any of our operational munitions and are not—in either numbers or configuration—suitable for use by the Australian Defence Force. The munitions are retained to assist in the training of personnel in rendering cluster munitions safe and to assist in the development of countermeasures to cluster munitions.

A principal aim of the Cluster Munitions Convention agreed in Dublin in May 2008 is to prohibit cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians. Under the text of this convention, the retention or acquisition of a limited number of cluster munitions for training in clearance or destruction techniques, or for the development of counter measures, is permitted.

Defence also holds the SMArt 155, a sensor-fused precision munition for use against tanks and other armoured vehicles, which delivers two sensor-fused precision projectiles. Each projectile has a targeting system designed to identify armoured vehicles, as well as independent and reliable self-destruction and self-neutralisation capabilities. The SMArt 155 does not pose an unacceptable risk to civilians and, under the Cluster Munitions Convention, it is not considered to be a cluster munition.

Defence has no knowledge of any cluster munitions held by anyone in Australia outside the Defence organisation.
Fraser Island Dingo Fence
(Question No. 509)
Senator Siewert asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, upon notice, on 24 June 2008:
(1) When was the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency notified by the department of the section 9 emergency declaration application made under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 with respect to the construction of the dingo fence at Happy Valley.
(2) Why did it take 8 days after the application was made for work to stop on the construction of the dingo fence.
(3) Was there a stop work order given to stop construction of the dingo fence.
(4) Why did representatives from the department attend a meeting at Fraser Island on Tuesday, 20 May 2008, when an earlier section 9 emergency declaration application had been withdrawn on Friday, 9 May 2008 and federal jurisdiction consequently removed.
(5) Have the ground disturbance guidelines been reviewed by the Fraser Island World Heritage Area Indigenous Advisory Committee and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service; if so, when did that review occur.
(6) How will any disturbed cultural heritage sites along the dingo fence on Fraser Island be remediated.
Senator Wong—The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
(1) The Queensland Parks and Wildlife, which is part the Environmental Protection Agency, was advised of the application on 30 April 2008.
(2) The Queensland Parks and Wildlife ceased ground disturbance work the day after the section 9 application was determined legally valid. This was two days after the applicant’s barrister confirmed the content of the section 9 application.
(3) No.
(4) A meeting of Commonwealth and Queensland Officials on 9 May 2008 agreed that a set of important practical outcomes to better protect Indigenous heritage in the Fraser Island World Heritage Area would be implemented, including if the application was withdrawn.
(5) This matter will be discussed at the next meeting of the Fraser Island World Heritage Area Indigenous Advisory Committee.
(6) Future management of any disturbed sites will be agreed between the Fraser Island World Heritage Area Indigenous Advisory Committee and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, taking into consideration the advice of an independent archaeologist.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions
(Question No. 511)
Senator Abetz asked the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, upon notice, on 27 June 2008:
With reference to the report by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Sustainable Ecosystems and the Australian National University to the Climate Institute, Energy affordability, living standards and emissions trading: Assessing the social impacts of achieving deep cuts in Australian greenhouse emissions, dated June 2008.
Tuesday, 26 August 2008

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

(1) How much revenue did and/or will the CSIRO receive for work on this report.
(2) How many CSIRO staff worked on the report.
(3) How many CSIRO staff hours went into the report.
(4) Specifically, what were the terms of reference for this report that were provided by the client.

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

(1) $20,000.
(2) One.
(3) 88.2 hours.
(4) This report was delivered under a contract to provide professional advice on:
   • Climate change policy options, especially related to the introduction of emissions trading in Australia;
   • Economic modelling of the impacts of mitigation policy; and
   • Interpretation and communication of the impacts of climate change and potential policy options.

Specifically, this report was commissioned by The Climate Institute to explore the potential social impacts of achieving deep cuts in Australian greenhouse gas emissions through the introduction of emissions trading.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions
(Question No. 512)

Senator Abetz asked the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, upon notice, on 27 June 2008:

With reference to the report by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Sustainable Ecosystems and the Allen Consulting Group to the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Growing the green collar economy: Skills and labour challenges in reducing our greenhouse emissions and national environmental footprint, dated June 2008:

(1) How much revenue did and/or will the CSIRO receive for work on this report.
(2) How many CSIRO staff worked on the report.
(3) How many CSIRO staff hours went into the report.
(4) Specifically, what were the terms of reference for this report that were provided by the client.

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

(1) $27,000.
(2) Three.
(3) 110.25 hours.
(4) This report was delivered under a contract to provide professional advice on developing a research plan to examine the existing and future ‘green collar’ workforce. The services provided by CSIRO pursuant to the project were:
   • a short report suitable for submission to the Garnaut Review and use as an input to the Australia 2020 Summit
   • a paper based on this report suitable for submission to an appropriate journal
   • presentation of results to business or policy stakeholders.
Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research: Overseas Travel
(Question No. 513)

Senator Abetz asked the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, upon notice, on 3 July 2008:

With reference to the Minister’s travel to Japan and the United States of America (US) in June 2008:

(1) Did the Minister travel from Australia to Japan by commercial airline or by special purpose aircraft.

(2) How many personal staff and departmental officials accompanied the Minister to Japan.

(3) Did all personal staff, family and departmental officials travel to Japan on the same flight as the Minister.

(4) When were the travel arrangements for the Minister’s trip to Japan confirmed.

(5) Was the Minister booked on a direct flight from Australia to the US prior to the planned visit to Japan.

(6) (a) What was the Minister’s itinerary for the visit to Japan; (b) when was this itinerary first drafted; and (c) when was this itinerary subsequently finalised.

(7) What was the length of the Minister’s stay in Japan.

(8) For the visit to Japan: (a) what was the total cost of the Minister’s: (i) travel, (ii) accommodation, and (iii) any other expenses; and (b) what was the total cost for each of the following groups, departmental officials, personal staff, and family, in relation to: (i) travel, (ii) accommodation, and (iii) any other expenses.

(9) Did all family, staff and departmental officials accompany the Minister from Japan to the US.

(10) What was the cost of travel from Japan to the US for: (a) the Minister; (b) his family; (c) his personal staff; and (d) departmental officials.

(11) How long did the Minister stay in the US.

(12) For the visit to the US: (a) what was the total cost of the Minister’s: (i) travel, both internal and external, (ii) accommodation, and (iii) any other expenses; and (b) what was the total cost for each of the following groups, departmental officials, personal staff, and family, in relation to: (i) travel, (ii) accommodation, and (iii) any other expenses.

(13) Were any of the Minister’s US activities adjusted to accommodate the trip to Japan.

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

(1) Minister Carr travelled by commercial airline.

(2) Two.

(3) Yes, however the Department Official joined the Minister in Hong Kong for the connecting flight from Hong Kong to Nagoya.

(4) 4 June 2008.

(5) Yes.

(6) (a) To meet with Toyota Motor Corporation in Nagoya; (b) 27 May 2008; and (c) 4 June 2008.

(7) The Minister was there for less than 24 hours.

(8) (a) A report on the costs for overseas Ministerial travel (including family and staff) is tabled every six months by the Department of Finance and Deregulation. Interested Senators may refer to that public document for information on Ministerial travel costs; and (b) The total costs for the Department Official accompanying the Minister for the entire visit for Japan and the US was approximately $30,575 (a breakdown of the airfare for Japan and US is not available).
QUESTIONs ON NOTICE

(9) Yes.
(10) (a, b & c) see (8) (a). (d) see (8) (b).
(11) Nine days.
(12) Refer to responses to questions (8) and (10).
(13) Yes, one meeting was moved to approximately 3 hours later on the same day.

Conservation Covenants
(Question No. 516)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, upon notice, on 10 July 2008:

(1) How much Australian land has come under conservation covenants: (a) in perpetuity; and (b) via short-term covenants.
(2) What is the average length of time for a short-term covenant.
(3) Can a list of covenanted areas be provided, outlining their size in hectares and the duration of the covenant.
(4) What conservation standards are required to be demonstrated by recipients of National Reserve System funds.
(5) How much federal money is being spent on private conservation efforts, both in areas of conservancies and private landholders.
(6) (a) How much money was distributed through the first Tasmanian Forest Conservation Fund; (b) what is the breakdown of the spending by the fund; and (c) what was left over.
(7) Will another such fund be established; if so: (a) how much money would be allocated to this fund; and (b) will it use the same systems as the first fund.
(8) What overall percentage of funds provided for private land conservation programs are earmarked for monitoring and evaluation.

Senator Wong—The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) (a) The Australian Government does not enter directly into conservation covenants as covenanting mechanisms are established under state legislation.
    Perpetual conservation covenants recorded and included in the 2006 Collaborative Australian Terrestrial Protected Area Database (CAPAD) covered 2.61m hectares. CAPAD figures for 2008 are yet to be collated.
    (b) The Department has no data about the total amount of Australian land held under short term covenants.
(2) This question needs to be addressed to the relevant State/Territory authorities.
(3) No, the Australian Government does not have a database of covenanted areas. This detailed information is held by the state covenanting programs – managed by a mix of State government agencies and non-government organisations. The data is held by the States and Territories and peak covenanting bodies.
(4) Perpetual covenants on private lands counted as part of Australia’s National Reserve System must meet the following requirements:

• The primary purpose is nature conservation;
• The covenant must be legally enforceable and registered - in perpetuity - on the land title;
The new protected area is managed in accordance with an agreed IUCN management category; 
Appropriate monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems are in place; and 
Wherever possible the land has been identified as a priority for conservation through a strategic assessment process.

Specific conservation, monitoring and reporting requirements relate to the State legislation under which each perpetual covenant is declared.

The previous Government’s primary investments in conservation on private lands have been through the Natural Heritage Trust and the National Landcare Program. Details of annual expenditure can be found in the relevant annual reports for these programs. The Government’s new Caring for our Country Initiative, which will include investment in conservation on private lands, came into effect on 1 July this year.

The Tasmanian Forest Conservation Fund (FCF) has expended almost $21.3m on protection of high conservation forest in Tasmania. This figure includes approximately $16.5m of funding approvals for conservation covenants with private land owners. The overall budget for the FCF is managed in conjunction with the Department of Finance under commercial in confidence conditions.

The FCF Program will terminate on 30 June 2009. No decision has been taken by the Government to establish a second Fund beyond this date.

No decision has been taken under the Government’s new Caring for our Country Initiative to earmark a specific percentage of funds for monitoring and evaluation.

Abalone Industry
(Question No. 517)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 11 July 2008:

With reference to the Abalone Viral Ganglioneuritis (AVG) aquatic biosecurity review:

(1) Will the Commonwealth take over the management of the AVG disease outbreak situation, and all ongoing management of the disease.

(2) Given the highly mobile nature of the AVG disease, what is the Government’s plan to contain outbreaks in states other than Victoria.

(3) What provision has the Government made for quarantining areas known to have the active virus present.

(4) Will the Government implement a Commonwealth review of the Australian abalone aquaculture situation, with a view to developing a set of management response actions that are mandated and triggered upon identification of diseases on the aquaculture farms, similar to the aquavet program.

(5) Will the Government agree to be in charge of managing all disease research.

(6) Will the Government agree to undertake a national review of aquaculture policies in each state, checked against the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment, national aquatic translocation policies, and Environmental Protection Agencies in each state.

(7) Will the Minister agree to undertake an independent epidemiological review into Victoria’s handling of this escape of an exotic disease into the marine environment.

Senator Sherry—The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
(1) Under the Australian Constitution, the states and territories are responsible for animal (including aquatic animal) disease control within their borders. The Australian Government has no constitutional powers to ‘take over’ the management of such disease situations.

(2) The Australian Government is actively participating in the National Abalone Health Management and Advisory Co-ordinating Body (NAHMACB), which is coordinating the national approach to managing the disease and associated fisheries issues. The state and territory governments have responsibility for the management of aquatic animal diseases within their jurisdiction, and this includes preventing introduction of diseases from other states and territories. South Australia and Tasmania are developing plans and strategies to contain the disease in the event of it reaching their jurisdictions.

(3) While the Australian Government has no power to direct a state government on management of a disease occurring within that state’s borders, nationally agreed arrangements are in place for managing aquatic animal diseases under certain circumstances. These arrangements include consultation through the Aquatic Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Diseases (AqCCEAD – chaired by the Australian Government) on the national technical response to the emergency, and through the Aquatic Animal Health Committee (AAHC) on ongoing management of the disease. Both these arrangements were utilised in the response to abalone viral ganglioneuritis. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) has engaged in the deliberations of both these committees. The arrangements also include guidance through the Australia Aquatic Veterinary Emergency Plan (AQUAVETPLAN).

(4) The Government has already implemented this. The department has provided $35,000 to fund the development of a draft disease strategy manual for abalone viral ganglioneuritis as a new component in the AQUAVETPLAN series. This manual will provide a preferred Australian approach to possible future outbreaks of the disease. This draft manual will shortly be provided to industry and the states for comment and input into the preferred Australian response options described in this manual. Once completed, the manual will undergo a rigorous endorsement process including review by technical experts and industry, and endorsement by governments.

(5) The state and territory governments manage research of diseases within their jurisdictions. The Australian Government does not have the authority to manage all disease research in the country. However, the Australian Government does provide direction through its participation in the AAHC and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation’s Aquatic Animal Health Subprogram. In addition, the CSIRO’s Australian Animal Health Laboratory continues to contribute significantly to investigating this disease.

(6) Individual states and territories have their own legislation and policies on aquaculture which are developed in response to the needs and requirements of the particular state or territory, including environmental impact and diseases. Under the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment the states and territories are required to liaise with each other where their activities may impact upon other states. If they feel that the matter is not being progressed, they may invite the Commonwealth to assist.

There are currently no adopted national aquatic translocation policies, as each state has legislation regarding noxious and undesirable species and restrictions on sale and maintenance of those species in that state. Local governments within each state also have policies on this matter. One of the objectives of AQUAPLAN, Australia’s national strategic plan for aquatic animal health (endorsed by Primary Industries Ministerial Council in April 2005) is to implement a common/national approach for managing pathogens associated with the translocation of live aquatic animals across Australia. The creation and adoption of National Technical Guidelines for the Translocation of Live Aquatic Animals, with respect to pathogens, was listed as a discrete project.
Numerous guidelines and translocation policies have been developed by jurisdictions for specific sectors, but some projects have concluded that the practicality or utility of generic, national technical guidelines (i.e. technical guidelines that apply across sectors) is limited. The focus of consultation among jurisdictions is on sharing of information to facilitate consistency between specific translocation policies, in particular regarding requirements for health testing and the cost to industry for the service.

(7) State and territory governments have responsibility for the management of aquatic animal diseases within their jurisdiction. The Australian Government is responsible for any resulting quarantine or international trade issues, making any necessary international disease notifications, and facilitating national coordination of any disease response. An independent epidemiological review of the handling of the response by the Victorian authorities is the responsibility of the Victorian Government. This disease is not confirmed to be exotic, and the most likely scenario is that it is caused by an endemic agent, originally from wild abalone, now manifesting as clinical disease.

Health and Ageing: Printer Products
(Question Nos 529, 552 and 554)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health and Ageing, upon notice, on 14 July 2008:

(1) Does the department have a policy regarding the use of remanufactured printer products as opposed to buying new ones; if so, does the department assess the cost and re-useability of the product as part of its decision-making in regard to the policy.

(2) Does the department have a policy directive to use remanufactured printer products and, by doing so, lower the balance of payments through reducing imports.

(3) What environmental standard has the department put in place in regard to the disposal of printer cartridges.

(4) Is the Minister aware that several of the printer companies are now putting chips in printer cartridges so that they cannot be re-used.

(5) Does the department have any contractual arrangements with Lexmark or Epson; if so, is the department party to any ‘Prebate’ program.

(6) Does the department know what happens to the printer cartridges when they are empty.

(7) With whom does the department hold a printer supply contract and what are the conditions of the contract.

(8) How much does the department spend on printer cartridges each financial year.

(9) Does the department use Planet Ark to recycle cartridges.

(10) Does the department use foreign companies such as Corporate Express when purchasing printer cartridges.

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

(1) The Department of Health and Ageing is developing a policy regarding the use of remanufactured printer products. Cost and re-usability of printer products are assessed in the individual procurement exercises.

(2) The Department of Health and Ageing does not have an explicit policy directive to use remanufactured printer products, however, remanufactured printer products are available for purchase through the Department’s stationery provider.
(3) The Department of Health and Ageing complies with Australian Standard ISO 14001:2004 “for the collection, remanufacture, marketing and distribution of laser cartridges”.

(4) I understand that the department is aware that some printer companies build microchips into their printer cartridges to reduce the use of third-party or refilled cartridges. The advice is that these cartridges can be reused by returning them to the original manufacturer.

(5) Lexmark printers are provided by IBM Global Services under the provisions of the IT Services Agreement. Printer consumables are sourced from a range of vendors that may include Lexmark.

(6) Yes. Used printer cartridges are placed in recycling boxes located throughout the Department. Approximately 90% of all printer consumables returned are reused or recycled.

(7) The Department does not have any exclusive printer supply contracts. Lexmark printers are provided by IBM Global Services under the provisions of the IT Services Agreement.

(8) In 2007/08 the Department spent approximately $980,000 on printer cartridges. Expenditure was similar in 2006/07.

(9) No. The Department uses the Recycling Centre/RTS Imaging to recycle cartridges.

(10) Yes.

Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs: Printer Products

(1) Does the department have a policy regarding the use of remanufactured printer products as opposed to buying new ones; if so, does the department assess the cost and re-useability of the product as part of its decision-making in regard to the policy.

(2) Does the department have a policy directive to use remanufactured printer products and, by doing so, lower the balance of payments through reducing imports.

(3) What environmental standard has the department put in place in regard to the disposal of printer cartridges.

(4) Is the Minister aware that several of the printer companies are now putting chips in printer cartridges so that they cannot be re-used.

(5) Does the department have any contractual arrangements with Lexmark or Epson; if so, is the department party to any ‘Prebate’ program.

(6) Does the department know what happens to the printer cartridges when they are empty.

(7) With whom does the department hold a printer supply contract and what are the conditions of the contract.

(8) How much does the department spend on printer cartridges each financial year.

(9) Does the department use Planet Ark to recycle cartridges.

(10) Does the department use foreign companies such as Corporate Express when purchasing printer cartridges.

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

(1) As part of any cost consideration the department assesses all potential options to ensure best value for money and this includes product reusability.

(2) As part of any cost consideration the department assesses all potential options to ensure best value for money and this includes product reusability.
(3) The department provides toner recycling boxes to encourage all toner cartridges and other printing consumables be recycled.

(4) The department is aware that some printer companies build microchips into their printer cartridges to reduce the use of third-party or refilled cartridges. The advice is that these cartridges can be reused by returning them to the original manufacturer.

(5) The department does not have any contractual arrangements with Lexmark or Epson.

(6) The department’s empty printer cartridges are removed from the machine and placed into Planet Ark toner recycling boxes. These cartridges are then sent to a recycling plant in Melbourne where they are recycled for all plastic, glass, metal, toner/developer and oil. The plastic is reused for items such as rulers and park benches.

(7) The department currently has contracts with Fuji Xerox for the Provision of Printer, Photocopier, Scanner and Facsimile machines and with Ricoh for the supply of Printers and Multifunction devices.

(8) The bulk of the department’s toner is included in the ongoing equipment maintenance charge under existing contracts with Ricoh and Fuji Xerox. This is charged on a per copy basis. The department spent a further $201,861 (inc GST) during 07/08 on other toner cartridges.

(9) The department uses Planet Ark to recycle cartridges.

(10) The department has a contract with Corporate Express to supply printer cartridges for personal printers. Toner cartridges for network printers and multifunction devices are supplied under contractual arrangements with Fuji Xerox and Ricoh.

Treasury: Printer Products

(Question No. 543)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Assistant Treasurer, upon notice, on 14 July 2008:

(1) Does the department have a policy regarding the use of remanufactured printer products as opposed to buying new ones; if so, does the department assess the cost and re-useability of the product as part of its decision-making in regard to the policy.

(2) Does the department have a policy directive to use remanufactured printer products and, by doing so, lower the balance of payments through reducing imports.

(3) What environmental standard has the department put in place in regard to the disposal of printer cartridges.

(4) Is the Minister aware that several of the printer companies are now putting chips in printer cartridges so that they cannot be re-used.

(5) Does the department have any contractual arrangements with Lexmark or Epson; if so, is the department party to any ‘Prebate’ program.

(6) Does the department know what happens to the printer cartridges when they are empty.

(7) With whom does the department hold a printer supply contract and what are the conditions of the contract.

(8) How much does the department spend on printer cartridges each financial year.

(9) Does the department use Planet Ark to recycle cartridges.

(10) Does the department use foreign companies such as Corporate Express when purchasing printer cartridges.
Senator Conroy—The Assistant Treasurer has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

1. The Treasury’s policy regarding the use of printer products has been based on value for money along with environmental and occupational health and safety considerations. 
Due to unverifiable cartridge yield levels, toner quality, toner ingredients and associated non-warrantable device service costs caused by defective cartridges the Treasury currently uses Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) cartridges only.

2. See above (response to Question 1).

3. All spent toner cartridges are sent to Planet Ark for recycling and safe disposal.

4. Yes.

5. The Treasury has no contractual arrangements with manufacturers. ATI is the Treasury’s managed print services provider (see also response to Question 7).
   ATI purchases prebate cartridges on behalf of the Treasury. ATI then uses Planet Ark to recycle the spent cartridges.

6. Yes, ATI coordinates the recycling of spent printer toner cartridges through Planet Ark. Details of Planet Ark’s recycling process are available on their website.

7. The Treasury has a full managed printer supply and services contract with ATI, part of the ATI Group Pty Ltd, an Australian owned, small to medium enterprise.
   The Treasury has a three-year managed printer services contract with an option of two additional two-year terms. ATI owns and maintains the printers and is responsible for the installation of new equipment, removal of redundant equipment, onsite valet service, provision of consumables and other process support services.

8. Approximately $150,000 per annum.

9. Yes, via ATI.

10. No.

Veterans’ Affairs: Printer Products
(Question No. 545)

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, upon notice, on 14 July 2008:

1. Does the department have a policy regarding the use of remanufactured printer products as opposed to buying new ones; if so, does the department assess the cost and re-useability of the product as part of its decision-making in regard to the policy.

2. Does the department have a policy directive to use remanufactured printer products and, by doing so, lower the balance of payments through reducing imports.

3. What environmental standard has the department put in place in regard to the disposal of printer cartridges.

4. Is the Minister aware that several of the printer companies are now putting chips in printer cartridges so that they cannot be re-used.

5. Does the department have any contractual arrangements with Lexmark or Epson; if so, is the department party to any ‘Prebate’ program.

6. Does the department know what happens to the printer cartridges when they are empty.

7. With whom does the department hold a printer supply contract and what are the conditions of the contract.
(8) How much does the department spend on printer cartridges each financial year.
(9) Does the department use Planet Ark to recycle cartridges.
(10) Does the department use foreign companies such as Corporate Express when purchasing printer cartridges.

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

Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA)

(1) DVA has a policy of purchasing 50 per cent recycled paper for use in printers, but also allows the purchase of paper with no recycled content where required. DVA also actively supports the use of recycled toner cartridges through its participation in Planet Ark’s “Close-the-Loop” program, which recycles used toner cartridges for future use.

(2) No.

(3) DVA returns empty cartridges to Planet Ark via their “Close-the-Loop” program. This program is a certified zero-waste to landfill operation.

(4) The cartridges in DVA’s current fleet of printers are not fitted with microchips however all of DVA’s devices read the serial numbers of the toner cartridges as part of their automated toner supply. I also understand that DVA is aware that some printer companies build microchips into their printer cartridges to reduce the use of third-party or refilled cartridges. The advice is that these cartridges can be reused by returning them to the original manufacturer.

(5) Yes. DVA has a printer supply contract with Lexmark. Under this contract DVA pays on a per-page printed basis. The per-page cost is calculated to cover the use of toner, printer consumables, device lease and maintenance, and hence DVA is not a party to a prebate for toners as individual-cost items.

(6) DVA returns empty cartridges to Planet Ark via their “Close-the-Loop” program and expects it to follow its published recycle/reuse procedures. It returns suitable cartridges to Lexmark for remanufacture. Unsuitable items are dismantled and the component parts are recycled. The Planet Ark “Close-the-Loop” program is a certified zero-waste to landfill operation.

(7) DVA has an exclusive supply contract with Lexmark which monitors DVA’s devices and supply toner and other consumables when required.

(8) DVA has a contract with Lexmark under which it is paid on a per-page printed basis. This covers the cost of toner, printer consumables, device lease and maintenance. The toner cartridges are not separate expense items.

(9) Yes.

(10) DVA’s printer supply contract is with Lexmark for its networked departmental fleet of printers.

Australian War Memorial (AWM)

(1) No.
(2) No.

(3) AWM returns empty cartridges to Planet Ark via their “Close-the-Loop” program. This program is a certified zero-waste to landfill operation.

(4) I understand that AWM is aware that some printer companies build microchips into their printer cartridges to reduce the use of third-party or refilled cartridges. The advice is that these cartridges can be reused by returning them to the original manufacturer.

(5) No.
(6) AWM returns empty cartridges to Planet Ark via their “Close-the-Loop” program and expects it to follow its published recycle/reuse procedures. The Planet Ark “Close-the-Loop” program is a certified zero-waste to landfill operation.

(7) AWM has contracts with:
- Upstream for supply of two types of genuine HP toner cartridges per printer as required (total of 45 printers); and
- Toshiba for the supply of genuine toner supplied free of charge. AWM is then charged per print, dependant on print type (i.e. colour or black and white).

(8) AWM spends approximately $50,000 on printer cartridges annually.

(9) Yes.

(10) AWM uses a range of suppliers for the provision of printer cartridges including Upstream and Toshiba as previously mentioned; Corporate Express to purchase ink for a few bubble jet printers; Harris Technology to purchase toner cartridges beyond what is supplied under the Upstream contract and Dell for the provision of ink for one off-site printer.

Senator Milne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Housing and the Minister for the Status of Women, upon notice, on 14 July 2008:

(1) Does the department have a policy regarding the use of remanufactured printer products as opposed to buying new ones; if so, does the department assess the cost and re-useability of the product as part of its decision-making in regard to the policy.

(2) Does the department have a policy directive to use remanufactured printer products and, by doing so, lower the balance of payments through reducing imports.

(3) What environmental standard has the department put in place in regard to the disposal of printer cartridges.

(4) Is the Minster aware that several of the printer companies are now putting chips in printer cartridges so that they cannot be re-used.

(5) Does the department have any contractual arrangements with Lexmark or Epson; if so, is the department party to any ‘Prebate’ program.

(6) Does the department know what happens to the printer cartridges when they are empty.

(7) With whom does the department hold a printer supply contract and what are the conditions of the contract.

(8) How much does the department spend on printer cartridges each financial year.

(9) Does the department use Planet Ark to recycle cartridges.

(10) Does the department use foreign companies such as Corporate Express when purchasing printer cartridges.

Senator Wong—The Minister for Housing and the Minister for the Status of Women has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) As part of any cost consideration the department assesses all potential options to ensure best value for money and this includes product reusability.

(2) As part of any cost consideration the department assesses all potential options to ensure best value for money and this includes product reusability.
(3) The department provides toner recycling boxes to encourage all toner cartridges and other printing consumables be recycled.

(4) The department is aware that some printer companies build microchips into their printer cartridges to reduce the use of third-party or refilled cartridges. The advice is that these cartridges can be reused by returning them to the original manufacturer.

(5) The department does not have any contractual arrangements with Lexmark or Epson;

(6) The department’s empty printer cartridges are removed from the machine and placed into Planet Ark toner recycling boxes. These cartridges are then sent to a recycling plant in Melbourne where they are recycled for all plastic, glass, metal, toner/developer and oil. The plastic is reused for items such as rulers and park benches.

(7) The department currently has contracts with Fuji Xerox for the Provision of Printer, Photocopier, Scanner and Facsimile machines and with Ricoh for the supply of Printers and Multifunction devices.

(8) The bulk of the department’s toner is included in the ongoing equipment maintenance charge under existing contracts with Ricoh and Fuji Xerox. This is charged on a per copy basis. The department spent a further $201,861 (inc GST) during 07/08 on other toner cartridges.

(9) The department uses Planet Ark to recycle cartridges.

(10) The department has a contract with Corporate Express to supply printer cartridges for personal printers. Toner cartridges for network printers and multifunction devices are supplied under contractual arrangements with Fuji Xerox and Ricoh.

Treasury: Printer Products

(Question No. 551)

Senator Milne asked the Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law, upon notice, on 14 July 2008:

(1) Does the department have a policy regarding the use of remanufactured printer products as opposed to buying new ones; if so, does the department assess the cost and re-useability of the product as part of its decision-making in regard to the policy.

(2) Does the department have a policy directive to use remanufactured printer products and, by doing so, lower the balance of payments through reducing imports.

(3) What environmental standard has the department put in place in regard to the disposal of printer cartridges.

(4) Is the minister aware that several of the printer companies are now putting chips in printer cartridges so that they cannot be re-used.

(5) Does the department have any contractual arrangements with Lexmark or Epson; if so, is the department party to any ‘Prebate’ program.

(6) Does the department know what happens to the printer cartridges when they are empty.

(7) With whom does the department hold a printer supply contract and what are the conditions of the contract.

(8) How much does the department spend on printer cartridges each financial year.

(9) Does the department use Planet Ark to recycle cartridges.

(10) Does the department use foreign companies such as Corporate Express when purchasing printer cartridges.
Senator Sherry—The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:

(1) The Treasury’s policy regarding the use of printer products has been based on value for money along with environmental and occupational health and safety considerations.

Due to unverifiable cartridge yield levels, toner quality, toner ingredients and associated non-warrantable device service costs caused by defective cartridges the Treasury currently uses Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) cartridges only.

(2) See above (response to Question 1).

(3) All spent toner cartridges are sent to Planet Ark for recycling and safe disposal.

(4) Yes.

(5) The Treasury has no contractual arrangements with manufacturers. ATI is the Treasury’s managed print services provider (see also response to Question 7).

ATI purchases prebate cartridges on behalf of the Treasury. ATI then uses Planet Ark to recycle the spent cartridges.

(6) Yes, ATI coordinates the recycling of spent printer toner cartridges through Planet Ark. Details of Planet Ark’s recycling process are available on their website.

(7) The Treasury has a full managed printer supply and services contract with ATI, part of the ATI Group Pty Ltd, an Australian owned, small to medium enterprise.

The Treasury has a three-year managed printer services contract with an option of two additional two-year terms. ATI owns and maintains the printers and is responsible for the installation of new equipment, removal of redundant equipment, onsite valet service, provision of consumables and other process support services.

(8) Approximately $150,000 per annum.

(9) Yes, via ATI.

(10) No.

National Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Program
(Question No. 556)

Senator Colbeck asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health and Ageing, upon notice, on 15 July 2008:

(1) What was the uptake, by numbers and percentage of students, of the school based National HPV Vaccination Program for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 financial years.

(2) What was the uptake by numbers and percentage of students aged between 13 and 18 of school based catch-ups under the program for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 financial years.

(3) What was the uptake by numbers and percentage of women aged between 18 and 26 of the general practitioner based catch-ups under the program for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 financial years.

(4) Was the uptake of the vaccine as predicted or modeled by the department; if not, why not.

(5) Has the department identified any impediments to the take up of the program; if so, what are they.

(6) Is the Government considering extending the catch-up programs, which are due to expire at the end of June 2009, so that more girls and women can be protected.

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

(1) - (3) Data on uptake of HPV vaccinations by numbers and percentages is not currently available. Data obtained from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) indicates that 3.7 million doses of the HPV vaccine Gardasil have been distributed since the program commenced in April 2007.
However, categorisation of dosages will not be possible until the National HPV Vaccination Register is completed and fully operational in early 2009.

On 1 February 2008 the Department of Health and Ageing (the Department) entered into a contract with the Victorian Cytology Service to establish and maintain a National Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Register. The purpose of the Register is to enable the Department to evaluate the success or otherwise of the National Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Program by providing information on uptake rates and monitoring the long-term effectiveness of the vaccine in preventing certain cervical cancers.

Vaccination records are currently being collected and stored by immunisation providers to be added to the Register when it is operational. The Register is expected to be completed in November 2008 and fully operational in early 2009. Data on uptake by numbers and percentages of the National HPV Vaccination Program will be available at that time.

(4) Uptake of the vaccine was higher than expected. In its modelling for the GP catch-up program the Department based its assumptions, and estimates of cohorts in this age group on those used in the implementation of new vaccines. Subsequent advertising campaigns significantly raised the awareness of the program within the community resulting in a greater than anticipated uptake of the vaccine.

(5) State and territory immunisation coordinators have indicated that there has been a slight decline over recent months in parental consent to vaccinations in some jurisdictions, attributed mainly to media reports of adverse reactions to the vaccine. No other notable impediments have been identified.

(6) It is anticipated that most young women falling within the catch-up group and wishing to be vaccinated will have been vaccinated by 30 June 2009. Consideration may be given to continuing the catch-up program if there is ongoing demand beyond this date.