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FORTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FOURTH PERIOD

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

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 Stephen Shane Parry

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 Barnaby Thomas Gerard Joyce
Deputy Leader of the Nationals—Senator Fiona Nash
Leader of the Australian Greens—Senator Robert James Brown
Deputy Leader of the Australian Greens—Senator Christine Anne Milne
Leader of the Family First Party—Senator Steve Fielding
Chief Government Whip—Senator Kerry Williams Kelso O’Brien
Deputy Government Whips—Senators Donald Edward Farrell and Anne McEwen
Chief Opposition Whip—Senator Stephen Shane Parry
Deputy Opposition Whips—Senators Judith Anne Adams and David Christopher Bushby
The Nationals Whip—Senator John Reginald Williams
Australian Greens Whip—Senator Rachel Mary Siewert
Family First Party Whip—Senator Steve Fielding

Printed by authority of the Senate
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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) Chosen by the Parliament of Western Australia to fill a casual vacancy vice Christopher Martin Ellison, resigned.
(4) 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
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion
Treasurer
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and Leader of the Government in the Senate
Special Minister of State, Cabinet Secretary and Vice President of the Executive Council
Minister for Finance and Deregulation
Minister for Trade
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Defence
Minister for Health and Ageing
Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and Leader of the House
Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
Minister for Climate Change and Water
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts Attorney-General
Minister for Human Services and Manager of Government Business in the Senate
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism

[The above ministers constitute the cabinet]
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<td>Minister for Home Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Bob Debus MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Chris Bowen MP</td>
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<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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<td>Minister for Defence Science and Personnel</td>
<td>Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</td>
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<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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<td>Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law</td>
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<td>Minister for Ageing</td>
<td>Hon. Justine Elliot MP</td>
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<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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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change</td>
<td>Hon. Greg Combet AM, MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support and Parliamentary Secretary for Water</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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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children’s Services and Parliamentary Secretary for Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction</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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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Duncan Kerr MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Parliamentary Secretary for Trade</td>
<td>Hon. Anthony Byrne MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and Parliamentary Secretary for the Voluntary Sector</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Ursula Stephens</td>
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<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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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Government Service Delivery</td>
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SHADOW MINISTRY

Leader of the Opposition
The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP

Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Leader of the Opposition
The Hon Julie Bishop MP

Shadow Minister for Trade, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and Leader of the Nationals
The Hon Warren Truss MP

Shadow Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Leader of the Opposition in the Senate
Senator the Hon Nick Minchin

Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate
Senator the Hon Eric Abetz

Shadow Treasurer
The Hon Joe Hockey MP

Shadow Minister for Education, Apprenticeships and Training and Manager of Opposition Business in the House
The Hon Christopher Pyne MP

Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and COAG and Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on Emissions Trading Design
The Hon Andrew Robb AO, MP

Shadow Minister for Finance, Competition Policy and Deregulation
Senator the Hon Helen Coonan

Shadow Minister for Human Services and Deputy Leader of The Nationals
Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion

Shadow Minister for Energy and Resources
The Hon Ian Macfarlane MP

Shadow Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
The Hon Tony Abbott MP

Shadow Special Minister of State and Shadow Cabinet Secretary
Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson

Shadow Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water
The Hon Greg Hunt MP

Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing
The Hon Peter Dutton MP

Shadow Minister for Defence
Senator the Hon David Johnston

Shadow Attorney-General
Senator the Hon George Brandis SC

Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
The Hon John Cobb MP

Mr Michael Keenan MP

Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
The Hon Dr Sharman Stone

Shadow Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors, Tourism and the Arts
Mr Steven Ciobo

[The above constitute the shadow cabinet]
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<th>MP Name</th>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law</td>
<td>The Hon Chris Pearce MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon Tony Smith MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Sustainable Development and Cities</td>
<td>The Hon Bruce Billson MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs and Deputy</td>
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<td>Manager of Opposition Business in the House</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Housing and Local Government</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education, Childcare, Status of</td>
<td>Mrs Louise Markus MP</td>
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<td>Women and Youth</td>
<td>Mrs Sophie Mirabella MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Justice and Customs</td>
<td>The Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Roads and Transport</td>
<td>Mr Don Randall MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development</td>
<td>Mr John Forrest MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Energy and Resources</td>
<td>Mr Barry Haase MP</td>
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<td>Mr Mark Coulton MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Health Administration</td>
<td>Senator Mathias Cormann</td>
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The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. John Hogg) took the chair at 12.30 pm and read prayers.

BUSINESS

Rearrangement

Senator LUDWIG (Queensland—Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (12.31 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the hours of meeting for Tuesday, 12 May 2009 be from 12.30 pm to 6.30 pm and 8 pm to adjournment, and for Thursday, 14 May 2009 be from 9.30 am to 6 pm and 8 pm to adjournment, and that:

(a) the routine of business from 8 pm on Tuesday, 12 May 2009 shall be:
   (i) Budget statement and documents 2009-2010,
   (ii) adjournment; and
(b) the routine of business from 8 pm on Thursday, 14 May 2009 shall be:
   (i) Budget statement and documents—party leaders and independent senator to make responses to the statement and documents for not more than 30 minutes each, and
   (ii) adjournment.

Question agreed to.

AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS
INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP BILL 2009

AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS
INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP
(CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENT)
BILL 2009

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 18 March, on motion by Senator McLucas:

That these bills be now read a second time.

Senator COONAN (New South Wales) (12.32 pm)—I rise to speak in response to the proposed Australian Business Investment Partnership Bill 2009. ABIP, colloquially called Ruddbank, will be established under the Corporations Act 2001 and will be a public company limited by shares. The members, or shareholders, of ABIP will be the Commonwealth of Australia and Australia’s four major domestic banks, Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, National Australia Bank Ltd and Westpac Banking Corporation.

This bill provides for the creation of the Australian Business Investment Partnership, which is a company established to address the potential risk of a funding gap in the commercial property sector due to a reduction of foreign banks’ level of financing. The objectives of this organisation are to provide refinancing for loans relating to commercial property assets in Australia in situations where finance relating to those assets is not available from commercial providers other than the organisation itself—that is, other than ABIP—and the assets would be otherwise financially viable. Its further object is to provide financing arrangements in other areas of commercial lending if circumstances necessitate and provided those arrangements are agreed upon unanimously by the members of ABIP. The board of the organisation comprises one nominee from each of the four major banks, and a Commonwealth nominee will chair the board. The Treasurer, Mr Swan, announced at 11.30 pm on Sunday, 10 May the appointment of a former senior public servant, David Borthwick, to be the chair of Ruddbank. Each member has a right of veto, and all decisions about lending need unanimous agreement.

How much will it cost? The government and the four major domestic banks, Commonwealth, NAB, Westpac and ANZ, will provide initial loan funding to ABIP and an amount of working capital. The government will provide $2 billion, and the four major
domestic banks will provide $500 million each. On its establishment, ABIP will have access to $4 billion in undrawn loan facilities less an amount for working capital, which is expected to be $4 million. The financing provided by the major banks will not be government guaranteed. ABIP will repute the loan funding provided by the government and the four major domestic banks to commercial property assets that meet ABIP’s lending criteria, determined by shareholders. The organisation will only provide funding for commercial property where the underlying assets and the income streams from those assets are financially viable. If additional financing is required beyond the initial contribution of $4 billion, ABIP will be able to issue up to $26 billion in debt to raise that additional funding, subject of course to the unanimous agreement of shareholders. This could provide the bank with up to $30 billion in funds and financing. Debt issued by ABIP will, however, be guaranteed only by the Commonwealth.

ABIP is expressly exempted from the provisions of the Trade Practices Act. The Trade Practices Act is of course the key competition law in Australia and provides fair trading and the protection of consumers and prevents some restrictive trade practices of companies. As the government is proposing that ABIP be exempt from the Trade Practices Act, ABIP will not be subject to the laws promulgated in the Trade Practices Act regarding restrictive trade practices, unconscionable conduct or misleading or deceptive conduct.

The first issue here, then, is whether the foundation for the Ruddbank—namely, the potential for withdrawal of foreign banks—is likely.

On 20 January 2009, the Prime Minister gave an address in Adelaide and spoke of how ‘cash-strapped foreign banks are scaling back their lending in foreign markets such as Australia’. The Prime Minister went on to say:

If foreign banks do not roll over their share of these loans, it would be difficult for Australia’s four major banks to fill the gap on their own.

The Prime Minister was insinuating, if not stating directly, that Australia could expect to see an exodus of foreign lenders in Australian credit markets, particularly where loans are provided in the commercial property sector. Four days later, the Prime Minister took it upon himself to establish a solution to this scenario. On 24 January 2009 the Prime Minister announced through a media release the birth of the $30 billion policy project, the Australian Business Investment Partnership, through the bill which we are now discussing in the Senate.

Two weeks after Mr Rudd made this announcement, the Reserve Bank of Australia refuted the Prime Minister’s claims with regard to the possible exodus of foreign lenders from Australian shores. In its Statement on monetary policy released on 6 February 2009 it stated:

Over recent months there has been some speculation that many foreign owned banks will withdraw from the Australian market and that this will create a significant funding shortfall for businesses. While there is a risk that some foreign lenders will scale back their Australian operations, particularly if offshore financial markets deteriorate further, at this stage there is little sign of this, with most of the large foreign-owned banks planning to maintain their lending activities in the Australian market.

So here we have a situation where yet again Mr Rudd has overreacted, created policy on the run and responded to a problem where the evidence was at least equivocal.

In evidence to the Senate Standing Committee on Economics, the Property Council of Australia said that of the 23 foreign banks in Australia only one, the Royal Bank of
Scotland, had been withdrawn from the Australian market. It added that the US Citigroup faced some difficulties. These banks, of course, face unique solvency problems in their respective home countries. Perhaps their problems are not unique, but they are certainly pervasive. No specific evidence was given to the committee of further foreign banks planning to withdraw from Australia; only vague references were made to what appeared to be unsubstantiated possibilities that some foreign banks might be considering withdrawal.

In his submission from Concept Economics, respected economist Professor Henry Ergas disagreed strongly with the government’s pre-emptive concerns about foreign bank withdrawal. He said:

There seems to be little convincing evidence justifying the primary rationale for the proposal—bailing out distressed syndicated commercial property lenders and preventing fire sales—and even less evidence of a market failure in respect of the secondary purpose of financing commercial lending in general.

This points to one of the major problems with the proposal: the moral hazard that it creates. There is a material risk that the initiative could actually encourage the very actions it is designed to forestall. Faced with a one-way bet, developers have an incentive to play off their existing foreign lenders which, in turn, could accelerate their withdrawal from the Australian market.

ABIP, then, could potentially act as a counterproductive incentive for foreign banks, offering them the security of a taxpayer funded safety net that will allow foreign banks to exit at the full value of their investment. This will encourage them to reduce their Australian exposures and could harm Australia’s reputation more broadly in global markets. This very point was raised at the Senate Standing Committee on Economics hearing of 14 April 2009, which I referred to a little earlier, when Mr Peter Verwer, the longstanding Chief Executive Officer of the Property Council of Australia, said:

It is the strongest argument against ABIP.

... we do not have the technical answer as to how we can make sure foreign banks do not try and use ABIP as their escape card from Australia.

If there were a prize for the most counterproductive legislation of the year, this mess before us, I think, would have to be in the running as a standout winner.

Under Australian Corporations Law, companies are required to have a board which consists of members acting in the best interests of the company. Given that the board structure of ABIP consists of a representative of the four major banks and the government, the four major banks do expose themselves to a potential conflict of interest and abuse of market power. All four banks are involved in competitive financial commercial property developments, and each has a veto over any decisions of the board of ABIP. In his submission, Professor Ergas highlighted the concerns for good corporate governance and accountability in this particular part of the structure:

The majority of commercial property exposures in Australia are held by domestic banks. In particular, most exposures are held by the proposed shareholders of the new entity—the four major banks.

We are starting to get the picture here: unusually for a government agency there are no clear lines of accountability for ABIP either to a minister or indeed to the parliament. This lack of transparency and accountability offends just about every principle of good governance that I can think of and should not be countenanced.

Another significant concern with this bill is the broad nature of the lending criteria. The Australian Business Investment Partnership Bill 2009 fails to specify the criteria for...
the ‘other’ commercial lending that may be embarked upon by the bank. Section 7(2) of the Australian Business Investment Partnership Bill does not prevent the partners lending from this fund for whatever purpose they see fit. Concerns surrounding the broad nature of the lending criteria in this fund have also been shared by General Electric. In correspondence which I have received from their Vice-President, Government Relations, they stated their concerns: ‘The scope of the legislation is too broad and it goes beyond the government’s originally stated intention to cover just property.’ Here we have a bit of legislation creep.

The large gaps in this bill leave the door open for lending that would not be restricted to the commercial property sector, exposing the scheme to potential uncertainty and exposure to unnecessary debt. Of no small concern is the fact that Ruddbank has been given specific exemption from the Trade Practices Act. Some would claim that this is necessary for the structure to work. I can understand the thinking that would have surrounded this exemption, but such an exemption from the Trade Practices Act does smack of a potential for decision making by a cartel. The ACCC were not, as I understand it, involved in discussions of any significance with Treasury in formulating the scheme, and they were involved in no discussions about the implications of exemptions from the Trade Practices Act or the legal framework within which the bank would operate. We really have to ask: why not? We do not appear to have a cogent reason why, although, as I say, I can imagine in developing the scheme the reasons why it may have been thought the only way it would work would be to exclude it. But it does expose the scheme to risks.

The bill does not explain in what circumstances, for instance, finance is ‘not available’ in the definition or describe the circumstances where a viable project would become ‘unviable’—what does that mean?—due to the margin of the financing arrangement available other than that of the bank. It is a very circuitous definition. This bill structures the bank in a way that provides, of course, a disproportionate level of risk for Australian taxpayers. This is a critical factor. The four banks own half of Ruddbank, participate equally in the benefits of the bank but are not liable for the $26 billion in further borrowings. Guess who is liable for that? The good old Australian taxpayer. These borrowings are guaranteed by the Australian taxpayer.

What government, I ask, in their right mind would set up a company, contribute half the capital and bear all of the risk for billions of dollars worth of borrowings for a problem which is yet to emerge, let alone eventuate? If the size of the taxpayers’ contribution towards this mess was not enough, it is the composition and the unfettered powers of the bank which really beggar belief. Ruddbank is a rushed piece of legislation brought to the parliament to fix a problem which is yet to surface or emerge or manifest itself in any significant way. It is a problem which some may argue is a result of an earlier mistake made by the Rudd government, back in October 2008. Overseas lenders are finding it increasingly difficult to lend against the Rudd government—taxpayer funded—guaranteed banks. Foreign lenders are in fact being crowded out of the market.

ustralians have witnessed billions of their taxpayers’ dollars used in frivolous cash splashes this year and yet are now facing the largest deficit in this nation’s history. The Howard government paid off $96 billion of Labor’s debt and left the Rudd government with a $22 billion surplus, lower taxes, record low unemployment and higher real wages. We had set up the Future Fund, the Higher Education Endowment Fund and the Communications Fund. There are expectations that tonight the Rudd Labor govern-
ment will bring down a budget that will have a deficit of $60 billion and debt and deficit as far as the eye can see. From a surplus of $22 billion last year, the Rudd Labor government has made spending decisions in the order of $80 billion since the last budget that have been largely wasted on short sugar hits that have had no lasting benefits but have contributed to ballooning debt. Australia will have the largest deficit in modern Australian history and every Australian will now be paying for the Rudd Labor government’s reckless spending. The government has simply lost control of the nation’s finances.

The Rudd government now, in this legislation, wants to press ahead with a scheme that will increase Australia’s contingent liabilities, which some people in the chamber might not realise are currently running at about $1 trillion. With insufficient detail as to how this bank will support jobs in the commercial property sector, no real evidence before us of a pattern of withdrawal in financing, the government has spectacularly failed to substantiate the need for this new commercial vehicle. We need to keep asking ourselves the question: what is the government really doing to support small business and jobs, allowing the productive capacity of the economy to recover and pull us out of the rivers of red ink? Someone has to stand up for Australian taxpayers, and that is exactly why we are opposing this legislation. This is a poorly constructed bill and has the potential to make a difficult economic situation worse. The coalition will not support it.

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (12.49 pm)—The Australian Business Investment Partnership Bill 2009 and the Australian Business Investment Partnership (Consequential Amendment) Bill 2009 confront us in the Senate with how we are custodians of some $2 billion upfront of public money that will be matched by an equal component coming from the four major banks together in Australia, at a time when there are other huge demands on the government to help people dealing with the recession—not least small business, which has nothing to gain at all from this legislation. The Commonwealth carries the majority of the funding requirements and also most of the risk. Where I say ‘Commonwealth’ there, I effectively mean taxpayers. This bill could potentially expose taxpayers to a $28 billion increase in debt. That is because, added to the initial $2 billion—which is seeding the loan to the entity which will be made up of the four banks and the Commonwealth to then ensure that developers and others who may face a default from an overseas lender are able to get the money to continue with their development—is a $26 billion loan guarantee. That $26 billion is a guarantee from the Commonwealth—that is, the taxpayers—and not from the big four banks. Moreover, the Commonwealth is funding up to 93 per cent of the loan facility, and therefore the risk, compared to 1.6 per cent of the debt funding carried by each of the four commercial banks. In other words, their risk is potentially tiny compared to the enormous risk that the taxpayers of Australia could end up taking under this legislation.

What is more, it is not very clear and has not become clear through the process of the Senate inquiry how necessary the Australian Business Investment Partnership arrangement is. It may have appeared, early in the recession, to be much more urgent. There was a lot of talk about defaults or bank closures overseas and the drying up of foreign investment potential, but that has somewhat eased in the meantime. In its statement on monetary policy this month, the Reserve Bank itself had data showing that foreign bank lending in the private sector has been maintained throughout the economic crisis. So the alarm bells which were sounding and
which triggered this idea from the government, and therefore the legislation, have not led to the crisis that may have been expected. While it is probably the case that some banks are reducing their lending activity, the industry stakeholders have not given convincing evidence to the Senate inquiry to provide for us here, who now have to deal with this matter, conclusive argument that other banks or other sources of funding cannot be found without putting the taxpayers’ dollar at so much risk.

The other problem the Greens have with this legislation is that the fate of the public money that is put up through this mechanism will effectively be decided by private sector bankers without parliamentary oversight. We know that there is an arrangement for a board to be made up of private sector representatives, one from each bank and one from the Commonwealth. I hasten to point out that, yes, we know that each member will have the right of veto on the money being used to facilitate loans to applicants. But really why not have at the outset a board made up of at least four Commonwealth representatives to match the four from the banks? After all, they are putting in $2 billion upfront, even though the banks at the end do not face near the risk that the Commonwealth does. Anybody familiar with boards will know that if you have a like-minded or like-interested fellow member on a board you can function much better very often than if you are there by yourself. So we have an amendment which would change that board arrangement to bring it up to eight: four representatives from the Commonwealth and one from each of the four banks.

The lending criteria have not been released for public comment and there is no parliamentary oversight on developing those criteria in this legislation that I can see. The immediate question is why there should not be. Why should we not in the Senate, for example, as watchdogs of the public interest, be able to be informed and keep an oversight on quite an enormous amount of public money and the decisions being made about it by the proposed board? The Australian Business Investment Partnership’s annual reports to parliament will not include details of who has applied for or who has been granted loans. We might read that in the financial press or we might not. The parliament therefore will not have a say in how the money is used or who is getting access to it—not even a retrospective say, unless we happen to read it in the press. That is unsatisfactory. I know that there will be some people crying commercial confidentiality. I notice that President Obama is giving short shrift in the United States to this idea that the private sector, even when a recipient of billions of dollars of public money, can remain translucent at best, if not opaque, rather than transparent, as is expected with money going into the public sector. The quid pro quo for large amounts of money like this coming from taxpayers’ pockets and being directed, through parliamentary decision, to a board which then can allocate the money on to commercial firms is that those commercial firms have to be open about the business enterprises which are being facilitated in such a way.

At a time when we are expecting and the government is predicting eight per cent plus unemployment within 12 months, it is hard to get a handle, reading this legislation, on what sort of job generation, let alone what sort of job guarantee, comes with the apportionment of $2 billion of taxpayers’ money and a potential $26 billion further money put at risk. The Australian Business Investment Partnership has been developed to support investment in the construction sector, it is said, but it will be focused on refinancing projects which have already been built or
which are under construction. This raises the question of which jobs are going to be saved or created through the use of these public funds, and indeed what weighting is being given to employment factors in making decisions about these loans. We are very used to the biggest of corporations presenting themselves as being in the business of job creation when in fact they are not; they are in the business of creating a maximum bottom line, a maximum profit, and very often at the expense of jobs.

The loans will be potentially available to all businesses which need refinancing of their commercial property due to the withdrawal of a foreign bank. But where are the employment benefits of providing loans to investment companies who may own those properties? They are hard to see. Certainly, I have seen nothing from the government to give us some feelgood outcome from this legislation with regard to the creation of jobs for Australians who may be desperately seeking them in the heart of a recession.

We are told that one purpose of the Australian Business Investment Partnership is to boost confidence in the construction sector and therefore investment and employment in new projects. But an easier and more transparent way to achieve this outcome is through direct government investment in public infrastructure. We do not have to go to a private sector with no report-back to parliament, where decisions are going to be made for the commercial good of some very large companies—some of them international corporations—without an eye on the social dividends and what comes back to the taxpayer for the expenditure of this money.

I flag that we Greens will move an amendment in the committee stage relating to the salaries of chief executive officers who are in companies—either the banks facilitating the use of this large amount of taxpayers’ money, or the developers, particularly in the construction industry, who may be the recipients of between $2 billion and $28 billion of public largesse. Some of those involved—I can give you the figures for 2008, Mr Acting Deputy President—include Mr Mike Smith of the ANZ Bank, who last year was paid $6 million; Mr Norris of the Commonwealth Bank, who got $8.66 million; Mr Stewart of the National Australia Bank, who got $4.28 million; and then, when we go beyond the banks to potential recipients of loans, Mr Frank Lowy from Westfield, who was reported, on 29 March 2008 in the Australian Financial Review, to be on $15.88 million annually. You can move from there right down to Mr Paramor of Mirvac who was on $2.8 million. I have also had my attention drawn to the Adelaide Advertiser of Wednesday, 18 March, with the heading, ‘Rio sacks 14,000 workers and pays a retiring boss $15 million’. This is, of course, Rio Tinto, the international corporation, which has drawn so much attention because of Chinalco’s interest in having a controlling interest in that particular company.

President Obama has moved to limit the executive payments where public largesse is involved to half a million dollars. Germany and Sweden have legislated for similar arrangements, and other countries are continuing to look at clipping the wings of some of the more, to quote the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. Kevin Rudd, ‘obscene’ payments being taken by some of the more greedy CEOs in Australia. I, for one, do not want to see taxpayers’ money—potentially hundreds of millions of dollars of it—being lent to or facilitating corporations which, by the very nature of getting such largesse, may not have managed their affairs as well as they could have and who have CEOs on multimillion-dollar packages which will be draining some of that taxpayers’ money straight into their Rolls-Royces or their
newly purchased multibillion-dollar homes or whatever.

**Opposition senator interjecting**—Million-dollar homes.

**Senator BOB BROWN**—Yes, million-dollar homes, says my fellow senator. It is a serious matter. I have brought before the Senate, on behalf of the Greens, at least four times in the last six months—although this has been a Greens policy matter expressed in the Senate since 2005, at least—the need to cap some of the more extreme so-called salaries. I do not think they are salaries; I think they are the purloining of public money—by the heads of some companies only, because most CEOs, like most people in the private sector and like most people in the public sector, are good-hearted and civic-minded people. But some cannot help but be engaged in a decision-making process which benefits them. I do not need to explain to the Senate that, no less than in the public sector, when money—tens of millions of dollars—gets taken out of the private sector and put into the hands of CEOs, it does not come out of thin air; it comes out of the pockets of ordinary Australians. It either comes out of forgone profits which should go to the shareholders of those companies, or it comes out of the goods and services rendered by those companies, in added costs, higher prices, passed on to the person in the street, the average householder. There is no magic about that. It is simply unfair that some CEOs are taking home salaries hundreds of times above those that the workers at the lower income end, who work just as hard in those corporations, get to take home.

We are proposing that, where corporations or banks are facilitated by this use of $2 billion of public money and the potential $26 billion loan guarantee that comes with it, the CEO packages should be limited to $1 million, taking into account all entities, all ways of payment. I would be very confident that if we went out to the street and asked, ‘Do you think that any CEO in Australia would be doing very well indeed on a million dollars a year, or three times the Prime Minister’s income?’ people would say, ‘Yes, that’s a maximum.’

There are those who feel that, with reports of severance payments of over $80 million to one CEO in Australia last year and ongoing payments of $10 million, $20 million or $30 million to certain CEOs going into this year, we have all become a little bit blase about it, but a reality check is required here. People are in Struggle Street in Australia due to the recession. People are having a hard time of it. A lot of small businesses are running very close to the line if not imploding. Bankruptcies are up. It is not that people are working less; they are working harder, but they are having a very, very tough time of it. We have seen hundreds of thousands of people added to the unemployment queues, not least in my home state of Tasmania, in just the last few months. I, for one, with my fellow Greens, am not about to say, ‘No strings attached,’ to the captains of industry, with this money coming out of the public purse at such a time.

I can guarantee that, if the Greens were given $2 billion to invest in small business in this country or to invest in local government, we would get a huge jobs dividend. We did with the stimulus package. In the $500 million that we got through reducing the one-off payments to taxpayers from $950 to $900 through the good services of the government, we were able to create a package which was job rich, with more than double the job creativity of the stimulus package itself—and so we could do with this.

The proposed amendment is a serious one. We are not in the business here of putting forward an amendment like that and saying,
'But we’re quite happy for it to be knocked down.’ I want to hear a serious response from the government. That does not mean fobbing it off or putting it off to some other time or place for discussion. Now is the time to discuss CEO salaries. Now is the time to act on it. I put that to the Prime Minister. We are not about to just pass this legislation without some dinkum response from the government on these amendments.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Marshall)—Senator Brown, was that a second reading amendment you were referring to?

Senator BOB BROWN—No. I am flagging those amendments in committee.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Thank you, Senator Brown.

Senator CAMERON (New South Wales) (1.09 pm)—I am pleased to support the second reading of these bills. The Australian Business Investment Partnership Bill 2009 introduces measures to establish the Australian Business Investment Partnership Ltd and to create appropriations for the government’s investment in ABIP and the government’s guarantee on any additional debt-ABIP issues. The Australian Business Investment Partnership (Consequential Amendment) Bill 2009 amends the Corporations Act by listing the Australian Business Investment Partnership Ltd as exempt from the requirement to hold an Australian financial services licence.

On 24 January 2009, the Prime Minister and the Treasurer announced the establishment of the Australian Business Investment Partnership. ABIP is a temporary contingency measure to provide support for viable commercial property assets where there is a withdrawal from financing arrangements due to the abnormal conditions in global capital markets. It seems to me from listening to some of the contributions here this afternoon that people do not understand that there is a global financial crisis, that people do not understand that workers’ jobs are at risk and that people do not understand that finance is drying up all around the globe. And these people who do not understand it are putting Australian jobs at risk. It is about time that the opposition had some financial credibility in dealing with the global economic crisis and understood what governments around the world are dealing with: the biggest financial collapse since the Great Depression. Yet all the opposition want to do is say no—no to every initiative that the government brings forward to assist the community and to assist business against the economic tsunami that is coming in the shape of the global economic crisis.

This is a temporary contingency measure to provide support for viable commercial assets. The announcement that Kevin Rudd made followed a range of discussions with the major banks regarding actions the government may take to address potential liquidity problems that may emerge as a result of foreign banks withdrawing funding from Australia due to commercial and political pressures within their countries of origin. Make no mistake: these big banks are not only under commercial pressure; the foreign banks that are here are under political pressure in their countries of origin to withdraw overseas funding and put that funding in their countries of origin. Yet here we have the opposition carping and criticising, with no intellectual analysis, with no critical analysis, of the problems that this country is facing and the problems that building workers face in maintaining their jobs in the face of this crisis.

ABIP will operate in a market gap. It will not be creating a market. It will operate in that market gap with other commercial providers who are not able to provide finance due to the global crisis. Accordingly, ABIP is not taking business away from existing fi-
nanciers. This is buttressed by a pricing policy which will charge a small premium to the market. ABIP is a contingency measure. It may ultimately not write any loans at all. The government is not subsidising ABIP or any of the four major banks which are co-shareholders. The shareholders agreement prevents ABIP directors from passing confidential information back to the shareholders. ABIP will operate on commercial lines and hence is not taking on poorly performing assets to the benefit of other financiers.

ABIP has broad support, both from independent economic experts and the industry. The Urban Taskforce, a not-for-profit organisation representing large urban property developers, fully supports the bill. It understands the crisis that the industry is facing, and it supports the government’s position. General Electric supports this bill. Though it has raised some minor concerns, it generally supports the bill. Eureka Funds Management, a super funds manager, is supportive and has suggested some minor amendments. AMP Capital Investors supports it and has actually suggested broadening the scope of the lending in this bill. The Property Council of Australia—the biggest organisation around in the industry, and whose members are the people actually in there helping create the jobs and build the infrastructure in this country—supports this bill. Frank Gelber, the chief economist of BIS Shrapnel, just destroyed the arguments that were put by the other economists appearing before the committee’s inquiry into the bill. He supports ABIP as preventing a financial crisis and not on the basis of trying to stimulate development. The Master Builders Association, the peak building and construction association in the industry, supports the bill. This is what it has to say:

Master Builders agrees that ABIP should not be used to provide finance for those commercial building projects under construction that are not financially sound but should only be used to provide last resort finance where other sources of finance cannot be obtained.

Mr Harnisch said “Availability of finance and business confidence are the two critical factors that need to be addressed in responding to the challenging economic period facing Australia”.

The proposed ABIP Bill therefore is an important circuit breaker in meeting those challenges.

The industry understands the need for ABIP even if the opposition cannot understand the need for this approach. The opposition has come from the usual suspects. It has come from ‘Mr No’, the Leader of the Opposition, Malcolm Turnbull: no on every initiative; just reject every initiative the government takes to try to assist Australia to manage the global economic crisis. It does not matter if it saves the jobs of building workers; just say no. It does not matter if we are faced with global warming and the need to deal with it—something that the opposition refused to do for 11½ years; just say no. This is an opposition leader with no vision and no leadership for this country. This is an opposition leader whose first reaction to every piece of legislation to assist this country is to say no. Those opposite are the cheer squad for the negative. You sit there and you stick your hand up to say no to helping ordinary Australians deal with the effects of the biggest economic crisis since the Great Depression. You are not interested in jobs; you are only interested in short-term politics and trying to get your eye on the next headline in the Australian. That is your position. You are consumed by negativity, you are consumed by ideology and you are not interested in dealing with the key issues for this country during the global financial crisis.

Who do we then see let loose on the Senate Standing Committee on Economics in support of the government’s negativity? One Dr Henry Ergas—

Senator Eggleston—Brilliant!
Senator CAMERON—Malcolm Turnbull’s tame economist; Malcolm Turnbull’s paid economist. I heard the word ‘brilliant’. Well, I challenge anyone to look at the submission that Dr Henry Ergas gave to the economics committee and describe it as ‘brilliant’. In fact, it was sloppy, it was biased and it did not go to the facts of the matter that was before them. You do not have to pay Dr Henry Ergas to come to the economics committee anymore. What you should simply do is pick up his articles in the Australian and table them as your opposition report, because that is what you have basically done. You see, the Prime Minister announced this initiative on 25 November last year. On 27 November, Dr Henry Ergas wrote an opinion piece in the Australian without understanding the details of the legislation, without seeing the legislation and without understanding what was going on. It was typical of Dr Henry Ergas. He rings Malcolm up, and Malcolm says: ‘Say no. Find me a story so that I can justify saying no.’ And Dr Henry Ergas goes back to Concept Economics and says, ‘Build the story for no,’ and out it comes to the economics committee and the Senate. The Liberal and Nationals senators on the economics committee sat there in raptures, clapping their hands at the negativity of Dr Henry Ergas. What a joke! What an absolute joke you lot are. You really do not have the interests of this country at heart; you are simply into negativity and saying no whenever it counts.

Unlike other people who came to the committee and tried to deal with this issue, Dr Henry Ergas did not deal with this in a rigorous and independent manner. And Henry Ergas has form on this. He is not seen as independent. He is not seen as rigorous. The whole case from the opposition rests on a sloppy submission from Dr Henry Ergas to the economics committee. Dr Henry Ergas is the guy who has had 64 articles or quotes in the Australian since 11 August. Twenty-three of those articles are negative about the government. The guy is an absolute, serial oppositionist. He is a bit like Malcolm Turnbull—‘Just say no.’ He is the paid apparatchik of the Liberal Party, yet you have the hide to come here on an issue of such importance to the construction and building industry in this country and use Dr Henry Ergas as the reasoning for why you oppose this. You should be absolutely ashamed of yourselves. How about putting the building workers of Australia before your ideology? How about putting the 50,000 building workers who could lose their jobs if foreign investment is removed from this country before your ideology and your dogma? For once, stand up for the workers in this country and look at this legislation on the basis of what it is about. It is not, as Senator Bob Brown tried to put it, standing up for big business. Sometimes you have to actually analyse the issues, and the key issues here are 50,000 jobs that could disappear unless we do the right thing in the face of the global economic crisis.

The Labor plan is to fund this proposal to put a safety net in place if that foreign investment disappears. As we understand it, close to $30 billion will need to be refinanced over the next three years in the building industry. Close to 70 per cent of this is bank debt controlled by foreign banks. This is not simply an issue where the opposition should say, ‘We don’t like the government legislation,’ because the coalition do not want any government involvement in the markets and their ideology will not let them do it. They should get over that. Senator Brown should get over simply targeting the issue of executive pay. No-one on this side supports the terribly high pay that is provided to some of our executives, but the issue here is not executive pay; the issue here is to get the financial backing for our commercial construction industry. It is about en-
suring that 50,000 jobs do not disappear if that funding is removed.

It is about time the opposition took the blinkers off. It is about time they stopped looking at their toes and looked around, not only within Australia but at the rest of the world, and started to understand that we have a global financial crisis facing this country. That financial crisis will cost workers their jobs. We must do everything in our power to buffer ourselves against the failure of the financial system. What do the Liberal-National coalition do? They go back to what they always want to be—neoliberals with small government, with no involvement for government. They think it does not matter if workers lose their jobs and if communities go backwards, just as long as the government does not intervene in the market. All the Liberal-National coalition understand is to try to be internationally competitive on ripping away workers’ wages and conditions. That is why we saw the nonsense in relation to the Fair Work Bill, where those on the other side were clinging to what they see as the only economic way forward—that is, to be competitive by reducing workers’ wages and conditions.

You can be competitive and smart and you can do it by government involvement in the economy. The market should serve society, not the other way round. That is what you lot do not understand. Your opposition to this legislation is an example of saying that the market should be let rip and that it does not matter about jobs as long as the economic theories of Hayek are there, as long as the pure neoliberal approaches are in there. ‘Do not let the government intervene, do not let the government support this industry, do not let the government support 50,000 jobs’—that is the nonsense that we have from those on the other side. It is the lack of economic credibility that left this country ill-prepared to face the global economic crisis—ill-prepared on training, ill-prepared on infrastructure—

**Senator Williams**—Debt free.

**Senator CAMERON**—We hear the interjection ‘debt free’. You mean debt free but with crumbling infrastructure, debt free with no education policy of substance, debt free but unable to deal with a global financial crisis. What a lot of economic incompetents you are. No wonder you were tossed out on your neck. The public will never accept this type of rabid nonsense from you lot again because they know that there is a role for government. The public know there is a role for intervention in the economy. (Time expired)

**Senator EGGLESTON** (Western Australia) (1.30 pm)—I must say, in response to Senator Cameron, that I am very proud to be part of the cheer squad for the ‘no’ case for this legislation, the Australian Business Investment Partnership Bill 2009 and the Australian Business Investment Partnership (Consequential Amendment) Bill 2009, which we consider to be an unnecessary overreaction to an unlikely event. And the unlikely event is, of course, the withdrawal of foreign banks from the Australian commercial property market. This whole legislation is predicated on the concept that foreign banks that are heavily involved in the commercial property market—not as heavily involved, I have to say, as our four major banks; the four domestic banks hold 63 per cent of the investment in the commercial property market, but I will come back to that—will all withdraw from the Australian commercial property market.

In giving evidence to the Senate Standing Committee on Economics, the Property Council of Australia said that of the 23 foreign banks in Australia, only one, the Royal Bank of Scotland, has actually withdrawn from the Australian market. The other bank
that had a question mark over it was Citibank. It faced some difficulties in the United States but has remained in Australia. So in fact only one bank, the Royal Bank of Scotland, has withdrawn from the commercial property market, and it appears that it is very unlikely that any other foreign banks will withdraw from the Australian commercial property market. In fact, the Reserve Bank’s February 2009 statement on monetary policy said:

Over recent months there has been some speculation that many foreign-owned banks will withdraw from the Australian market and that this will create a significant funding shortfall for businesses. While there is a risk that some foreign lenders will scale back their Australian operations, particularly if offshore financial markets deteriorate further, at this stage there is little sign of this, with most of the large foreign-owned banks planning to maintain their lending activities in the Australian market.

In other words, there is no evidence of foreign banks withdrawing from the Australian market, and yet this is the underlying rationale of ABIP, or Ruddbank, as it is more commonly known. This means, in effect, there is no reason to establish the ABIP, or Ruddbank, because the possibility that it is being set up to deal with is not occurring—namely, the foreign banks are not withdrawing from the Australian market at all. That is a very important point that Senator Cameron should take on board. This is a totally unnecessary proposal that could cost Australian taxpayers up to $28 billion—if, in fact, this is being set up for the purpose that Prime Minister Rudd has said it is being set up for. There is the question of whether there may be a wider agenda here than just dealing with the withdrawal of the foreign banks from this country.

We have other concerns beyond the fact that the rationale for the establishment of this proposal, this bank, has no basis. These concerns deal with the fact that, as Professor Henry Ergas said, there was a very real possibility that the very act of establishing Ruddbank, or ABIP, would in fact encourage the withdrawal of foreign banks from the Australian commercial property market—and Senator Cameron referred to Professor Ergas in his speech. In fact, if there is a safety net there willing to guarantee 100 per cent of the investment of these foreign banks in commercial property, the banks will probably avail themselves of it; they will take the money, get 100 per cent of their money and the poor old Australian taxpayer will be carrying the can. Under the buyback proposal, it is possible that ABIP can guarantee up to $28 billion of loans.

Senator Cameron was very critical of Professor Ergas, when in fact Professor Ergas is a clear-thinking and highly regarded economist. The point he makes that ABIP could create the situation which it is supposed to be preventing is one which the coalition senators on the economics committee found to be very convincing. There is a very real danger that, if ABIP is set up, foreign banks will avail themselves of the guarantees it offers and withdraw from the commercial property market in Australia. That is another reason why it is a very bad idea to set up ABIP, because at the moment there is no suggestion whatsoever that foreign banks will be withdrawing from the Australian commercial property market.

We in the coalition were also deeply concerned about the structure of Ruddbank, or ABIP. We were very concerned about the fact that this bank is exempted from the Trade Practices Act. The exemption of ABIP from the Trade Practices Act means that there is real scope for anticompetitive market activities, which, again, means that this bank is a very questionable entity if it is set up. It is very interesting that there was no consultation with the ACCC, the Australian Competi-
tion and Consumer Commission, about the exemption of ABIP from the Trade Practices Act. The ACCC was obviously concerned about this, because setting up a bank of this kind with the kind of market power that it could have could create very serious distortions in the Australian market. We were very concerned about this, but we were supportive of some amendments.

Another professor—whom we regard highly but I doubt that Mr Cameron does—Professor Frank Zumbo of the University of New South Wales, made a submission in which he suggested three recommendations which would require legislation to establish that any section 51 exemptions be accompanied by a competition impact study so that, in future, the government at least could not simply exempt an entity such as ABIP from the jurisdiction of the ACCC. Secondly, he believed that the ACCC should be empowered and required to systematically review all section 51 exemptions currently in effect, including a requirement that a competition impact study be prepared and tabled in the Senate within three months of the ABIP Bill coming into force and every year thereafter.

There are very real concerns that ABIP, if set up in its current form, could exercise undue market power. This is because the board of ABIP consists of the Commonwealth government and the four major banks in Australia. Between them, these four banks in fact control some 63 per cent of the commercial property market, with an investment valued at $103.8 billion. The other banks and financial institutions in Australia are responsible for only some 18.5 per cent of the commercial property market in Australia. So here you have the four banks that, as I have said, are responsible for 63.1 per cent of the commercial property market sitting on a board, along with the Commonwealth, and each of the four major banks has the power of veto over any decision that ABIP might make. We believe that this certainly gives them a very broad range of powers and, at the very least, opens ABIP up to concerns about conflict of interest. We believe this is a quite undesirable situation to exist. Accordingly, we think that the board of ABIP, as Senator Bob Brown has suggested, should, if it is set up, at least have some independent members on it. Senator Brown suggested four independent directors. In their report, coalition senators also thought that, in addition to the four major banks—if they are to remain on the board, each with the power of veto—there should be four independent directors so that there is some balance and a reduction in the possibility of conflict of interest.

Coalition senators are also rather concerned about the real purpose of ABIP. In his early statements, the Prime Minister said that ABIP was being established as a precautionary measure to deal with the impact of the withdrawal of, as I have said, the foreign banks from the commercial property sector in Australia, but, as I have also said, there was no evidence given confirming any intention of any foreign bank to withdraw from the commercial property market. In the actual bill, the scope for entering into refinancing agreements by ABIP appears to be broader than just commercial property. In fact, proposed section 7(2), dealing with the objects of ABIP, or Ruddbank, reads that it should be:

… to provide financing in other areas of commercial lending through financing arrangements of a kind agreed to by the members of ABIP Limited …

That is, the four major banks. Considering the broad wording of this clause, coalition senators are rather concerned that ABIP might have a broader objective than the Prime Minister has actually conceded in public. We believe that the Prime Minister has an obligation to clarify the proposed extent of ABIP’s activities so that the possible impact
on the Australian economy and in particular on government debt can be evaluated, given that ABIP has the authority to guarantee debts up to $28 billion. We find that this is a matter of serious concern because the Rudd government have shown a great propensity to increase the debt of the federal government. At the present time they have a credit card limit of $200 billion. While adding another $28 billion may not be a matter of any concern to the Treasurer, Mr Swan, or to the Prime Minister, we in the coalition certainly feel that potentially adding another $28 billion in debt to the Commonwealth’s already high debt is something that we as Australians should all be gravely concerned about.

It took the coalition 10 years to pay off the Keating government’s debt of, I think, $94 billion. One has to wonder how many years the people of Australia will be paying off the debt left by the Rudd government, including the addition of another $28 billion for ABIP to that debt when it seems there is no need for this bank to be established. The very rationale of it has been proved to not exist—that is, the foreign banks are not withdrawing from Australia. It is very hard indeed to see why this organisation should be guaranteed an additional $28 billion by the Commonwealth government. We certainly believe that this is not in the public interest, and that it is a very strong reason, even if there are no others—and there are plenty of other reasons, as I have said—for ensuring that this legislation is not passed.

Coalition senators were also concerned that ABIP was being set up as a semigovernment agency but, unlike most government agencies, it is unaccountable and unregulated. It has a board, whose independence of judgment could be open to question, yet there are no lines of responsibility to the government. There is no overseeing of the activities of ABIP by a minister or by the parliament, for example through the Senate estimates process. We in the coalition see it as a very serious defect in this legislation that there is no oversight of the activities of ABIP, and we think that there should be some accountability mechanism put in place if this legislation is passed—although, as I have said, we certainly do not think it should be passed, because it is not in the public interest.

One of the rationales which Senator Cameron referred to for the establishment of ABIP, or Ruddbank, is that it would prevent the loss of 50,000 jobs. This is a line that Prime Minister Rudd has used consistently in seeking to justify the establishment of this curious little agency. We have to ask where the 50,000 jobs would be lost. There is no evidence at all that foreign banks are withdrawing from Australia. So, in other words, the commercial property sector is not under threat. The charter of ABIP states that it can only invest in financially viable commercial properties, so if the commercial property sector is not under threat where is the ABIP money going to protect jobs?

This is where we come to those vague additions to the purpose of ABIP under clause 7(2). ABIP, according to its charter, will not be investing in projects which are not commercially viable. But is it possible, if the government finds that the commercially viable sector is not collapsing, that, in fact, ABIP and its $28 billion might be used to prop up non-commercial property investments and developments? That is an interesting possibility which the coalition feels deeply concerned about. As I said, we really believe the Prime Minister should clarify the meaning of clause 7(2) in this legislation because it does appear to open Ruddbank up to a whole range of other possible investments, which certainly is a cause for concern. No-one has actually said that this bank will be used to invest in developments which are not commercially viable, but the Prime Minister should clarify the meaning of clause 7(2) in this legislation.
Minister has said that this bank will be used to protect 50,000 jobs. That could mean that the area where jobs might be lost might be in developments which are not particularly financially sound. That is a possibility which we in the coalition regard very seriously and regard as a very strong reason for not supporting this legislation.

In conclusion, I repeat that the coalition members of the economics committee could find no justification whatsoever for the setting up of ABIP on the grounds given, that the foreign banks were going to withdraw from the commercial property market in Australia. We think this is very bad legislation and should not be passed because there are too many questions about the structure of this organisation.

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (1.49 pm)—The global financial crisis is upon us. It is an insidious disease which is spreading to every part of the economy and requires urgent treatment to contain it from spreading further. This treatment so far has come in the form of two major stimulus packages—one in December last year and another one in February. The government has drawn down into billions of dollars of debt to try and shore up the economy and prevent the crisis from affecting Australians further.

Family First has voted for both of the stimulus packages. We have supported the government because the financial security and welfare of Australians is something which we believe demands bipartisan support. We have not, however, at any stage agreed to write the government a blank cheque. On each occasion Family First has scrutinised the packages to ensure that the best outcome was being delivered for all Australians. We fought tooth and nail with the government in February because we did not believe the stimulus package did enough for the hundreds of thousands of Australians who were forecast to lose their jobs. This led to the government incorporating our Get Communities Working scheme into the package, which will invest $200 million into creating jobs for local communities. This is just one example of where proper scrutiny of the government has led to better outcomes for everyone.

There is little question that government intervention is required if we are to soften the impact that this recession will have on Australian families. But the money available to be spent is not infinite. And the money should not be spent recklessly. That is why it is crucial that, for every dollar we spend, we make sure we are getting the best bang for our buck. The government has again come before parliament, this time asking for a cheque for a whopping $28 billion. This money, we are told, is intended to provide loans to the commercial property sector where foreign banks are no longer able to provide money for refinancing. The $28 billion is to be used by the big four banks in partnership with the government as they create a new corporation, which is to become the bank of last recourse, commonly referred to as ‘Ruddbank’.

This proposal raises enormous concerns. First and foremost, it will expose Australian taxpayers to an even greater debt than we are already facing. Twenty-eight billion dollars is a lot of money. It is not $28 million; it is $28 billion. Future generations have already been saddled with a multibillion-dollar debt, and the prospect of adding another $28 billion to that amount poses an incredible risk. We have already been told that the future interest repayments on our enormous debt alone are expected to reach $3 billion a year. That is $3 billion that Australian taxpayers need to fork out just to service our debt, and the government is asking us to potentially increase this even more, by another $28 bil-
lion. This is not something that Family First takes lightly and it is not something that Australians should take lightly.

The government has sought to give assurances that ABIP, or the Ruddbank, is only a temporary measure, that there are strict controls over how money will be lent and that the money is only intended to be for the commercial property sector. But, looking at this legislation, I cannot see any of this. In fact, what the government has said and what the government has actually contained in the bill are two entirely different things. The government told us that the creation of ABIP is for the purpose of refinancing commercial property assets in the event that there is an exodus of foreign banks from the market-place. This has been the government’s message from day one. But, when you actually take a closer look at the bill, you will see hiding in there clause 7(2), which allows ABIP ‘to provide financing in other areas of commercial lending’. In essence, this gives ABIP a licence to lend money in the commercial market for almost any reason it sees fit. Has the government been deliberately misleading?

It is for these reasons that I have put forward my own amendments. There need to be greater safeguards on how taxpayers’ money can or should be spent if the legislation does get up. Quite frankly, the Rudd government’s ‘trust me’ approach just does not cut it, especially when the other members of ABIP whom we are expected to trust are the big four banks. Family First is proposing three amendments. Firstly, ABIP will be limited to providing refinancing only for loans relating to commercial property assets in Australia. This will ensure that taxpayers’ dollars are spent only for the purpose for which ABIP was created and are not used by the government and the big four banks for whatever purpose and in any way they choose.

Secondly, any loans made by ABIP must satisfy lending criteria which, at a minimum, are just as strict as the lending criteria applied by any other commercially competitive bank. In other words, if no other bank wants to pick up the loan because it looks as if it is going sour or down south, ABIP should not be giving them money either. The question of whether or not to give a company a loan needs to be based on solid fundamentals like LVR and the interest coverage ratio and not whether or not it is good politics. Without these amendments, there is a greater risk of something going wrong, and if the government in partnership with the big banks gets it wrong then taxpayers will end up footing the bill. We need to be sure that the companies asking for the money are genuinely cash-strapped because of a genuine liquidity crisis and not because they are mismanaged or bad investments. We need to make sure of these things before we dole out billions of dollars. We have seen in past decades the terrible losses endured by the states when they gambled with the public purse on investments that lost heavily and put them horribly in debt. This led to the collapse of the State Bank of South Australia in 1991 and put the state $3.15 billion in debt. Now we are talking about $28 billion, almost 10 times the amount lost in South Australia. The last thing we can afford is for the Ruddbank to turn into the ‘Dudbank’.

Finally, Family First is seeking to ensure that the term of any loan will be limited to a maximum of three years. The government has clearly stated that ABIP is only a temporary measure, and this amendment will certainly confirm this. Whether or not funding from ABIP will be genuinely needed or will artificially prop up an oversupplied marketplace still remains a huge question. There is still the question: is there a real need for the Ruddbank and why should taxpayers end up footing the bill to prop up commercial ven-
What we can say with certainty is that a failure to impose proper controls on a proposed bank is reckless and irresponsible. It is a risk that Australians can ill afford. Family First cannot support the ABIP bank in its current form.

Senator HURLEY (South Australia) (1.58 pm)—The Australian Business Investment Partnership Bill 2009 and Australian Business Investment Partnership (Consequential Amendment) Bill 2009 provide for the establishment of the Australian Business Investment Partnership, ABIP, an incorporated company under the Corporations Act. ABIP will be financed at $4 billion, with the government financing of $2 billion to be matched by a half-billion-dollar contribution from each of Australia’s four major banks. This could be extended via the issuance of government guaranteed debt of up to $26 billion to create a $30 billion financing fund if required, but only if required. The board of ABIP will comprise five directors, one appointed by each of the shareholders, with the government-nominated director being the chairperson. The issuing of any debt by ABIP will be subject to the unanimous agreement of ABIP shareholders. The government guaranteed debt would only be issued if the initial $4 billion is exhausted and would attract an appropriate fee having regard to risk and liquidity factors and general market conditions. Refinance by ABIP will only be available to financially viable commercial property assets and will not be used to refinance loans from the four major banks. ABIP will only be able to make loans for two years from its establishment, with the maximum term of loans being three years. Therefore, ABIP will only temporarily operate, for a period of five years, and I believe that this has been underemphasised in the debate to date. This is only a temporary measure of five years to see us through this period of a global economic downturn. It is by no means a permanent measure.

Debate interrupted.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Emissions Trading Scheme

Senator CASH (2.00 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Minister Wong. Does the minister stand by her statement at the Poznan climate change conference on 12 December last year when, in arguing for a 2010 commencement of the government’s so-called Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, she said, ‘delay will simply increase the cost’?

Senator WONG—Those opposite would certainly know about increasing costs in this area given that they delayed for a decade and more whilst in government. We know those opposite have delayed for years taking a position on this and are continuing to delay. We on this side of the chamber counted no fewer than seven positions from the opposition about when they are proposing to take a position on this. I look forward to the supplementaries because I would like to share with Senator Cash just how many positions delaying a decision in their party room they have put on the table. We know that the reason those opposite continue to delay making a decision is that Mr Turnbull cannot garner the numbers in the party room for one or either position, and many of the people in this chamber are amongst those most vitriolic when it comes to actually acting on climate change. But I will say this: yes, the government have been very clear about the need to act on climate change. We have indicated—

Opposition senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Senator Wong, resume your seat. I cannot hear your answer. I am entitled to hear it, as others are.
Senator WONG—As you know, Mr President, the government have announced that we will be deferring the commencement date of the scheme for a year and will be having a one-year fixed price for the first year thereafter, recognising the current global economic crisis, something those opposite continue to try to avoid. But we do not want to delay the signal to investors or the need to provide certainty ahead of Copenhagen. (Time expired)

Senator CASH—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. I refer the minister to the Prime Minister’s statement in September 2008 where he said:
To delay any longer, to stay in denial as the climate change sceptics and some members opposite would have us do, is reckless and irresponsible.

Does this government’s broken promise and move to delay their emissions trading scheme therefore mean that the Prime Minister of Australia is ‘reckless and irresponsible’ and a ‘climate change sceptic’?

Senator WONG—That was quite an Academy Award performance from the senator, whom we know is one of the very climate change deniers and sceptics causing Mr Turnbull so many problems in the party room. You do not want to act because you do not believe this is real. You do not want to act and now you will hold onto any position to justify it. It is very interesting, isn’t it, that this is—

Opposition senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Order! Senator Wong, resume your seat. I understand that it is budget day and that people are excited, but Senator Wong is entitled to be heard when answering the question.

Senator WONG—There is a reason we have business groups, such as the Business Council and the Australian Industry Group, and key CEOs, such as the CEOs of Shell, BP and others, saying that we need—

Senator Abetz interjecting—

Senator WONG—Yes, you want to interrupt me on this, don’t you, Senator Abetz, because you do not want to hear it. The fact is that responsible business is arguing for the passage of this legislation. The only people at the moment who are causing trouble on that front are the opposition, who still do not have a position. I recall Mr Hunt, for example, saying in December 2007— (Time expired)

Senator CASH—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Can the minister advise the Senate by how much sea levels will rise as a result of her decision to delay the CPRS by a year? Was Minister Garrett correct when he claimed that sea levels are set to rise six metres unless urgent action is taken?

Senator WONG—It is extraordinary that those opposite still seem to not recognise the science on this front. I would just remind the good senator that, for example, the Garnaut review found that the value of agricultural production—Senator Joyce should listen to this—over the next century is projected to decline by 97 per cent if emissions are not reduced. That is what we are looking at. But those opposite want to avoid this. What I am interested in is seven positions. In December 2007, Mr Hunt said that you would set targets after Garnaut, then it became the white paper, then the Treasury modelling and now, when you see the legislation, you are avoiding taking a position on this because you cannot come to a position in your party room. What we say is this: why don’t you listen to environmental advocates? Why don’t you listen to the business community— (Time expired)

Broadband

Senator McEWEN (2.08 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Sena-
Senator CONROY—Thank you, Mr President, and welcome back safely from Mexico, can I say on behalf of the whole chamber. The National Broadband Network is nation building for the 21st century. It will transform the Australian economy in the same way that rail and electricity networks transformed Australia in past centuries.

A recent report by Access Economics found that the national high-speed broadband network will positively impact our economic performance and lead to economy-wide productivity growth that would be 1.1 per cent higher after 10 years compared to what it would be if the network were not built. A report by the Centre for International Economics in November 2008 said that broadband could lift national economic output by 1.4 per cent after five to six years. This is equivalent to $15 billion in GDP 2007-08. Compare that with the GST, which was championed by the Howard government on the basis that it would add to GDP growth by 0.5 per cent. The great economic reform put forward by those opposite—0.5 per cent.

The Rudd government understands that its investment in the National Broadband Network will create jobs and drive productivity today and into the future. It will create new efficiencies and sustainability. It will improve the availability of emerging services and applications in areas such as health care and education. It will position Australia to take advantage of the global recovery when it comes. Meanwhile, the Leader of the Opposition—(Time expired)

Senator McEWEN—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. I ask whether the minister is aware of comments by Optus CEO, Paul O’Sullivan, who, in relation to the NBN announcement, stated:

The Government’s new model has the potential to fundamentally change the competitive landscape and create a true level playing field. This is a very positive outcome for consumers and business right across the country.

Can the minister inform the Senate what the reaction of other key industry stakeholders has been to the government’s NBN announcement on 7 April?

Senator CONROY—Yes, it is possible to outline some of the reaction from the industry, but that would be in stark contrast to what those opposite have said. The Leader of the Opposition said he was happy that he could already download his movies in one to two seconds. That was the entire thinking behind the position of those opposite on this: ‘I am happy I can download my movies fast enough. Don’t worry about everybody else; don’t worry about regional Australia. In Wentworth I can download my movies as fast as I want them.’ It is fair to say that the reaction of the industry to the National Broadband Network has been overwhelmingly supportive. I will take this opportunity to inform the Senate of some comments from key industry representatives. Take iiNet Managing Director, Michael Malone, who stated—(Time expired)

Senator McEWEN—I thank the minister for his answer so far, and I ask a further supplementary question. On 6 February 2009, prior to the National Broadband Network announcement, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Turnbull, stated:

… the infrastructure that will give you the best return is economic infrastructure that will make the economy more efficient, more productive and you know grow more strongly. … that is investment in communications …
Can the minister therefore advise the Senate if investment in productive economic infrastructure like high-speed broadband is widely recognised as a critical way to ensure Australia’s prosperity?

Senator CONROY—While the industry and government clearly understand that productivity gains result from high-speed broadband access, the opposition can only be described as confused. As the senator noted, prior to the NBN announcement, the Leader of the Opposition—

Senator Minchin interjecting—

Senator CONROY—You just keep hugging those nodes! The Leader of the Opposition said that investment in productive economic infrastructure like communications was vital. Following the NBN announcement, Mr Turnbull backflipped, criticising the government for investing in high-speed broadband infrastructure and describing the NBN as a monumental policy failure. So now the opposition appear to agree with investment in productive infrastructure but oppose investment in high-speed broadband. In his speech to the National Press Club on 6 May 2009, Malcolm Turnbull stated:

Debt which is incurred to fund investment in infrastructure that increases the productivity of Australia will, in time, pay for itself …

(Time expired)

Emissions Trading Scheme

Senator BOSWELL (2.14 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Minister Wong. I refer the minister to a letter she wrote me asking for help to promote a schools competition on the topic ‘What does climate change mean to me?’ I ask the minister whether the climate change information pack going out to schools in the Bowen Basin, an area with livestock industries, in Queensland advises that many parents will lose their jobs as a result of the government’s flawed emissions trading scheme.

Senator WONG—It is perhaps a little unfortunate that the senator chooses to have a go on this issue. That is a competition which we initiated in government because I got so many letters from schoolchildren expressing their views about climate change—I have to say often more cogently than some parliamentarians, but that might be the case on a number of topics. There was an interest, in a number of schools that we spoke with, in the issue of climate change; and we thought it was a good thing to enable young people in Australia, if they wished—obviously this is entirely voluntary—to involve themselves in a competition where they could express themselves, from memory, either through a story, poetry or art, about what climate change meant to them. We are not prescriptive about it. Obviously people’s perceptions about what it will mean will differ depending on different experiences and also where they live in Australia.

Senator Boswell, I would say that if you do not want to be involved in promoting this then that is entirely a matter for you. This is entirely voluntary. But we did take the view that a lot of young Australians do express very clearly their views about the importance of this issue for their future. These are the sorts of letters I do get quite regularly from schoolchildren around Australia. The point of this competition is to build on that interest that so many young Australians have shown on a topic which is of relevance to them. The people who are potentially the most affected by climate change are our children and our grandchildren. Sometimes I suspect that makes this a politically difficult issue, but that is the reality of the facts. (Time expired)

Senator BOSWELL—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Will the minister be writing to these schools to advise
that the government’s climate change response will cost 10,000 coal jobs, force the closure of 16 coalmines and cost the state government substantial royalties?

Senator WONG—As I said, we have a competition to enable children to express themselves, if they wish, about what climate change means to them.

Senator Abetz interjecting—

Senator WONG—It is if they wish, Senator Abetz, because we are not requiring people to. Clearly this is a competition, so I will take that interjection. In terms of the issue that Senator Boswell raises, I would have thought it would be very clear from the way the government is approaching not only this policy area but all policy areas that jobs remain the central priority for this government. I note that those opposite are the ones who voted against the stimulus package. In terms of the CPRS decision, again I refer to Senator Nash’s question where she was essentially criticising the government for adopting the position that Mr Turnbull had argued for—which was a deferral. We have delayed the CPRS by one year. (Time expired)

Senator BOSWELL—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. As some regional economies are forecast to decline by 20 per cent as a result of the government’s ETS, can the minister guarantee that no school will shut down as a result of the decline in jobs and the number of people in these areas?

Senator WONG—Senator Boswell, what I can guarantee is that the government will continue to do what it has done—that is, to approach the design of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme being very mindful of the need to support jobs today. If you look at the announcements we have made—of a deferral of one year given the current global economic crisis, of a fixed price start to enable a phased-in approach to the commencement of the scheme and of additional assistance to the emissions intensive trade exposed sector in terms of what we have described as a global recession buffer—then you see that these are all decisions which are about supporting jobs through what we believe is a responsible transition.

Economy

Senator CAMERON (2.19 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law, Senator Sherry. Given that in the last 12 months Australia and the world have experienced unprecedented financial turmoil and many Australian investors have lost money through inappropriate lending practices, can the minister inform the Senate of what action the Rudd government is taking to ensure that Australia does not experience a similar subprime lending crisis to that which has gripped the US? Can the minister update the Senate on what initiatives the Rudd government has announced to ensure responsible lending in Australia?

Senator SHERRY—The Rudd government is very well aware of the impacts of the international financial and economic crisis we are seeing in the global economy. In 2008 the Council of Australian Governments ministers agreed to a Commonwealth request to transfer the remaining regulation and supervision of all financial services, products and providers into a single standard national regulatory regime, including, importantly, what is known as consumer credit. Included in this new regime will be important new safeguards for consumers. The Rudd government has recognised that in the context of the US one of the root causes of the financial crisis was irresponsible lending. There are some families who can in fact maintain a reasonable sized mortgage but are often saddled with more debt than they need and more often than not more than they can repay. The
new responsible lending provisions in the
new national laws will make it illegal for a
lender to extend credit to a consumer when it
is unsuitable for them and it is reasonably
believed the individual—

Senator McGauran—You’re just going
to make credit harder. You are going to
wreck the market.

Senator SHERRY—I will take that inter-
ception. Maybe Senator McGauran should
listen to some of his National Party col-
leagues, who have been very interested in
Storm Financial of late, and get their views
on responsible lending—or, in that case, irre-
sponsible lending. This is about brokers and
other intermediaries who suggest credit for a
consumer that is unsuitable based on their
needs and their financial capacity. Breaches
of responsible lending will result in serious
sanctions ranging from fines through to civil
and criminal penalties. The new regime will
include a low-cost dispute resolution service
to award compensation and will also include
appropriate licensing, education and training.
(Time expired)

Senator CAMERON—Mr President, I
ask a supplementary question. The minister
touched on the benefits of a national regula-
tory environment for providing Australian
consumers with credit facilities that incorpo-
rate a responsible lending requirement. Can
the minister update the Senate on how this
new regime will impact on the regulation of
margin lending?

Senator SHERRY—Currently in Austra-
lia there is no regulation or supervision of
margin lending—none whatsoever. Follow-
ing on from the neo-liberal interjections of
Senator McGauran—perhaps I should say
neo-national; certainly not neo-national
party—maybe he believes there should be
absolutely no regulation and supervision of
margin lending, given what we see has hap-
pened in this country over the course of the
last 18 months. For the first time, the Com-
monwealth government, the Rudd Labor
government, intends to take responsibility
for the regulation of margin lending. For the
first time, lenders will have to hold an Aus-
tralian financial service licence, be regulated
by ASIC and be members of low-cost exter-
nal dispute bodies. Lenders will also have to
effectively and clearly disclose all fees and
commissions before lending, and the new
responsible lending rules will also apply in
respect of margin lending, and we make no
apologies—(Time expired)

Senator CAMERON—Mr President, I
ask a further supplementary question. The
minister touched on the benefits of a national
regulatory framework for credit. Can the
minister advise the Senate how a national
regulatory regime of credit providers will
benefit Australians and the impact on Austra-
lia’s businesses?

Senator Abetz—Which regulation is go-
ing to get knocked back? Which is it going to
replace?

Senator SHERRY—Thank you, Mr
President. I take Senator Abetz’s interjection.
He asked which regulations are going to get
knocked out. Let me tell the Liberal opposi-
tion: 2,500 pages of inconsistent state and
territory regulation are going to get knocked
out, Senator Abetz, through the introduction
of these standard national laws, and many of
the 2,500 rules and regulations in respect of
the state regulation of financial services have
existed for well over 100 years. So, if you
want to blame past governments, it is both
state Labor and Liberal governments that
have built up 2,500 pages of regulation in
respect of financial services, and, in our new
single standard national regime, we will re-
duce it to approximately 300 pages. Busi-
ness, at least, welcome this particular aspect
because they want one set of rules— (*Time expired*)

**Broadband**

**Senator MINCHIN (2.25 pm)**—My question is to the minister for very expensive broadband, communications and the digital economy, Senator Conroy. Following the complete failure of its first broadband plan, has the government conducted a full cost-benefit analysis of its $43 billion National Broadband Network mark II proposal? If so, will the minister table this analysis, and, if not, will the proposal be subjected to a full assessment by Infrastructure Australia in line with clear Labor Party policy?

**Senator CONROY**—I thank Senator Minchin for his question. As I have already said, the National Broadband Network is a nation-building initiative. This is a proposal that will transform the economy. It will transform and revolutionise the way that we live our lives, the way that we communicate and the way that industry does business.

Labor’s commitment to invest in a high-speed broadband network has been clear. We went to the 2007 election with a commitment to build a national broadband network. We are now following through and exceeding our election commitment. A range of studies have been carried out all over the world and have investigated the economic impact of broadband. These studies have consistently shown there are substantial benefits of high-speed broadband for the economy. Let me give you just two examples. As I have mentioned, a report by Access Economics found that a national high-speed broadband network will positively impact our economic performance by 1.1 per cent. A report by the Centre for International Economics in November 2008 said broadband could lift national economic imports by 1.4 per cent. The IMF and OECD are very positive about investment in productive economic infrastructure, due to the stimulus, and longer term benefit. Broadband fits this bill.

The opposition are now trying to pretend that they agree with investment in productive economic infrastructure, but they are against investment in high-speed broadband. Before the National Broadband Network announcement, Mr Turnbull supported investment in productive— (*Time expired*)

**Senator MINCHIN**—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Is John Martin, the infrastructure specialist with RBS Australia, correct when he said, in reference to the minister’s proposed NBN, ‘What we need is a thorough business case that then gets put through Infrastructure Australia, a cost-benefit analysis’? Given that there could be over $20 billion of taxpayers’ money at risk, why won’t the government commit to a full cost-benefit analysis?

**Senator CONROY**—Thank you, Mr President. What is the plan of the opposition, who do not have a policy—and after 12 years with 18 failed policies? Let’s have a cost-benefit analysis on why you need to do it. We do not need any more studies, any more cost-benefit analyses, to know that this is an infrastructure investment that this country is crying out for.

**Opposition senators interjecting**—

**Senator CONROY**—We could do another cost-benefit analysis or we could look at the Page Research Centre, who also looked at this. How many reports do those opposite need before they just accept that they have been responsible for leaving Australia falling behind the rest of the world, lagging in a critical piece of infrastructure— (*Time expired*)

**Senator MINCHIN**—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. What is the basis for the $43 billion NBN mark II costing figure? Have any credible independent estimates been carried out? Was it
plucked out of thin air, as many in the industry suspect, or was it pinched from someone else—like the $4.7 billion figure for the government’s first failed plan?

Senator CONROY—Can I assure those opposite, and Senator Minchin, that an extensive calculation was done. Treasury was involved, Finance was involved and my own department was involved, and consultants that were employed by my department were included. This was something that we had many people look at, kick around and kick the tyres of. I note that there is nobody who has suggested that this is an underestimate. To those opposite who sit there and who turn their back on this chant to take Australia into the 21st century, I say that you sat there for 12 years and you did nothing. You should be ashamed and condemned for your lack of progress in this area. (Time expired)

Nuclear Energy

Senator LUDLAM (2.31 pm)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Wong. Has this government expressed a position on whether or not nuclear power should be incorporated into the Clean Development Mechanism, or other instrument, as part of the post-Kyoto arrangements, either verbally or in writing, in any of the UNFCCC negotiations that it has participated in to date?

Senator WONG—Certainly domestically the government has expressed a view about nuclear power—that we are opposed to the utilisation of nuclear power in Australia. I am not sure what the position of those opposite is—they have expressed a range of views—but that is the policy position of the government. There have been quite a lot of discussions about the Clean Development Mechanism and whether or not other forms of technology should be included. Certainly we are on the record on carbon capture and storage—and I appreciate that your party has, I think, a view about that. But we were of the view that that would be an appropriate thing to include in the Clean Development Mechanism as a way of trying to maximise the incentives for technology that we believe the world needs if it is to tackle climate change. I am not aware personally of any detail of what has been expressed in those negotiations by negotiators. I can tell you what the government’s policy position, certainly domestically, is: that we do not agree with a position that says nuclear power is the answer for Australia. We think we should invest in carbon capture and storage and also in renewables.

Senator Cormann—It should be explored. You should have an open mind.

Senator WONG—You can advocate in your party room, Senator Cormann, that you want nuclear power; that is fine. I am answering a question from Senator Ludlum. In terms of what discussions have occurred on the CDM, as I said, the one I can recall that occurred at ministerial level was certainly the CCS discussion. That occurred at the COP—the conference of the parties—in Poznan. As I said, the government has made clear its views about nuclear power domestically—(Time expired)

Senator LUDLAM—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. I can presume then, Minister, that you would take it on notice if it later turns out that discussions have occurred—that the Australian government has put a position. Can you tell us what position the government negotiators are being directed to take in Copenhagen on the inclusion of nuclear power—which was rejected in 2001—into the post-2012 Clean Development Mechanism, and with whom the government is consulting on this matter?

Senator WONG—As you are probably aware, negotiating mandates are first signed off at the highest level of government,
whether it is a coalition or a Labor government, for these sorts of major international negotiations. Our submissions to the negotiations are public. They are on the web and, in fact, I have had questions from your colleague Senator Milne about the detail of some of our submissions. Those submissions go in reasonably regularly. I cannot recall our most recent submission on the CDM. I do recall a range of submissions—particularly on legal structure—and a range of other matters, and the process is that those submissions are developed by government. There is the possibility of dialogue with other organisations. In fact, I have taken the opportunity to brief a range of NGOs with an interest in international matters about the most recent international negotiations. (Time expired)

Senator LUDLAM—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Does the government have a position on the use of uranium exports from Australian uranium mines being used to offset domestic emission reductions here in Australia? Depending on your answer, Minister, would you rule out any possibility of this?

Senator WONG—I am not sure that is a question that should come to me. Uranium exports are in Minister—

Opposition senators interjecting—

Senator WONG—Uranium exports—

Senator Cormann—Let’s increase it!

Senator WONG—You really cannot help yourself in your advocacy of nuclear power, can you, Senator Cormann. I hope you tell the people who vote for you in Western Australia that that is your solution to everything. What I was trying to express, Senator Ludlam, is that my recollection is that exports—

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Order! I cannot hear the answer for the interjections on both the left and the right. Senator Wong is entitled to be heard when answering the question.

Senator WONG—As I was trying to express over the din opposite, Senator Ludlam, export licences, from recollection, are in Minister Ferguson’s portfolio. What I have continued to express is that our very clear view, as the Australian government, is towards investment in Australia in renewables and in carbon capture and storage. We are not going down the nuclear path. (Time expired)

Asylum Seekers

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS (2.37 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Evans. I refer to the 20 vessels and the 714 people who have reached Australia since Labor softened our border protection laws. When will the minister accept the obvious and concede that the surge in illegal people-smuggling activities is a direct result of policy changes?

Senator CHRIS EVANS—I certainly reject the suggestion in the senator’s question because there has been no softening of border security measures under this government. We have one of the toughest and most comprehensive border security regimes in the world, and that is because we retained all of the Howard government’s border security measures—every one of them—and built on them by supplying more funds and more patrols. The border security measures that we have retained include the excision of offshore islands, mandatory detention of all unauthorised boat arrivals, and offshore processing on Christmas Island of unauthorised arrivals. We have also maintained and extended extensive air, land and sea patrols; we have put a priority on the prosecution of people smugglers; and we have heightened the strategic regional engagement of source and transit countries to address people smuggling.
We are absolutely committed to stamping out people smuggling. We are working very hard to ensure that this evil trade is shut down, but we are dealing with a surge in people smuggling in the region. It is a surge that is impacting on all our neighbours as well. We are absolutely committed to maintaining strong border security measures and to doing everything we can to attack the people smugglers and disrupt their operations. That commitment is absolute and that commitment will be reinforced in tonight’s budget. Since coming to office, we have already taken additional measures to strengthen border security, and more will be done to ensure that the strongest possible border security measures are in place. We reject any suggestion that there has been any weakening of border security, and the figures and the evidence prove it.

Senator FIERRA V ANTI-WELLS—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Clearly the minister is not familiar with the 26 initiatives and projects that have been changed in his department, but my question is: has the minister familiarised himself with the Australian Federal Police advice warning that changes in the area of border protection will lead to an increase in people smuggling into Australia? If not, why not?

Senator FIERRA V ANTI-WELLS—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Clearly the minister is not familiar with the 26 initiatives and projects that have been changed in his department, but my question is: has the minister familiarised himself with the Australian Federal Police advice warning that changes in the area of border protection will lead to an increase in people smuggling into Australia? If not, why not?

Senator CHRIS EVANS—As the senator would have learnt from all the discussions on these issues in recent times, we are experiencing a surge in people-smuggling activities as a result of the displacement of persons from countries in turmoil and war. Since the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated, we have seen tens of thousands of people fleeing Afghanistan, and we have seen many Afghans who were residing in Pakistan fleeing Pakistan because of the deteriorating security circumstances there. And, of course, we have seen the war in Sri Lanka lead to an increased movement of people there.

At the recent Bali conference, all of our regional neighbours committed to a joint approach to try to tackle the problem of increased unlawful people movement in our region. We are going to be working with our neighbours to try to solve this growing problem. (Time expired)

Senator FIERRA V ANTI-WELLS—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. That is, the focus on push rather than pull. Given the need to accommodate the hundreds of extra asylum seekers as a result of Labor’s softer policies, does the minister agree with his colleague, Mr Danby that the Christmas Island detention centre is a grandiose waste of money and a white elephant?

Senator CHRIS EVANS—I have always made clear that the Christmas Island detention centre will be utilised by the Labor government, because it was the Howard government’s major investment in detention facilities. Senator, you ought to pay attention. That has been the consistent policy of this government. It was announced at the election that we would process people on Christmas Island. The Howard government spent $400 million, under a project supervised by Senator Minchin, on building an 800-bed detention centre. The Howard government invested $400 million in the detention centre, and they anticipated the need for 800 beds. They had the foresight to know that there would be surges in the future that would require a capacity of at least 800 beds plus other facilities on Christmas Island. I commend them for their foresight, although I think $400 million was a very high price to pay.

Pakistan

Senator JACINTA COLLINS (2.42 pm)—My question is to Senator Faulkner, the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs. On the issue of surges, in
light of reports of heavy fighting in Pakistan between the government forces and militants in the Swat Valley, can the minister update the Senate on the situation in Pakistan?

Senator FAULKNER—As senators would be aware, Australia has been very concerned about Pakistan for some time. Pakistan is, of course, one of the world’s most strategically important countries and a country facing a number of acute challenges. The threat of terrorism and extremism in Pakistan has become so grave that President Zardari has described it as a threat to Pakistan’s very existence. Regrettably, the Afghanistan-Pakistan border regions remain a hotbed of international terrorism. This affects not only the safety of our troops in Afghanistan but also the safety and stability of the region and beyond.

Tensions continue to escalate in the Swat Valley as fighting between government forces and the Taliban intensifies. The army says it has deployed around 15,000 troops against up to 5,000 militants in the Swat, and the Australian government is watching the situation very closely. While we welcome the Pakistan army’s actions to push back the Taliban’s advance, it is vitally important that the Pakistani government makes every effort to protect the welfare of civilians who are caught up in the conflict.

The Pakistani government must ensure that its international human rights obligations are respected, including for women and children. It is important that Pakistan take a comprehensive approach to dealing with extremism that includes strategies to combat extremism, to promote stability and to foster economic development. The Australian government does not underestimate the complexity of the challenges facing the democratically elected government of Pakistan.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS—I ask a supplementary question, Mr President. Given ongoing concerns regarding the large number of displaced persons, can the minister provide an update for the Senate on the humanitarian situation in the Swat Valley?

Senator FAULKNER—I thank Senator Collins for that supplementary question and acknowledge her concern about this issue. I can say that the humanitarian crisis in the Swat Valley is worsening. An estimated 1.2 million people have been displaced by the conflict and the military has ordered all civilians to leave the Swat area. Pakistani authorities are coordinating humanitarian assistance with international aid agencies but World Vision has warned of the conditions that exist in camps.

Last month the government announced it would provide $3 million to help Pakistan meet the urgent humanitarian needs of people displaced by the rising conflict in the North-West Frontier Province and federally administered tribal areas. This is in addition to the $3 million provided in October 2008 after the fighting began. (Time expired)

Senator JACINTA COLLINS—I have a further supplementary question, Mr President. What were the outcomes of the recent Pakistan Donors’ Conference and what further development assistance is Australia providing to the democratically elected government of Pakistan?

Senator FAULKNER—Australia is a founding member of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan group. At the Pakistan Donors’ Conference in Tokyo last month the Minister for Foreign Affairs announced that Australia would significantly increase its development assistance to Pakistan. Our aid program to Pakistan will rise to $120 million over two years. Part of this aid will be directed to the border areas. We will increase our aid to these regions in response to humanitarian
need and to help improve basic services such as health and education. Our aid program will also focus on improving rural livelihoods, strengthening standards of democratic governance and protecting internationally recognised human rights standards.

Forestry

Senator COLBECK (2.47 pm)—My question is to the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Senator Wong. What consultations with the New South Wales government were undertaken before the ban on logging in the Deniliquen area—where logging has been occurring for over 100 years with no apparent effect on the parrot population—was imposed, and what was the decision-making process?

Senator WONG—I understand from advice received that it is not the case that a stop-work order has been issued. I am advised that DEWHA, the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, has been in active discussions for some time with Forests NSW about their operations as part of an investigation into whether the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act has been breached. The department requested certain actions by Forests NSW as part of those discussions. I am advised that Minister Garrett has asked his department to intensify its effort to achieve an outcome which is good for both the environment and local jobs. I am also advised that Minister Garrett’s expectation is that these matters ought be resolved before 31 May. However, if necessary, the Commonwealth government is prepared to agree an appropriate timeline for the resolution of these matters with the New South Wales government as part of these negotiations.

In terms of the time frame, I understand that the department first became aware of potential contraventions of the act in May 2008. There was a National Parks Association report alleging that river red gum forestry operations in New South Wales Murray and Murrumbidgee state forests have significantly impacted upon Ramsar wetlands and on listed threatened species. I am also advised that these forests contain the last remaining remnants of river red gums in the region and are the last remaining stronghold for a number of state and nationally threatened species, of which the superb parrot is just one. DEWHA has visited the forestry areas in question and has been investigating whether any breach of the act has occurred. I am advised that the department has been raising these issues directly with Forests NSW since July 2008. (Time expired)

Senator COLBECK—I ask a supplementary question, Mr President. Does the government agree with the New South Wales Primary Industries Minister, Ian Macdonald, when he said that the ban ‘put 875 jobs at risk in a part of New South Wales already struggling to deal with the effects of prolonged drought’ and when he said: ‘I have no idea why the federal government would take this action right at this time. That is quite a significant employment level when we’re talking about areas which are already devastated by drought and have lost hundreds of workers’?

Senator WONG—Obviously the good minister from New South Wales has put his views on the public record, and if the senator has questions about that he probably ought address them to the good minister. What I can advise—this is in relation to the part of the primary question I did not have the opportunity to address—is that I am advised that the department has requested that Forests NSW cease certain types of harvesting activity and cease activity in the Ramsar site. There has not been a request, on the advice provided to Minister Garrett and through him to me, for the cessation of all harvesting. As I
said earlier, Minister Garrett has indicated that his expectation is that the department will intensify its effort to achieve a satisfactory outcome. (Time expired)

Senator COLBECK—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Why does the government make decisions that are not informed by science, yet will cost hundreds of jobs in the Deniliquin region?

Senator WONG—I have outlined to the senator the advice from the department about the investigation of a possible breach of the EPBC Act. These matters have been raised with Forests NSW on the advice provided to me since July 2008. I am not sure what the allegation is in Senator Colbeck’s question in terms of the support of the science. The fact is that Minister Garrett and his department are charged with implementing and administering an act that was passed, in fact, by the government of which you were a part, Senator. They do so, obviously, to the appropriate standard. I have indicated to the senator the minister’s expectation about negotiations. (Time expired)

Economy

Senator MARSHALL (2.53 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Carr. Can the minister inform the Senate how the government is working with Australian businesses to help them manage through the global recession? Can the minister describe both the macroeconomic and the sectoral responses the government has made to improve business conditions? Can the minister explain how the government is meeting the immediate demands of the crisis whilst still pursuing its long-term nation-building agenda?

Senator CARR—I thank Senator Marshall for his question. All Australian businesses have benefited from the government’s actions to stabilise the financial system and to stimulate the economy. We are investing in high-quality, enduring assets that will deliver lasting benefits to the Australian community long after the global recession has passed into history. These nation-building investments are also helping to support jobs and keep businesses going through these very difficult times. We are creating jobs for today by building the infrastructure for tomorrow.

Our investments in social housing and energy efficiency and support for first home buyers are maintaining activity not only in the housing industry but also in the manufacturing and services industries that supply it. The ABS reported today that the number of new finance commitments for the construction of dwellings rose by 14 per cent in March. Our investments in economic, educational and social infrastructure are maintaining activity in construction, in engineering and throughout the built environment sector. Our cash bonuses to pensioners, students, low-income earners and families are maintaining activity in retailing and beyond. Our Green Car Plan has given new hope to workers and businesses in this cornerstone industry and to many more in other sectors who owe their livelihood to it. (Time expired)

Senator MARSHALL—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. I thank the minister for his answer. Can the minister inform the Senate what specific measures have been taken to support small- and medium-sized firms through the crisis? In particular, what is the government doing to address the short-term needs of firms that find themselves strapped for cash through no fault of their own and what is the government doing to make small businesses stronger for the future?

Senator CARR—Small business is the backbone of the Australian economy. That is why we moved in February to make the in-
vestment tax break even more accessible to small firms. Our three-point—

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Order! I need order on both sides.

Senator CARR—It is a tragedy that the opposition is not interested in the three-point, $8 billion investment tax break that the government has provided to business, which will assist in the cost of acquiring new equipment and technologies for every Australian company. We have also guaranteed payment within 30 days to small business suppliers on Commonwealth contracts. We have provided $1.16 billion in tax relief to small business by deferring and reducing pay-as-you-go instalments. (Time expired)

Senator MARSHALL—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. I thank the minister for his answer. Can the minister update the Senate on how Enterprise Connect is working to strengthen smaller firms as the global recession bears down on the Australian economy?

Senator CARR—The government’s Enterprise Connect network was established precisely to build on the productivity and innovation capacity of smaller Australian firms. Enterprise Connect has teamed up with 19 organisations to deliver more than 180 capacity-building workshops in capital cities and regional centres in every state and territory. These free workshops are giving smaller firms the tools they need to tackle the global downturn head-on. They offer practical advice on managing cash flow, generating sales and many other challenges that small- and medium-sized businesses are facing today. In many cases, Enterprise Connect is able to work with firms on strategies to apply what they learn. (Time expired)

Senator Chris Evans—Mr President, I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.
ency by the processes that are put in place by the emissions trading scheme. And now we have seen this extraordinary backflip that occurred last Monday.

We finished hearings on the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy on the Friday of the previous week. Right up until the last day, we had Labor senators asking questions of submitters to the inquiry, making suggestions to them, cajoling them, almost insisting that the global financial crisis was not a reason to delay the commencement of the emissions trading scheme. It went on for three weeks. How must they feel now, when, on the following Monday, Kevin Rudd and Penny Wong waltzed out in front of the national media and said, ‘We are going to delay the commencement of the emissions trading scheme because of the global financial crisis’? One of the key parameters that they had been arguing in the hearings for the previous three weeks had just been completely ripped out from under their feet. They were left there, wearing their little tin hats with their little guns, firing off the bullets that they had been given by the powers that be in the Labor Party: that the emissions trading scheme should not be delayed by the global financial crisis, and yet that was the very excuse that was used by the government to delay the emissions trading scheme.

It is quite clear from those three weeks of the inquiry that we have a flawed scheme. The impact on agriculture in particular is absolutely devastating. We have heard of job losses through the coal regions of Australia, and Senator Boswell has spoken of those extraordinary impacts. We heard of the cost of $6,000 to $9,000 per dairy farmer. The government told us during hearings that agriculture is not in; that there will not be an impact. Yet the pass-back impact from agriculture into dairy—$6,000 to $9,000 per dairy farmer—is the impact as the impact comes through from the processing sector of agriculture. A flawed scheme is a flawed scheme is a flawed scheme. It ignores abatement opportunities. It locks out proposals and opportunities for abatement that could be incorporated into the scheme. The rigidities of the scheme were criticised across the country. It is quite clear from the hearings that we held over the last few weeks that we cannot believe what the Prime Minister tells us in relation to the ETS. We have to be careful about what the Prime Minister tells us about anything, and I would urge the Australian people to use that as a prime approach when the Prime Minister says anything.

Senator CAMERON (New South Wales) (3.06 pm)—I am really surprised that Senator Colbeck would come here and run the arguments that were supposedly put forward at the Senate select committee. I must say that Senator Colbeck had a lot on his plate at that Senate select committee. And the biggest problem Senator Colbeck had was to try to get Senator Boswell to accept that something was happening. Here we have the coalition, who did nothing for 11½ years on climate change, having the gall, the temerity, to challenge this government, which has said that it accepts the science—something that is not happening over there. Those opposite do not accept the science and even those that claim they do accept the science are clearly under pressure from the National Party and from Senator Boswell and Senator Joyce.

You have the Leader of the Opposition, Malcolm Turnbull, who says no to everything, but he will not say no to Senator Boswell, he will not say no to Senator Joyce and he will not to say no to the sceptics who just do not accept that climate change is here and that climate change will cost this country if it is not acted upon. It is a lack of courage and a lack of commitment from Malcolm Turnbull to stand up to The Nationals, Senator Minchin and those climate sceptics and
deniers in the opposition. How about a bit of leadership from the Leader of the Opposition on this issue? Do not come here complaining to us about promises. It was the National Party and the Liberal Party that invented core and non-core promises. Remember that little trick? The government is determined to act in the interests of Australia and is determined to act in the interests of farmers, even though The Nationals will not act in the interests of farmers. Farmer after farmer came to the select committee and accepted that climate change was upon us; they accepted that there would be more droughts and storms and that their stock would be affected; they accepted the reality of climate change. But the so-called leaders of the farming community in the National Party are still trying to deny it. They are still the sceptics. You are doing nothing for the farming community and you are doing nothing for this nation by your denial of the reality of climate change and the need to do something about it.

For 11½ years you had the opportunity to act on climate change, and what did you do? In 1999 you did something and then after that you did absolutely nothing. You stood back and allowed this to take place and you left the Australian economy unprepared for climate change. The Labor Party will take leadership on climate change. We will act in the interests of farmers, we will act in the interests of jobs and we will act in the interests of the communities that are going to be affected. We will demonstrate our leadership and we will clearly outline your lack of leadership on this issue. The deniers and the sceptics cannot be allowed to run riot in the Liberal Party. It is about time Mr No, Mr Malcolm Turnbull, said to the sceptics and the deniers in the coalition, ‘No. We are going to deal with climate change and we will act in the national interest,’ but he does not have the bottle to do it. He does not have the guts to take on Senator Joyce and Senator Boswell. What a pathetic performance. The real test of leadership is to get leadership and some cohesion in your party. Malcolm Turnbull has failed. That will result in the loss of jobs in this country and that will result in more and more problems. (Time expired)

**Senator CASH** (Western Australia) (3.11 pm)—It never ceases to amaze me, or those of us on this side of the chamber, how the Labor government does acrobatic stunts like a true circus performer. Labor has consistently criticised the coalition for arguing for a delay in its flawed ETS. It has had the audacity to accuse us of playing politics. We have a Prime Minister who said, ‘The costs of inaction on climate change are actually greater than the costs of action.’ Well, haven’t the chickens now come home to roost? Guess what—yet again the coalition has been right all along. This is now acknowledged by Rudd Labor’s political backflip.

**Senator Cormann**—They have nowhere else to go.

**Senator CASH**—Thank you very much, Senator Cormann. That is right. All along, the coalition have been arguing that in the current economic environment, if Labor were to proceed with their flawed ETS, thousands of Australian jobs would be put at risk. Billions of dollars of capital investment in the resources and energy structure would be put at risk due to their reckless approach to the implementation of their ETS. Guess what—yet again we were right. Who is reckless and irresponsible now, Mr Rudd?

The coalition has argued from day one that the government needs to sit up, take responsibility and acknowledge that its proposed ETS is seriously flawed. We have consistently argued that, if the government proceeded with the implementation without having regard for the global financial crisis, this would have severe consequences for all Aus-
talians. What do we have now? We have confirmation of the coalition’s good, strong, correct policy. Let me quote the Minister for Climate Change and Water from her media release with the Prime Minister on 4 May:

The Rudd Government will delay the start of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme by one year to help Australian companies manage the impacts of the global recession.

Australian businesses are currently dealing with the worst global recession since the great depression.

In this environment the Government has decided to act to further support jobs and assist businesses during these ... economic times ...

So what do we have? We have a Labor minister effectively adopting the coalition’s sound, long-held policy. My favourite quote from the relevant minister was given very recently in an interview with Adelaide 5AA.

She said:

This shouldn’t be about politics. Climate change is too important an issue for people to play political games with. We are focused on doing the right thing, what we think is in the national interest. We are pressing on because this is too important an issue to play politics with.

And then she said:

What we hope is that senators from all parties will approach this issue with that sense of responsibility.

You have got to be kidding me! I stood in this place last November and argued the coalition’s position. We have long warned that rushing towards a 2010 deadline to implement what is a flawed scheme would see unpredictable damage to Australian industry and Australian jobs.

But perhaps the defining moment in this sad tale is when Labor’s handpicked climate policy adviser, Professor Ross Garnaut, gave evidence at a public inquiry into the CPRS and said: ‘Judging whether it would be better to pass the emissions trading scheme as it stands or start again would be a lineball call.’

That is the government’s handpicked adviser saying it is a lineball call. That is the faith that he has in the Labor Party policy. If we are going to have an ETS, its objective must be to encourage reductions in carbon emissions without imposing undue costs on Australians. Bad policy should never be passed. This government needs to go back to the drawing board and start again.

Senator PRATT (Western Australia) (3.16 pm)—I say to those opposite: where is your plan for business certainty for the businesses of this country, which said that what they need now is certainty? They know that the carbon constrained future across the global economy and in Australia is coming. They have a looming carbon liability and they need certainty from the government on how to deal with it. And the opposition are leaving businesses right across the country swinging in the wind. Where is the opposition’s plan for a global agreement and for a commitment to having a path that will help the globe lower its emissions? They do not have one. Only Labor have a plan for Copenhagen that will see us tackle Australia’s emissions and make a contribution to securing a global deal that is in Australia’s best interests, because we are at the forefront of those who will be affected with the negative consequences of climate change.

The opposition’s approach to this issue is just completely irresponsible. From an economic point of view in the competitive global economy, those businesses that adapt to change in the international environment and in the changing global economy are the ones that thrive in the long term. Those that do not adapt and those that seek to deny, ignore or avoid changes may survive in the short term but they will stagnate and eventually wither and die. That is the dustbin that the opposition would send Australian businesses to.
Emissions trading is already underway in 27 European countries. And we already know that Obama is committed to introducing emissions trading in the United States. These countries all know that by doing this they will ensure that their enterprises, their industries and their economies will thrive in the long term. They know that the day will come when countries will no longer be able to afford not to have a price on carbon.

Getting a head start on these changes, which we know are coming, is indeed in the best interests of Australian business. The opposition are leaving them in absolute no-man’s-land. Australia cannot afford this ongoing uncertainty in relation to our carbon pricing. It will have a deadening effect on our industrial innovation and competitiveness. We will not have, and the opposition do not have, a coherent framework to guide the economy through this transition. What we have from the opposition on these issues is absolute gobbledygook. Rewards will be distorted and industries of the future will struggle to get off the ground while those that must adapt to survive will put off till tomorrow what should be done today. That is why this scheme needs to be passed: in order to provide that certainty.

Investment opportunities will be misdirected and opportunities will be lost, and Australian industries, which have proven so resilient and adaptive in the past, will struggle to survive in the carbon constraint future unless we provide them with a path and a way forward. We will be left in a carbon intensive cul-de-sac with declining living standards and vanishing job prospects. These dangers of delay were indeed evident in information provided to the committee.

We know that, when countries do not take action relative to when they act together and they end up having economic costs, it is because they continue on their emissions-intensive pathway of development. When they enter a scheme later on they find themselves at a disadvantage relative to countries that took action earlier. Investment flows to countries that took action earlier, so countries that delay are worse off by delaying their schemes. That is what Meghan Quinn from Treasury said to our committee.

But the real question is not delay; it is one of certainty. It is a matter of those businesses knowing what the framework is. It is about that legislation passing this chamber. It is about giving businesses the certainty so that they can take action and adapt, and the opposition are leaving those businesses swinging in that wind. Prolonged uncertainty, particularly at this time of global recession, is going to constrain capital flows and even threaten the supply of electricity, which is what Origin Energy said in evidence before our committee. No scheme at all will leave us with only one lever and that is that someone will sit there and say, ‘This will work, that will work, and something else will work.’ But there is a high probability that all of those decisions could be wrong. (Time expired)

Senator BOSWELL (Queensland) (3.21 pm)—What I have not heard about in this debate is the most prominent sufferer—that is, the blue-collar worker. One would have thought Senator Pratt or Senator Cameron would have at least mentioned the phrase ‘blue-collar worker’. We have had the cement industry coming in and saying, ‘We’re going to have to put people off; we won’t be able to proceed with our new projects.’ We have had the beef industry coming in and saying, ‘We’re going to have to put people off; we won’t be able to proceed with our new projects.’ We have had the steel industry saying it is going to cost $34 extra to process a cow through its abattoirs. We have had the steel industry come in and say, ‘We can’t survive.’ We have had every industry in Australia—with the exception of Origin Energy, who are retailers; all they do is pass the cost on—come forward with three messages: (1) ‘We’re go-
You would think the Labor Party would be worried about that, but no: 'Don’t you worry about a thing; we’ll create green jobs.' I do not know where these green jobs are going to pour out of the sky from, but maybe the representatives of the working class, the Labor Party, are going to say to the Australian blue-collar workers, ‘You’re going to have to compete against the Chinese, so you’re going to have to work six days a week, 12 hours a day if you want the green jobs.’ With anything we manufacture in Australia, if you can do it better and cheaper in China then that is where the manufacturing goes—unless you want to put on tariffs. These green jobs are a dream. They are not going to happen. Manufacturing will go to the same place where it always goes: to China, because they can do it cheaper. I do not say they do it better, but they can certainly do it cheaper. Where are the representatives coming in and saying: ‘We’ll get you the green jobs, guys; don’t worry about a thing. It’ll be a little unpleasant for you because you might have to live in a dormitory with your wife up the other end with the women and you’ll have to work 12 hours a day, but we’ll get you the green jobs’? What a nonsense!

Government senators interjecting—

Senator O’Brien—Even your own side’s laughing at you here—look.

Senator BOSWELL—Don’t you talk to me, because you have never stood up for the blue-collar worker in your life. You do not even count in this place.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Order! Senator Boswell, address your remarks through the chair.

Senator BOSWELL—Yes, Mr Deputy President. I think one of the directors of the Reserve Bank, who was also a director of BlueScope Steel, said it perfectly. He said it for Australia; he said it for industry; he said it for the blue-collar workers; he said it for everyone:

The Australian economy will survive the economic downturn but it may not survive the emissions trading system.

That is what he said. He must have some credibility, for the government have him on the Reserve Bank. I admire his tenacity and strength in coming out and telling it as it is. That is what it is all about: you have turned your back on the blue-collar jobs. It is a tragedy.

But gradually it is filtering through. Last week I went up to Allies Creek, a million acres of forestry plantations, with apiarists and cattle. It has all closed down. About 300 jobs have been lost in the sawmilling industry. Who suffered? It was the sawmillers and the blue-collar workers who suffered, sold out for Greens preferences. These guys are going to wake up to you. You have absolutely deserted them. You have walked away from them. You are selling out. You sold them out in the Riverina yesterday—800 working-class jobs gone through your minister again selling the blue-collar workers out to the environmental lobby, the green lobby. You have got away with it—you have Greens preferences in the state—but it is not going to last. You can fool people some of the time, but you cannot fool them all the time. The blue-collar workers are not stupid. They can see their jobs being traded off for Greens preferences. It happened in Allies Creek. Sixty years of development, 15 homes—working men’s quarters—sheds and fire engines were sold off for $270,000. Sixty people made their living there, and it was sold for $270,000. You are selling these guys out, but you are selling them out cheaply. (Time expired)

Question agreed to.
Nuclear Energy

Senator LUDLAM (Western Australia) (3.27 pm)—I move:

That the Senate take note of the answer given by the Minister for Climate Change and Water (Senator Wong) to a question without notice asked by Senator Ludlam today relating to nuclear power.

I would like to make some brief comments on the answer to the question that I asked of Minister Wong on the role of nuclear power in the Clean Development Mechanism. As we know, this is an instrument that was devised under the Kyoto protocol as one of its flexible mechanisms. Perhaps it proves in one sense the idea that the road to hell is often paved with good intentions. It is meant to allow industrialised countries to meet a part of their greenhouse gas reduction targets by funding projects in industrialising countries that lead to reduced emissions. It was also meant to assist developing countries in achieving sustainable development. All of this makes a lot of sense on paper, recognising the disproportionate impacts of climate change on the world’s poor and the different responsibilities for emissions reductions that developed and developing countries have.

One of the most important issues is which technologies and practices should be eligible for the Clean Development Mechanism, or CDM. In 2001 the efforts of the nuclear industry globally to claim that nuclear was clean were rejected by the world’s governments. The governments decided that, with the production of more radioactive waste and the constant risk of catastrophic accidents in transport of radioactive fuel and waste, it was simply not worth it and acknowledged the fact that a dollar spent on nuclear power would be diverted away from the development of sustainable energy systems, energy efficiency and effective measures to combat climate change. Of course, this was rather embarrassing for the industry, and it has meant that since that time the nuclear industry has not been eligible for significant sources of financing and—although it has certainly been happy to make the claim—has not had the legal underpinnings of international greenhouse gas reduction measures. Of course, it has never been able to compete in the Clean Development Mechanism market.

The nuclear industry has always required huge public subsidies to do the business that it does and, of course, it needs protection from liability in the event of accidents, tax breaks and so on. It missed out on this new source of subsidy under the CDM. It missed out on being able to claim carbon reduction credits from new nuclear power stations to help it meet emissions reduction targets. It is essential to remember—and, I think, often forgotten in the nuclear industry’s claims to be clean and green—that they were in fact rejected. The last time this question was put in international fora the nuclear industry was rejected, and with very good reason.

The industry knew at that time—as it still does today—that its last hope was in exploiting global concern over climate change by promoting itself as carbon-free energy technology. The case was made in 2001 by everybody else—and the arguments are just as valid today—that the nuclear industry is not clean and that it is simply not an answer to climate change. It is, in fact, a deeply embedded part of the problem.

The reason that this move by the industry was defeated in 2001 is worth recalling. The European Union took a position that excluded nuclear from the CDM by calling for a positive list of safe, environmentally sound and eligible projects based on renewable energy and energy efficiency. The small island states who are already being directly affected by climate change and stand to lose the most—in some cases, their very existence—
also strongly rejected the cynical push by the industry. This is crucial because they know the direct consequences of expanded shipments of plutonium oxide fuel and high-level waste through the Pacific Ocean and through their waters. These are the countries with the most to lose at this stage of climate change and they led the charge to reject the nuclear industry being included.

So neither the grave threat of climate change nor the industry’s opportunistic public relations efforts can transform an obsolete, expensive and unsafe industry into a green source of energy, because it simply is not. There is still no place for nuclear in the post-Kyoto architecture or various mechanisms or instruments that will be developed. Our government should not be taking a position to Copenhagen to roll the clock back on that clear decision that was made in 2001. That was the reason for the question that I put to the minister this afternoon. She said that, to her knowledge, the Australian government has not taken a position and that she was not really aware of the situation worldwide on whether the industry were making a pitch—which, of course, they are—to be included at Copenhagen. The argument put by the nuclear industry ignores the highly carbon intensive nature of nuclear power and nuclear technology. They like to talk about nuclear energy being nuclear free but not about all the other stages in the nuclear fuel chain, which are highly carbon intensive. Those arguments may yet have to come to light.

What has essentially happened? We know that the nuclear industry is mounting a sustained attempt to get this technology accepted under the CDM or its successor within the post-Kyoto regime. So what I really wanted to know—and we did not get a clear answer on this from the Australian government today—is: do the government support this push or not? Have they taken a position in these international fora? Will they be taking a position to Copenhagen? We know that, as a consequence of nuclear being given access to the CDM, the Australian uranium mining industry will be knocking at the door, suggesting that we should be allowed to avoid making emissions reductions here in Australia because of uranium exports. I think that is a key issue that the government need to address. We need the government to rule this out at this stage. (Time expired)

Question agreed to.

CONDOLENCES

Mr George Conrad Hannan

The PRESIDENT (3.32 pm)—It is with deep regret that I inform the Senate of the death on 1 May 2009 of George Conrad Hannan, a senator for the state of Victoria from 1956 to 1965 and 1970 to 1974.

Senator CHRIS EVANS (Western Australia—Leader of the Government in the Senate) (3.32 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the Senate records its deep regret at the death, on 1 May 2009, of George Conrad Hannan, former senator for Victoria, and places on record its appreciation of his long and meritorious public service and tenders its profound sympathy to his family in their bereavement.

George was born in Wagga Wagga in 1910. I always think of former Senator Kemp when I come across the name ‘Wagga Wagga’. He famously mispronounced it and I cannot look at it now without being reminded. I am sorry about that. After graduating from the University of Melbourne, George practised as a barrister and solicitor. During the Second World War he served as a radar officer with the Royal Australian Naval Volunteer Reserve.

George joined the Liberal Party shortly after its formation in 1944. He first entered parliament as a Liberal senator for Victoria in 1956 when he was chosen by the Victorian parliament to fill a casual vacancy. He successfully retained his seat at the 1958
George was staunchly conservative in his political views and he often spoke of how his formation of the new party was a reaction to what he termed the ‘trendies’ in the Victorian Liberal Party. I am sure Senator Minchin will share his views in his contribution to this motion. He is clearly of the same mould. After Senator Hannan unsuccessfully contested the 1974 Senate election as a National Liberal Party candidate, he resumed his legal practice. As I said, he passed away on 1 May this year at age 98.

Senator Hannan was a respected member of the Senate. He was regarded as one of the Liberal Party’s best speakers during his time here. He made a valuable and colourful contribution to national political life. On behalf of the government, I offer our condolences to his wife, Eileen, his children, Judith, Peter, Michael and Eilene, and his family and friends.

Senator MINCHIN (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (3.37 pm)—I am pleased to support the motion moved by Senator Evans and offer on behalf of coalition senators sincere condolences upon the death of former Liberal senator from Victoria George Conrad Hannan. George Hannan died on 1 May at the age of 98—a grand age indeed. His grandson observed the irony of such a strong conservative passing away on May Day.

George filled no fewer than two casual vacancies in the Senate, the first in 1956 and the second in 1970. That must be unique. He served for a total of 13 years in this place—a full six-year term from 1959 to 1965 and then a term shortened by the 1974 double dissolution, from 1970 to 1974. I note that whenever he was up for election he was always in the precarious third spot on the Liberal Party’s Senate ticket in Victoria; that was in the days when we only had 10 senators from each state. He was born in Wagga
but grew up in Albury and went to boarding school in Goulburn; then studied law in Melbourne. He spent his non-political life working in his own legal practice in Melbourne.

As Senator Evans noted, George served with the Royal Australian Naval Volunteer Reserve during World War II, becoming a lieutenant in 1942. He worked in the radar division, which suited his electronic knowledge and experience with amateur radio; hence his long interest in communications. As shadow communications spokesman, it would be remiss of me not to mention that from a young age George had an interest in areas of communication, broadcasting and technology, as shown through his interest in amateur radio, subsequent work with the Navy and his interests and committee involvement during his time in parliament.

George participated in the Parliamentary Library’s oral history project and gave a detailed account of his life and of his time in the federal parliament, which does make interesting reading. He did that in November 1984 just before the 1984 federal election. In that oral history he describes his mother as having very conservative views on political matters, while his father was more affiliated with the Labor tradition. So, as Senator Evans noted, we see who won out! In that Parliamentary Library interview George described the development of what were his apparently very conservative views. He stated that it was after World War II that he discovered a strong conservative feeling and that ‘things for which the Labor Party stood after the war were nothing like the ideals that had actuated my father’.

George joined the Liberal Party in 1946, drawn to our party because he was ‘impressed by the aims and objects set out by Mr Menzies’, for whom he had a lifetime of admiration. Prior to the war he supported Menzies and after the war he thought the Liberal view was better for Australia. He was a strong supporter of the Liberal Party structure upon its formation, stating that ‘a man from down at branch level could beat the Prime Minister for endorsement if he was good enough’. That does not happen very often, however! He was a proud conservative during his time in parliament, interested in foreign affairs and broadcasting and very well known for his anticommunism, which was a hot-button issue in the fifties.

George was an active member of a number of select committees during his time in the Senate, including the Select Committee on the Encouragement of Australian Production for Television in 1962 and 1963, and was a strong champion of Australian broadcasting content. As Senator Evans noted, he was not endorsed by the executive of the Victorian Division of the Liberal Party in 1974. Having sought and failed in preselection due to what Senator Evans noted was his view that the then administration was controlled by ‘trendies’, he was concerned that the party was drifting away from the Menzies principles, so he established the National Liberal Party to contest the election in 1974. He stated in the Parliamentary Library interview that ‘the trouble is, too much of what is called small ‘L’ liberalism doesn’t mean conservative at all, it means jumping on any bandwagon that is going by’. I guess that sums up former Senator Hannan’s view of the world.

In 1974, the Age, in discussing his new party, described him as one of the best ‘boots and all’ orators on the Liberal benches. He was certainly passionate about his conservative views. Having stood for his National Liberal Party, he had a temporary absence from our party but later rejoined and remained active. He has received a lifetime service award through the Victorian division of the Liberal Party, and it is good to see that degree of forgiveness by the Victorian divi-
sion. I understand he was a frequent caller on many Victorian Liberal politicians to provide his views. I must say I regret never having met George Hannan. From what I have read of him and from what I know, I am sure I would have liked him very much indeed.

To his wife of 71 years, Eileen, and their children and grandchildren, on behalf of the Liberal and National parties I place on record our sincere appreciation of George’s long and meritorious public service and tender our profound sympathy at this time.

Senator JOYCE (Queensland—Leader of the Nationals in the Senate) (3.42 pm)—Very briefly, I add my concurrence with the remarks of Senator Evans and Senator Minchin on reading of the life of George Conrad Hannan. I had to be impressed, especially as he tried to form the National Liberal Party, my being in the Liberal-National Party, and I hope we come to a better outcome. I also very much admire the fact that George was a person of conviction, so much so that he was willing to put his own political life on the line and to pursue his cause through the creation of a party. Unfortunately that party received only 1.2 per cent of the vote at the election.

To his children, Judith, Peter and Michael, and his wife of 71 years, Eileen, for all the work that he did for our nation, I would like to offer my sincere condolences. May he rest in peace.

Senator KROGER (Victoria) (3.43 pm)—It is with real pleasure that I rise in this chamber to speak of the late former Senator George Hannan, an old friend. I have to say that in the context of 98 years, the 30 years that I have had the pleasure of knowing him pales into insignificance compared to the number of years that so many others have. George was one of the first people I knew and met when I joined the Liberal Party. He was a member of the East Malvern branch when he rejoined the party and he was a great character, a seriously great character, one who did not take himself too seriously, although he took his passions and his cause very seriously.

One of my enduring memories of him is that we would rock up to yet another branch meeting and find he was always moving a motion on water infrastructure. He thought that we were not protecting the generations to come and wanted to protect them and ensure that we were providing sufficient investment in water infrastructure. At just about every meeting we rocked up to he would be moving a motion at that branch to see if he could fix that—which then went on to state council.

As Senator Minchin has already mentioned, he was recognised for his extensive contribution to the Victorian Division of the Liberal Party with a distinguished service award—something which many of us were very happy to support when that was put forward. He has also been a great friend and mentor, if I may say so, to many of us. In fact one of the first people I received correspondence from when I was successfully preselected for the Senate to represent the Liberal Party in Victoria was former Senator Hannan. Whilst he was in a nursing home, he took a very active interest, up until his final days, in the affairs of the nation and what was going on.

I attended his memorial service at the Order of the Carmelites in Kew last week at the beautiful chapel which they have only just allowed to be used for public services and funerals. It was a gorgeous service. It was a real celebration of the man and his many and varied interests. He had a passionate interest in politics, obviously, but he had an equally passionate interest in the arts, music, literature and sport. He had very diverse interests and in fact the only things he did not have an
interest in were gardening—and that was actually pointed out at the time—and clothes. He was well known for his cardies, which he would actually wear into the Senate under his suit jackets because he loved his hand knitted cardigans.

May I also extend my best wishes to Eileen and the family. They are truly a great family. I would like to close with something that was repeated and relayed to us at the funeral which George said many a time—that is, he was born to marry his wife, Eileen. He dedicated his life to her, and she will be missing him hugely after over 70 years of marriage.

Question agreed to, honourable senators standing in their places.

Mr John Lindsay Armitage OAM
Mr William George Burns

The PRESIDENT (3.48 pm)—It is with deep regret that I inform the Senate of the death of two former members of the House of Representatives: John Lindsay Armitage OAM, on 13 April 2009, a member for the divisions of Mitchell, from 1961 to 1963, and Chifley, from 1969 to 1983; and William George Burns, on 16 March 2009, a member for the division of Isaacs, Victoria, from 1977 to 1980.

Senator Chris Evans—Before seeking leave I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Senator Kroger in the previous condolences on the death of George Hannon, former senator. It is so much better when somebody in the chamber actually has personal knowledge of the people we are talking about in condolences. I know that sometimes Senator Minchin and I find it hard to speak on condolences when we have not actually met the person, so I thank Senator Kroger for her contribution.

Sergeant Brett Till

Senator CHRIS EVANS (Western Australia)—Leader of the Government in the Senate) (3.49 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the Senate records its deep regret at the death, on 19 March 2009, of Sergeant Brett Till, while on combat operations in Afghanistan, 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 senators I wish to express my deepest condolences to Sergeant Till’s family—particularly his wife, Breeanna; his children, Jacob and Taleah; his mother, Susan, and her husband, Leigh; and his father, Noel, and his wife, Cathy. I am sure they are all grieving deeply at this tragic loss of Sergeant Brett Till. I also wish to express our sympathy to his extended family and friends, and of course to his fellow service men and women of the Australian Defence Force, who must be devastated by the loss of their colleague. This reinforces again the commitment of our forces in Afghanistan and the extreme danger in which they are operating. It brings home to us the absolute commitment and bravery those forces are showing in what are increasingly difficult circumstances.

Afghanistan remains a very dangerous battleground for our troops, but it is essential for our security that we continue our fight to bring security and stability to that country. I think reports out of Afghanistan in recent times have reinforced the need for that area to be stabilised and for the forces of the Taliban to be defeated. We cannot allow Afghanistan to again become a safe haven for international terrorists. At the time of his death Sergeant Till was serving as a bomb disposal expert with the Special Operations Task Group. He was, tragically, killed while attempting to defuse an improvised explosive device in order. Obviously this was a very dangerous task, and one that only very spe-
cial people are trained to do. It is inherently dangerous. Sergeant Till, in performing that duty, was seeking to protect his colleagues.

As I say, those who play this role not only put themselves at great personal risk but also are completely dedicated to ensuring the safety of their fellow soldiers. Throughout his military career Sergeant Till had risen to all the challenges that had been presented to him. He had earned the privilege of commanding one of the Special Operations Task Group’s mobility and survivability teams in Afghanistan, and that is a very demanding role. He was well respected by those he commanded as a man who led from the front and who led by the example of his conduct. Through his skill and his commitment, Sergeant Till demonstrated all of the values that typify the Australian service men and women: courage, initiative, teamwork and selflessness.

Australia is deeply indebted to Sergeant Till and all the other brave soldiers who have given their lives on our behalf. I would like to reinforce to the family our gratitude for the sacrifice they have made. We take very seriously our responsibility in terms of committing our forces to combat, and the government’s recent decision to continue its commitment in Afghanistan, to try to empower the Afghan government security operations and to allow them to govern that country with stability is a sign that we regard the task as an ongoing one and that we need to continue the commitment we have made; but we do so highly conscious of the responsibility of committing our troops there and recognising the dangers in which we place them. I was talking to a soldier who was about to be deployed to Afghanistan for the second time. The enthusiasm and the commitment these soldiers bring to going back there never ceases to amaze me. I guess I would take the view that if you have survived it once it would be a case of quitting while you are ahead, but the fact that they volunteer to go back and recommit to what they know is a highly dangerous situation is a sign of their great commitment.

On behalf of the Australian government and, I am sure, all members of the Senate, we offer our condolences to Sergeant Till’s family, friends and fellow soldiers. We grieve with you at this terrible loss, but you should take comfort that his service and sacrifice is acknowledged and honoured by this government and this Senate.

Senator MINCHIN (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (3.54 pm)—The coalition fully supports the statements made by Senator Evans. We join in offering our sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Sergeant Brett Till. Sergeant Till was killed in Afghanistan on 19 March 2009 and, though we offered our condolences in the Senate that day, we were not aware of his personal details. We are now able to pay tribute to Sergeant Till’s contribution and service to a proud nation.

Sergeant Till was an explosive ordnance disposal technician—one of the most dangerous jobs there can be. He served with the Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan. He joined the Army in 2001. He was a dedicated husband and father, which makes his passing all the more tragic. His own father has stated how proud he was of his son for his devotion to his wife and children, for his selfless concern for the wellbeing of others and for his dedication to his mates and his country.

Sergeant Till was the 10th casualty in Afghanistan. He was killed in the same week as Corporal Matthew Hopkins. It was a week that brought very much to the forefront of Australians the challenge we face in Afghanistan. The ever-present dangers that our ADF personnel face in overseas operations are a constant concern, especially for those
of us who, like Senator Evans and me, either are in or have been in cabinet and responsible for overseas deployments. We all value the service of our ADF personnel wherever they serve and we support their continued work against the Taliban in Afghanistan. That task is of the utmost importance. Our service men and women have our full support, and we genuinely and sincerely respect their service and commitment to this great country.

We in the opposition join the government in recognising the importance to our national security of the continuing involvement of Australian troops in Afghanistan in their great endeavours to bring peace and stability to that country and stop it ever again being used as a base for the global terrorist activities of groups like al-Qaeda.

Australian personnel are performing a tremendous task and our thoughts are with all of Sergeant Till’s colleagues and all the friends and families of Australian personnel in Afghanistan, particularly the families of all soldiers that we have spoken about on this occasion and in the past in this chamber. We join the government in honouring the bravery and service of Sergeant Till. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife and children on the loss of a husband and a father. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, and we thank them for their sacrifice.

Senator JOYCE (Queensland—Leader of the Nationals in the Senate) (3.57 pm)—I rise to concur with the remarks of Senator Evans and Senator Minchin. The sacrifice now of Sergeant Till’s colleagues and all the friends and families of Australian personnel in Afghanistan, particularly the families of all soldiers that we have spoken about on this occasion and in the past in this chamber. We join the government in honouring the bravery and service of Sergeant Till. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife and children on the loss of a husband and a father. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, and we thank them for their sacrifice.

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (3.58 pm)—I fully concur with previous speakers and the motion put by the government. We honour Sergeant Brett Till and send the deepest condolences to his family—his wife, his children and his parents—all his loved ones and his friends and fellow members of the ADF. He was courage with aforethought; he possessed the remarkable degree of courage that is required to take on a job that involves demobilising explosives in the interests of his fellow soldiers. He has paid the ultimate price for having had the courage to take up that job, and we honour him.

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (3.59 pm)—I wish to add my remarks on the condolence motion. On behalf of Family First, it is with great sadness that I acknowledge the death of Sergeant Brett Till, who was tragically killed on 19 March serving his country in Afghanistan. I express my condolences to his family and friends. Sergeant Till was 31 years old. He was a loving husband to his wife of just one year, Bree, a devoted father to his two children, aged 10 and seven, and was looking forward to the birth of his third child later this year.

Tributes from his wife and family have told of a courageous, kind and calm man with a winning smile who valued honour and humility. He was the 10th Australian to die serving in Afghanistan. Sergeant Till was an exemplary and brave soldier who was pre-
pared to risk all to protect his fellow soldiers. According to those who served with him, he never faltered in his duty. His work as an explosive ordnance disposal technician operating with the Special Operations Task Group saw him regularly called upon to dismantle dangerous explosive devices that threatened his team. He died attempting to protect his fellow soldiers from an improvised explosive device that, regrettably, exploded. The words of the Defence head, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, I think demonstrate his courage: ‘Sergeant Till’s selfless act to protect his mates and innocent civilians is a mark of the character of the man.’

I think it is very important that the Senate notes Sergeant Brett Till’s death and the death of each and every one of the military people killed serving our country. Sergeant Till’s life was not lost in vain. Family First’s thoughts and prayers are with his family at this very difficult time.

Question agreed to, honourable senators standing in their places.

PETITIONS

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

Seniors Health Card

To the Hon President and Members of the Senate in Parliament assembled:
The petition of the undersigned shows:
The Association of Independent Retirees (A.I.R.) Limited is the peak body representing the views of self-funded retirees, people who have made and continue to make a significant contribution to this nation’s well-being as taxpayers, volunteers and citizens.

This petition concerns the proposed inclusion of previously taxed money from superannuation (both income streams and lump sums) in the income threshold for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

The Social Security and veterans Entitlements Amendment (Commonwealth Seniors Health Card) Bill 2009 will have the same effect as lowering the income threshold for CSHC eligibility for those Seniors with superannuation payments as, in an unprecedented move, money from superannuation which has already been either fully or partly taxed, will now for the first time be included in the adjusted taxable income to determine eligibility for the Health Card.

The current threshold has not been increased since 2001. Not only has it not been indexed since then, but now, if this legislation is passed, it will therefore be effectively lowered for those retired people reliant on their savings, depriving many of concessional pharmaceuticals, utilities allowance, Seniors Bonus, phone allowance and discretionary bulk-billing for GP services.

At no time during the last federal election campaign was the issue of changing the eligibility criteria for the CSHC raised by the Labor Party. This proposed legislation, introduced in the first Labor Budget, therefore seeks to change these criteria without a mandate from the people.

Your petitioners ask that the Senate:

(a) amend the social security and veterans Entitlement (Commonwealth Seniors Health Card) Bill 2009 to exclude already taxed superannuation monies from the taxable income threshold used to determine eligibility for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

or

(b) failing that, reject the Bill in its current form.

by Senator Hogg (from four citizens)

Seniors Health Card

To the Honourable President and Members of Parliament assembled:
The petition of the undersigned shows:
The Social Security and Veterans’ Entitlements Amendment (Commonwealth Seniors Health Card) Bill 2009 proposes that, for the first time, the after-tax component of all superannuation withdrawals be included in the adjusted taxable income used for determining eligibility for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card. This money has already been fully taxed at marginal rates prior to being put into the superannuation fund, so
it represents capital, not income, and should not be considered as such.

Your petitioners ask that the Senate:
either
(a) amend the Social Security and Veterans’ Entitlement (Commonwealth Seniors Health Card) Bill 2009 to exclude these after-tax superannuation payments from the adjusted taxable income used to determine Commonwealth Seniors Health Card eligibility,
or
(b) failing that, in recognition of the substantial contribution made by Senior Australian self-funded retirees over their long working lives, reject outright the Bill in its current form.

by **Senator Scullion** (from 845 citizens)

**Internet Filtering**

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

The petition of the undersigned shows:

- that the Government is proposing a costly, oppressive and technically infeasible plan to impose filtering on all Internet connections;
- that, according to the Whirlpool Australian Broadband Survey 2007, 74.4% of Australian Internet users oppose the plan;
- that, according to a June 2008 report produced by the Australian Communications and Media Authority, present filtering technology could result in performance degradation of over 80% and up to 8% false positives, while failing to block up to 12% of tested sites;
- that present filtering technology is ineffective at filtering non-Web protocols such as instant messaging and peer-to-peer file sharing, increasingly used by today’s children;
- that no comparable filtering schemes are used in any liberal democracy;
- that the scheme will restrict our civil liberties while encouraging lax parenting;
- that this will come at a likely cost to the taxpayer of over $44 million, and further increase Internet charges;
- that the filter will be ineffective and will NOT protect Australian families from pornography or online criminals;
- that we the undersigned, whilst having differing moral and religious views regarding pornography and unlawful material, believe that the proposed filter is not a good solution to these issues.

Your petitioners ask the Senate to:

- condemn the Government’s Internet filtering plan,
- oppose any legislation for the plan’s implementation,
- recognise that it is the role of parents, not the government, to protect their children, and support educational programs and the work of the Australian Federal Police in this area.

by **Senator Ludlam** (from 41 citizens)

**Baby Safe Havens**

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

The petition of the undersigned draws to the attention of the Senate a need for legislation to be enacted to provide legal abandonment of newborn babies.

Your Petitioners therefore request that the Senate call on the States to consider enacting legislation so that young women would be discouraged from killing, causing physical harm or abandoning their babies if the Commonwealth provided “Baby Safe Havens” where the mothers would remain anonymous and immune from prosecution.

by **Senator Polley** (from 340 citizens)
“Baby Safe Havens” where the mothers would remain anonymous and immune from prosecution.

by Senator Polley (from 95 citizens)

Petitions received.

NOTICES

Withdrawal

Senator WORTLEY (South Australia) (4.01 pm)—Pursuant to notice given on 19 March 2009, I now withdraw business of the Senate notice of motion No. 2 standing in my name for 10 sitting days after today.

Senator MILNE (Tasmania) (4.02 pm)—I withdraw notice of motion No. 1 standing in my name for today.

Presentation

Senator Moore to move on the next day of sitting:

That the time for the presentation of the report of the Community Affairs Committee on compliance audits on Medicare benefits be extended to 10 June 2009.

Senator Hurley to move on the next day of sitting:

That the time for the presentation of the report of the Economics Committee on foreign investment in Australia be extended to 17 July 2009.

Senator McGauran to move on the next day of sitting:

That the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties be authorised to hold a public meeting during the sitting of the Senate on Thursday, 14 May 2009, from 9.30 am.

Senator Colbeck to move on the next day of sitting:

That the time for the presentation of the report of the Select Committee on Climate Policy be extended to 15 June 2009.

Senator Hogg to move on the next day of sitting:

That the Senate records its deep regret at the death, on 24 April 2009, of Miss Anne Lynch, former Deputy Clerk of the Senate, and places on record its appreciation of her long and meritorious public service and tenders its profound sympathy to her family in their bereavement.

Senator Hutchins to move on the next day of sitting:

That the Senate—

(a) notes:

(i) the passing of the esteemed union leader and Australian Labor Party (ALP) hero, Mr Laurie Short, and

(ii) the international regard in which he was held as a prominent member of the Australian labour movement;

(b) acknowledges his substantial contribution to fighting the communist threat within the labour movement and the ALP;

(c) recognises that he made this contribution at a time when opposing the communists meant risking real physical harm, which he was subjected to from time to time; and

(d) passes its condolences to his daughter, Susanna Short and her family.

Senator Minchin to move on the next day of sitting:

(1) That the Senate notes that the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (Senator Conroy) is in contempt of the Senate for his failure to comply with a Senate order of 4 February 2009 for the production of documents relating to the National Broadband Network (NBN) tender process.

(2) That there be laid on the table by 6.50 pm on Wednesday, 13 May 2009:

(a) the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission’s formal report on the NBN proposals to the NBN Panel of Experts; and

(b) the final report provided to the Government from the NBN Panel of Experts on submissions to the NBN process.

(3) That if the Government continues to refuse to comply with the orders of the Senate for the provision of these documents, consideration of any bill relating to the
Government’s ‘new national broadband network’ be postponed and made an order of the day for the next day of sitting after the documents described in (2)(a) and (2)(b) are laid on the table.

Senators Siewert and Fifield to move on the next day of sitting:

That the following matters be referred to the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee for inquiry and report by 25 June 2009:

(a) the conduct of the 2009 tendering process by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to award Employment Services contracts, with particular attention to:
   (i) the design on the tender, including the weighting given to past performance and the weighting given to the ‘value for money’ delivered by previous and new service providers,
   (ii) evaluation of the tenders submitted against the selection criteria, including the relationship between recent service performance evaluations in various existing programs (such as provider star ratings), selection criteria and tendering outcomes, and
   (iii) the extent to which the recommendations of the 2002 Productivity Commission report into employment services have been implemented;
(b) the level of change of service providers and proportion of job seekers required to change providers, and the impacts of this disruption in communities with high levels of unemployment or facing significant increases in unemployment;
(c) any differences between the recommendations of the Tender Assessment Panel and the announcement by the Minister for Employment Participation of successful tenders on 2 April;
(d) the transaction costs of this level of provider turnover, the time taken to establish and ‘bed-down’ new employment services, and the likely impacts of this disruption on both new and existing clients seeking support during a period of rapidly rising unemployment;
(e) communication by the department to successful and unsuccessful tenderers, the communications protocol employed during the probity period, and referrals to employment services by Centrelink during the transition period;
(f) the extent to which the Government has kept its promise that Personal Support Program, Job Placement Employment and Training and Community Work Coordinator providers would not be disadvantaged in the process, and the number of smaller ‘specialist’ employment service providers delivering more client-focused services still supported by the Employment Services program;
(g) the particular impact on Indigenous Employment Services providers and Indigenous-focused Employment Services providers;
(h) the Employment Services Model, including whether it is sustainable in a climate of low employment growth and rising unemployment, and whether there is capacity to revise it in the face of changed economic circumstances; and
(i) recommendations for the best way to maintain an appropriate level of continuity of service and ongoing sector viability while at the same time ensuring service quality and accountability and maximising the ancillary benefits for social inclusion through connection and integration with other services.

Senator Bob Brown to move on the next day of sitting:

That the Senate, in regard to the massacre of civilians, including hundreds of children in the Tamil homelands of northern Sri Lanka, calls on the Government to take decisive action commensurate with the need to immediately halt this unnecessary bloodshed.
Senator Hanson-Young to move on the next day of sitting:

That the following bill be introduced: A Bill for an Act to amend the Fair Work Act 2009 to guarantee 26 weeks government-funded paid parental leave, and for related purposes. Fair Work Amendment (Paid Parental Leave) Bill 2009.

Senator Ludlam to move on the next day of sitting:

That the Senate—

(a) recalls the Government’s election promise and policy platform to repeal the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act 2005;

(b) notes:

(i) the statement given by the Minister for Resources and Energy (Mr Ferguson) on ABC Radio, Darwin, on 30 April 2009 which indicated that the Government will keep its election promise, but refused to confirm when this will occur, and

(ii) that the Minister indicated that scientific reports on the assessment of potential sites have almost been completed and that the Government will be making a recommendation on an appropriate site, but has not yet finalised its policy on community consultation; and

(c) calls on the Government to establish a process for identifying suitable sites that is scientific, transparent, accountable, fair and allows access to appeal mechanisms, ensures full community consultation in radioactive waste decision-making processes, and for international best practice scientific processes, including transportation and storage, to underpin Australia’s radioactive waste management.

Senator Siewert to move on the next day of sitting:

That the Senate—

(a) notes that the week beginning 11 May 2009 is National Volunteer Week;

(b) recognises that more than 5.4 million Australian volunteers contribute more than 700 million hours of their time to support our community in a wide range of areas from aged care, health, emergency services, education and sport;

(c) acknowledges that community groups, charities and services would not be able to deliver their services without volunteers;

(d) commends volunteers for their tireless contributions to our community; and

(e) acknowledges the enormous role that volunteers play in civil society.

COMMITTEES

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

Extension of Time

Senator O’Brien (Tasmania) (4.05 pm)—by leave—At the request of the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport, Senator Sterle, I move:

That the time for the presentation of reports of the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee be extended as follows:

(a) natural resource management and conservation challenges—to 18 June 2009; and

(b) matters specified in part (2) of the inquiry into the management of the Murray-Darling Basin system—to 22 May 2009.

Question agreed to.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Senator O’Brien (Tasmania) (4.05 pm)—by leave—I move:

That leave of absence be granted to Senator Pratt for 13 and 14 May 2009, for personal reasons.

Question agreed to.
NOTICES

Postponement

The following items of business were postponed:

General business notice of motion no. 399 standing in the name of Senator Cormann for today, proposing an order of continuing effect relating to non-disclosure of information during committee proceedings on public interest grounds, postponed till 13 May 2009.

General business notice of motion no. 414 standing in the name of the Leader of the Family First Party (Senator Fielding) for today, proposing the introduction of the Parliamentary Superannuation Amendment (Removal of Excessive Super) Bill 2009, postponed till 14 May 2009.

DEPARTMENTAL AND AGENCY APPOINTMENTS

Order

Senator CORMANN (Western Australia) (4.06 pm)—I move:

That the order of the Senate of 24 June 2008 for the production of documents relating to departmental and agency appointments be amended as follows:

At the end of paragraph (1)(a), add “and the place of permanent residence by state or territory of the appointee”.

Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES

Agricultural and Related Industries Committee

Reference

Senator PARRY (Tasmania) (4.07 pm)—At the request of Senator Heffernan, I seek leave to amend general business notice of motion No. 413. The details of the amendment have been circulated.

Leave granted.

Senator PARRY—I move the motion as amended:

That the following matter be referred to the Select Committee on Agricultural and Related Industries for inquiry and report:

The incidence and severity of bushfires across Australia, including:

(a) the impact of bushfires on human and animal life, agricultural land, the environment, public and private assets and local communities;

(b) factors contributing to the causes and risks of bushfires across Australia, including natural resource management policies, hazard reduction and agricultural land maintenance;

(c) the extent and effectiveness of bushfire mitigation strategies and practices, including application of resources for agricultural land, national parks, state forests, other Crown land, open space areas adjacent to development and private property and the impact of hazard reduction strategies;

(d) the identification of measures that can be undertaken by government, industry and the community and the effectiveness of these measures in protecting agricultural industries, service industries, small business, tourism and water catchments;

(e) any alternative or developmental bushfire prevention and mitigation approaches which can be implemented;

(f) the appropriateness of planning and building codes with respect to land use in the bushfire prone regions;

(g) the adequacy and funding of fire-fighting resources both paid and voluntary and the usefulness of and impact on on-farm labour;

(h) the role of volunteers;

(i) the impact of climate change;

(j) fire – its causes (accidental, natural and deliberate) and remedies;

(k) the impact of bushfires on biodiversity and measures to protect biodiversity; and

(l) insurance against bushfires.
Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (4.08 pm)—I seek leave to move an amendment to the motion as amended.

Leave granted.

Senator BOB BROWN—I move:

Omit paragraph (j), substitute “arson – its causes and remedies and its contribution to bushfires in Australia”.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—The question is that the amendment moved by Senator Brown be agreed to.

The Senate divided. [4.13 pm]

(The Deputy President—Senator the Hon. AB Ferguson)

Ayes……….. 5
Noes……….. 56
Majority…….. 51

AYES
Brown, B.J.
Ludlam, S.
Siewert, R*

NOES
Adams, J.
Arbib, M.V.
Bilyk, C.L.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—The question now is that the motion moved by Senator Parry be agreed to.

That the motion (Senator Parry’s), as amended, be agreed to.

The Senate divided. [4.22 pm]

(The President—Senator the Hon. JJ Hogg)

Ayes……….. 36
Noes……….. 34
Majority…….. 2

AYES
Abetz, E.
Back, C.J.
Barnardi, C.
Boswell, R.L.D.
Brown, C.L.
Cameron, D.N.
Colbeck, R.
Conroy, S.M.
Crossin, P.M.
Farrell, D.E.
Ferguson, A.B.
Fierravanti-Wells, C.
Fisher, M.J.
Furner, M.L.
Humphries, G.
Hutchins, S.P.
Kroger, H.
Lundy, K.A.
McEwen, A.
Moore, C.
O’Brien, K.W.K.

NOES
Polley, H.
Ryan, S.M.
Sherry, N.J.
Sterle, G.
Trood, R.B.
Wortley, D.

The PRESIDENT—The question is that the new paragraph (j) be agreed to.

That the new paragraph (j) be agreed to.

The Senate divided. [4.28 pm]

(The President—Senator the Hon. JJ Hogg)

Ayes……….. 38
Noes……….. 32
Majority…….. 6

AYES
Abetz, E.
Back, C.J.
Barnardi, C.
Boswell, R.L.D.
Brown, C.L.
Cameron, D.N.
Colbeck, R.
Conroy, S.M.
Crossin, P.M.
Farrell, D.E.
Ferguson, A.B.
Fierravanti-Wells, C.
Fisher, M.J.
Furner, M.L.
Humphries, G.
Hutchins, S.P.
Kroger, H.
Lundy, K.A.
McEwen, A.
Moore, C.
O’Brien, K.W.K.

NOES
Polley, H.
Ryan, S.M.
Sherry, N.J.
Sterle, G.
Trood, R.B.
Wortley, D.

* denotes teller

PAIRS
Carr, K.J.
Wong, P.
Evans, C.V.

Adams, J.
Arbib, M.V.
Bilyk, C.L.

* denotes teller

Opposition

Abetz, E.
Back, C.J.
Barnardi, C.
Boswell, R.L.D.
Brown, C.L.
Cameron, D.N.
Colbeck, R.
Conroy, S.M.
Crossin, P.M.
Farrell, D.E.
Ferguson, A.B.
Fierravanti-Wells, C.
Fisher, M.J.
Furner, M.L.
Humphries, G.
Hutchins, S.P.
Kroger, H.
Lundy, K.A.
McEwen, A.
Moore, C.
O’Brien, K.W.K.

General

Polley, H.
Ryan, S.M.
Sherry, N.J.
Sterle, G.
Trood, R.B.
Wortley, D.

* denotes teller

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Furner, M.L.
Humphries, G.
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Humphries, G.
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Moore, C.
O’Brien, K.W.K.

General

Polley, H.
Ryan, S.M.
Sherry, N.J.
Sterle, G.
Trood, R.B.
Wortley, D.
The PRESIDENT—I have received a letter from Senator Fierravanti-Wells proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the Senate for discussion, namely:

The recent increased activities of people smuggling.

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

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

The PRESIDENT—I understand that informal arrangements have been made to allocate specific times to each of the speakers in today’s debate. With the concurrence of the Senate, I shall ask the clerks to set the clock accordingly.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS (New South Wales) (4.27 pm)—I rise to speak on this matter, which is of great importance to many in Australia as we see the growing surge of people smuggling. Two things are very clear: firstly, that the Labor government’s border protection policies have failed miserably; secondly, that the Labor government’s softening of border protection laws has given the green light to people smugglers.

In the last eight months we have seen 20 boats, with over 714 unauthorised arrivals on board, come to Australia. This is a clear result of the government softening its border protection regime in August last year. In August last year we saw the abolition of temporary protection visas and, lo and behold, as soon as that happened we started to see this surge. That, of course, can be compared to the record in the Howard years. From 2002 to 2005, only one boat arrived on our shores. It is very clear that the Labor government’s change of direction is sending the wrong message to people smugglers. On this side, the coalition has been warning the government repeatedly since August last year that this very situation would arise—that the softening of our border protection regime would give a green light to people smugglers to come on down.

Let us look at what some of the asylum seekers themselves are saying. We heard directly from one of the asylum seekers in Indonesia in a report on the *AM* program on 24 April, which I would like to quote for the record. The report said:

‘Kevin Rudd—he change everything about refugee. If I go to Australia now, different, different. Maybe accepted. But when John Howard, president Australia, he said come back to Indonesia.’ He says Kevin Rudd won’t send him back to Indonesia and that’s why he’ll be getting on a boat again.

Then, of course, we look at what the Indonesian ambassador has to say on the issue. The Indonesian ambassador to Australia has said that people smugglers are using the changes
in policy as a marketing tool. In an article in the *Australian* on 22 April, he said:

I think maybe the traffickers use this as a trial to organise more of flowing of the refugees, because they get the money for that.

This is because the price has gone up because they can now guarantee that they do not have to spend time in detention, and so it is going to make it a lot easier for them to give the guarantee: ‘Yes, come on down, go on down to Australia. Spend a little bit of time in detention, but before you know it you’ll be out there.’ And let us look at the comments by Mr Steve Cook that were reported in the *Australian* on 1 December. Mr Cook, the International Organisation for Migration’s chief of mission in Indonesia, said: People smugglers have clearly noted that there has been a change in policy and they’re testing the envelope.

Even our own Australian Federal Police has reportedly warned the government that its softening of border protection laws would encourage the people smugglers. I would call on this government to immediately release any advice that it has received, particularly from the Australia Federal Police, about the impact of the changes of the border protection regime. The Australian public is entitled to know and have security about border protection, but it is very clear that this change in direction and this change in policy and the softening of border protection have resulted in the very thing that the Australian public does not want—that is, more people arriving on our shores.

And how many more will be coming? How many are waiting for the opportunity? We have seen them arrive virtually every day. Every day we are seeing another lot of boat people coming to our country. And every person who arrives in this manner is one less person who has been waiting in a camp, properly processed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who will not have the opportunity of coming to this place, who will not be afforded the opportunity of being resettled in a country like Australia. That is really the sad situation here. But of course the minister is very happy to say, ‘Oh, but nothing has changed.’ It has changed, Minister. It is very, very clear that from the moment you abolished temporary protection visas in August we suddenly started to see this surge. It is very clear that there has been a clear change in policy.

Let us look at some of the changes that this government has effected: the closure of Manus and Nauru offshore detention centres, the abolishing of the temporary protection visas and the expansion of appeal rights for asylum seekers. In my 20 years of working in the Australian Government Solicitor’s office, and over the many years when I acted, from time to time over those 20 years, for the department of immigration, I saw many instances where there had been a clear abuse of those appeal rights in futile legal cases which resulted in millions and millions of dollars of costs to the taxpayers of Australia. The important thing about the temporary protection visas is that the temporary protection visa procedures made people available to be deported if they were not granted a proper visa. So that is really the key.

But let me look at some of the other changes. The minister is very fond of telling us that there has been no change. So in answer to my questions in estimates, and in answer to written questions on notice, there are 26 initiatives or projects that have been changed in the department to give effect to the government’s change of its border protection regime. These include: considering arrangements to apply the onus on the department to justify detention to detain an unlawful citizen—so now the onus is on the department to justify why a person has to remain in detention; strengthening arrange-
ments to allow for the release of unauthorised arrivals when their immigration detention is no longer required for the management of health, identity and security risks to the Australian community; introducing further access to legal advice; least restrictive detention environments; use of community based alternatives. And then the minister gets upset because people criticise his change of direction.

It is interesting to look at the letters to the editor in the Daily Telegraph on 7 May. The minister got all huffy because somebody had written in. There was also a story in the Daily Telegraph on 4 May which was headed ‘Illegals will get a cuppa and visa’. The minister got all worked up about this, but the reality is that a very strong message has gone out there that is basically saying we have gone soft, we have changed our regime, we have changed our system of dealing with illegals. So it is virtually a situation now where we say: ‘Yes, okay, well you’ll spend a little bit more time in detention, but come on down. It’s a lot easier.’ And that is why we are seeing this surge; it is because of the pull factors. The minister talks about the push factors, but without pull, you do not have push. And now we have some very strong pull factors that mean that it is much, much easier for people to abuse our system and to come on down, and that is why we are seeing, daily, more arrivals. And I say to the people of Australia who are very concerned about this: mark my words, this change of direction means that we are going to have many, many more. They are waiting in their thousands, and they are waiting to come on down.

Senator ARBIB (New South Wales—Parliamentary Secretary for Government Service Delivery) (4.36 pm)—I am pretty disappointed after hearing Senator Fierravanti-Wells in her rant regarding the matters of public importance. I am disappointed but I am not surprised by it. I note that the good Senators Payne and Troeth have both declined to speak—they are not on the speaking list. They would be pretty disappointed as well by that performance of Senator Fierravanti-Wells. The really interesting thing is that it highlights the divisions within the Liberal Party on this issue—not just within the Liberal Party but between the chambers. Before I came in today, I thought I would check what is going on in the House of Reps, the other place, to see what they are talking about today and see if they are actually debating immigration and border protection. Guess what—in question time, how many questions were on border protection or immigration? Have a guess.

Senator Williams interjecting—

Senator ARBIB—Come on, Senator Williams, have a guess.

Senator Williams—I wouldn’t have a clue.

Senator ARBIB—Zero. Not one question. How many notices of motion are there on immigration or border protection? Would you like to guess? Zero—none. In the other place they are debating the economy. They are talking about the stimulus package and the budget, but here in the Senate the Liberal hardliners are at it again. The hard Right is here in the Senate holding the flag.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells—Mr Acting Deputy President, I rise on a point of order. I ask Senator Arbib to retract that last comment about the hard Right. I think it has connotations and would appreciate it if he would withdraw that. Thank you.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Bernardi)—After receiving some advice, it is a general comment across the chamber, but I put it back to Senator Arbib that a senator has found offence at that comment and he may or may not decide that it is an appropriate comment.
Senator ARBIB—In terms of my statement, at no time did I talk about the hard Right; I talked about hardliners, so I do not intend to retract the comment. In terms of the hardliners on the other side of the chamber, they do not believe in global warming, they still believe in Work Choices and now they are returning to their roots in terms of immigration and border protection. Australia went down a very dark route when John Howard and the former government played wedge politics and dog-whistled on border protection. It looks like we are going back again. Here comes the new Liberal Party-National Party scare campaign and Senator Fierravanti-Wells is at the helm. So you have to ask: why are they referring back to immigration and asylum seekers? Why are they running a scare campaign? They are desperate. They are losing the debate on the economy, they are losing the debate on climate change and they are losing the debate on workplace relations, so they are back to their typical scare campaign.

The worrying thing about the scare campaign is that it is really a political game based on opportunism. It is not based on fact; it is based on fear. If you listen to Senator Fierravanti-Wells and some other members of the coalition front bench, you would think that there is a huge difference between our position on border protection and immigration and the coalition’s position. Look at what the shadow minister, Sharman Stone, the member for Murray, said on Sky News on 16 April, straight after—this was minutes after—the Ashmore Reef explosion:

You can’t slash funds, you can’t take your eye off the ball, you can’t announce a softer policy and then expect people not to lose their lives through people smuggling...

On 17 April, the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Wentworth, said:

There is no doubt the impression has been created that we are now more accommodating or taking a less hard line towards people smuggling than ... in the past.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells said we have given the green light to asylum seekers.

Senator Williams—Everybody says that.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells—Everybody says that.

Senator ARBIB—That is amazing, because the Liberal Party and the coalition have completely changed their position over the past two to three months. This is a complete U-turn. They have finally found another scare campaign they can run. The facts tell the story. Senator Fierravanti-Wells, let’s go back to it. Let’s look at what the member for Murray, the shadow spokesperson for immigration, said on 2UE on 19 January this year:

Well certainly Rudd’s Government has continued with the excised migration zones. They’ve also continued with what was originally a Labor-introduced policy of mandatory detention—that is right—

They’re using the Christmas Island detention centre, which we built.

What did she say on 2SM on 1 December? Listen to this, Senators. She probably did not think anyone was listening:

Labor is echoing very much what we did; it’s just that they seem very reluctant to loudly and clearly state into the region, look, we still do have excised zones for migration purposes.

That was the Liberal shadow minister. She went on to say:

They also still of course have mandatory detention until you can prove the identity of the people. I don’t think we need—

Senator Fierravanti-Wells—What about temporary protection visas?

Senator ARBIB—Hang on, Senator Fierravanti-Wells. Please listen to this. I think you should listen to it because it was your own spokesperson.
The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT—
Please address your comments through the chair, Senator Arbib.

Senator ARBIB—The shadow minister said:
I don’t think we need to again have Nauru and Manus Island operating, because we’ve got of course Christmas Island. There’s a $360 million new detention centre sitting there.

Are the coalition coming into this chamber today and saying, ‘Let’s go back to the Pacific solution’? No. Are coalition senators coming back today and saying, ‘Let’s go back to temporary protection visas’? No. In fact, a joint standing committee looking at immigration detention measures released a report in December 2008. It was endorsed by shadow immigration minister Sharman Stone and Liberal MP Danna Vale. Senator Fierravanti-Wells left that out today, but it is useful information and I think other senators should know. The committee’s report endorsed the Rudd government’s abolition of the former Prime Minister’s inhumane approach to immigration detention. Let’s get the quote in. This is from the report, signed by the shadow minister:

The series of recommendations we have made will build on the new immigration detention values and strike a fair balance between protection of the Australian community and our obligations towards those in immigration detention.

The opposition’s own spokesperson has outlined how little difference there is in mandatory detention and border protection. You do not want to go back to the Pacific solution and neither do the government. You do not want to go back to temporary protection visas and neither do we. We do not want to go back to having women and children in endless detention, and I hope that you do not want to go back to that either. Of course, your spokesperson has said that, and I hope the senators on the other side will agree with that.

In terms of temporary protection visas, Senator Fierravanti-Wells made the point that there was a surge of asylum seekers when the government ended temporary protection visas, which is absolute rubbish. TPVs did not stop boats arriving.

Senator Johnston interjecting—

Senator ARBIB—Listen to the facts, Senator. Temporary protection visas were introduced in October 1999. There were 3,722 unauthorised boat arrivals that year. During the next two years there were 8,459 unauthorised arrivals, including 5,520 arrivals in 2001 alone. Not only was there an increase, people granted TPVs did not leave Australia. By the time TPVs were abolished last year, nearly 90 per cent of people initially granted a TPV had been granted a permanent protection visa or another visa to remain in Australia. Even the previous government realised TPVs were failing. The coalition’s 2007 election policy manifesto dealing with unauthorised boat arrivals made no reference, Senators, to TPVs because they knew TPVs were not working.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells also made some claims about two asylum seekers who, apparently in news reports, had mentioned that Australia was a great place to come because of changed policies. Senator Fierravanti-Wells based that statement on two comments in a newspaper. Senators, there has actually been a report and a study done on this by Dr Roslyn Richardson of Charles Sturt University. She interviewed asylum seekers—not two, but many—and she did it in a systematic way. Let me offer a few quotes from her paper:

... none of the respondents who were interviewed for this study arrived in Australia with a detailed understanding of Australia’s immigration policies.

... some Afghan respondents reported that they had not even heard of a place called Australia prior to arriving on Australia’s shores.
While a number of the respondents said that they knew prior to their spontaneous arrival, that they might be detained in an Australian detention centre, only one of the respondents said that before he came to Australia, he knew that he might be subjected to the temporary protection visa.

...the apparent lack of importance of Australia to refugees prior to their arrival in Australia is worth noting. Australia to the respondents, pre arrival, was perhaps only as important to them as any other country which was outside of their region and with which they had little contact.

Most of the people interviewed actually came to Australia during the excesses of the Howard government asylum seeker policies, yet they were not even aware of the policies that were supposed to deter them. The argument that somehow there was a cause and effect relationship between the movement of asylum seekers and our domestic immigration policies was false then and it is false now.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells really did not go into the global factors that are driving the immigration, asylum seeker spike either. She just glossed over it as though it is not happening. She did not mention Pakistan or the turmoil there. She did not mention the turmoil in Sri Lanka and she did not mention the turmoil in Iraq. She did not mention these issues or the conflicts that are causing people across the world to migrate, to flee unsafe environments and look for safe havens.

The UN has described the situation in Sri Lanka as an intensifying emergency as tens of thousands of civilians continue to make their way out of the conflict zone. Among the major countries of origin of asylum seekers, the biggest increase in 2008 was registered by Afghanistan—numbers were up 85 per cent. Of course, Australia is going to be an area that is viewed as a safe haven. The UNHCR mentioned a 12 per cent spike in asylum seeker traffic across the globe. Senator Fierravanti-Wells never even mentioned these facts. What is happening globally is irrelevant to the Liberal Party. In the end this is a scare campaign not based on fact but based on opportunism.

Fortunately, though, there are some good people within the Liberal Party not motivated on this issue by political opportunism who have decided to take a stand. They have talked about the push and pull factors. Mr Barnett, the Western Australian Premier, said this about global factors:

I think what we are seeing is serious unrest in areas like Sri Lanka, Afghanistan … and there are desperate people trying to find a better life for themselves.

That was reported by AAP. The member for Pearce, Mrs Moylan, supported the government’s current policies and does not believe they are responsible for the rise in boat people. She said:

I don’t think that it is domestic policy driving this latest flood. I think you will see, like it was previously, that it is events in Afghanistan.

They are the facts. This is what is happening overseas and this is why there is a spike. It has absolutely nothing to do with government policy.

In its policy the government has maintained the strongest of border protection. If you look at the figures, funding has gone up for border security and border surveillance. Immigration and border protection policy for the Rudd government is based on six pillars: the excision of offshore islands; mandatory detention of all unauthorised boat arrivals; offshore processing of unauthorised boat arrivals on Christmas Island; extensive air, land and sea patrols; the prosecution of people smugglers; and working with our regional allies.

This is what the government is doing. We are working with Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka to ensure that these countries have the support and the resources they need to
stop the people smugglers. We all know that in the end these are the people who are helping to drive unauthorised arrivals, and this is what the Rudd government is concerned about. We have heard what the Prime Minister has said about people smugglers, and we will continue the fight. The government has the strongest of border protections in place but is at the same time processing asylum seekers humanely. So I say to Senator Fieravanti-Wells and those senators on the other side of the chamber: when you are addressing the Liberal Party policy, do not talk to or look at John Howard; talk to former Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser.

**Senator HANSON-YOUNG** (South Australia) (4.52 pm)—All too often when we talk about and debate the issues surrounding Australia’s border protection policy, we find ourselves in this ridiculous mix of scaremongering campaigns run by particular members of the opposition. Despite the fact that we know there are a growing number of people around the world seeking refuge, the coalition continue to turn a blind eye to the terrifying circumstances that these people have fled and from which they are seeking our protection.

I find it absolutely disappointing that the coalition’s own rhetoric in the last day—even in the last half hour—has changed from demonising people smugglers to demonising those seeking refuge themselves. The senators’ comments this afternoon were more about those individual asylum seekers than about the people smugglers that they continue to say we need to tackle. I guess that gets to the heart of the problem: the coalition do not believe we should have refugees in Australia. They do not believe that we should have a compassionate approach. If they did, they would understand that those people seeking asylum are not illegal. Terms like ‘illegal’ are not only offensive but absolutely inaccurate. It is actually not illegal to arrive in Australia and seek asylum and refuge. I find it incredibly distressing and unfortunate that some people continue to use this to exploit desperate asylum seekers for their own political advantage. I think Senator Arbib said something quite important: perhaps it is because of your own irrelevancy that you turn to demonising those who are more desperate than you.

As a signatory to the 1951 Geneva convention on refugees and a country that considers itself a compassionate nation and a champion of the fair go, Australia must step up to our international obligations and our reputation and swiftly consider asylum seekers for refugee status. Australia has a role to play in the global community, as the movement of people will grow. We know from numerous reports that the global numbers of people seeking refuge have been rising for some time. According to the UNHCR, the recent increases in Australia are reflected in the global trends. Between 2001 and 2006, all countries experienced a large drop in asylum applications, and then from 2007 to 2008 there was a universal increase of around 11 per cent. In Australia, asylum applications increased by 19 per cent last year, from 3,980 to 4,750. Let me point out that fewer than four per cent of those people arrived here by boat. The majority of people seeking asylum in Australia arrived by plane, yet not once have we heard the coalition comment on those people. Not once do we hear them criticise border protection in our airports. It is an absolute double standard. And why? Because it is easy to whip up fear around poor people who arrive by leaky boat.

I do not know how many times the Greens have said this, but advocating harsher immigration policies, as some of those in the opposition continue to do, does not stop desperate people who are fleeing war and perse-
cution. We know that the temporary protection visa scheme did not work in deterring people; in fact, we saw the numbers rise after the introduction of that scheme. We know that excising our territories does not work in deterring people, and we know that charging people for their own detention in immigration detention centres does not work in deterring people, despite the fact that even as late as this morning the opposition seemed split on whether we are going to go backwards to the dark old days where we charged people for detention regardless of whether they were found to be genuine refugees or not.

What I find most scary about the position currently being pushed by the opposition spokesperson for immigration and her supporters is that I thought Australia had moved on. The voters thought Australia had moved on. Had we not moved on from the days when we locked children in detention centres behind barbed wire in the middle of the desert? We knew that that was the case in the dark old days of the Howard regime, when Philip Ruddock was immigration minister and turned a blind eye to young children who had sewn their lips together in desperation for assistance. Yet those in the coalition who continue to feel irrelevant in their own positions have nothing better to do than prey on the fear and desperation of those more desperate than us.

I think we can all agree, on all sides of politics, that the people-smuggling trade is an appalling one that exploits innocent individuals who are in a desperate situation. Where I do think we differ, however, is on the role that Australia should play in managing the global rise in numbers of asylum seekers fleeing their homelands in search of a safe and peaceful environment. While there are reports that border security will receive a boost of up to $500 million in tonight’s budget to combat people smuggling, I hope that we also see an increase in our commitment to providing humanitarian visas and humanitarian aid.

Recent arrivals of people seeking asylum in Australia point to humanitarian problems right across the global community and increased refugee movement right around the world. Australia has an important part to play. Just as we want to be a player in helping to combat and deal with the global financial crisis, we have a role to play in helping to manage the movement of people globally and the numbers of people who will continue to seek refuge right around the world. We have a responsibility not just in our immediate region but in helping to manage those people right around the world.

Australia is one of the wealthiest nations in our region and we need to provide support to those in need without whipping up fear and unfounded scaremongering. Instead of spending millions of dollars on pushing people back, which we know is not a humane, appropriate or responsible way of managing the movement of people, we need to find better ways to create safer and more humane pathways for people to seek asylum.

I want to reiterate how disappointed I am that the coalition seem to be sliding back to the dark old days when we locked children in detention behind barbed wire in the middle of the desert and threw away the key, when we separated children from their parents because they happened to be at different stages of seeking asylum and having their visas processed, when we detained people unlawfully because they were not actually meant to be detained in the first place. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship has found hundreds of cases where we detained people unlawfully. Do we really want to go back to the dark old days when Australia’s reputation in the international world was frowned upon? I do not think we do and I do not think the Australian public want us to.
We should be proud of being a compassionate, humane country which does give people a fair go and does not demonise people because of where they come from or how they arrive. Whether somebody arrives by boat or by plane, they still have the right to seek asylum. We should not accept double standards and we should not accept any calls from the coalition to return to the days of locking people in detention and throwing away the key.

Senator SCULLION (Northern Territory) (5.01 pm)—As Senator Arbib got to his feet and I heard him speak, I knew that the government were lost and, having heard Senator Hanson-Young continue, I have to say that, disappointingly, in this matter this is a coalition of the unhinged. Two people who I have a deal of respect for stood up in this place and they clearly do not have any understanding of the sorts of challenges that we are facing in border protection. I think that really encapsulates it. They are simply in a state of denial.

The government are not in denial about one fact only—the fact that we have had a thirtyfold increase in the number of people who have come to this country by ship: forget about the lawfulness of it—since their decision to change the policy. Interestingly, in an answer during question time, Senator Evans said, ‘Of course, this is all the push factor.’ Talk about a bit of denial! The push factor is where we talk about Afghanistan, changes in the Middle East, changes in Sri Lanka. Perhaps the changes in Sri Lanka might have some sort of basis in fact; I will accept that.

Senator Feeney—Then sit down!

Senator SCULLION—I will take that interjection from someone else who obviously does not know too much about the matter. It is useful to look at the actual facts of this matter. Twelve and 16 people, respectively, came from Sri Lanka. They are in different circumstances, but I think you will find that out of 763 people it would not be a demographic you would die on the list about. It just would not be a demographic about which you would say, ‘That’s certainly a push factor’, because that would be unmitigated rubbish, as it is most of the time we hear from that side, and it is completely uninformed. What about that other surprising demographic, the two Bhutanese fishermen who were washed up in an esky? That gives you 30 out of 763.

We have this push factor, but we are just one country in a global situation. You have to think about what is happening in places like Europe, with its 27 states. They have had an increase of six per cent. That is a significant increase. Perhaps there is an amazing refugee movement out there. So how is it that Australia has had a 19 per cent increase across the board? We have had that increase because we have had a change in policy, and to talk about the push factor being such an important issue is being in complete and absolute denial.

Senator Evans stood up here, and people were gasping around me when he said, ‘We have had no change in policy. There is no policy difference.’ Under the policies of the previous coalition government, processing at offshore excised places ensured that unauthorised arrivals did not have access to Australia’s extensive administrative and judicial review processes. It also meant that successful asylum seekers did not have an automatic right to apply for a temporary protection visa, and I suspect the Greens, at least, said they did not like that about us. The government is saying that is the policy we have today. The facts of the matter are, according to the same Minister Evans, that unauthorised arrivals taken to excised places have access to legal advice, independent review, oversight by the Ombudsman and an automatic
right to apply for a permanent protection visa. That sounds to me like it is completely different. There are absolutely no similarities at all.

But, apart from the government being in denial, there is no pull factor; it is all push. We have wiped the push out. We understand that you managed 30 out of over 760. The fact of the matter is that the overwhelming majority of people who come to this country on a vessel expect to have a permanent migration outcome in 90 days. The last vessel was yesterday. Maybe I should check. It is only five o’clock; there may be another one today—who would know?

Senator Fierravanti-Wells—That’s right. You never know!

Senator SCULLION—You would never know. But the notion of a rush is alive and well. I know those on the other side may be in denial about that. I have a comparison. Yesterday’s boat was found 23 nautical miles from the Tiwi Islands. Of course, 23 nautical miles from the Tiwi islands is pretty close, and I commend Customs for stopping it there, because of the extensive immigration issues that are associated with the vessels. In November 2003, the Minasa Bone, a vessel which had come to the Tiwi Islands, was pushed offshore by the traditional owners, Mr Brown and Gibson Farmer. They called Customs, and what did Customs do? They towed it offshore and said, ‘You have got to go back to Indonesia’, so that is what happened. There is the difference from the one that was 23 nautical miles off there today. They know where they are going. They are coming to Australia because they are going to get the migration outcome that has been promised by the people smugglers. They are selling a pretty good product. The product they are selling says, ‘If you come to Australia under the new regulations you will get to stay. You will get a bit of a sorting out, a few questions for three months. Then you are in, Buddy, and you are in for good.’

We have now got a further softening, I think. It is hard to know how soft you can get on this matter and pretend that you are a rod of iron. We have got Villawood, and we understand from the media today that potentially unauthorised arrivals are going to have access to Australian courts. Keeping them at Villawood is another softening of the policy. We are going to get a whole raft of new administrative appeals from what we had in that dim, distant past when the government that I belonged to, and was so proud to be a part of, changed.

I sympathise with Senator Hanson-Young of the Greens. I understand where she is coming from when she pleads about the difficulties of these people. But we need to understand that when those people set sail and come to Australia they pay people some money to get into a boat. They get into an aeroplane first of all, fly to Malaysia and then go through the process. This is a commercial operation. People say we should feel very sad for the poor buggers when they get here. I do, but what I really feel sad about is the woman who has lived in a Somali refugee camp and whose life only gets better because one of her children dies every month and that is one less mouth to feed. The other four she will possibly be able to look after.

As Australians, we are proud signatories to the UNHCR 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. That says we will take into this country those most in need, and that is who we will take. There is a line. The previous government, the government that I belonged to, was so proud to ensure that taking 13,000 out of that line was the greatest expansion of the humanitarian refugee process in Australia’s history. These people who come to our shores unlawfully displace people who need a place more than them and
they put the quarantine of our nation at risk. We need to send a clear signal: do not put your families and children on these ships to come here. We need to send a clear signal, and that signal is not being sent. (Time expired)

Senator FEENEY (Victoria) (5.09 pm)—I am very pleased to rise on this occasion and make a contribution to what I believe is a very important matter of public importance debate. We have heard from the opposition today the usual series of half-truths and distortions they trot out whenever this subject comes up. Those opposite have no leadership, no policies and no response to the challenges facing this country, and so once again they have turned to this tiresome old mechanism for diverting attention from their hopeless performance by drumming up another scare campaign concerning asylum seekers. They try to arouse xenophobic sentiment in Australia. They try to exploit the desperation and suffering of people seeking asylum. It is a sad and grubby exercise and it reflects very poorly on those who continue to promote it.

As those opposite know perfectly well, there is no connection whatever between the policies of the Rudd government and the recent rise in the number of persons trying to reach Australia by boat in order to claim asylum. The core proposition being advanced by those opposite is that the policies of this government create a pull factor. This is, of course, semicodified language for what is a nonsensical proposition. The idea that desperate persons fleeing catastrophe, desperate persons in the middle of a humanitarian crisis—whether it be on the Jaffna Peninsula or in Afghanistan—are thumbing their way through the Hansard of the Commonwealth parliament is, of course, a nonsense.

This rise that has been experienced in Australia in recent days is a very small part of what is a worldwide upsurge in refugee movements. The upsurge began in 2006, when the Howard government was still in office, and it has been caused principally by the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, the escalation of the civil war in Sri Lanka, the increasing security concerns in Pakistan, the continuing violence in Iraq and, of course, the continuing conflict in several African countries. These are the drivers for creating a desperate population of persons who are on the move. Refugee numbers are rising all over the developed world, far more so than they are in Australia. In 2008, as we have heard, 36,000 people arrived by boat in Italy, 15,300 in Greece and 13,400 in Spain. Many thousands more have entered Europe overland. The US, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries all have major problems with would-be asylum seekers trying to cross their borders.

Australia’s problems are very minor indeed by comparison. In 2008 we saw just 127 asylum seekers arriving by boat. Not only is this a very small number when compared to those numbers experienced by other countries but it is also a small number compared to the number of people who arrive by air as tourists or students and then subsequently try to claim asylum while in Australia or who simply overstay their visas. That was true when those opposite were in government and that is still true today. But because those people are mostly from developed countries like New Zealand, the US or Britain those opposite do not make any fuss about them. They do not care how many people from those countries stay in Australia illegally. It is only the arrival of a very small number of people from non-Anglo-Saxon backgrounds—people from Afghanistan, Iraq or Sri Lanka—that arouses the passions of those opposite. That is because the other side learnt many years ago that to foster, nurture and promote the fear of the other is an oppor-
tunity to create votes. Those opposite are the poor shadow children of Pauline Hanson, who offer us xenophobia and racism in lieu of offering us real policies that will make a contribution to the challenges faced by this country.

Those opposite allege, quite falsely, that the current upsurge in attempts to reach Australia by boat is linked in some way to the policies of the Rudd government. This core proposition is completely contrary to the facts. It has also been refuted by leading experts in this area. What does Professor Susan Kneebone, Deputy Director of the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law at Monash University, say? She says:

… desperate people … are not cognisant of Australia’s policies. They resort to people smugglers because there are not sufficient legal channels to get here.

Of course, this proves what is common sense: the idea that desperate people fleeing in humanitarian crises are making some kind of regulatory impact statement on the latest set of laws promoted by any one country is a nonsense. Neither the asylum seekers themselves nor the smuggling gangs who ferry them from Indonesia to Ashmore Reef know or care about the details of Australia’s policy on asylum seekers. Of course, the smugglers tell these unfortunate people that if they get to Australia they will be allowed to stay. That is what they used to say, that is what they still say and no doubt it is what they will always say. They tell them they will be given a house and a farm. They tell them whatever they think they need to tell them to produce customers in their own unique, grubby little market. They are in a business. They did that when those opposite were in government and they do it today.

The Rudd government has made two substantial changes to Australia’s immigration system relating to asylum seekers. Firstly, we have abolished the Howard government’s expensive and ineffective policy of dumping asylum seekers on Nauru and other islands and keeping them there indefinitely in the hope that they will either go mad or go home. We now take them to the new facility at Christmas Island—that $400 million, 800-bed facility built by those opposite—and there we process their claims properly and with due process. Those who do not gain acceptance as asylum seekers are sent home. Secondly, we have scrapped the Howard government’s unnecessarily punitive temporary protection visas—visas which denied people accepted as refugees the right to access refugee settlement services such as English-language programs, employment and income assistance and which denied them reunion with their families. Of course, by denying family access, the TPV system actually increased the number of people who were attempting illegal entry into this country.

Neither of these measures by this government has made the slightest difference to the border protection regime which the Rudd government inherited from the previous government. Not only has this government maintained a strong border protection regime but it has actually increased funding for border protection. The government recently announced a $44.7 million increase in new measures to fight people-smuggling in cooperation with our neighbours—principally, Indonesia. The government has sent two ministerial delegations to Indonesia to reinvigorate the Bali process on people-smuggling at a ministerial level—a process the previous government neglected. It is worth pointing out that although there has been an increase in the number of people trying to reach Australia by boat since 2007 none of them have succeeded in doing so. The only would-be asylum seekers who have succeeded in reaching the Australian mainland have been those who were seri-
ously injured in the explosion on the boat at Ashmore Reef in April and who are now in Australian hospitals. All the others have been intercepted by the Navy or other services and taken to Christmas Island. In other words, under the Rudd government, Australia’s border protection regime has been maintained—indeed, it has been strengthened—and it has been effective in preventing unauthorised entry to Australia by boat.

It has been pleasing to see that not all members of the Liberal Party have been as willing as Senator Fierravanti-Wells and others to sell out their principles in pursuit of cheap and temporary political advantage. Once again we can find Liberal Party members and their utterances on both sides of the street. Mr Turnbull has called for the reintroduction of TPVs, although this has nothing to do with the border protection regime, since it affects only those who have already been accepted as refugees. Mr Russell Broadbent called TPVs ‘an extraordinarily harsh instrument’. Mr Petro Georgiou said there was no evidence that the Rudd government’s changes to the TPV system had any impact on asylum seeker arrivals. Ms Judi Moylan said that if TPVs were re-introduced ‘we’d put more lives in danger, especially those of women and children.’ That is what the parliamentary colleagues of those opposite think about Mr Turnbull’s cheap, populist stunting.

What do the Australian people think about this cheap, political xenophobia? Fortunately we do not have to guess, because last month the Essential Research poll asked this question: ‘Who would you trust most to handle Australia’s immigration and border security—Kevin Rudd and the Labor Party or Malcolm Turnbull and the Liberal Party?’ The answer was 46 per cent for Kevin Rudd, 34 per cent for Malcolm Turnbull and 20 per cent were undecided. (Time expired)

Senator JOHNSTON (Western Australia) (5.19 pm)—Nobody wants to see hundreds of men, women and children travelling from small islands in Indonesia—travelling from Sri Lanka and Pakistan—to the north-west coast of Australia on small leaky boats. Nobody wants to see that. But the bumbling, fumbling, naive, negligent policies of this Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and this government have meant that we have seen a massive increase. Here are the facts that these speakers from the government simply refuse to acknowledge. In 2003-04, we had one boat; in 2004-05, we had no boats; in 2005-06, we had four boats; in 2006-07, we had five boats; in 2007-08, we had three boats; but in 2008-09, the one year that Labor has had total and sole responsibility for, we have had 20 boats and 763 arrivals. There was one yesterday, so I think it is now 21, but who is counting, because the number changes so regularly.

These government senators talk about the ‘dark time’ when John Howard and the coalition were in charge of immigration. The dark time was when border protection came upon this country as a major issue when we saw massive dislocation in the late nineties. We saw people in the water; we saw people perish. What did we do? We sent the right messages. We sent the right messages to South-East Asia, to people smugglers and to the people who would pay the people smugglers—the desperate, sad people who would pay, as the AFP used to tell me when I was the minister, US$18,000.

These ministers and members of the government delude themselves. The Indonesian ambassador has said that we have sent the
wrong message; the changes in policy are being used as a marketing tool. That is what he said, but those over there in the government do not believe him because it is not convenient and does not fit their spin. The International Organisation for Migration’s chief of mission in Indonesia, Steve Cook, says that people smugglers have taken note of Australian government policy changes and are testing the envelope. But the government do not want to hear that because it does not fit within their spin. Lastly but most importantly, the Australian Federal police have warned the government that the change in policy is sending the wrong message.

I tell you that today I must say I was embarrassed for Senator Arbib. He said that in 2001 we had 5,000 boats. When a senator comes into the chamber, you would expect him to at least spend one or two minutes trying to learn the basic fundamentals of the issues upon which he seeks to give a dissertation. Sadly, it indicates he has spent far too many hours in Sussex Street plotting the demise of his colleagues and enemies within the New South Wales Right of the Labor Party. We had 54 boats, for his benefit. It is not hard to find out the actual facts. There were 4,137 arrivals. I am staggered that he would come in here and talk about 5,000 boats. Obviously he has no concept of the subject matter at hand.

This is spin about the dislocation in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. When the war was on in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2002 we had no boats. During the Iraq War, 2003 and 2004, we had one boat. I have got to tell you that these guys over the other side will tell you anything that suits them. Their bumbling, naive, negligent policies are going to mean that men and women are on the water between Roti Island and Darwin and Broome. That is what they have done in their naive stupidity. For 11 years they sat in opposition and thought, 'Well, they are looking after people-smuggling. The AFP know what they are doing. We don’t need to get involved.' As soon as they change the policy it is used as an advertising tool, as has been explained to them by the Indonesian ambassador. Do you think they are listening? They come in here today and try and skate over and paper over the cracks of their policy. This is absolutely stupid. You are sending the wrong message. This trade, this commercial corruption out there, depends upon the messages that you send. You do not need to be an Einstein to work that out. But this government has not got a clue.

It is laughable that when we had this incident off Ashmore Reef, when the boat burst into flames and exploded, the minister for border protection said to the media, ‘I don’t know anything more than what I have read in the press about this.’ Talk about utterly asleep at the wheel! Minister Debus is just comatose. He is an absolute disgrace. What I said to my department as minister was, ‘As soon as there is an event I must be in the loop, I must have the facts, I must be able to tell my Prime Minister and indeed the parliament what is going on.’ But let me tell you again what he said: ‘I don’t know anything more than what I’ve read in the press about this.’ If he was run over by a bus tomorrow, who would know? He is utterly asleep at the wheel. He is a disgrace, and he is very emblematic of the sorts of ministerial skills that these guys in the government bring to this very important issue. If you want to bring foot and mouth into this country, if you want to bring typhoid or TB or any of those things into this country, then just look at the style and the ability and the confidence imparted by Minister Debus and indeed the spin we have seen from Senator Arbib with his 5,000 boats in 2001. He does not even know what day it is. They are just appalling, and heaven help us if these boats keep coming.
The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Marshall)—Order! The time for the debate has expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Sri Lanka

Senator McLUCAS (Queensland—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing) (5.27 pm)—On behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Smith, I table a ministerial statement relating to the humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka.

DOCUMENTS

Tabling

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Marshall)—Pursuant to standing orders 38 and 166, I present documents as listed below which were presented to the President, the Deputy President and Temporary Chairmen 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, the government response will be incorporated in Hansard.

The list read as follows—

(a) Committee reports
1. Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee—Report, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee—Additional estimates 2008-09 (received 31 March 2009)
2. Economics Committee—Interim report—Exposure draft of the legislation to implement the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (received 14 April 2009)
3. Procedure Committee—Second report of 2009—The Senate committee system (received 16 April 2009)
4. Economics Committee—Final report, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee—Exposure draft of the legislation to implement the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (received 16 April 2009)
5. Environment, Communications and the Arts Committee—Interim report to second report—Effectiveness of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and other programs in protecting threatened species and ecological communities (received 24 April 2009)
6. Finance and Public Administration Committee—Report, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee—Residential and community aged care in Australia (received 29 April 2009)
7. Environment, Communications and the Arts Committee—Second report [final]—The operation of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (received 30 April 2009)
8. Economics Committee—Report, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee—Uranium Royalty (Northern Territory) Bill 2008 [Provisions] (received 30 April 2009)
9. Select Committee on Fuel and Energy—Interim report—The CPRS: Economic cost without environmental benefit (received 7 May 2009)
12. Economics Committee—Report, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee—Australian Business Investment Partnership Bill 2009 and the Australian Business Investment Partnership (Consequential Amendment) Bill 2009 (received 7 May 2009)
13. Economics Committee—Report, together with submissions received by the committee—
Financial Sector Legislation Amendment (Enhancing Supervision and Enforcement) Bill 2009 [Provisions] (received 7 May 2009)


15. Environment, Communications and the Arts Committee—Report, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee—Water Amendment (Saving the Goulburn and Murray Rivers) Bill 2008 (received 7 May 2009)


(b) Government response to parliamentary committee report

Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee—Report—Bridging the skills divide (received 17 April 2009)

(c) Government documents

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner—Reports for 2008—Native title. [Received 30 April 2009] Social justice. [Received 30 April 2009]

Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918—2008 Redistribution into electoral divisions—Western Australia—Report—Replacement compact disc of supporting information. [Received 29 April 2009]

Australian National Maritime Museum—Strategic plan 2009-2012. [Received 6 May 2009]

Australian Rail Track Corporation Limited (ARTC)—Revised statement of corporate intent 2008-09. [Received 29 April 2009]

Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority—Report for 2007-08—Addendum. [Received 17 April 2009]

Department of Finance and Deregulation—Campaign advertising by Australian government departments and agencies—Report for the period 1 July to 31 December 2008. [Received 30 March 2009]

Department of Health and Ageing—Report for 2007-08—Correction. [Received 14 April 2009]

Gene Technology Regulator—Quarterly report for the period 1 October to 31 December 2008. [Received 23 April 2009]

Health Insurance—Health Insurance Amendment (Compliance) Bill 2009—Draft explanatory material. [Received 21 April 2009]

Exposure draft. [Received 21 April 2009]

(d) Reports of the Auditor-General

1. Report no. 27 of 2008-09—Performance audit—Management of the M113 armoured personnel carrier upgrade project: Department of Defence (received 27 March 2009)

2. Report no. 28 of 2008-09—Performance audit—Quality and integrity of the Department of Veterans’ Affairs income support records: Department of Veterans’ Affairs (received 22 April 2009)


4. Report no. 30 of 2008-09—Performance audit—Management of the Australian Government’s action plan to eradicate trafficking in persons: Attorney-General’s Department, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Australian Federal Police and the Department of Families, Housing,
Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (received 29 April 2009)

5. Report no. 31 of 2008-09—Performance audit—Army Reserve Forces: Department of Defence
(received 8 May 2009)

(e) Returns to order

1. Taxation—Alcohol—[motion of Senator Cormann agreed to 4 February 2009; note: parts (a) to (c) were complied with on 5 February 2009]
(received 23 March 2009)

2. Health—Private health insurance—Reforms—Further response [motion of Senator Cormann agreed to on 11 March 2009; note: on 16 March 2009, the government provided an initial response] (received 23 April 2009)

3. Health—Private health insurance—Reforms—Documents in response to entry no. 2 above [motion of Senator Cormann agreed to on 11 March 2009] (received 1 May 2009)

(f) Statement of compliance and letters of advice relating to Senate orders

1. Statement of compliance relating to indexed lists of files:
   Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) (received 25 March 2009)

2. Letters of advice relating to lists of contracts:
   Wheat Exports Australia (received 14 April 2009)
   Australian Fisheries Management Authority (received 14 April 2009)
   Department of Climate Change (received 23 April 2009)
   Office of Renewable Energy Regulator (received 23 April 2009)

   Ordered that the committee reports be printed.

The government response read as follows—

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE SENATE EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND EDUCATION REFERENCES COMMITTEE
‘BRIDGING THE SKILLS DIVIDE’
NOVEMBER 2008

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The Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee tabled the report Bridging the skills divide in November 2003. Although many of the issues identified in the report have since been addressed or superseded by events, including the closure of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) in 2005, the broad themes of quality, responsiveness and flexibility are still central to the national training system.

The Howard government failed to respond to the Senate report. This response outlines Australian Government initiatives that address the issues raised in each recommendation in the report. In addition, it provides an overview of the key achievements and policy directions of the Government to improve workforce participation and increase productivity.

ADDRESSING SKILLS NEEDS

Australia faces significant challenges in improving the productivity and participation of our working population and in improving social inclusion to achieve a more equitable society. To meet these challenges the Australian Government is committed to achieving genuine change, by treating the real problems rather than the symptoms, in order to ensure the best long-term outcome for the nation. The Government has committed to an Education Revolution that is founded on evidence-based research, consultation and independent expert advice.

The Government’s major policy statement, Skill- ing Australia for the Future, is designed to ensure that Australian workers have the skills they need and that their skills are maximised. A skilled workforce will be able to contribute to Australia’s
productivity and will enable Australian industry to continue to compete effectively in the global marketplace now and in the future.

*Skilling Australia for the Future* will increase and deepen the skills capacity of the Australian workforce and ensure that Australia’s vocational education and training system is driven by individual and business demand, thereby providing graduates with more relevant qualifications and a much better chance of securing a job. It will also provide industry with the skilled workforce that it needs. The key components of the strategy are:

- **Productivity Places Program (PPP)** - providing 700,000 new training places over five years to drive productivity growth, increase workforce participation and address skills shortages through more training places. Over 70,000 training places have been taken up since April 2008.

- **Skills Australia** – establishing a new independent body of seven members with expertise encompassing economics, industry, academia and education and training. Its role is to:
  - provide advice to government on current and future skills needs, both in the broader economy and across industry sectors;
  - assess evidence from commissioned research and industry stakeholders to inform workforce development needs;
  - widely distribute information from research and consultations, to enable all parties to make informed decisions; and
  - establish and maintain relationships with relevant state and territory bodies and authorities.

- **Strengthened Industry Skills Councils (ISCs)** - providing the ISCs with an expanded role in the broader area of workforce development and in the implementation process of the PPP. ISCs provide integrated industry intelligence and advice to Skills Australia, and advise enterprises on workforce development and skills needs in their industry sector. They support the development and implementation of workforce development products and services, and work with employment service and training providers to access appropriate training in areas of identified need.

- **Skills and Training Information Centres** - providing a one-stop shop for information and assistance in skills development that benefit Australian businesses, employers and individuals. The existing network of Australian Apprenticeships Centres (AACs) have expanded their responsibilities to take on this role.

**A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH**

The Australian Government is working in partnership with state and territory governments, education and training providers, industry and communities to look at practical ways to ‘bridge the skills divide’ that will benefit all Australians. Through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), all governments are committed to meeting the productivity challenges together, including addressing Australia’s long-term labour force needs and skill shortages. In particular, the COAG Productivity Agenda Working Group is implementing the COAG reform agenda in the areas of education, skills and training to ensure skills are fully utilised and wastage of human capital is reduced.

Additionally, COAG has put in place arrangements to make it easier for licensed tradespeople to operate across states and territories. These improvements to mutual recognition of occupational licences have been put in place for 22 occupations in six priority trades including:

- electricians;
- plumbers and gas fitters;
- motor mechanics;
- refrigeration and air-conditioning mechanics;
- carpenters and joiners; and
- bricklayers.

These improvements will also be extended by December 2008 to the following vocationally trained licensed occupations:

- land transport;
- maritime;
- property agents;
- pest and weed controllers;
- shotfirers and pyrotechnicians;
- gaming occupations; and


• asbestos, demolition and other building-related occupations.

Reforming Commonwealth payments to the states and territories

As part of the COAG reform agenda, from January 2009 a new Commonwealth-state financial framework will reshape the existing agreement to a clear focus on outcomes. The Australian Government has continued its funding under the Commonwealth-state agreement but has removed the suite of input controls and conditions that currently exist and will fund National Partnerships directed to supporting reforms in vocational education and training.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUSTRALIANS

The Australian Government’s shift to a demand driven training system is providing greater opportunities for Australians. Apprentices can acquire their trade while at school through an Australian School-based Apprenticeship, as a recent school leaver or as a mature worker. Apprentices can study for their apprenticeship on a full-time or a part-time basis as a first career or a new career.

Initiatives like Fast-track apprenticeships provide the training system with greater flexibility to address skills needs in trade occupations. The 2007/2008 Budget committed $58.5 million over four years to assist Registered Training Organisations work with industry and local employers to develop and implement Fast-track apprenticeships.

To complement these initiatives, the Government, in its 2008/2009 Budget, has also committed $109.5 million to support transitions from school, such as:

• on-the-job-training, enabling students who are undertaking Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs to access on-the-job-training;
• mentors for our students, who will engage with our youth to not only pass on skills knowledge but also a tacit knowledge of industry and professions; and
• improved school-business linkages, to establish innovative programs that will broaden learning options.

The Australian Government is committed to real change through an increase in investment in training and improving the quality of education, training and workforce development. These measures will ensure increased workforce participation and productivity.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The committee recommends that the Commonwealth, in conjunction with state and territory governments, develops a new, integrated, nationally consistent approach to the collection and reporting of the complete range of statistical information on the labour market and current and future skill needs. This would entail:

• agreement between all stakeholders on the relevant indicators of skill supply and demand, including underlying drivers, and consistent collection approaches;
• inclusion of information on skill shortages and regional labour markets; and
• inclusion of information on the skill needs of major resource and construction projects, from the earliest possible stage.

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) should be tasked with:

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Collaboration between government agencies and availability of information on the labour market and current and emerging skill needs has improved.

The February 2006 meeting of COAG agreed to better sharing of skills data across jurisdictions and the feasibility of skills needs reporting at the state and territory level.

In accordance with the recommendations of the 2006 COAG meeting, DEEWR consulted with state and territory government representatives to agree on better sharing of data and to progress the consistency of research into skill shortages. This work resulted in the expansion of DEEWR’s occupational research program by an additional 40 occupations. This brings to more than 175 the number of skilled occupations being assessed consistently over time and across states and territories on the basis of DEEWR skill shortage research methodology.
The methodology used by DEEWR was reviewed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) as part of the follow up to the COAG recommendations and was found to be suitable for its purpose. Results of this research are published at www.workplace.gov.au/skillshortages.

The Government consults widely with state and local governments, as well as regional development commissions and business chambers in relation to the collection of information on the recruitment experiences of employers at an industry or regional level. These surveys collect information on employers’ retention issues, training needs and success filling recent vacancies in addition to their recruitment experiences. The findings from these surveys are incorporated into workshop presentations (www.workplace.gov.au/bcw) and regional and industry reports: (www.workplace.gov.au/regionalreports).

The Government has also established a Labour Market Information Portal which is an online resource containing up to date labour market data at a regional, state and national level. The portal contains information from a range of sources such as ABS Labour Force Survey data and Centrelink customer population data and is updated on a regular basis (www.workplace.gov.au/lmip).

The SkillsInfo website at www.skillsinfo.gov.au and other labour market information on Australian Workplace www.workplace.gov.au provide comprehensive industry, occupational and regional skills information. The range of skills-related information and data on industry employment trends and prospects has expanded markedly and access to and awareness of the information has improved considerably.

2. The committee recommends that the Commonwealth, in conjunction with states and territories:

- examines the feasibility of a nationally integrated approach to collecting and reporting information on skill gaps, and for inclusion of such information in the national skills database; and

A nationally managed, integrated and consistent approach to labour market and skills data is available at www.workplace.gov.au and www.skillsinfo.gov.au. The SkillsInfo website includes forward-looking industry information and links to reports on emerging skill needs.

As part of the follow-up to the 2006 COAG recommendations, the ABS was asked to examine
### RECOMMENDATION

- considers the most appropriate means of incorporating qualitative information on current and future skill needs, including the training needs of emerging industries, and the changing nature of skill needs, in the national database and reports on skill formation.

### AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

the feasibility of producing quantifiable estimates of skill shortages and of forecasting skill shortages.

The report by the ABS titled Examination into the Cost and Feasibility of Methods to Produce Information on Skill Shortages was provided to state and territory governments and was the subject of discussions with the Commonwealth. The ABS report suggested there are significant difficulties and large costs (as well as relatively long time lags) associated with estimating shortages even at the aggregated level.

The regional and industry surveys collect quantitative and qualitative information on the current and future recruitment and training needs of employers, reasons for difficulty filling vacancies, unsuitability of applicants, why recruitment was necessary in the past and will be in the future and the types of occupations proving difficult to fill currently. This information is collected at the regional, industry and occupation level but is also aggregated to provide a broader picture of employers’ skills needs.

3. The committee, recommends that DEWR and the ABS, in developing the Australian and New Zealand Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) in conjunction with Statistics New Zealand, commit to the implementation of strategies that they are considering to:

- improve ANZSCO’s value as a tool for monitoring occupational change and changing skill needs;
- update the classifications regularly as occupations change, to capture labour force data at the occupation level;
- report on specialisations and higher skill levels within occupations; and
- make provision for information on skills to be linked to occupational structure.

The Australian Standards Classification of Occupations (ASCO), Second Edition, was reviewed and has been replaced by ANZSCO. The ANZSCO Project Team included representatives from ABS, DEEWR and Statistics New Zealand. The Team identified new and emerging occupations in developing the new ANZSCO classification. DEEWR has an online site, Job Explorer, which has detailed data on skills, knowledge and abilities for occupations available at www.jobsearch.gov.au/jobexplorer.

The Government now bases its skill shortage research on ANZSCO which results in occupational structures and definitions more accurately reflecting current labour market and employers’ skill needs. The first skill shortage information based on ANZSCO will be released by DEEWR early in 2009. A minor review of the ANZSCO classification is underway. This will help fine-tune the new classification.

4. In conjunction with the work to be undertaken in recommendation 1, the committee rec-
RECOMMENDATION

ommends that DEWR, in consultation with in-
dustry representatives, including skill councils, reviews its current approach to assessing skill shortages with the aim of capturing information: on a broader range of vacancies, including va-
cancies that are not advertised in the print me-
dia; on regional skill needs; details of speciali-
sations and the extent or severity of the skill shortages. This skill shortage information should be included in the national database de-
veloped by NCVER, and distributed by DEWR.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

shortages in the workforce. Specifically, Skills
Australia is tasked to identify and analyse:
future skills shortages, so they can be addressed
before they negatively impact on economic ac-
tivity;
persistent skills shortages, so that current capac-
ity blockages can be overcome; and
barriers that prevent skills formation in areas
where persistent skills shortages exist.
DEEWR lists details of specialisations in short-
age in its State and Territory Skills in Demand
Lists. State and territory reports for each of the
targeted occupations are available at
www.workplace.gov.au. The Department also
publishes reports for individual occupations,
which include information about specialist skill
needs. The research is based on a Survey of Em-
ployers who have Recently Advertised (SERA)
which involves contacting employers who have
recently advertised vacancies such as through
newspapers, specialist and general Internet sites,
advertisements in shop windows, professional
journals or contact with employers to ascertain
the extent of vacancies but where no advertising
took place.

Given the innate conceptual as well as measure-
ment difficulties in trying to identify the number
of skill shortages, the Department’s skill short-
age research does not attempt to quantify these
shortages. It does, however, provide good infor-
mation about which occupations are in shortage
and some quantitative measures (for example,
number of suitable applicants per vacancy and
the percentage of vacancies filled) for each oc-
cupation assessed.

As a result of the consultations outlined in rec-
ommendation 1, the information collected
through the recruitment experiences survey re-
fects the issues considered relevant to the region
or industry of interest. This information, which
includes vacancies recruited for by any means
and of all skill levels, has led to a greater under-
standing of skill related issues across regions and
industries.

Since the survey program commenced in late
2005, information on the recruitment experi-
ences of more than 32 000 employers has been
5. The committee recommends that ANTA, in consultation with stakeholders, should consider developing a set of skill performance indicators in addition to the relevant Australian Quality Framework (AQF) level to better distinguish between basic, intermediate and higher vocational training outcomes. These could be modelled on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) benchmarks and would provide an improved basis for targeting incentives under the New Apprenticeship scheme.

An additional set of skill performance indicators as suggested in the recommendation would create an unnecessary and substantial additional level of complexity for Australian Apprenticeships and incentive payments.

The AQF is a highly regarded framework for all post compulsory qualifications that describes features that distinguish the qualification levels.

6. The committee recognises that lack of national consistency in training standards and incentives makes the ideal of nationally portable qualifications difficult to achieve. The committee therefore recommends that the Commonwealth should work towards achieving nationally consistent standards and New Apprenticeship incentives through ANTA MINCO for the benefit of providers and their clients: employers and trainees.

Enhanced quality assurance and the national portability of qualifications are key features currently found in national training arrangements. The Australian Quality Training Framework 2007 (AQTF 2007) achieves greater national consistency through new standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and state and territory registering bodies.

Following February 2006 COAG decisions, information on equivalent licences in priority trades is available through a new website at www.licencerecognition.gov.au.

7. The committee recommends that the Workplace Relations Act should be amended, or a regulation made, to ensure that Subsection 170VR (2) applies equally to all New Apprenticeships; that is both apprentices and trainees.

Section 170VR existed in the Workplace Relations Act 1996 prior to the introduction of the Workplace Relations Amendment (WorkChoices) Act 2005.

Following the enactment of the Workplace Relations Amendment (Transition to Forward with Fairness) Act 2008 in March 2008, Australian Workplace Agreements are no longer able to be entered into. Further, under the Government’s proposed substantive workplace relations reforms, all forms of statutory individual agreements will be abolished.

Accordingly, recommendation 7 is no longer relevant to the current and future federal work-
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<td>8. To prevent abuse of New Apprenticeships, the committee considers that provisions for a training wage should not apply to existing workers.</td>
<td>The application of training wage provisions to existing workers is most appropriately dealt with by agreement between employers and employees through collective workplace agreements at the enterprise level.</td>
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<td>9. The committee recommends that states and territories should review time-based requirements governing apprenticeships and provision be made for true competency based training to be achieved by completion of the full apprenticeship in an unspecified timeframe.</td>
<td>COAG has endorsed a competency based approach to the completion of apprenticeships. From December 2006, all governments, through COAG, have put in place arrangements to allow apprentices to work as qualified tradespersons as soon as they have demonstrated competency to industry standards, without having to wait out a set time period. Specifically, state and territory governments agreed to apprentices being certified as competent without special application to State Training Authorities through: the amendment of training legislation and administrative procedures; and by removing references to fixed durations from awards and legislation in all jurisdictions where such awards prevent early sign-off based on competence.</td>
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<td>10. The committee recommends that, where core competencies have been achieved, these should be accredited through a process of Recognition of Prior Learning to allow additional or supplementary units to be taken to achieve the apprenticeship in a shorter time frame.</td>
<td>Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes are already applied and existing competencies recognised, allowing apprenticeships to be completed in a shorter time frame. All RPL nominal hours are recognised in national data collections and accountability arrangements. The Commonwealth, in conjunction with states and territories, is also funding a program to increase the uptake of RPL across all states and territories.</td>
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<td>11. The committee reiterates its view, expressed in its report on quality in vocational education and training, Aspiring to Excellence (2000) that individual training plans require a higher level of training plan requirements and implementation are the responsibility of the states and territories. Australian Apprenticeships commencement incentives are not able to be paid until a training</td>
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of commitment on the part of all stakeholders, and recommends that ANT A MINCO should review its position on the usefulness of these training plans for monitoring, auditing and evaluating outcomes.

12. The committee further recommends that at the next meeting with MINCO, ANT A should give consideration to requiring nationally consistent implementation of individual training plans, and support provision of additional Commonwealth funding for targeted incentives directed to TAFE to:

- develop individual training plans with the input of both the employer and apprentice;
- develop and maintain student profiles linked to individual training plans; and
- implement quality assessment and mentoring procedures for employers.

The committee considers that if Technical and Further Education (TAFE) is not involved, any additional incentive could be allocated to another negotiator such as a Registered Training Organisation (where it is not also the employer), a union or industry body to help employers negotiate individual training plans with the New Apprentice and carry out the necessary support and auditing roles.

13. The committee recommends that incentives for trade level qualifications and higher level traineeships should provide for the bulk of the New Apprenticeship incentive payment to be awarded to the employer at commencement. The payment should be contingent on compliance with a negotiated individual training plan, attached to the New Apprenticeship Training Agreement.

14. The committee further recommends that for training qualifications below AQF Certificate III, the full New Apprenticeship incentive payment should be awarded on completion on demonstration of skill outcomes, as negotiated under the individual training plan.

Significantly higher incentive payments are now available for AQF Certificates Level III and IV trade qualifications. Incentives have also been made available for Diploma and Advanced Diploma Australian Apprenticeships and for mid-career apprentices in areas of skills need.

The 2007-2008 Budget emphasised the importance of higher level VET skills with the extension of FEE-Help, a student loan system, to full-fee-paying students in Diploma and Advanced Diploma programmes with $221 million over four years expected to be loaned to students.

The Department will take this recommendation into consideration when undertaking any future review of the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program.
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<td>15. The committee recommends that New Apprenticeships incentives should be available for qualifications at AQF Certificate V and above, to foster higher skill development under traditional and non-traditional New Apprenticeships.</td>
<td>Australian Apprenticeships incentives have been available for AQF Diploma and Advanced Diploma since 1 July 2006 in areas of identified skills need. The incentives were further expanded from January 2007, opening up Diploma and Advanced Diploma Australian Apprenticeships to existing workers.</td>
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<td>16. The committee recommends that ANT A should be funded to provide targeted innovation incentives to TAFE and universities to develop partnerships with industry, and to support efforts to build multiple training pathways between institutions.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth places a high priority on partnerships between education and training providers and industry. The Commonwealth has strengthened industry involvement in learning and assessment through AQTF 2007.</td>
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<td>17. The committee considers that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), encompassing recognition of current competencies, should be conducted for all jobseekers to ensure that those with relevant skills or capacities have the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills to meet their own and industry’s training needs. To achieve this, the committee recommends:</td>
<td>National common principles and operational guidelines for RPL have been developed. In February 2006, COAG agreed to a three-year Commonwealth, state and territory matched program to support delivery and good practice in RPL. COAG also agreed to quicker and simpler processes to recognise the existing skills of all workers entering training, through contractual requirements with RTOs receiving public funding.</td>
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<td>• ANTA should endorse the adoption of national common principles and operational guidelines for RPL, and address identified barriers to RTOs and TAFE undertaking RPL;</td>
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<td>• an incentive for RPL should be provided under New Apprenticeship contract arrangements, either as a supplement or as a complement to incentives provided for training; and</td>
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<td>• training should be provided for Job Network staff with relevant industry experience under the proposed Training and Assessment (TAA) Training Package. All job seekers registered with Job Network should be RPL assessed and have access to appropriate training and available jobs. For higher level or specialised skills this may require TAFE or other RTOs to undertake the RPL.</td>
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<td>18. The committee recommends that additional provision should be made through the Job Network Job Seeker account to support 15 to 24 year olds to obtain employment-related training that leads to national qualifications, particularly</td>
<td>The Job Network Job Seeker Account is flexible enough to support employment-based training, including in areas with identified skills needs. The Job Network outcome-focused fees structure</td>
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<td>in the traditional trades and areas of skill shortage.</td>
<td>recognises the need for young job seekers to complete employment-related training to increase their employment prospects.</td>
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19. The committee recommends that the Commonwealth should identify and develop strategies to address impediments to genuine work placements, including the availability of public liability insurance and workers’ compensation, so that young people have increased opportunity to gain work experience and build their skills.

Responsibility for public liability and workers’ compensation for work placements rests with the states and territories.

The Commonwealth supports a network of Local Community Partnerships supported by Career Advice Australia for structured work placements. The Australian Safety and Compensation Council provides guiding principles for health and safety education for students in transition from school to work.

The Commonwealth already recognises and rewards Job Network members for their efforts in referring job seekers to Australian Apprenticeships.

Job Network members work with AACs, RTOs and Group Training Organisations (GTOs) to maximise employment and training opportunities for job seekers.

20. The committee recommends that Job Network providers should enter into arrangements with employers, with the agreement of all industry players, to access New Apprenticeships for unemployed people who have relevant skills to achieve fast-tracked apprenticeship qualifications in skill shortage areas.

The Commonwealth, following extensive consultations with stakeholders, has released a Request for Tender for Employment Services 2009-2012. The new employment services, which will commence on 1 July 2009, will focus on providing job seekers with the skills and training that employers require.

Providers will work with local employers to understand their needs in order to enable a better match of job seekers.

The emphasis on addressing the labour needs of employers is reflected in the payment and performance management structures and the Request for Tender selection criteria.

Outcome Payments are weighted to reflect the importance of engaging with employers, with vacancies secured and filled by a Provider attracting a higher payment. In addition, there are bonus Outcome Payments for placing job seekers in apprenticeships in occupational areas of skills shortage or when a job seeker is placed in employment after completing training directly related to the job.

The Performance Management Framework will...
22. The committee recommends that, in the context of the next ANTA agreement:
   • the Commonwealth recognises its responsibilities for providing funding for growth and unmet demand for VET and agrees to increase funding accordingly; and
   • the Commonwealth and states recognise their respective responsibilities for meeting the diverse skill formation needs recognised in the new national strategy and in this report and supporting improvements in the quality of VET facilities and teaching, and agree to increase funding accordingly.

23. The committee also recommends that ANTA MINCO develops a broader range of accountability and reporting measures for VET, to apply during the life of the next ANTA Agreement. A focus on student contact hours and enrolments must be balanced against accountability measures that value and support key outcomes, such as addressing current skill shortages, increasing the skills of the workforce against clearly defined targets and meeting the skill needs of individuals and communities.

24. The committee recommends that ANTA MINCO develops a long-term vision to guide and direct future investment in public infrastructure so as to ensure the sustainability of the TAFE system. This should include a professional development strategy for TAFE teachers.

Under new inter-governmental agreements being developed by COAG funding to support infrastructure and professional development in the VET sector is being considered.
to ensure that they have up-to-date industry experience, appropriate teaching competencies and qualifications, and the skills necessary to develop generic skills, including critical thinking, as well as technical skills.

25. The committee recommends that the evaluation of ‘user choice’ policy currently underway should include a consideration of the policy’s role within the broader objectives of the new national strategy, and jurisdictions’ own strategies for skill formation.

The committee also recommends that ANTA MINCO defers further consideration of user choice policies and principles until after the report of the evaluation has been provided to it and there has been an open and public debate on the policy, including with the full range of VET stakeholders.

26. The committee recommends that MINCO directs ANTA to review all training packages to ensure that the requirements for granting of the AQF qualification take account of any licensing requirements for the occupation, including international licensing requirements, where appropriate (for example in some aviation and marine occupations).

The committee also recommends that relevant Commonwealth and state authorities work towards the goal of national consistency of licensing requirements for the traditional trades.

27. The committee recommends that ANTA’s review of training packages address the full range of concerns about their design and implementation, including:

- the need for greater focus on the development of underpinning knowledge, critical thinking and generic skills;
- more consideration of the requirements of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and the differing industry structures in the smaller states;
- provision for all qualifications within a package to articulate to higher level qualifications within the package;
- greater scope for combining competencies from a range of packages into national

A new streamlined, quality assured and transparent process for the development and endorsement of Training Packages was implemented from 1 January 2008. The process has been agreed by the National Quality Council, a body of MCVTE which oversees Training Packages and quality assurance arrangements in the VET sector. The process results in improved responsiveness to industry priorities for new and updated skills, and give ISCs greater responsibility and accountability for the final product. The process will enable greater ‘speed to market’ of Training Packages and national qualifications by the vocational education and training providers.

As part of their Training Package role ISCs aim for the removal of duplication and greater transferability of skills across industries.
### RECOMMENDATION

- the need for quality learning and assessment support materials to be included with the release of every package; and
- measures to strengthen the integrity, consistency and informative nature of assessments, which might include one or more of: greater use of graded assessments, moderation of assessments, involvement of state industry advisory bodies and better integration with workplace and institutional learning.

28. The committee also recommends that, in order to improve the quality and consistency of the assessment process, ANTA:

- reviews the current competency standards for assessors to address criticisms about the adequacy of the current requirements for pedagogical skills and industry knowledge; and
- examines the scope for approaches such as moderation or involvement of industry advisory bodies in assessment.

29. The committee recommends that MCEETYA agrees that the further development and implementation of the employability skills framework should involve employee as well as employer interests and include a focus on:

- the need for unemployed people to have recognition of their current level of employability skills, and for assistance with upgrading these where necessary;
- the role of workplaces and employers in developing, fostering and utilizing employability skills;
- any necessary adjustment to the suite of employability skills to include or highlight, skills that are important for individuals, such as career management skills;
- appropriate support for the development of basic numeracy and literacy skills, particularly among older workers with limited formal education and the long-term unemployed;
- the implications for professional development and professional standards for teach-

### AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

A review of the Assessment and Workplace Training Package was completed and a new Training and Assessment Training Package endorsed in 2004. Three new Skills Sets for that Training Package were introduced in 2008. The Skills Sets are specifically designed for skills required by enterprise trainers and assessors. The AQTF 2007 was implemented on 1 July 2007 and includes an increased focus on quality of assessment outcomes.

The Government has endorsed the eight groupings of employability skills as skills that young people require for successful transition from school to a range of destinations, including work. The majority of the MCEETYA Ministers also agreed to the eight groupings of employability skills as outlined in the Employability Skills for the Future report.

The Government has progressed with several initiatives in relation to the eight groupings of employability skills, including ensuring Training Packages are revised to include employability skills. DEEWR has undertaken an examination of how the Employability Skills Framework could assist Job Network clients and has developed and implemented the Employability Skills Profiler.
30. The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government agrees to fund the proposed pilot scheme for increasing apprenticeship training in the Illawarra, to meet some pressing social and economic problems in the region, and as a possible model for other regions experiencing high youth unemployment and chronic skill shortages in trades’ areas such as manufacturing.

The Commonwealth negotiated an extension to the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Southern Highlands New Apprenticeships Regional project 2006, until 2009. The extended project includes the outer Western Sydney region and focuses on creating skilled employment opportunities for mature workers and using RPL mechanisms.

Following the successful completion of the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Southern Highlands New Apprenticeships Regional Project, the Government, engaged the NSW Business Chamber to conduct the Illawarra Business Chamber and NSW Business Chamber Industry Apprentices Project in the Illawarra and Western Sydney Regions for three years from mid 2007.

The project aims to increase the number of Australian Apprenticeship opportunities in the traditional trades for young people and mature aged workers in the Illawarra and Western Sydney Regions, especially for the disadvantaged and those marginally connected to the workplace.

The project is addressing youth and mature age unemployment, focussing on creating skilled employment opportunities and developing a consistent and easily accessed skills assessment or RPL process for mature age workers.

31. The committee recommends that there should be consistent standards for the maintenance of training records, including the keeping of log books by apprentices, in all industry sectors. Where Group Training Organisations are the hiring agency, they should be responsible for ensuring these standards are met, and that the required competencies are achieved within the period allotted for the apprenticeship. The whole process should be subject to external monitoring against an agreed training plan and monitored by an appropriate body.

This is a matter for purchasing policy in each jurisdiction. For the Commonwealth, a priority focus on skilling of existing workers will

32. The committee recommends that the MINCO should review and assess the most appropriate Commonwealth and state and territory
requirements for companies tendering on government jobs with a view to establishing a national benchmark to sustain the skills base in skill shortage areas. These could include a commitment to percentage of the tender value for training, or direct hire of apprentices, where appropriate.

33. The committee recommends that the Steering Committee which undertook the 2002 review of group training for ANT A should resume to oversight implementation of the new funding arrangements to:

• closely monitor the effect on rates of trade training, and other areas of skill shortage, and the hire of New Apprentices by small and medium enterprises; and

• advise ANT A of any further changes needed to address any problems that may arise during the implementation.

34. The committee recommends that the review of skill centres currently being undertaken by ANT A consider the broader role that they can play in meeting the training needs of industry, including:

• providing intensive upfront training, whether through pre-apprenticeship training or providing all the theoretical and practical work required for the first year of an apprenticeship;

• providing access to the latest technology for training; and

• promoting collaboration between enterprises within an industry and partnerships between industry and the education sector.

• The review should also consider any revision to funding arrangements and guidelines which may be needed to support these broader objectives, including support for intensive upfront apprenticeship training as a variation on current incentive arrangements for New Apprenticeships. Any such funding could and should be tied to an equal commitment of funds from the relevant local industry.

35. The committee also recommends that state
and territory governments investigate innovative and effective models for the local delivery of vocational education by both public and private providers. Models to be investigated should include access to industry’s state-of-the-art facilities for the practical component of training.

### Recommendation

36. The committee recommends that the MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School and ANTA, which are considering new funding models for VET in schools, specifically consider:

a. removing any disincentives to collaborative arrangements with TAFE;

b. facilitating the introduction of programs in a broader range of industry and occupational areas; and

c. ensuring that fees and charges are not a barrier to student participation in any chosen VET in schools program.

37. The committee recommends that the MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition should consult with TAFE about the particular literacy and numeracy requirements of current vocational training, including for emerging industries and traditional trades, and how schools could best provide these to students planning to follow VET pathways on completion of school.

### Australian Government Response

which incorporate trade based ASbAs at the Certificate III level with the senior secondary certificate (Year 12) are being implemented by states and territories. This is primarily being achieved through the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program (TTCSP) and in the integration of ATCs into the broader education and training systems and the VET in Schools Program.

The integration of ATCs will ensure maximum access to the innovative trade based Year 12 curriculum and ASbA pathway for senior students and ensure optimal use of all education and training infrastructure in each region.

The three points raised in the recommendation are substantially the business of state and territory governments.

Currently, 95 per cent of secondary schools across Australia offer vocational programs for senior secondary students which are supported by Schools General Recurrent and VET Recurrent funding in addition to VET in Schools program funding.

The Commonwealth, states and territories are also actively encouraging the entry of young people to trades through ASbAs. This is being realised through the TTCSP and through the integration of ATCs into the broader education and training system.

The Government has committed $577.4 million over four years to support schools to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, starting with those students most in need of educational support.

The first of the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 were implemented in May 2008.

The Government provides significant funding to support the development of students’ literacy and numeracy capabilities under current VET programmes.

The Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) is a comprehensive technical tool designed to assist specialist practitioners to describe performance in adult English language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) in a range of settings. The ACSF describes levels of performance in the

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<td>c. ensuring that fees and charges are not a barrier to student participation in any chosen VET in schools program.</td>
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38. The committee recommends that the MCEETYA Task Force on Transition should support the funding and development of mechanisms to help schools provide opportunities for all students, from years 8 and 9 onwards, to learn about the nature of industry and the world of work through workplaces visits so that they can make informed choices about future education and careers.

Career Advice Australia supports young people from 13 to 19 years to achieve successful transition through school, and on to further education, training and work. Local Community Partnerships across Australia assist with Structured Workplace Learning, Career and Transition Support, and encouraging businesses to participate in the Adopt a School Program. From 2009 all VET in Schools students from Year 9 to Year 12 will have access to one day per week of on-the-job training for 20 weeks per year under the on-the-job Training Program.

The Adopt a School Programme is also creating better links between schools and businesses.

39. The committee also recommends that the Commonwealth and states and territories support the establishment of local networks of schools, industry associations and representatives, the VET sector and higher education sector and the community, to help link vocational education and training, both in schools and in the VET sector, with industry needs and to assist transition between school and employment or further education.

The work of Career Advice Australia complements and supports industry and education partnerships through Local Community Partnerships to assist young people to make successful transitions. Further support is provided at a regional and national level through Regional Industry Career Advisers, and National Industry Career Specialists that link with industry associations, VET and further education providers.

Additionally, Regional Development Australia Committees bring together regional businesses, schools and government interests to improve opportunities for young people outside the school system.

The Commonwealth’s Industry Training Strategies Program (ITSP) aims to increase employer confidence in and understanding of the national training system while addressing skills development needs in specific industry sectors, occupations or regions. ITSP also helps industry/employers identify and address impediments to the take-up of Australian Apprenticeships and the use of Training Packages. Importantly, ITSP projects also help industry to develop, implement and evaluate models and pilots for improved access to and use of Australian Apprenticeships, including ASbAs and increase take-up of the flexibilities offered within the national training system.
40. The committee recommends that the MCEETYA should examine VET in schools models, such as the T3 model in New South Wales and promote their value for traditional apprenticeship and other vocational training, with state and territory education authorities. Industry should also take responsibility for promoting the development and implementation of best practice models.

41. The committee also recommends that ANTA develop, in conjunction with TAFE, industry bodies, schools and universities, programs based on the RMIT/Bosch model which combine school and apprenticeship training with an option for simultaneous progression diploma, and that ANTA provides financial assistance for the national implementation of those programs.

42. The committee recommends that all students should have access to professionally trained and well informed careers advisers, whether these are located in schools or are accessible through rotation, industry partnerships, or outsourcing arrangements. To facilitate this, MCEETYA should direct the task force examining career counselling issues to develop a set of national set of standards for career development services:

- in consultation with the Australian Association of Careers Counsellors and universities and TAFE institutes offering awards in ca-
The committee also calls on employer peak bodies and industry associations to encourage their members to establish closer links with schools and career counsellors in particular, to ensure that they have access to accurate and up-to-date advice on the full range of career opportunities.

Other initiatives include the Year 12 - what next? website and www.myfuture.edu.au. Additionally, a Certificate IV in Career Development has been approved by the NQC and all states and territories. National standards for career development practitioners have been developed which will be mandatory for Career Industry Council of Australia members by 2012.

All governments have demonstrated considerable commitment to improving education outcomes for young people.

In December 2007 COAG set a new target for 'lifting the Year 12 or the equivalent attainment rate to 90% by 2020'. This is underpinned by a new National Education Agreement, and National Partnerships including those for low Socio Economic Status school communities, teacher quality, and literacy and numeracy. The intent is to improve the learning environment and provide additional support to improve engagement in education.

A number of other programs announced in the 2008-09 Budget (e.g. Trade Training Centres) will contribute towards the achievement of this target.

All governments have demonstrated considerable commitment to improving education outcomes for young people.

Through a number of initiatives, the Commonwealth has strengthened its commitment to assist young people make a successful transition to further education, training or employment. Career Advice Australia’s Youth Pathways program provides more intensive case managed support to assist young people at risk aged 13-19 years, to stay at school. For those in the same cohort but have left school, the Connections program...
RECOMMENDATION

requirements for certain unemployed people.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

provides alternative education arrangements. Other initiatives include the Trade Training Centres in Secondary Schools, on-the-job training and the Mentors for Our Students programs. Community Employment Co-ordinators work with Job Network providers in regions that require greater support for high need young people.

45. The committee recommends that the Commonwealth and states and territories recognise the special role that pre-apprenticeship training can play as another pathway between school and further education and training, and employment for young people and make funding available to support such training. The committee also recommends that the Commonwealth and states and territories should consider the availability of pre-apprenticeship training as part of a VET in schools program.

The Commonwealth notes that pre-apprenticeship training is usually a state or territory-specific response to identified local skills needs.

The Australian Apprenticeships Access program and specific group training interventions such as Group Training in the Trades program support pre-apprenticeship training options for skills needs trades. Under new inter-governmental agreements being developed by COAG funding to support VET in Schools (VETIS) is being considered.

46. The committee recommends that ANTA undertake extensive consultation and research towards developing a model that allows for graded assessments to be provided within the competency-based system, where students require this for articulation to higher education. The committee recommends that ANTA should require that all Training Packages include support materials which outline basic content and knowledge as well as competencies; include study skills as well as workplace skills; and accept the classroom as well as the workplace as a legitimate site for assessment.

The competency-based approach to training and assessment is a high priority for the Commonwealth. The National Quality Council is considering the place of graded assessment for Diploma and Advanced Diploma level VET qualifications.

47. The committee recommends that ANTA, in conjunction with the AVCC, evaluate the Cast Cooperative Research Centre model for a national integrated education program, as a possible model for other disciplines or industry areas with low student numbers and a need for skill sets from both VET and higher education. The committee also recommends that ANTA and the AVCC consider possible funding arrangements to promote the development and implementation of such models.

The Commonwealth recognises that many industries require skill sets from both the VET and higher education sectors. The Collaboration and Structural Reform Fund provides support for projects that foster collaboration between higher education providers and other education and training providers and business and industry. A total of $41.7 million has been allocated to the Fund from 2005 to 2008.
The committee also considers that MCEETYA should examine the feasibility and merits of introducing a system for tracking students’ education and training from year 7 onwards. This examination should include consideration of the skills passport concept for recording the full range of VET outcomes.

The committee recommends that the Commonwealth consider introducing a separate scheme to support the training of existing workers, in place of the incentives under the New Apprenticeship scheme. The National Industry Skills Forum should provide advice on the key features of a new scheme which would better focus on the career development needs of workers, including casual employees, and on training which supports enterprise and industry skills development strategies and national skill priorities.

The committee also recommends that the Commonwealth provide funding to enable mature workers who are unemployed or at risk of being retrenched, to have a formal Recognition of Prior Learning, career counselling and access to training to develop new skill sets which will enhance their future employment prospects.

The committee recommends that ANTA should:

- review, at the end of 2004, the effect of reduced funding of state and territory industry advisory arrangements on their capacity to support the national advisory arrangements, and the national system;
- consider expanding the roles of the national

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<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
<th>AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE</th>
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<td>48.</td>
<td>Most education jurisdictions have initiated further developments of systems for tracking students’ education and training activities.</td>
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<td>49.</td>
<td>Access to Commonwealth incentives has been available for existing workers since 1998. The Government’s Productivity Places Program (PPP) has introduced incentives for all levels, including Higher Technical Skills, to assist at both ends of the skills spectrum in workforce entry level education capabilities and higher level industry skills.</td>
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<td>50.</td>
<td>Measures are already in place to support mature age people, job seekers and employees in specific circumstances. Employment Service Providers are able to provide targeted services to mature age jobseekers accordingly. The Australian Apprenticeships Mature Age Workers Incentives are available to mature age workers on commencement and completion of their training. Training places for mature age workers are also available under the Productivity Places Program. In addition, the Commonwealth introduced the Support for Mid-Career Apprenticeship initiative on 1 July 2007. The focus of this initiative is to encourage people established in the workforce to change their career pathway and commence a trade apprenticeship. This initiative provides an additional financial incentive for people 30 years and over to undertake a trade apprenticeship.</td>
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<td>51.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth recognises the importance of input from industry to ensure the national VET system meets industry needs. The Commonwealth has strengthened ISCs. They will support the development and implementation of workforce development products and services, and work with Employment Service Providers and training providers to access</td>
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skills councils to include developing skills formation and workforce development strategies for their industries and supporting this with appropriate funding; and

- announce its commitment to the continuing, central importance of the bipartite approach (based on a partnership between employers and unions) to industry advice, to be reflected throughout all of ANT A’s advisory bodies and working groups.

52. The committee also considers ANT A should commission independent research on the full range of strategies that can contribute to increased and more effective and targeted employer investment in training and more equitable access to training for the casual and contract workers.

The research should include consideration of collective bargaining arrangements, levies, incentive arrangements, taxation arrangements, industry training plans and workforce development strategies.

The Commonwealth strongly supports the full engagement of industry in the national VET system.

Since the release of this report in 2003, there has been a great deal of work done to strengthen industry engagement with the training system, increase the overall training effort, and target investment in training. Examples include:

- Under Skilling Australia for the Future, employer and industry engagement will be enhanced through strengthened ISCs. In addition to other new responsibilities, the strengthened ISCs will be funded by the Commonwealth to provide independent skills and training advice to enterprises, including matching identified training needs with appropriate training solutions. Strengthened ISCs will also work with enterprises, Employment Service Providers, training providers and government to allocate training places, particularly through the PPP.

- The 2005-2008 Commonwealth-State Agreement established agreement to a high-level industry advisory body to continue the strong industry leadership of the national training system – the National Industry Skills Committee provides high level industry advice.

- Access to training opportunities for existing workers will also be improved through the PPP, which will provide over 390,000 training places over 5 years to train workers already in the workforce. These places will be targeted at industries experiencing skills shortages.

- Specific incentives have been introduced to
encourage employment of Australian Apprentices and to promote training in targeted higher level skills and other target areas.

COMMITTEES

Procedure Committee

Senator McLUCAS (Queensland—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing) (5.27 pm)—by leave—

In relation to the Procedure Committee’s second report of 2009, I move:

That consideration of the report be made a business of the Senate order of the day for the next day of sitting.

Question agreed to.

NOTICES

Presentation

Senator McLUCAS (Queensland—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing) (5.28 pm)—by leave—I give notice that, on the next day of sitting, I shall move:

That, effective on 14 May 2009, standing order 25 be amended to read as follows:

25 Legislative and general purpose

(1) At the commencement of each Parliament, legislative and general purpose standing committees shall be appointed, as follows:

Community Affairs
Legislation Committee
References Committee
Economics
Legislation Committee
References Committee
Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
Legislation Committee
References Committee
Environment, Communications and the Arts
Legislation Committee

References Committee
Finance and Public Administration
Legislation Committee
References Committee
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Legislation Committee
References Committee
Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Legislation Committee
References Committee
Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
Legislation Committee
References Committee.

(2) (a) The legislation committees shall inquire into and report upon estimates of expenditure in accordance with standing order 26, bills or draft bills referred to them by the Senate, annual reports in accordance with paragraph (20), and the performance of departments and agencies allocated to them.

(b) The references committees shall inquire into and report upon other matters referred to them by the Senate.

(3) References concerning departments and agencies shall be allocated to the committees in accordance with a resolution of the Senate allocating departments and agencies to the committees.

(4) The committees shall inquire into and report upon matters referred to their predecessor committees appointed under this standing order and not disposed of by those committees, and in considering those matters may consider the evidence and records of those committees relating to those matters.

(5) (a) Each legislation committee shall consist of 6 senators, 3 nominated by the Leader of the Government in the Senate, 2 nominated by the Leader of the Opposi-
tion in the Senate and one nominated by minority groups and independent senators.

(b) Each references committee shall consist of 6 senators, 2 nominated by the Leader of the Government in the Senate, 3 nominated by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, and one nominated by minority groups and independent senators.

(6) (a) The committees to which minority groups and independent senators make nominations shall be determined by agreement between the minority groups and independent senators, and, in the absence of agreement duly notified to the President, any question of the representation on a committee shall be determined by the Senate.

(b) The allocation of places on the committees amongst minority groups and independent senators shall be as nearly as practicable proportional to the numbers of those minority groups and independent senators in the Senate.

(7) (a) Senators may be appointed to the committees as substitutes for members of the committees in respect of particular matters before the committees.

(b) On the nominations of the Leader of the Government in the Senate, the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and minority groups and independent senators, participating members may be appointed to the committees.

(c) Participating members may participate in hearings of evidence and deliberations of the committees, and have all the rights of members of committees, but may not vote on any questions before the committees.

(d) A participating member shall be taken to be a member of a committee for the purpose of forming a quorum of the committee if a majority of members of the committee is not present.

(e) If a member of a committee is unable to attend a meeting of the committee, that member may in writing to the chair of the committee appoint a participating member to act as a substitute member of the committee at that meeting. If the member is incapacitated or unavailable, a letter to the chair of a committee appointing a participating member to act as a substitute member of the committee may be signed on behalf of the member by the leader of the party or group on whose nomination the member was appointed to the committee.

(8) A committee may appoint sub-committees consisting of 3 or more of its members, and refer to any such sub-committee any of the matters which the committee is empowered to consider.

(9) (a) Each legislation committee shall elect as its chair a member nominated by the Leader of the Government in the Senate, and as its deputy chair a member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate or by a minority group or independent senator.

(b) Each of 6 references committees shall elect as its chair a member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, and each of 2 references committees shall elect as its deputy chair a member of a minority group in the Senate, and each references committee shall elect as its deputy chair a member nominated by the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

(c) The chairs and deputy chairs to which members nominated by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and members of minority groups and independent senators are elected shall be determined by agreement between the opposition and minority groups and independent senators, and, in the absence of agreement duly notified to the President, any question of the allocation of chairs and deputy chairs shall be determined by the Senate.

(d) The deputy chair shall act as the chair of the committee when the member elected as chair is absent from a meeting of the
committee or the position of chair is temporarily vacant.

(e) When votes on a question before a committee are equally divided, the chair, or the deputy chair when acting as chair, shall have a casting vote.

(f) The chair, or the deputy chair when acting as chair, may appoint another member of a committee to act as chair during the temporary absence of both the chair and deputy chair at a meeting of the committee.

(10) The chairs and deputy chairs of the committees, together with the chairs and deputy chairs of any select committees appointed by the Senate, shall constitute the Chairs' Committee, which may meet with the Deputy President in the chair, and may consider and report to the Senate on any matter relating to the operations of the committees.

(11) Except as otherwise provided by the standing orders, the reference of a matter to a committee shall be on motion after notice, and such notice of motion may be given:

(a) in the usual manner when notices are given; or

(b) at any other time by a senator:

(i) stating its terms to the Senate, when no other business is before the chair, or

(ii) delivering a copy to the Clerk, who shall report it to the Senate at the first opportunity;

and shall be placed on the Notice Paper for the next sitting day as business of the Senate and, as such, shall take precedence of government and general business set down for that day.

(12) Matters referred to the committees should relate to subjects which can be dealt with expeditiously.

(13) A committee shall take care not to inquire into any matters which are being examined by a select committee of the Senate appointed to inquire into such matters and any question arising in this connection may be referred to the Senate for determination.

(14) A committee and any sub-committee shall have power to send for persons and documents, to move from place to place, and to meet and transact business in public or private session and notwithstanding any prorogation of the Parliament or dissolution of the House of Representatives.

(15) All documents received by a committee during an inquiry shall remain in the custody of the Senate after the completion of that inquiry.

(16) A committee shall be empowered to print from day to day any of its documents and evidence. A daily Hansard shall be published of public proceedings of a committee.

(17) A committee shall be provided with all necessary staff, facilities and resources and shall be empowered to appoint persons with specialist knowledge for the purposes of the committee, with the approval of the President.

(18) A committee may report from time to time its proceedings and evidence taken and any recommendations, and shall make regular reports on the progress of its proceedings.

(19) A committee may authorise the broadcasting of its public hearings, under such rules as the Senate provides.

(20) Annual reports of departments and agencies shall stand referred to the legislation committees in accordance with an allocation of departments and agencies in a resolution of the Senate. Each committee shall:

(a) Examine each annual report referred to it and report to the Senate whether the report is apparently satisfactory.

(b) Consider in more detail, and report to the Senate on, each annual report which is not apparently satisfactory, and on the other annual reports which it selects for more detailed consideration.

(c) Investigate and report to the Senate on any lateness in the presentation of annual reports.

(d) In considering an annual report, take into account any relevant remarks about the report made in debate in the Senate.
(e) If the committee so determines, consider annual reports of departments and budget-related agencies in conjunction with examination of estimates.

(f) Report on annual reports tabled by 31 October each year by the tenth sitting day of the following year, and on annual reports tabled by 30 April each year by the tenth sitting day after 30 June of that year.

(g) Draw to the attention of the Senate any significant matters relating to the operations and performance of the bodies furnishing the annual reports.

(h) Report to the Senate each year whether there are any bodies which do not present annual reports to the Senate and which should present such reports.

I table a document relating to the proposed amendments.

**COMMITTEES**

**Finance and Public Administration Committee**

Additional Information

Senator FARRELL (South Australia) (5.29 pm)—I present additional information received from the Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration on its inquiry into residential and community aged care in Australia. I also present a correction to the report of the committee on the same matter.

Ordered that the document be printed.

**Finance and Public Administration Committee**

Report

Senator POLLEY (Tasmania) (5.30 pm)—I move.

That the Senate take note of the report.

I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

**Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee**

Report

Senator FARRELL (South Australia) (5.30 pm)—by leave—At the request of the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Senator Crossin, I move:

That the final reports of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee on the provisions of the Evidence Amendment (Journalists' Privilege) Bill 2009, the provisions of the Law and Justice (Cross Border and Other Amendments) Bill 2009 and the provisions of the Native Title Amendment Bill 2009 be presented today.

Question agreed to.

**DOCUMENTS**

**Responses to Senate Resolutions**

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Marshall)—I present the following responses to resolutions of the Senate:

(a) Response from the Acting Prime Minister, Ms Gillard, to a resolution of the Senate of 11 March 2009 concerning International Women’s Day; and

(b) Response from the Premier of Victoria, Mr Brumby, to a resolution of the Senate of 9 February 2009 concerning the bushfires in Victoria.

**Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner**

Senator BARNETT (Tasmania) (5.31 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the Senate take note of the document.

The Social Justice Report 2008, tabled in April, is by Mr Tom Calma, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, and he is of course a member of the Australian Human Rights Commission. The report is very substantial. It makes a whole range of observations and recommendations, and it was tabled at a time when, at the end of April, Mr Tom Calma, as the Race Discrimination Commissioner and
one of the five commissioners of the Australian Human Rights Commission, was heading to a UN anti-racism conference in Geneva.

The Australian government, a day before the conference actually started, officially boycotted the conference and created a dilemma for itself—and, indeed, for Australia. The conference, unfortunately, was used as a platform to attack Israel, and Iran’s president, Moahmoud Ahmadinejad, on the opening day of the conference condemned Israel as a racist regime. So the federal government officially boycotted the conference. However, Mr Tom Calma did go. He, of course, is paid for by the Australian taxpayer, and he was there representing himself as the Race Discrimination Commissioner and as a member of the Australian Human Rights Commission.

I called at that time on the government to immediately recall the commissioner from this conference—though that was not acceded to—and I know that many others did as well. Our shadow minister Julie Bishop likewise called on the government to get its act together and officially boycott the conference—sadly, it was only a day before it started, so it had placed itself in an undeniably difficult and challenging position.

I want to note that this particular conference was referred to at some length in the Australian newspaper. David Knoll in his article in that paper on 30 April said this:

The decision of Tom Calma to attend last week’s UN Durban II Conference in his capacity as race discrimination commissioner was controversial in more ways than one. The principal proponents of the conference, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and various rogue states, including some of the worst abusers of human rights on this planet, had two clear agendas.

He went on to refer to those agendas, and then he said that:

The proponents of the conference will have noticed inevitably that Australia (along with the US, Israel, Canada, New Zealand, Italy, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Poland and Germany) publicly chose not to participate in a conference whose clear design, prepared during many months, was to promote a particular form of racism rather than to fight all forms of racism. Having an official as senior as the race discrimination commissioner attend as an observer could be perceived as a signal that Australia might in the future adopt some or all of the Durban II agenda.

He went on to say:

Did Australia really oppose the conference or was Australia having a bet both ways? It is a pity that Calma did not follow Australian government policy and have no truck with racism of any hue.

Those were the comments of David Knoll on 30 April in the Australian. I concur with those comments and the concerns that he has.

This was first raised in the Australian on 23 April. Patricia Karvelas did a story headed ‘Race Discrimination Commissioner Tom Calma attends UN racism meeting in Geneva’. The article says:

A spokeswoman for Foreign Minister Stephen Smith said it was entirely up to Mr Calma if he wanted to attend. “He is an independent authority. His attendance is entirely a matter for him,” …

Legally, if you look at the legislation that set up the Australian Human Rights Commission, that is partly right, but I have asked the question before: is the Australian Human Rights Commission a law unto itself? It is paid by taxpayers’ money to conduct itself in an appropriate manner and to ensure that the objectives of that legislation are properly met, but in this instance I am very fearful that that was not the case. I wonder why the Australian Human Rights Commission and Mr Calma did not return—in fact, why he left Australia in any event for this particular conference. I notice that the Australian reports:
Former Executive Council of Australian Jewry president Jeremy Jones said Mr Calma should have boycotted the forum.

He is quoted as saying:

Last time the race discrimination commissioner was part of the Australian government delegation, so I don’t know where he would sit …

That is a fair question. He says:

… his wage comes from the Government, he is on the Government’s payroll.

What sort of message does it send to the international community? Clearly, I—and, I know, many others—have a concern about what sort of message it sends to the international community.

In my view, the government’s refusal to recall Mr Calma, or its lack of influence over Mr Calma, is inexcusable. In fact, it was a pathetic effort on the part of the government. His presence at the conference signalled that Australia condones anti-Jewish rhetoric and, sadly, it associates us with such comments. I want to place on the record—with many others, I know—that absolutely under no circumstances would we associate ourselves with those particular comments.

I said at the time and say again on the record here that during Senate estimates in a few weeks time, at the end of May, I will be asking some questions of the Australian Human Rights Commission. I will be asking Mr Calma some questions. I would like to know, on behalf of the public, about how much of our taxpayers’ money is being and has been spent on this misconceived excursion. I have not seen any public statement by the Australian Human Rights Commission condemning the Iranian President’s speech. Maybe it is out there—maybe it has been made and I have missed it—but I look forward to pursuing that in further detail.

I know it is on the record that Mr Calma is paid over $200,000 per annum by the government, and of course his presence would be seen by many as representing Australia at this clearly discredited UN conference. These are the concerns that I have, and I think they are concerns that are held by many in the community. There is certainly more to find out with respect to the views about and the reasons why this whole misconceived excursion took place.

Question agreed to.

WATER AMENDMENT (SAVING THE GOULBURN AND MURRAY RIVERS) BILL 2008

Report of Environment, Communications and the Arts Committee

Senator NASH (New South Wales) (5.40 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the Senate take note of the report.

I thank the Senate for its indulgence. I want to make a few remarks this evening on the report presented by the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts on the Water Amendment (Saving the Goulburn and Murray Rivers) Bill 2008. This bill, by and large, deals with the ability to take water out of the Murray-Darling Basin for what is termed the Sugarloaf Pipeline, or north-south pipeline. It was interesting to note that the minority report was agreed to by Liberal, National, Greens and Independent senators, and there was a very strong belief on the part of all of those senators about the detrimental nature of removing water from the Murray-Darling Basin to pipe water to Melbourne.

Part of the requirement of the bill is that there should be no water taken out of the Murray-Darling Basin for new purposes. That is simply a no-brainer. We see a system that is completely under stress, and unfortunately the Victorian government sees fit to take 75,000 megalitres of water out of that basin every year for the purposes of Melbourne. While the Victorian government will
say that the water is going to come from savings in the food bowl program, there were some very, very serious concerns raised about the premises on which those savings were to be made. Certainly the Liberal, National, Greens and Independent senators have some extremely serious concerns about whether or not those savings can actually be made.

We need to look at this in the context of the water that has been saved so far in the Murray-Darling Basin. While I understand that it is not the purview of Minister Wong in her capacity and that the federal relationship relates to the EPBC Act under Minister Garrett, it would be interesting for Minister Wong to answer the question about how—when, under the first buyback program that she has in place, only 2,000 megalitres approximately of real water have been saved—she can sit by as minister and not enter the debate about why 75,000 megalitres of water are going to be sucked out of the Murray-Darling Basin for Melbourne. It is completely incongruous for this government to say, ‘We want to do everything we can to try and save the Murray-Darling Basin and to try and keep water in the Murray-Darling Basin,’ and then at the same time to allow the Victorian government to rip 75,000 megalitres a year out of the basin.

On that basis, we certainly have some very, very serious concerns. That is why this bill came into being in the first place, and we very strongly recommend that it be passed. There was very strong opposition to this water being taken for Melbourne, particularly in the light of the fact that the Victorian government has done almost nothing to look at alternative sources of water. The impact that this is going to have on the basin and particularly on those rural and regional communities that rely on this water is enormous. It simply stands to reason that, if indeed—and we are not entirely sure—these savings are going to come from the food bowl arrangements, surely any water saved in the Murray-Darling Basin should stay in the Murray-Darling Basin and not be ripped out and sent down a pipeline to Melbourne for their use.

Senator Brandis—Hear, hear!

Senator NASH—Thank you very much, Senator Brandis. There is considerable concern around the inaccuracy of the stated water savings. The Victorian government is looking at saving around 225 gigalitres a year. A concern certainly raised during the committee by some was that the very premise that those savings are based on is incorrect. Yet we have seen no independent audit, nothing whatsoever, to give any certainty or any kind of comfort to those members of the Senate committee that were very concerned about this particular issue. Indeed, one of the recommendations that we have made in the minority report is to ensure that there is an independent audit of those savings. It is absolutely vital that this take place. Minister Garrett should come out tomorrow and say he recognises that there is a requirement to have an audit of this process and that the audit should be done—we believe by CSIRO—immediately.

This is far too important an issue to simply allow the Victorian government to make claims about the process that are unsubstantiated. It is not only the people in the Murray-Darling Basin but also people right across this nation who deserve a response to this, because there is no doubt that water is going to be—and is right now—one of the biggest issues for this country. It would simply be sensible for, as I said, the minister to come out and say he has absolutely no problem at all with requiring an independent audit immediately.

If he does not do that, what should we assume? If the minister is not prepared to say, ‘Yes, I absolutely require an independent..."
audit,’—and it is our understanding that it actually is a requirement under the EPBC Act—then what is he trying to hide? If the minister does not say that there should be an independent audit immediately, we can only assume that there is something that he is trying to hide. So we need to have absolute clarity on this. We need to make sure that those uncertainties are looked into. It is far too important an issue for this audit not to take place. Simply taking that water out of the basin is completely wrong.

It was very pleasing to see that all of those senators—the Liberals, the Nationals, the Greens and the Independent senators—were able to reach an agreement quite easily that the minority report would stand in all of our names. We had a very clear view of what was appropriate and what should be taking place. I recommend the report to the Senate. I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

COMMITTEES

Environment, Communications and the Arts Committee

Senator BIRMINGHAM (South Australia) (5.48 pm)—I seek leave to move a motion in relation to the report of the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts into the operation of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Leave granted.

Senator BIRMINGHAM—I move:
That the Senate take note of the report.
I seek leave to continue my remarks later.
Leave granted; debate adjourned.

DOCUMENTS

14th National Schools Constitutional Convention

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Marshall)—I present a communiqué from the 14th National Schools Constitutional Convention held at Old Parliament House from 17 March to 19 March 2009.

COMMITTEES

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee: Joint Documents

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Marshall)—I present a report on access to documents of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence’s subcommittee on human rights in the Soviet Union.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

Additional Information

Senator FARRELL (South Australia) (5.49 pm)—At the request of the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport, Senator Sterle, I present additional information received by the committee in its inquiry into climate change and the Australian agricultural sector.

National Broadband Network Committee

Report

Senator FISHER (South Australia) (5.49 pm)—I present the second interim report of the Senate Select Committee on the National Broadband Network, entitled Another fork in the road to national broadband.

Ordered that the report be printed.

Senator FISHER—by leave—I move:
That the Senate take note of the report.
It is with pleasure that I rise to speak to the tabling of this report, appropriately titled Another fork in the road to national broad-
This committee is currently scheduled to table its final report in the week commencing 22 June. In the course of tabling this report I want to deliver some thanks, firstly and most importantly, to the secretariat—namely, Alison Kelly and Veronica Gover—for their dedication and continued hard work. Likewise, the committee wishes to thank Jonathan Chowns from the Parliamentary Library for his behind-the-scenes assistance. I also want to thank the stakeholders and those who gave their time and dedicated their expertise to making submissions to this committee and appearing before it. I also want to thank my colleagues on the committee of all political persuasions for their hard, dedicated and very constructive work on this significant part of the government’s policy changes.

In terms of the road thus far with the National Broadband Network, this committee was set up in June 2008 to inquire into the government’s then announced national broadband network policy. This committee has had almost 10 days of public hearings. We have received almost 40 written submissions and we tabled our first interim report in December last year. This is our second interim report. The committee has chosen to table this second interim report to summarise the road thus far, given its recent fork. I am referring of course to the government’s announcement on 7 April this year to essentially abandon its National Broadband Network round 1 policy promise and replace it with another, to which I will refer as its National Broadband Network round 2 promise.

In the process, it terminated the request for proposals underway under NBN round 1 and arguably wasted some $20 million of taxpayers’ money and some 18 months of time, during which consumers waited to see how the government was going to deliver on its promise with respect to NBN round 1. The desertion of NBN round 1 by the government left many questions unanswered, a number of which have been teased out through the work of this committee. They include the ‘Who?’, the ‘What?’, the ‘When?’, the ‘Where?’, the ‘Why?’, the ‘How?’ and the ‘How much?’ In terms of the ‘Who?’, NBN round 1, said the government, would reach 98 per cent of Australians. Yet the government repeatedly refused to demonstrate to the population who was in the 98 per cent and who was in the left-out two per cent. They repeatedly refused to demonstrate whether city or country were in or whether the 98 per cent was based on per capita or households or businesses or premises or something different again.

In terms of the ‘What?’, the government repeatedly refused to show with any clarity whether people would get the promised minimum speed of up to 12 megabits or something different. The government was unable to stick to its time frames in terms of the ‘When?’ The tender process was treated as an elastic process, by way of example. With respect to the ‘How?’ was it to be fibre to the home or was it to be fibre to the node? Were the services and access thereto to be rolled in or rolled out? Was the then National Broadband Network round 1 to be delivered in partnership with the private sector, as promised, or something different? At what cost? The government postulated that it would cost some $4.7 billion, yet this committee heard evidence from experts that it would cost that and then some, and that is under the government’s NBN round 1. At what price for the consumer? Was the consumer to be invited to pay more for the same or less? These questions remain unanswered.

These questions are much the same as those now posed by NBN round 2, but the thing about NBN round 2 is that it is a bigger promise and then some, and this government’s bigger promises come with even big-
ger questions. They come with the ‘Who?’ The government says that 90 per cent of Australians will now get fibre to the home. The government has yet to show who will be in the 90 per cent and who will be in the 10 per cent. Ten per cent of the Australian population is some two million Australians. The government says that towns and cities and communities with populations of less than 1,000 will not be in the 90 per cent. When you look at the names of the towns and cities and communities that the government has proffered as being those who will be left out of the 90 per cent, you get 103 towns in South Australia and some half a million Australians. Where is the government hiding the other 1.5 million Australians who are in the 10 per cent and who ain’t going to get and ain’t going to be part of the 90 per cent fibre to the home? Just as Minister Conroy failed to show us his nodes with NBN round 1, he is failing to show us his maps with NBN round 2. The Australian community deserves to know that. They deserve nothing less.

Then there is the ‘What?’ The government is promising users speeds of up to a hundred times faster than they are currently getting. Rural and regional Australians, and in particular rural and regional South Australians, know that a hundred times nix is still nix. ‘When?’ The government is suggesting it will take some eight years to deliver on NBN round 2 at best guesstimates thus far. Others suggest it is going to take as long as 10 years. The government’s implementation study, says Minister Conroy, is to be finished by the end of this year. Yet the government’s advertisements—under the hand of its department—published on recent weekends, advertise for a consultant to undertake the study, with the study to be completed in the early part of next year. The time frame is already being treated as elastic by the government.

Then there is the ‘Where?’ Where is this going to happen? Tasmanians are to be congratulated. They are being promised by our Prime Minister ‘top tier’ in terms of the National Broadband Network. The Prime Minister says that it is possible to do in Tasmania what he is now promising by way of ‘top tier’ and says that it is ‘not necessarily possible’ in the rest of Australia. Well, ‘not necessarily’ displays that he knows that it is possible in some other places for some other communities for some of the time. Who are those people? Where do they live? And where is the government’s plan to deliver in those other places where it could be possible?

‘How?’ Will this NBN round 2 be delivered in partnership with the private sector or will the private sector sit back and wait and see it fail and then wait for the government to entice it to participate? ‘At what cost?’ The government has steadfastly failed to provide a commercial case for NBN round 2, which is projected—even on the government’s own say-so—to cost almost tenfold what NBN round 1 would have, at some $43 billion. ‘At what price for consumers?’ At this stage the experts are saying ‘some two to three times the price that consumers currently pay for services with which they are provided’.

In NBN round 1 the government was spectacularly successful at muzzling the participants in the process with a formal commercial-in-confidence gag during the tender process. The difficulty with NBN round 2 is that there is no formal gag at this stage but rather there is an informal one generated by the lack of certainty—by which potential stakeholders and potential participants in the industry would of course be best advised to keep their powder dry. So they stay silent, with effectively a muzzle that is even more pervasive and arguably even more powerful than the formal gag applied by the govern-
ment in NBN round 1. With NBN round 2 and its bigger promises come bigger questions. The government’s promise deserves scrutiny, the government’s policy deserves scrutiny and the government’s process deserves scrutiny. I commend the report to the Senate. (Time expired)

Senator LUNDY (Australian Capital Territory) (6.00 pm)—I too rise to speak to the second interim report of the Select Committee on the National Broadband Network and specifically to note that the government senators have prepared a minority report. We have done that for a very good reason—that is, because on 7 April 2009, as we have heard many times in this chamber already, the government announced that it had terminated the National Broadband Network request for proposals process on the basis of advice from the independent panel of experts that none of the national proposals offered value for money for the Commonwealth.

The history of this committee dates back to prior to the coalition losing their control of the Senate. The select committee was established with a structure the opposition have used to completely dominate the numbers on the committee. I do not think that has impacted too much on the substance of the material that we have received from witnesses but it really belies the underlying purpose of this select committee inquiry into the National Broadband Network. We have an opposition scratching around for relevance in one of the most critical areas of public infrastructure that we as a government have had to deal with for a long time.

It is well and truly on the record that Labor’s policy for a national broadband network as announced on 7 April is the largest investment in public infrastructure, and rightly so. It provides the economic foundation for the future. It is truly economic infrastructure. We have done this with vision and foresight on the back of a very long period, under the former Howard government, of neglect and ad hoc policy servicing the needs of the privatisation agenda of a monopolistic telecommunications company that we all, as Australians, are paying a price for.

The opposition makes a comment with respect to this report about questions remaining unanswered, and yet this very inquiry was set up to parallel the government’s process in setting out the request for proposals. Now that we have announced our policy and have been very clear about our implementation plan—and we remain completely committed to consultation with all of the stakeholders and providing opportunities, as we have said in our minority report, for appropriate scrutiny of associated legislative processes with the progress of the National Broadband Network—I am at a bit of a loss as to why the opposition appears to be so adamant about questions remaining unanswered. Those processes are in train and it seems to me that, as a platform for wanting to somehow appear relevant, the opposition are attaching themselves to the National Broadband Network process. It is quite pathetic. I had cause earlier today at CeBIT to reflect on the more than a decade of neglect in telecommunications policy and the fact that it has been the Labor government that has had, as I said, the vision and the foresight to step up and put this forward.

Just to clarify some misleading information provided to the Senate, the government’s National Broadband Network proposes to connect 90 per cent of all Australian homes, schools and workplaces with broadband services with speeds of 100 megabits per second but all other premises—and this is a very important point—with next-generation wireless and satellite technologies that will deliver broadband speeds of 12 megabits per second. This is way above our previous commitments. I do not accept, and Labor
does not accept, any criticism by the opposition when it purports that somehow we are not honouring our election promise. We are going far beyond our election commitments with the fibre-to-the-premises National Broadband Network as announced on 7 April. I should also say that this comes at a time when we need this investment. Our economy needs this investment. It will provide up to 25,000 local jobs every year on average over the eight-year life of the project. In that regard, this is indeed a very worthy and timely investment.

The other issue I want to talk about is the substance of the evidence from the witnesses received in the course of the inquiry. I am very happy, as the chair and other members of the committee know, to acknowledge the contribution of the range of stakeholders—witnesses, academics and members of the community—who took the time to make submissions to the inquiry. Regardless of how the opposition chooses to twist their representation of the evidence that we received, the evidence was in fact incredibly valuable to the government. We would like to acknowledge that, despite our concern and despite not concurring with the non-government senators’ recommendations, we were grateful for the input by the range of witnesses. Many of the issues they raised informed the government’s decision to proceed with a fibre-to-the-premises network rather than a fibre-to-the-node network—as well as, importantly, the wholesale nature of the National Broadband Network as it was announced. Those who participated in the inquiry would know that it did cast a forensic eye across some of the weaknesses of the fibre-to-the-node network—at the time I think rather to the glee of the opposition as they tried to tear down our policy. In fact, our vision was true and the policy as announced recognised the limitations of a fibre-to-the-node network. Hence, our very sound and future-proofed decision to proceed with a fibre-to-the-premises network.

I too would like to thank the secretariat of the committee for their hard work, and I also thank Jonathan Chowns. There were a wide range of technical issues to absorb and represent. I commend the government senators’ minority report to the chamber. We feel that it is an accurate reflection of the substance of the matter. The evidence collected through this inquiry is a powerful and immensely important validation of Labor’s National Broadband Network policy. Points were made about the need for a future-proof network, and the issue that came out was that the speed—the 12 megabits per second—represents a tenfold increase on what people are getting with broadband. But there was acknowledgement through our policy that great speeds were needed if we were going to genuinely future-proof this public investment, and we have been able to respond to that profoundly with our visionary policy for a national broadband network.

I urge people to read the transcript and understand the evidence that was put forward. Despite an opposition scratching around for relevance on this one, they are still in the broadband black water. I still get emails from people who are aggrieved and who are essentially victims of 10 years of policy neglect by the previous Howard government, which Labor will now rectify with our visionary plan for a national broadband network.

Senator LU DLAM (Western Australia) (6.09 pm)—I agree with the former speakers that the Senate Select Committee on the National Broadband Network played an exceptionally useful role, particularly given that the RFP was conducted in something of a vacuum. I take the point that both the previous speakers have made—that the evidence provided to the committee was extremely
valuable, although obviously now, interestingly, there is some dispute about whether the committee should continue to provide that oversight role. I think it has been a very useful task that we have undertaken. We have taken good evidence and engaged a range of experts and stakeholders from across the industry and from the community. I appreciate Senator Lundy’s acknowledgement that the evidence that we took and the work that we did informed the outcome of the RFP.

The situation has changed quite dramatically. We have a project which is essentially ten times the scope of what was proposed during the election campaign. The Australian Greens believe that the logic of making such a bold investment is sound, and we are also pleased that the government has concurred, at least in the interim, with the Greens’ view that the network should be publicly owned. I will come back to that at the end of my remarks.

I was a bit surprised to hear the minister this afternoon in question time, I think in response to a question from the Leader of the Opposition, essentially rebutting the need for any formal cost-benefit analysis or economic modelling as to the benefits or otherwise of such a project. The minister now has a very delicate balancing act before him as to whether the taxpayer is going to be getting value for money for building the network and what that actually means in the way of cost for the end user purchasing bandwidth from the NBN. I find it impossible to imagine that the project was announced without such modelling being undertaken at least in some form.

Senator Ian Macdonald—I would not be surprised.

Senator LUDLAM—I certainly look forward to the production of that work if it has been undertaken, but, if the government does not intend to do this work, I think it would be a valuable role for this committee to play in the future.

One of the key roles for the committee in the future, as the chair of the committee, Senator Fisher, has indicated, concerns the 10 per cent of the population that will be left out of the fibre-to-the-premises proposal. I do not think that anyone has yet proposed running fibre to every door in Australia. But the question then becomes: to what degree will the remaining communities be left with a service that is up to eight times slower than that in the metropolitan areas? The relative speed of the network in regional and metropolitan areas is very important because there will be services delivered down this system that we, in 2009, cannot even conceive of yet. So the relative speeds delivered to regional areas will remain of extreme importance. Will this project further entrench the digital divide or, for $43 billion, can we do better than an eight to one performance gap between those with and those without?

Finally, to return to where I began, why the government would want to embed a privatisation trigger in a project of this kind is a bit beyond me. We already heard Senator Lundy’s reference to the privatisation agenda of the previous government and yet we find in the minister’s and the Prime Minister’s announcement of the expanded NBN project exactly such a trigger embedded in this project. So we draw the Senate’s attention to the heading ‘Ownership’ at section 3 of the report, which essentially draws these questions to the attention of the committee when it refers to five years after the completion of the NBN. What does ‘completion’ mean for this infrastructure? You might as well talk about the completion of the road network. What does five years after completion of the NBN mean? What rationale is there to reprivatise the network, given that we are here today because we are cleaning up, in part,
the mess from the privatisation of an essential service?

There were very few details on the conditions which the government would set as a trigger to sell off the network and the nature of essential public services being offered on a for-profit basis, where the interest of shareholders will not always coincide with the public interest. So I very much look forward to the committee continuing to play the extremely valuable role that it has played so far. I would like to acknowledge the chair for her work, Senator Lundy for keeping things on track, and the hardworking staff and secretariat of the committee. I look forward to continuing its work.

Senator MINCHIN (South Australia) (6.13 pm)—As a participating member I also welcome the production of this second interim report of the Select Committee on the National Broadband Network. I also join Senator Ludlam in congratulating Senator Fisher on her outstanding chairmanship of this committee and for the very good recommendations that are made in the second interim report. I commend them to the government and I look forward to the government acting on those recommendations.

This report confirms the fiasco that has become Labor’s national broadband network policy. Senator Conroy, the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate, has presided over the complete collapse of his election policy. We had Senator Lundy here today essentially admitting that this committee, which the government opposed, has been the vehicle by which the failure of this mark I NBN policy of the government’s has been exposed as a complete and utter failure. Of course, it does not surprise us at all that it has failed so comprehensively, because the then Labor opposition simply wrote this policy on the back of an envelope in the lead-up to the last election, having lifted the policy from the proposition that Telstra put to the former government. And even the contribution of $4.7 billion which the Labor government proposed to make was a straight lift from Telstra’s original proposal to our government to have a subsidy for a fibre-to-the-node network. The Labor Party did no analysis or work on a fibre-to-the-node network—as to how or whether it could be built. It simply went to the election having stolen that particular policy.

In our view the whole tender process which this government embarked on was doomed to failure from the outset. Indeed, the minister was completely humiliated last December by his own department excluding the current operator of the current broadband network in this country—and I refer, of course, to Telstra—despite his boasting widely, both publicly and privately, that he had a very flexible process that would allow anybody to put any sort of bid in and that non-conforming bids would of course be considered. It was not, of course, the minister who excluded Telstra. It was the departmental secretary who acted upon no fewer than five sets of legal advice to remove Telstra from the process despite it being obvious that, at the end of the day, Telstra were the only company capable of building a fibre-to-the-node network in this country. And to be excluded on the basis that on the day they submitted their tender they did not submit a small business participation plan is ludicrous in the extreme.

So 18 months after this government was elected, and after the expenditure of $20 million of precious taxpayers’ money, the whole of Senator Conroy’s mark I NBN plan has completely collapsed in a heap and there is nothing to show for it. Indeed, in the 18 months that he has been the minister, Senator Conroy has done nothing to advance the
cause of more access to broadband by Australians. All he has to show for it is $20 million of taxpayers’ money down the drain on this failed tender process, and the insult to the residents of rural and regional Australia by his wanton cancellation of the contract which our government signed with Optus and Elders to bring high-speed broadband to a million residents of rural and regional Australia at a cost to the government of $1 billion with an investment by that consortium of $1 billion. That has all gone. That would have almost been completed by now and there is nothing to show for it whatsoever.

In what can only be described as a flagrant and extravagant cover-up of the failure of that particular policy, this government has come out with the extraordinary announcement that it is going to create another government entity to spend $43 billion on extending fibre to 90 per cent of Australian residential and business premises. This is the most extraordinarily reckless and irresponsible policy announced on the run we have seen, I think, in this country’s history. As Senator Ludlam pointed out, when I asked the question today about the cost-benefit analysis, ‘Oh, no, we don’t have to do a cost-benefit analysis. We are just going to spend $43 billion but who needs a cost-benefit analysis’ to spend—as they boast—the biggest single infrastructure investment ever proposed in the history of this country. There is no business plan and yet the government asserts that this will be a commercial investment. If it had come out and been honest and said, ‘Look, it will never be commercial but we think taxpayers should subsidise it anyway and we are just going to go ahead and build it,’ that would be one thing. But it has come out and said that this will be a commercial exercise, done through this public-private partnership which will eventually be privatised. No-one in this country has ever established that fibre to the premises could possibly be a commercial business proposition in this country. We believe that there is no prospect whatsoever of commercial viability. For it to be commercially viable, the prices you would have to charge would be such that nobody could afford to use it.

What they are proposing is the effective renationalisation of the fixed line network in this country which may, as I detect from Senator Ludlam’s remarks, please him. But it certainly should not please the rest of Australia to have the renationalisation of a fixed line network in this way, particularly when there will be some $20 billion, at least, of taxpayers’ money put at risk in an investment in a particular fixed-line technology which many have noted will take another 10 years to roll out. And by then we have no idea what the capacity and possibilities will be with alternative communications technologies—most particularly, of course, mobile and wireless. There is a massive flight from fixed line to mobile and wireless broadband going on right now. What will it be like in 10 years time when this thing is finally built? I suspect this will be one of the all-time great white elephants this country has seen.

The government, very secretly, is not even putting into this the $4.7 billion which it only has because of our sale of Telstra through the Communications Fund and the proceeds from T3. They are not even going to put that in. They have very secretly decided that they are only going to put in the $2.4 billion from the Communications Fund and borrow the rest. The whole process is shrouded in secrecy. We are not going to be shown the expert panel’s report upon which this is based. We are not going to be shown the ACCC report.

I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.
EXCISE TARIFF VALIDATION BILL 2009
CUSTOMS TARIFF VALIDATION BILL 2009

First Reading

Bills received from the House of Representatives.

Senator STEPHENS (New South Wales—Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and Parliamentary Secretary for the Voluntary Sector) (6.21 pm)—I move:

That these bills may proceed without formalities, may be taken together and be now read a first time.

Question agreed to.

Bills read a first time.

Senator STEPHENS (New South Wales—Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and Parliamentary Secretary for the Voluntary Sector) (6.21 pm)—I seek leave to move a motion to exempt these bills from the bills cut-off order.

Senator PARRY (Tasmania) (6.21 pm)—We are not going to grant leave for this to take place at this stage. Arrangements have been made with the Manager of Government Business in the Senate and we will deal with this matter tomorrow morning.

Senator STEPHENS (New South Wales—Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and Parliamentary Secretary for the Voluntary Sector) (6.22 pm)—On a point of clarification: I am seeking leave to exempt the bills from the bills cut-off order, not to debate them.

Senator PARRY (Tasmania) (6.22 pm)—If the government will indicate that this matter will be put off until tomorrow, so it becomes an order for tomorrow rather than an order for later today, we will grant exemption for the cut-off.

Senator STEPHENS (New South Wales—Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and Parliamentary Secretary for the Voluntary Sector) (6.22 pm)—To clarify: that is procedurally what will occur as a result of this.

Leave granted.

Senator STEPHENS—I move:

That the provisions of paragraphs (5) to (8) of standing order 111 not apply to these bills allowing them to be considered during this period of sittings.

I table a statement of reasons justifying the need for these bills to be considered during these sittings and seek leave to have the statement incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

The speech read as follows—

Purpose of the Bills

To validate the collection of all of excise and customs duties demanded or collected before 14 May 2009 because of Excise Tariff Proposal (No. 1) 2008 and Customs Tariff Proposal (No. 1) 2008, so that they are taken to have been lawfully imposed and lawfully demanded or collected.

This gives the effect of ensuring the additional revenue derived from tariff proposals that increased the rate of duty paid on ‘other excisable beverages not exceeding 10% by volume of alcohol’ (alcopops), between 27 April 2008 and 13 May 2009 inclusive, is not required to be refunded to the payers of that duty.

Reasons for Urgency

On 18 March 2009, the Senate negatived bills that would have applied a higher rate of duty to alcopops.

Under the laws relating to tariff proposals the Government has continued to be able to collect the higher rate of duty on alcopops that has applied since 27 April 2008. This is because officers are protected from commencement of legal proceedings for anything done by them for the protection of the revenue in relation to tariff proposals. In this case, such protection applies until the last moment of 13 May 2009.
Once such statutory protection expires, the additional revenue raised from the higher duty rate on alcopops will need to be refunded to payers of the duty. However, such action is not required where validation bills are passed by the Parliament before protection expires.

Question agreed to.

**Second Reading**

Senator STEPHENS (New South Wales—Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and Parliamentary Secretary for the Voluntary Sector) (6.23 pm)—I move:

That these bills be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading speeches incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The speeches read as follows—

**EXCISE TARIFF VALIDATION BILL 2009**

The Bill I am introducing today, known as the Excise Tariff Validation Bill 2009, will ensure that all duties of excise demanded or collected before 14 May 2009 because of Excise Tariff Proposal (No. 1) 2008 are taken to have been lawfully imposed and lawfully demanded or collected.

This Bill will ensure that revenue collected under the alcopops measure will not be returned as a windfall gain to alcopop producers. It will be retained by the Government to assist in the implementation of our programs to address binge drinking.

A complementary bill, the Customs Tariff Validation Bill 2009, will also be introduced so that all excise equivalent customs duties demanded or collected under the Customs Tariff Proposal (No. 1) 2008 are also taken to be lawfully imposed and lawfully demanded or collected.

This will ensure equivalent treatment for domestically manufactured and imported alcopops.

So let’s be clear—these two bills stop the alcopops revenue collected thus far from going directly to the coffers of the alcopops distillers, or importers.

In addition, the Government will take two further actions.

Firstly, the Government will introduce further Excise and Customs Tariff Proposals, with effect from 14 May 2009, to ensure that revenue is collected for all spirits at the same rate whether they are consumed as alcopops or full strength spirits, for the next 12 months.

In other words, we will make sure the alcopops measure does not cease today.

Second, the Government will in this session of Parliament reintroduce the same bills rejected by the Senate earlier this year to legislate the higher rate for alcopops, and in doing so ensure the new rate continues into the future.

That is, we will lock in the higher excise for alcopops into the future.

For the benefit of the Senate, it is worth recapitulating how we arrived at this point.

Following Gazette notices on 26 April 2008, the Excise Tariff Proposal (No.1) 2008 and Customs Tariff Proposal (No.1) 2008 were tabled on 13 May 2008 to increase the rate of duty applying to ‘other excisable beverages not exceeding 10 per cent by volume of alcohol’ from $39.36 to $66.67 per litre of alcohol content on and from 27 April 2008. These Tariff Proposals also allowed the Australian Taxation Office and Australian Customs and Border Protection Service to collect the higher rate of duty on alcopops from 27 April 2008.

However, on 18 March 2009, the Senate chose not to support the bills that would have locked in a higher rate of duty for alcopops.

Under the laws relating to Tariff Proposals, the Australian Taxation Office and Australian Customs and Border Protection Service have continued to collect the higher rate of duty on alcopops that has applied since 27 April 2008. This statutory protection expires at midnight Wednesday night.

Once the statutory protection expires, the additional revenue raised from the higher duty rate on alcopops would need to be refunded to alcopops producers or importers.

With the Senate voting down the Government’s attempts to confirm in legislation the increase in the rate applying to alcopops, the introduction and passage of these Validation Bills is considered by
The Government to be a necessary measure to protect the collection of duties permitted by the Tariff Proposals.

I’ll say it again in plain English for the benefit of members opposite — these Bills are to stop the revenue collected so far from going to the distillers or importers.

Since the announcement of the original alcopops measure on 26 April 2008, the Government has collected approximately $424 million in revenue. That’s a $424 million jackpot for the distillers.

We are absolutely committed to pursuing this initiative.

Our commitment to acting to tackle binge drinking has not wavered.

Soon after coming to office the Rudd Government recognised that binge drinking was increasingly becoming a significant health and social issue.

Barely a day goes by without horrible stories of the ill effect of binge drinking in Australia.

One only needs to visit any hospital emergency department on a Saturday night to see the direct, ugly reality of binge drinking.

Let’s not forget a few facts.

The industry itself admits its sales of alcopops grew by 250 per cent since 2000 when the Liberals opened an alcopops loophole by reducing their tariff so that it was lower than other spirits.

Between 2000 and 2004, the percentage of female drinkers aged 15-17 who had consumed alcopops at their last drinking occasion increased from 14 per cent to 62 per cent.

For females drinking at risky and high risk levels in 2004, 78 per cent drank alcopops on their last drinking occasion. That figure has increased threefold since 2000.

In any given week, approximately one in ten 12 to 17 year olds are binge-drinking or drinking at risky levels.

Almost 20,000 girls aged 12-15 drink daily or weekly.

In some jurisdictions the number of young women aged 18-24 being admitted to hospitals because of alcohol has doubled in eight years.

In a year, more than three-quarters of a million Australians are physically abused by persons under the influence of alcohol.

The social cost of alcohol misuse in Australia was estimated to be about $15 billion in 2004-05.

Health experts and police from across Australia agree that action needs to be taken. They know that achieving cultural change does not happen overnight, and that intervention needs to take many forms and many fronts.

This is a long-term issue and which requires sustained long term action.

Experts agree that to effectively tackle binge drinking, we need to have a multi-pronged, and prolonged strategy.

And so, the Rudd Government decided to act — something the previous government never took much interest in.

As a first step, in March 2008 the Prime Minister and the Minister for Health and Ageing announced the National Binge Drinking Strategy. This involved investing $53.5 million to address binge drinking among young people. Elements of the package include:

- Investing $14.4 million in community level initiatives to confront the culture of binge drinking, particularly in sporting organisations. Six major sporting codes have now signed up to a code of conduct.
- Committing $19.1 million to intervene earlier to assist young people and ensure that they assume personal responsibility for their binge drinking; and
- Funding of $20 million for advertising that confronts young people with the costs and consequences of binge drinking via the gritty and hard hitting Don’t Turn a Night Out into a Nightmare campaign.

By tackling the issue on many fronts we aim to make inroads into behaviour particularly among young Australians. This strategy remains in place and has been made stronger by additional Government intervention.

We believe that the Liberals’ alcopops tax break has played a special role in drinking culture, especially amongst young women.
Alcopops are brazenly targeted directly at young people and underage drinkers. By using bright colours and sweet flavours, alcopops can very effectively fool young people about how much they’re drinking by disguising the taste of alcohol.

Effectively, alcopops are alcohol-laced lolly water targeted to young people, and young women in particular who might not otherwise drink as much, or at all, if the taste of alcohol was more obvious as it would be unpleasant to their young palates.

They are basically designed to undermine any notion of responsible drinking.

I’ve heard of alcopops referred to as cocktails on training wheels.

So following on from the Binge Drinking Strategy, the Government introduced a measure to close the alcopops loophole by again equalising the alcopops tariff with other spirits.

And it worked. The amount of alcopops being drunk has plummeted.

The measure has seen a 35 per cent fall in excise and equivalent customs duty clearances of alcopops between May 2008 and March 2009 when compared to the same period the previous year.

Now the distillers and their puppets in the Liberal Party argue that the decline in consumption of alcopops has been offset by substitution to full strength spirits.

It hasn’t. While there has been some substitution to full strength spirits—partly driven by the marketing strategies of alcopop sellers—overall there has been a fall in total spirits excise and equivalent customs duty clearances of around eight per cent.

The Liberals’ and distillers’ argument does not stand up on the facts.

The measure has worked—I repeat—an eight per cent decline in total spirits excise and equivalent customs duty clearances.

The distillers and their stooges opposite simply can’t argue otherwise.

Distillers are driven purely by making a buck from selling a drink, not by some newfound concern for our children’s health.

Their bottom line, quite literally, is to sell more product.

Only someone who came down in the last shower, or who has ulterior motives, would argue otherwise.

The reality is that on average, young people, who are very sensitive to price, are consuming less alcopops and less spirits, which while resulting in social good, is bad for profits.

There have been a range of other self-serving reports and surveys commissioned in desperation by the distillers, but the fact of the matter is this: fewer alcopops in particular and spirits in general are being consumed as a result of this measure, and they will go to any lengths to stop this.

I referred earlier to the need for a comprehensive package of measures, and that more action is in the pipeline, and I’d like to briefly outline some of these now.

At COAG last year the Rudd Government announced the single largest investment ever made by any Australian Government in preventative health, to support a range of programs and interventions to reduce the impact of chronic illness on the community - $872 million worth. Part of this will be directed to reducing the ill-effects of alcohol abuse, along with the harm caused by tobacco, obesity and other chronic illness.

All of this is new money and is partly supported by the revenue from closing the alcopops loophole.

And importantly, the Government has established the Preventative Health Taskforce chaired by Professor Rob Moodie. The Taskforce will focus on the priority areas of alcohol, tobacco and obesity, and I expect its report in the coming months. I know that the Taskforce’s report will have strong recommendations based on evidence on further action to reduce the effects of binge drinking, and I look forward very much to receiving them.

So the point I have demonstrated is that this is not a stand alone answer to binge drinking, and was never meant to be, as the Liberals have so disingenuously claimed.

The alcopops measure is just one part—an important part—of the Government’s comprehensive approach to tackling binge-drinking.
It is not the first initiative we have taken.
Nor will it be the last.
We will continue to engage in a conversation with the Australian community on how best to address the scourge of binge drinking.
It is now also time for the Liberal Party to show their hand … and choose a side.
Full details of the Excise Tariff Validation Bill 2009 are contained in the Explanatory Memorandum.
I commend the bill to the Senate.

CUSTOMS TARIFF VALIDATION BILL 2009

The Customs Tariff Validation Bill I am now introducing will ensure that all excise equivalent customs duties demanded or collected before 14 May 2009 because of Customs Tariff Proposal (No.1) 2008 are taken to have been lawfully imposed and lawfully demanded or collected.
This Bill is cognate with amendments contained in the Excise Tariff Validation Bill and ensures equivalent treatment for domestically manufactured and imported alcopops.
Validation of the collection of excise equivalent customs duties, before 14 May 2009, under the Government’s alcopop measures will mean that importers of these products will not receive a windfall gain and that the Government will continue to deliver its current programmes tackling binge drinking.
Full details of the Customs Tariff Validation Bill 2009 are contained in the joint Explanatory Memorandum for the Customs and Excise Tariff Validation Bills.
I commend the bill to the Senate.

Debate (on motion by Senator Stephens) adjourned.

FEDERAL FINANCIAL RELATIONS BILL 2009
FEDERAL FINANCIAL RELATIONS (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS) BILL 2009
TAX AGENT SERVICES BILL 2009
TAX LAWS AMENDMENT (2008 MEASURES No. 6) BILL 2009
TAX LAWS AMENDMENT (TAXATION OF FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS) BILL 2009
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AMENDMENT (INTEGRATED PUBLIC NUMBER DATABASE) BILL 2009
AUSTRALIAN ENERGY MARKET AMENDMENT (AEMO AND OTHER MEASURES) BILL 2009
DEFENCE LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 2009
CIVIL AVIATION AMENDMENT BILL 2009
TRANSPORT SAFETY INVESTIGATION AMENDMENT BILL 2009
APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 3) 2008-2009
APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 4) 2008-2009
APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 5) 2008-2009
APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 6) 2008-2009
SOCIAL SECURITY AMENDMENT (LIQUID ASSETS WAITING PERIOD) BILL 2009
AVIATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (2008 MEASURES No. 2) BILL 2009
TAX LAWS AMENDMENT (2009 MEASURES No. 1) BILL 2009
Assent

Messages from Her Excellency the Administrator of the Commonwealth of Australia were reported informing the Senate of assent to the bills.
FAIR WORK BILL 2009

Assent

Message from the Governor-General reported informing the Senate of assent to the bill.

COMMITTEES

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

Report

Senator O'BRIEN (Tasmania) (6.24 pm)—Pursuant to order and at the request of the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Senator Crossin, I present the committee’s reports on the provisions of the Evidence Amendment (Journalists' Privilege) Bill 2009 and the Law and Justice (Cross Border and Other Amendments) Bill 2009, together with the Hansard records of proceedings and documents presented to the committee.

Ordered that the reports be printed.

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

Extension of Time

Senator O'BRIEN (Tasmania) (6.26 pm)—by leave—At the request of the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Senator Crossin, I move:

That the time for the presentation of the report of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee on the provisions of the Native Title Amendment Bill 2009 be extended to 13 May 2009.

Question agreed to.

AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP BILL 2009

AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENT) BILL 2009

Second Reading

Debate resumed.

Senator HURLEY (South Australia) (6.25 pm)—In considering the Australian Business Investment Partnership Bill 2009, I think the crucial question is: why do we need to establish ABIP? The global recession has resulted in a concern that foreign banks may want to concentrate their lending on their home markets. Many in Europe and in the United States are under pressure, and that may lead to a withdrawal of funding from the Australian commercial property projects, even when they are still commercially viable.

The Senate Economics Committee, during its inquiry into the ABIP bills, heard evidence that an increasing number of foreign banks may be less willing to refinance existing syndicated debts. This was called into question by some coalition and Independent members of the committee, but I think that anyone who has been out there talking to business, ranging from small business to large business, has found that they are very concerned about the ability to roll over borrowed funds. Anyone who does not believe that is the case is not out there talking to business.

The National Australia Bank estimated that over $70 billion of commercial property debt would require refinance in the next two years—that is, within the next two years when this bill is proposed to be operating. Of that $70 billion, $50 billion is syndicated debt, which is precisely the target of this legislation. The Property Council of Australia noted that $30 billion, or 18 per cent of Aus-
Australia’s commercial property debt, is provided by foreign banks—a significant and important percentage. Furthermore, a survey of the Property Council’s members indicated that there was already evidence that some foreign banks were withdrawing from our market. Should such a market failure occur—or, indeed, continue to occur—it would lead to unnecessary economic disruption and job losses if local banks were unable to fill the gap.

In respect of economic disruption, Treasury evidence noted that a withdrawal financed from otherwise viable commercial property assets may force businesses to sell assets in a distressed sale, particularly if there is a sequence of such distressed sales. That would result in a fall in prices below underlying value. This is a very real concern. If these distressed or fire sales occur, it could artificially depress the commercial property prices more generally—that is, beyond the major syndicated commercial property that we are looking at with these bills—and that would further dampen economic activity.

One industry participant argued that, without ABIP to transition the commercial property sector through these liquidity problems, we will go back to the very boom-and-bust economies that economic policy is trying to smooth out. That is precisely the issue here. The government is trying to take anticipatory measures so that we will not get those boom-and-bust cycles that will exacerbate the economic problems that we are seeing at the moment. The participant also argued that it would create an inflationary pressure that could be avoided by a sensible transitional approach. ABIP is designed not to interfere with natural market outcomes or to hold up prices but to protect against undue and distorting overcorrection of the market. There is no doubt that the Australian market has seen this before. Property markets can go well below the underlying asset values, and that is what the government is trying to avoid.

Debate interrupted.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 8.00 pm

BUDGET

Statement and Documents

Senator SHERRY (Tasmania—Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law)

(8.00 pm)—I table the following documents:

The Budget 2009-10—Statement by the Treasurer (Mr Swan), dated 12 May 2009.

Budget papers—

No. 1—Budget strategy and outlook 2009-10.

No. 2—Budget measures 2009-10.

No. 3—Australia’s federal relations 2009-10.

No. 4—Agency resourcing 2009-10.

Ministerial statements—

Australia’s international development assistance program: A good international citizen—Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Smith) and the Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance (Mr McMullan), dated 12 May 2009.

Climate change—Statement by the Minister for Climate Change and Water (Senator Wong) and the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts (Mr Garrett) and the Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism (Mr Ferguson) and the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (Ms Macklin), dated 12 May 2009.


Jobs, Productivity and Fairness—A foundation for recovery—Statement by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Rela-
tions and Minister for Social Inclusion (Ms Gillard), dated 12 May 2009.

Building our rural communities—Statement by the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (Mr Albanese) and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Mr Burke) and the Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism (Mr Ferguson) and the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Northern Australia (Mr Gray), dated 12 May 2009.

I seek leave to move a motion in relation to the budget statement and documents.

Leave granted.

Senator SHERRY—I move:

That the Senate take note of the statement and documents.

Debate (on motion by Senator Sherry) adjourned.

Portfolio Budget Statements

The PRESIDENT (8.01 pm)—I table the portfolio budget statements for 2009-10 for the Department of the Senate and the Department of Parliamentary Services. Copies are available from the Senate Table Office.

Senator SHERRY (Tasmania—Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law) (8.01 pm)—I table portfolio budget statements for 2009-10 for portfolio and executive departments in accordance with the list circulated in the chamber. Copies are available from the Senate Table Office.

The list read as follows—

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.
Attorney-General’s portfolio.
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio.
Defence portfolio.
Department of Climate Change.
Department of Veterans’ Affairs.
Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio.
Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts portfolio.
Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio.
Finance and Deregulation portfolio.
Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio.
Health and Ageing portfolio.
Human Services portfolio.
Immigration and Citizenship portfolio.
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government portfolio.
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research portfolio.
Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio.
Resources, Energy and Tourism portfolio.
Treasury portfolio.

Senate adjourned at 8.02 pm
The following government documents were tabled:

Australian Communications and Media Authority—National relay service provider performance—Report for 2007-08.


Department of Immigration and Citizenship—Access and equity in government services—Report for 2006-08.


The following documents were tabled by the Clerk:

Aged Care (Residential care subsidy—amount of concessional resident supplement) Determination 2009 (No. 1)—ACA Ch. 3 No. 3/2009 [F2009L01160]*.

Aged Care (Residential care subsidy—amount of pensioner supplement) Determination 2009 (No. 1)—ACA Ch. 3 No. 7/2009 [F2009L01151]*.

Aged Care (Residential care subsidy—amount of respite supplement) Determination 2009 (No. 1)—ACA Ch. 3 No. 4/2009 [F2009L01165]*.

Aged Care (Residential care subsidy—amount of transitional accommodation supplement) Determination 2009 (No. 1)—ACA Ch. 3 No. 5/2009 [F2009L01166]*.

Aged Care (Residential care subsidy—amount of transitional supplement) Determination 2009 (No. 1)—ACA Ch. 3 No. 6/2009 [F2009L01150]*.

User Rights Amendment Principles 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01152]*.

Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act—Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Rules Amendment Instruments 2009—(No. 1) [F2009L01136]*.

(No. 2) [F2009L01198]*.


Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2007-2008—Determination to Reduce Appropriations Upon Request—(No. 21 of 2008-2009) [F2009L01473]*.
(No. 23 of 2008-2009) [F2009L01648]*.

Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2008-2009—
Determination to Reduce Appropriations
Upon Request (No. 18 of 2008-2009)
[F2009L01098]*.

Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2008-2009—
Determination to Reduce Appropriations
Upon Request—
(No. 19 of 2008-2009)
[F2009L01099]*.
(No. 20 of 2008-2009)
[F2009L01245]*.
(No. 22 of 2008-2009)
[F2009L01647]*.

Auslink (National Land Transport) Act—
Determination of the Auslink Roads to
Recovery List—Instrument No. 2009/1
[F2009L01192]*.

Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry
Act—Australian Meat and Live-stock In-
dustry (High Quality Beef Export to the
European Union) Order 2009
[F2009L00671]*.

Australian Prudential Regulation Authority
Act—Australian Prudential Regulation Au-
thority (Confidentiality) Determination
Nos—
4 of 2009—Information provided by lo-
cally-incorporated banks and foreign
ADIs under Reporting Standard ARS
320.0 [F2009L01171]*.
5 of 2009—Information provided by lo-
cally-incorporated banks and foreign
ADIs under Reporting Standard ARS
320.0 [F2009L01454]*.

Australian Research Council Act—
Approval of Proposals—Determinations
Nos—
64—Linkage International Social
Sciences Collaboration commencing in
2009.
65—Linkage Learned Academies
Special Projects commencing in 2009.

Australian Research Council Linkage
Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities
(LIEF) Funding Rules for funding
commencing in 2010 [F2009L01455]*.

Broadcasting Services Act—
Broadcasting Services (Amalagamated
Remote Television Licence Areas –
Remote Central and Eastern Australia
TV1 and Mt Isa TV1) Determination
2009 [F2009L01239]*.

Broadcasting Services (Amalagamated
Remote Television Licence Areas –
Remote Central and Eastern Australia
TV1 and Remote Central and Eastern
Australia TV2) Determination 2009
[F2009L01237]*.

Broadcasting Services (Technical Plan-
ing) Amendment Guidelines 2009 (No.
1) [F2009L01623]*.

Charter of the United Nations Act—Select
Legislative Instrument 2009 No. 59—
Charter of the United Nations (Sanctions
— Iran) Amendment Regulations 2009
(No. 1) [F2009L01298]*.

Child Support (Registration and Collec-
tion) Act—SSAT Child Support Review
Directions 2009 [F2009L01300]*.

Christmas Island Act—Christmas Island
Space Centre (APSC Proposal) Repeal
Ordinance 2009 [F2009L01469]*.

Civil Aviation Act—
Civil Aviation Regulations—
Civil Aviation Order 40.0 Amend-
ment Order (No. 1) 2009
[F2009L01234]*.

Instruments Nos CASA—
142/09—Direction – parallel
runway operations at Sydney
(Kingsford Smith) Airport
[F2009L01216]*.
145/09—Direction – number of
cabin attendants [F2009L01187]*.
146/09—Permission and direction – helicopter special operations [F2009L01246]*.

150/09—Instructions – use of RNAV (GNSS) approaches by RNP-capable aircraft [F2009L01223]*.

157/09—Permission and direction – helicopter special operations [F2009L01244]*.

EX21/09—Amendment of instrument CASA EX15/09 [F2009L00982]*.

EX22/09—Exemption – recency flying at night by holders of night V.F.R. agricultural ratings [F2009L00827]*.

EX24/09—Exemption – training and checking organisation, flight check system [F2009L00990]*.


EX29/09—Exemption – operations by RAA aircraft in Avalon aerodrome temporary restricted area [F2009L01199]*.

EX30/09—Exemption – maximum take-off weight requirements in flight manuals or other documents (agricultural or restricted category aircraft) [F2009L01193]*.

EX32/09—Exemption – from standard take-off and landing minima [F2009L01389]*.

Civil Aviation Safety Regulations—Airworthiness Directives—Part—

105—

AD/A320/231—Flap Track No. 1 Pendulum Assembly [F2009L00898]*.

AD/A330/86 Amdt 3—MLG Bogie Beam [F2009L01075]*.

AD/A330/92 Amdt 1—Passenger Compartment Electrical Harness [F2009L01577]*.

AD/A330/100—Fire Extinguishing System – Replacement/Modification [F2009L01576]*.

AD/AB139/8—Generator Control Unit [F2009L01575]*.

AD/AS 355/60 Amdt 4—Tail Rotor Blade Trailing Edge [F2009L01009]*.

AD/AT/4—Rudder Hinges – Inspection [F2009L01499]*.

AD/AT/7—Horizontal Stabiliser Eyebolts [F2009L01498]*.

AD/AT/8 Amdt 1—Aileron Control – Push-Pull Rods [F2009L01573]*.

AD/AT/10—Aircraft Wiring [F2009L01572]*.

AD/B-2/6—Overrunning Clutch – Modification and Cockpit Placard Amendment [F2009L01571]*.

AD/B727/217—Fuel Tank Safety [F2009L01570]*.

AD/B737/354—Fwd Cargo Compartment Frames and Frame Reinforcements [F2009L01497]*.

AD/B747/314 Amdt 1—Aft Pressure Bulkhead Web [F2009L01496]*.

AD/B747/380 Amdt 2—External Skin Doublers [F2009L01495]*.

AD/B747/390—Section 42 Fuselage Skin at Frame Shear Tie End Fasteners [F2009L01494]*.
AD/B747/391—Refuel Valve Control Unit [F2009L01569]*.

AD/B767/163 Amdt 1—Door Emergency Escape System [F2009L01493]*.

AD/BaE 146/107 Amdt 3—Forward Fuselage Skin [F2009L01492]*.

AD/BaE 146/133 Amdt 1—Airworthiness Limitations [F2009L00897]*.

AD/BaE 146/138—Frame 29 Wing-to-Fuselage Lug Plate Attachment [F2009L01491]*.

AD/BEL 205/6—Cyclic Control Supports – Inspection [F2009L01015]*.

AD/BEL 205/22—Transmission Oil System – Inspection [F2009L01014]*.

AD/BEL 205/35 Amdt 1—Swashplate Support Assembly – Retirement Life [F2009L01013]*.

AD/BEL 205/53—Main Rotor Pillow Block [F2009L01012]*.

AD/BEL 205/55—Pitch Change Link Universal [F2009L01011]*.

AD/BEL 206/177—Main Rotor – Pitch Horn Trunnion Bearing [F2009L01179]*.

AD/BEL 212/27—Internal Rescue Hoist Assembly – Modification [F2009L01008]*.

AD/BEL 212/16—Cyclic SCAS Stops Installation – Modification [F2009L01007]*.

AD/BEL 212/19 Amdt 1—External Cargo Suspension Kit – Load Restriction and Modification [F2009L01006]*.


AD/BEL 212/30—Engine Mount Fireshield – Installation [F2009L00965]*.

AD/BEL 212/33—Main Rotor Grip/Blade Bolt – Inspection and Rework [F2009L01004]*.

AD/BEL 212/37—Main Rotor Pillow Block [F2009L00972]*.

AD/BEL 212/38—Engine Fuel Valve Electrical Connectors P/NO MS3456W14S-5S [F2009L00971]*.

AD/BEL 212/39—Engine Fuel Switch [F2009L00970]*.

AD/BEL 212/41—Pitch Change Link Universal [F2009L00969]*.

AD/BEL 212/42—Main Rotor Tension Torsion Straps [F2009L01003]*.

AD/BEL 212/43—Bogus Pressure Gauge Emergency Floats P/N 212-073-905-1 [F2009L00964]*.

AD/BEL 212/44—Swashplate Outer Ring [F2009L00968]*.
AD/BELL 212/48—
Tension Torsion Straps Retention Pins [F2009L00896]*.
AD/BELL 407/33—
Tailboom Assembly [F2009L01180]*.
AD/BELL 407/34—
Hydraulic Pump – Drive-shaft Assembly [F2009L01568]*.
AD/BELL 407/35—Gas Producer RPM [F2009L01567]*.
AD/BELL 407/36—Anti-Drive Link Assembly [F2009L01644]*.
AD/BELL 412/57—Main Rotor Yoke [F2009L01125]*.
AD/BELL 427/9—
Hydraulic Pump – Drive-shaft Assembly [F2009L01566]*.
AD/BELL 427/10—Anti-drive Link Assembly [F2009L01645]*.
AD/CAP 10/13 Amdt 1—
Flight Controls Tie Rod Bolts [F2009L00894]*.
AD/CERES/1 Amdt 1—
Aileron Outboard Mass Balance Weight Attachments – Modification [F2009L00893]*.
AD/CERES/2 Amdt 1—
Propeller Counterweights – Modification [F2009L00963]*.
AD/CERES/3 Amdt 1—
Fuel Tank Vent – Modification [F2009L00962]*.
AD/CERES/4 Amdt 1—
Mixture Control Lever Quadrant – Modification [F2009L00961]*.
AD/CERES/5 Amdt 1—
Pilots Safety Harness Inertia Reel – Installation [F2009L00892]*.
AD/CERES/7 Amdt 1—
Turnover Truss – Modification [F2009L00891]*.
AD/CESSNA 208/25—
Aileron Upper Quadrant Carry-Through Cable Attachment [F2009L01490]*.
AD/CHA/2 Amdt 3—
Circuit Protector [F2009L01563]*.
AD/CHA/4—Fuel Lines in Engine Compartment [F2009L01562]*.
AD/CHA/6—Throttle Arm and Knob [F2009L01561]*.
AD/CHA/7—Elevator and Rudder Control Systems [F2009L01560]*.
AD/CHA/8—Front Wing Strut [F2009L01489]*.
AD/CHA/19—Flap Stage Advisory Plate [F2009L01559]*.
AD/DHC-1/39—Flap Operating System Latch Plate [F2009L01002]*.
AD/DHC-8/145—Wing Fuel Tank Skin between Yw171 and Yw261 [F2009L00890]*.
AD/DO 228/16—Main Landing Gear Stub Axle [F2009L01124]*.
AD/DO 228/17—Engine Controls – Throttle Box Assembly [F2009L01558]*.
AD/DO 328/72—Elevator, Rudder and Aileron Trim Tab Assemblies [F2009L01484]*.
AD/EC 135/17 Amdt 1—Main Gearbox Oil Sampling & Analysis [F2009L01643]*.
AD/EC 135/21 Amdt 1—Rear Structure/Tail Boom [F2009L01195]*.
AD/EC 135/22—External Mounted Hoist System [F2009L01458]*.
AD/EC 225/4 Amdt 1—Main Rotor Hub Dome Fairing Attachment Screws [F2009L00889]*.
AD/EC 225/6 Amdt 1—Main Rotor Hub Coning Stop Supports [F2009L00888]*.
AD/EC 225/11—Main Gear Box Epicyclic Reduction Gear Module [F2009L01332]*.
AD/EC 225/11 (Cancelled)—Main Gear Box Epicyclic Reduction Gear Module [F2009L01611]*.
AD/EC 225/12 Amdt 1—Main Rotor Drive–Epicyclic Reduction Gear Module [F2009L01609]*.
AD/EC 225/12—Main Rotor Drive – Epicyclic Reduction Gear Module [F2009L01457]*.
AD/ECUREUIL/133 Amdt 1—Collective Pitch Lever Locking Stud [F2009L01557]*.
AD/ECUREUIL/135—Time Limits/Maintenance Checks [F2009L00959]*.
AD/EMERAUDE/1—Anti Spin Strakes – Installation [F2009L00887]*.
AD/ERJ-170/16 Amdt 1—FADEC Software Load V5.40 [F2009L01556]*.
AD/ERJ-170/21—Outboard Slat Skew Sensor [F2009L00886]*.
AD/ERJ-170/22—FADEC Software [F2009L01555]*.
AD/ERJ-190/20—Outboard Slat Skew Sensor [F2009L01554]*.
AD/F50/98 Amdt 1—MLG Sliding Member End-stop [F2009L00884]*.
AD/F50/100—Flap Mechanical Drive [F2009L01483]*.
AD/F50/101—Engine Controls – Automatic Flight-Idle Stop Control Unit [F2009L01552]*.
AD/F100/85 Amdt 1—Flight Controls – Elevator Booster Control Unit [F2009L01500]*.
AD/F100/94—Passenger Door Actuator Attachment [F2009L00885]*.
AD/F2000/33 Amdt 1—Main Landing Gear – Shock Absorber Restrictor [F2009L01553]*.
AD/FFU24/19—Engine Mounts and Firewalls [F2009L01482]*.
AD/FFU24/37—Elevator Horn Assembly – Inspection [F2009L01481]*.
AD/FFU24/39—Cleveland Wheel and Brake Assembly – Inspection [F2009L01551]*.
AD/FFU24/42—Installation of No Step Placard [F2009L01550]*.
AD/FFU24/47—Cockpit Bulkhead – Modification [F2009L01480]*.

CHAMBER
AD/FU24/54—L.H. Rudder Pedal – Inspection [F2009L01549]*.
AD/FU24/55—Oil Pressure Gauge Line – Fitment of Restrictor [F2009L01548]*.
AD/FU24/57—Shoulder Harness Inertia Reel Installation Tension Clip P/N 08-16037-3 – Inspection [F2009L01399]*.
AD/FU24/59—Rudder Torque Tube to Rudder Attachment – Inspection [F2009L01397]*.
AD/FU24/61—Main Landing Gear Torque Link Brackets – Inspection/Replacement [F2009L01396]*.
AD/GBK 117/23—Time Limits/Maintenance Checks – Airworthiness Limitations [F2009L01235]*.
AD/HU 269/11 Amdt 3—Main Rotor Blade – Inspection [F2009L01395]*.
AD/HU 269/26 Amdt 16—Retirement Life – Critical Components [F2009L01396]*.
AD/HU 269/32 Amdt 1—Tail Rotor Gearbox – Inspection and/or Replacement [F2009L01547]*.
AD/HU 269/33—Main Rotor Mast – Inspection for Internal Corrosion [F2009L01390]*.
AD/HU 269/35 Amdt 1—Main Rotor Drive Shaft – Inspection for Corrosion [F2009L01546]*.
AD/HU 269/40—Main Rotor Hub and Shaft Assemblies P/Nos 269A5305 and 269A5305-9 – Inspection [F2009L01545]*.
AD/HU 269/41—Main Rotor Thrust Bearing P/N 269A5050-73 – Inspection for Runout [F2009L01544]*.
AD/HU 269/44—Tail Rotor Control Stop – Inspection [F2009L01543]*.
AD/HU 269/47—Main Rotor Blade Root Fitting Bolts – Main Rotor Blade Damper Bolts – Inspection [F2009L01542]*.
AD/HU 269/49—Engine Cooling Impeller – Bolt Inspection [F2009L01541]*.
AD/HU 269/50 Amdt 1—Main Rotor Mast and Tailboom Supports – Inspection and Modification [F2009L01387]*.
AD/HU 269/59—Cockpit Placard – Removal [F2009L01540]*.
AD/HU 269/64 Amdt 1—Tail Rotor Assembly – Component Replacement, Inspection and Revised Assembly Procedures [F2009L01539]*.
AD/HU 269/66—Tail Rotor Swashplate Bearing Locknut – Increase in Torque [F2009L01538]*.
AD/HU 269/69—Alternator Circuit Protection – Modification [F2009L01537]*.
AD/HU 269/70—Main Rotor Thrust Bearing P/N 269A5050-73 – Inspection [F2009L01536]*.
AD/HU 269/74—Belt Drive Pulley H-Frame Tie
Bar Bracket – Inspection [F2009L01386]*.
AD/HU 269/76—Main Rotor Damper Pitch Bearing Case – Inspection and Modification [F2009L01535]*.
AD/HU 269/77—Inertia Reel Shoulder Harness – Inspection [F2009L01385]*.
AD/HU 269/78—Tail Rotor Pitch Control Link Assembly [F2009L01534]*.
AD/HU 269/79 Amdt 1—Main Rotor Drive Shaft [F2009L01533]*.
AD/HU 269/80—Throttle and Governor Control Cable Assemblies [F2009L01532]*.
AD/HU 269/81—Main Transmission Assembly [F2009L01531]*.
AD/HU 269/84—Thrust Bearing Tube [F2009L01530]*.
AD/HU 269/86—Belt Drive Upper Pulley Assembly [F2009L01529]*.
AD/HU 269/87—Tail Rotor Attachment Area [F2009L01528]*.
AD/HU 269/88—Collective Pitch Mixer Bellcrank [F2009L01383]*.
AD/HU 269/89—Droop Stop Nut [F2009L01527]*.
AD/HU 269/91—Main Transmission Pinion Assembly [F2009L01526]*.
AD/HU 269/93—Tail Rotor Blade Spar [F2009L01382]*.
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27 of 2009—Amendment determination – prescription of pharmaceutical benefits by authorised optometrists [F2009L01118]*.
28 of 2009—Determination – drugs on F1 and drugs in Part A of F2 [F2009L01119]*.
29 of 2009—Amendment Special Arrangements – Botulinum Toxin Program [F2009L01221]*.
31 of 2009—Amendment declaration and determination – drugs and medicinal preparations [F2009L01248]*.
32 of 2009—Amendment determination – pharmaceutical benefits [F2009L01249]*.
33 of 2009—Amendment determination – responsible persons [F2009L01250]*.
34 of 2009—Amendment – price determinations and special patient contributions [F2009L01251]*.
35 of 2009—Amendment Special Arrangements – Highly Specialised Drugs Program [F2009L01254]*.
36 of 2009—Amendment Special Arrangements – Chemotherapy Pharmaceuticals Access Program [F2009L01255]*.
37 of 2009—Determination – drugs on F1 [F2009L01445]*.
38 of 2009—Amendment determination – conditions [F2009L01321]*.


National Residue Survey (Excise) Levy Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2009 No. 50—Primary Industries Levies and Charges (National Residue Survey Levies) Amendment Regulations 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01168]*.

Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act—
Northern Territory National Emergency Response (Community Stores – Maryvale Station Store) Instrument 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01487]*.
Northern Territory National Emergency Response (Other Areas – Daly River Region) Declaration 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01232]*.

Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act—Exemptions Nos—
OZO8912205—Virgin Blue International Airlines Pty Ltd, dated 10 February 2009.

Primary Industries (Excise) Levies Act—
Select Legislative Instrument 2009 No. 49—Primary Industries (Excise) Levies Amendment Regulations 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01170]*.

Privacy Act—Approval to vary the Queensland Club Industry Privacy Code [F2009L01488]*.

Private Health Insurance Act—
Private Health Insurance (Benefit Requirements) Amendment Rules 2009 (No. 2) [F2009L01140]*.

Private Health Insurance (Complying Product) Amendment Rules 2009 (No. 2) [F2009L01141]*.

Public Lending Right Act—Public Lending Right Scheme 1997 (Modification No. 1 of 2009) [F2009L01333]*.

Quarantine Act—Quarantine Amendment Proclamations 2009—
(No. 1) [F2009L01619]*.
(No. 2) [F2009L01624]*.

Remuneration Tribunal Act—Determinations—
2009/03: Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Public Office [F2009L01174]*.
2009/04: Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Public Office; and Members of Parliament — Entitlements and Office Holders Additional Salary [F2009L01579]*.


Social Security Act—
Social Security (Deeming Threshold Rates) (DEEWWR) Determinations 2009—
(No. 1) [F2009L01167]*.
(No. 2) [F2009L01139]*.
Social Security (Waiver of Waiting Period for Advance Payment of Entitlement) Determination 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01186]*.
Social Security (Administration) Act—
Social Security (Administration) (Declared relevant Northern Territory areas — Various) Determination 2009 (No. 3) [F2009L01228]*.
Social Security (Administration) (Declared relevant Northern Territory areas — Various) Determination 2009 (No. 4) [F2009L01630]*.
Social Security (Administration) (Declared voluntary income management areas — Western Australia) Determination 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01631]*.

Social Security (International Agreements) Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2009 No. 58—Social Security (International Agreements) Act 1999 Amendment Regulations 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01256]*.

Superannuation Act 1976—
Superannuation (CSS) Approved Authority Amendment Declaration 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01162]*.
Superannuation (CSS) (Eligible Employees — Exclusion) Amendment Declaration 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01164]*.
Superannuation (CSS) (Eligible Employees — Inclusion) Amendment Declaration 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01158]*.

Superannuation Act 1990—
Superannuation (PSS) Approved Authority Inclusion Amendment Declaration 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01163]*.
Superannuation (PSS) Membership Inclusion Amendment Declaration 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01161]*.

Superannuation Act 2005—
Superannuation (PSSAP) Approved Authority Exclusion Amendment Declaration 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01154]*.
Superannuation (PSSAP) Membership Eligibility (Inclusion) Amendment Declaration 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01155]*.

Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2009 No. 71—Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Amendment Regulations 2009 (No. 3) [F2009L01485]*.
Superannuation (Unclaimed Money and Lost Members) Act—Temporary Residents’ Superannuation Measure – Scheduled Statement Days 2009 year and onwards [F2009L01210]*.

Sydney Airport Curfew Act—Dispensation Report 03/09.

Sydney Airport Demand Management Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2009 No. 69—Sydney Airport Demand Management Amendment Regulations 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01621]*.

Taxation Administration Act—PAYG withholding—Occasional payroll donations to deductible gift recipients [F2009L01143]*.

Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act—
Telecommunication (Interception and Access) (Communications Access Coordinator) Specification 2009 [F2009L01172]*.

Therapeutic Goods Act—
Poisons Standard Amendment No. 1 of 2009 [F2009L01257]*.
Select Legislative Instrument 2009 No. 63—Therapeutic Goods Amendment Regulations 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L00839]*.
Therapeutic Goods (Listing) Notice 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01384]*.

Trade Practices Act—
Consumer Protection Notices Nos—

Determination under section 152AQA—Pricing principles for the domestic Mobile Terminating Access Service [F2009L01176]*.
Select Legislative Instrument 2009 No. 66—Trade Practices (Consumer Product Safety Standard) (Reduced Fire Risk Cigarettes) Amendment Regulations 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01271]*.

Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2009 No. 65—Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Amendment Regulations 2009 (No. 1) [F2009L01291]*.

Veterans’ Entitlements Act—Statements of Principles concerning—
Bipolar Disorder No. 27 of 2009 [F2009L01594]*.
Bipolar Disorder No. 28 of 2009 [F2009L01595]*.
Bronchiectasis No. 17 of 2009 [F2009L01584]*.
Bronchiectasis No. 18 of 2009 [F2009L01585]*.
Cerebral Meningioma No. 19 of 2009 [F2009L01586]*.
Cerebral Meningioma No. 20 of 2009 [F2009L01587]*.
Cushing’s Syndrome No. 33 of 2009 [F2009L01600]*.
Cushing’s Syndrome No. 34 of 2009 [F2009L01601]*.
Electrical Injury No. 31 of 2009 [F2009L01598]*.
Electrical Injury No. 32 of 2009 [F2009L01599]*.
Epileptic Seizure No. 37 of 2009 [F2009L01604]*.
Epileptic Seizure No. 38 of 2009 [F2009L01605]*.
Fibrosing Interstitial Lung Disease No. 35 of 2009 [F2009L01602]*.
Fibrosing Interstitial Lung Disease No. 36 of 2009 [F2009L01603]*.
Frostbite No. 23 of 2009 [F2009L01590]*.
Frostbite No. 24 of 2009 [F2009L01591]*.
Immersion Foot No. 25 of 2009 [F2009L01592]*.
Immersion Foot No. 26 of 2009 [F2009L01593]*.
Macular Degeneration No. 13 of 2009 [F2009L01580]*.
Macular Degeneration No. 14 of 2009 [F2009L01581]*.
Malignant Neoplasm of the Cerebral Meninges No. 21 of 2009 [F2009L01588]*.
Malignant Neoplasm of the Cerebral Meninges No. 22 of 2009 [F2009L01589]*.
Schizophrenia No. 15 of 2009 [F2009L01582]*.
Schizophrenia No. 16 of 2009 [F2009L01583]*.
Trigeminal Neuropathy No. 29 of 2009 [F2009L01596]*.
Trigeminal Neuropathy No. 30 of 2009 [F2009L01597]*.

* Explanatory statement tabled with legislative instrument.
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions were circulated:

Prime Minister and Parliamentary Secretaries: Overseas Travel
(Question No. 578)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Prime Minister in the Senate, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:

(1) How many ministers and/or parliamentary secretaries travelled overseas during July and August 2008.

(2) (a) Which ministers and parliamentary secretaries travelled overseas; (b) where did they travel; and (c) what was the duration of this travel.

Senator Chris Evans—The Prime Minister has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
I refer the honourable senator to the information provided in answer to Senate Questions on Notice No. 687-722.

Ministerial Staffing
(Question Nos 616, 617, 618, 644 and 649)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Education, the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and the Minister for Social Inclusion and the Minister representing the Minister for Youth, upon notice, on 27 August 2008:

(1) How many departmental officers are working in the office of the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.

(2) How many of these staff are Departmental Liaison Officers.

(3) How many departmental officers, on secondment from the department, are in the office of the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary in personal staff positions?

Senator Ludwig—The Minister for Education, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, the Minister for Social Inclusion and the Minister for Youth have provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

Minister for Education, Employment & Workplace Relations and Social Inclusion

(1) 3

(2) 3

(3) 0

Minister for Employment Participation

(1) 1

(2) 1

(3) 0

Minister for Youth

(1) 1

(2) 1

(3) 0
Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector
(1) 1
(2) 1
(3) 0

Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education and Child Care
(1) 1
(2) 1
(3) 0

Ministerial Staffing
(Question No. 621)
Senator Minchin asked the Special Minister of State, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:
(1) How many departmental officers are working in the office of the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
(2) How many of these staff are Departmental Liaison Officers.
(3) How many departmental officers, on secondment from the department, are in the office of the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary in personal staff positions.
Senator Faulkner—The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:
(1) One Department of Finance and Deregulation employee works in the office of the Special Minister of State.
(2) One.
(3) None.

Ministerial Staffing
(Question Nos 622 and 623)
Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:
(1) How many departmental officers are working in the office of the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
(2) How many of these staff are Departmental Liaison Officers.
(3) How many departmental officers, on secondment from the department, are in the office of the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary in personal staff positions.
Senator Faulkner—The Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade have provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
Numbers correct as at 25 August 2008.
(1) Mr Smith’s Office: 2.
   Mr Crean’s Office: 1.
   Mr McMullan’s Office: nil.
   Mr Kerr’s Office: 1.
   Mr Murphy’s Office: nil.
(2) Mr Smith’s Office: 2.
   Mr Crean’s Office: 1.
   Mr McMullan’s Office: nil.
   Mr Kerr’s Office: 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mr Murphy’s Office:</th>
<th>nil.</th>
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<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>Mr Smith’s Office:</td>
<td>nil.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Crean’s Office:</td>
<td>nil.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr McMullan’s Office:</td>
<td>nil.</td>
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<td>Mr Kerr’s Office:</td>
<td>nil.</td>
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<td>Mr Murphy’s Office:</td>
<td>nil.</td>
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**Ministerial Staffing**  
(Question No. 627)

*Senator Minchin* asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:

1. How many departmental officers are working in the office of the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
2. How many of these staff are Departmental Liaison Officers.
3. How many departmental officers, on secondment from the department, are in the office of the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary in personal staff positions.

*Senator Sherry*—The Minister for Finance and Deregulation has supplied the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

1. Two Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance) employees work in the office of the Minister for Finance and Deregulation.
2. Two.
3. There are no departmental officers on secondment in the office of the Minister for Finance and Deregulation.

**Ministerial Staffing**  
(Question Nos 639 and 640)

*Senator Minchin* asked the Minister representing the Assistant Treasurer, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:

1. How many departmental officers are working in the office of the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
2. How many of these staff are Departmental Liaison Officers.
3. How many departmental officers, on secondment from the department, are in the office of the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary in personal staff positions.

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

1. As at 21 October 2008 there were three (3) departmental employees working in the Assistant Treasurer’s Office.
2. Two (2) as Departmental Liaison Officer (One representing the Treasury and one representing the Australian Taxation Office).
3. One (1) on secondment.

**Beijing Olympic Games**  
(Question Nos 658 and 659)

*Senator Minchin* asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister representing the Minister for Trade, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:
(1) Did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary within the Minister’s portfolio attend any event at the Beijing Olympic Games; if so, which events did the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary attend.

(2) Was the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary accompanied by: (a) family; (b) personal staff; and (c) departmental officials; if so, how many.

(3) Did any officials from the department attend the Beijing Olympic Games in their capacity as an employee of the Australian Government; if so, how many and in what capacity did they attend.

(4) In regard to the attendance by the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary and/or departmental officials at the Beijing Olympic Games, what was the total cost of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.

Senator Faulkner—The Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade have provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Yes. The Minister for Trade attended the Olympics Opening Ceremony on 8 August, the rowing heats on 9 August and the swimming finals on 10 and 11 August.

(2) Please refer to the response to Questions on Notice Nos. 694 and 695.

(3) Yes. Seven A-based staff of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade based at the Embassy in Beijing attended some Beijing Olympic Games events from 8 to 24 August 2008 to accompany high level visitors.

(4) Please refer to the response to Questions on Notice Nos. 694 and 695.

Prime Minister and Parliamentary Secretaries: Overseas Travel

(Question No. 687)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Prime Minister, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:

(1) Where did the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary travel.

(2) What was the duration of the travel.

(3) What was the purpose of the travel.

(4) For each country visited, what was the total cost to the taxpayer of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.

(5) How many personal staff accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.

(6) How many family members accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.

(7) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.

(8) How many departmental officers accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary; and (b) what was the total costs of their: (i) travel; (ii) accommodation; and (iii) any other expenses.

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

I refer the honourable senator to Senate Question on Notice No 750.

Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion and Parliamentary Secretary: Overseas Travel

(Question Nos 688, 689, 690, 716 and 721)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Education, Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, and the Minister representing the Minister for Social Inclusion, upon notice, on 27 August 2008:
Did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary within the Minister’s portfolio travel overseas during July or August 2008; if so:

(1) Where did the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary travel.
(2) What was the duration of the travel.
(3) What was the purpose of the travel.
(4) For each country visited, what was the total cost to the taxpayer of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.

(5) How many personal staff accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
(6) How many family members accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
(7) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.
(8) (a) How many departmental officers accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary; and (b) what was the total cost of: (i) travel; (ii) accommodation, and (iii) any other expenses.

Senator Ludwig—The Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) and (2) The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education; Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations; and, Minister for Social Inclusion travelled to the United States of America, United Kingdom and Singapore from 21 June 2008 to 5 July 2008.

(3) The Minister attended the Australian American Leadership Dialogue and met with ministerial counterparts and senior government officials in the United Kingdom and Singapore.

(4) The total costs associated with the Minister’s travel are estimated at: (a) $22,757.27; (b) $11,333.12; and (c) $12,910.83.

(5) and (6) The Minister was accompanied to the USA, United Kingdom and Singapore by two ministerial staff and one family member.

(7) The total costs associated with the travel for accompanying staff/family are estimated at: (a) $68,357.61; (b) $12,020.32; and, (c) $1,868.13.

(8) One departmental officer accompanied the Minister to the USA, United Kingdom and Singapore. The total costs associated with this travel are estimated at: (i) $20,145.65; (ii) $6,102.86; and, (iii) $2,750.71.

Treasurer: Overseas Travel
(Question No. 691)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:

Did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary within the Minister’s portfolio travel overseas during July or August 2008; if so:

(1) Where did the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary travel.
(2) What was the duration of the travel.
(3) What was the purpose of the travel.
(4) For each country visited, what was the total cost to the taxpayer of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.
(5) How many personal staff accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
(6) How many family members accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.

(7) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.

(8) (a) How many departmental officers accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary; and (b) what was the total cost of their: (i) travel, (ii) accommodation, and (iii) any other expenses.

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

(1) New Zealand.

(2) 16-18 July 2008.

(3) To attend bilateral meetings with the New Zealand Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Dr Michael Cullen.

(4) (a) Travel costs A$2769.00 (b) accommodation A$445.42 (c) other expenses A$273.11.

(5) Two.

(6) Nil.

(7) (a) Travel costs A$5168.60 (b) accommodation A$698.70 (c) other expenses A$744.77

(8) (a) One (b) (i) travel A$2198.00 (ii) accommodation A$400.00 and (iii) any other expenses A$401.00.

**Special Minister of State: Overseas Travel**

(Question No. 693)

**Senator Minchin** asked the Special Minister of State, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:

Did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary within the Minister’s portfolio travel overseas during July or August 2008; if so:

(1) Where did the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary travel.

(2) What was the duration of the travel.

(3) What was the purpose of the travel.

(4) For each country visited, what was the total cost to the taxpayer of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.

(5) How many personal staff accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.

(6) How many family members accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.

(7) In regards to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.

(8) (a) How many departmental officers accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary; and (b) what was the total cost of their: (i) travel, (ii) accommodation, and (iii) any other expenses.

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

I did not undertake any overseas travel during July or August 2008, therefore, questions (1) to (8) are not applicable.

**Minister for Finance and Deregulation: Overseas Travel**

(Question No. 699)

**Senator Minchin** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, upon notice, on 27 August 2008:
Did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary within the Minister’s portfolio travel overseas during July or August 2008; if so:
(1) Where did the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary travel.
(2) What was the duration of the travel.
(3) What was the purpose of the travel.
(4) For each country visited, what was the total cost to the taxpayer of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.
(5) How many personal staff accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
(6) How many family members accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
(7) In regards to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.
(8) (a) How many departmental officers accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary; and (b) what was the total cost of their: (i) travel, (ii) accommodation, and (iii) any other expenses.

Senator Sherry—The Minister for Finance and Deregulation has supplied the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
(1) United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands.
(3) To hold a series of bilateral discussions on deregulation, the world economic outlook and prospects for financial markets.
(4) The costs outlined are for the Minister only. Please refer to Question 7 for costs related to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
   (a) Airfares: $11,220.86
   (c) Other expenses (Passport plus allowances): $653.00

United Kingdom
   (a) Ground travel: $4,577.53
   (b) Accommodation: $1,876.19
   (c) Other expenses: $650.08

France
   (a) Ground Travel: $1,894.85
   (b) Accommodation: $1,140.93
   (c) Other expenses: $158.14

Netherlands
   (a) Ground Travel: $37.35
   (b) Accommodation: $0.00
   (c) Other expenses: $0.00

(5) Minister Tanner was accompanied by one Members of Parliament (Staff) Act (MOP(S) Act) employee for the duration of the visit.
(6) Minister Tanner was accompanied by his spouse for the duration of the visit.
(7) (a) Airfares (spouse): $10,427.26
   Airfares (MOP(S) Act employee): $11,220.86

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Ground travel (MOP(S) Act employee): $261.56
(b) Accommodation (spouse)\(^5\): N/A
  Accommodation (MOP(S) Act employee): $3,012.06
(c) Other expenses (spouse): $275.00
  Other expenses (MOP(S) Act employee): $1,358.36\(^6\)

(8) (a) The Minister was accompanied by the Secretary of the Department of Finance and Deregulation, Dr Ian Watt AO for the duration of the visit.
(b) The total cost for Dr Watt was:
  (i) Travel: $9,749.66
  (ii) Accommodation: $3,007.61
  (iii) Other expenses: $1,459.50

1 The cost of airfares (refer 4a and 7a) relates to the entire overseas visit, and cannot be disaggregated where travel relates to more than one country.
2 The cost of the passport relates to the entire overseas visit, and cannot be disaggregated where travel relates to more than one country.
3 Includes recoverable expenditure totalling $131.28.
4 Includes recoverable expenditure totalling $52.32.
5 Spouse accommodation costs included with the Minister.
6 Includes recoverable expenditure totalling $91.59.

**Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and Parliamentary Secretary: Overseas Travel**

*(Question No. 700)*

**Senator Minchin** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:

Did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary within the Minister’s portfolio travel overseas during July or August 2008; if so:

(1) Where did the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary travel.
(2) What was the duration of the travel.
(3) What was the purpose of the travel.
(4) For each country visited, what was the total cost to the taxpayer of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.
(5) How many personal staff accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
(6) How many family members accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
(7) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.
(8) (a) How many departmental officers accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary; and (b) what was the total cost of their: (i) travel, (ii) accommodation, and (iii) any other expenses.

**Senator Conroy**—The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

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**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**
(1) The Minister travelled to Germany, France, Belgium and the United Kingdom in July 2008. No overseas travel was undertaken by the Minister during August 2008. No overseas travel was undertaken by the Parliamentary Secretary during July or August 2008.

(2) The Minister was away for 13 days in July.

(3) The purpose of travel was to launch the Australia-EU Comprehensive Air Services Agreement, to sign the Australia-United Kingdom Air Services Agreement and to meet with European counterparts.

Meetings were held including with the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, the Executive Director of the International Energy Agency, the Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, public transport operators in Germany and France, the Secretary General of the International Transport Forum, the British Civil Aviation Authority, infrastructure and transport industry representatives, the Heads of the German Federal Chancellery Infrastructure Branch and Transport, Housing and Urban Development Section, Germany’s State Secretary for Urban Development, Germany’s Minister for Transport, Building and Urban Affairs, France’s Secretary of State for Transport, France’s Minister for Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Town and Country Planning, France’s Secretary of State for Development of the Capital City Region, the European Commissioner for Regional Policy, the offices of the European Commissioners for the Environment and for Transport, the European Commission Director-General for Energy and Transport, Belgium’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Britain’s Secretary of State for Transport, and Britain’s Under Secretary for Transport.

Discussions focussed on infrastructure development priorities, infrastructure funding models, regional development, responses to urban transport and congestion issues, road transport safety, airport development, maritime issues and the issue of transport emissions and climate change. Visits were made to memorials in the Somme Valley (Villers-Bretonneux and Le Hamel) and to the British House of Commons.

(4) The Department does not have these details.

(5) One.

(6) One.

(7) The Department does not have these details.

(8) (a) Two.

(b) Total costs for the two departmental officers are $46,471.85.

**Minister for Climate Change and Water: Overseas Travel**

*(Question No. 703)*

**Senator Minchin** asked the Minister for Climate Change and Water, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:

Did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary within the Minister’s portfolio travel overseas during July or August 2008; if so:

(1) Where did the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary travel.

(2) What was the duration of the travel.

(3) What was the purpose of the travel.

(4) For each country visited, what was the total cost to the taxpayer of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.

(5) How many personal staff accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.

(6) How many family members accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
(7) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.

(8) (a) How many departmental officers accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary; and (b) what was the total cost of their: (i) travel, (ii) accommodation, and (iii) any other expenses.

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

Cost paid by Finance as at 4 September 2008.

(1) Japan

(2) 8 July 2008 to 10 July 2008

(3) Accompany the Prime Minister to the Leaders Meeting of the Major Economics Meeting on Energy Security and Climate Change

(4) (a) $6,040.27
    (b) $728.19
    (c) $126.00

(5) One

(6) None

(7) (a) $6,040.27
    (b) $728.19
    (c) $42.48

(8) (a) one
    (b) (i) $10,105
    (ii) $2,291
    (iii) $1,109

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts: Overseas Travel
(Question No. 704)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:

Did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary within the Minister’s portfolio travel overseas during July or August 2008; if so:

(1) Where did the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary travel.

(2) What was the duration of the travel.

(3) What was the purpose of the travel.

(4) For each country visited, what was the total cost to the taxpayer of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.

(5) How many personal staff accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.

(6) How many family members accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.

(7) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.

(8) (a) How many departmental officers accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary; and (b) what was the total cost of their: (i) travel, (ii) accommodation, and (iii) any other.

Senator Wong—The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
(1) The Minister travelled to Chile and the United States (US).
(2) 22 June – 2 July 2008.
(3) Chile: To attend the 60th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission; US: to hold meetings with Californian Government officials including the Governor, and representatives from the energy and film industries.
(4) As at 5 March 2009, the cost of Minister Garrett’s travel to both Chile and the US is as follows:
   (i) Travel: $19,341.64
   (ii) Accommodation: $8,214.10
   (iii) Other expenses: $5,894.21
(5) In Chile, Minister Garrett was accompanied by two advisers. In the US, Minister Garrett was accompanied by one adviser.
(6) No family members accompanied Minister Garrett.
(7) As at 5 March 2009, the total cost of the Minister’s advisers’ travel to both Chile and the US is as follows:
   (i) Travel: $28,949.50
   (ii) Accommodation: $5,894.23
   (iii) Other expenses: $1,791.39
(8) One departmental officer accompanied the Minister in both Chile and the US. A further six departmental officers accompanied the Minister in Chile as part of the Australian delegation to the 60th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission. One further departmental officer on official travel to the US accompanied the Minister for one day in that country. The total cost of these departmental officers’ travel is as follows:
   (i) Travel: $106,783.28
   (ii) Accommodation: $32,628.84
   (iii) Other expenses: $16,512.33

Attorney-General and Minister for Home Affairs: Overseas Travel
(Question Nos 705 and 710)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General and the Minister representing the Minister for Home Affairs, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:

Did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary within the Minister’s portfolio travel overseas during July or August 2008; if so:
(1) Where did the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary travel.
(2) What was the duration of the travel.
(3) What was the purpose of the travel.
(4) For each country visited, what was the total cost to the taxpayer of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.
(5) How many personal staff accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
(6) How many family members accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.
(7) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.
(8) (a) How many departmental officers accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary; and (b) what was the total cost of their: (i) travel, (ii) accommodation, and (iii) any other expenses.
Senator Ludwig—The Attorney-General and Minister for Home Affairs have provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

Ministerial travel expenditure for the period July and August 2008 totalled approximately $164,540.00. A breakdown of the costs is provided below and in the attached table:

**Attorney-General**

The Attorney-General undertook two ministerial visits during the period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Reason for Travel</th>
<th>Period of Travel</th>
<th>Total Cost of Visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Attend Commonwealth Law Minister’s Meeting</td>
<td>5-12 July</td>
<td>$37,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Attend Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) and signing of Trans-Tasman Treaty on Court Proceedings and Regulatory Enforcement</td>
<td>23-27 July</td>
<td>$12,594</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note – The cost of Departmental staff travel is not included in the total cost of visit details.

**Minister for Home Affairs**

The Minister for Home Affairs undertook three ministerial visits during the period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Reason for Travel</th>
<th>Period of Travel</th>
<th>Total Cost of Visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Timor</td>
<td>Meet ministerial counterparts and senior government officials</td>
<td>2-5 July</td>
<td>$3,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Attend Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG)</td>
<td>23-25 July</td>
<td>$6,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand</td>
<td>Joint visit with Minister for Immigration and Citizenship</td>
<td>2-10 August</td>
<td>$29,926</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note – The cost of Departmental staff travel is not included in the total cost of visit details.
### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Attorney-General</th>
<th>Attorney-General</th>
<th>Minister for Home Affairs</th>
<th>Minister for Home Affairs</th>
<th>Minister for Home Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend Commonwealth Law Minister’s Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signing of Trans-Tasman Treaty on Court Proceedings and Regulatory Enforcement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet ministerial counterparts and senior government officials in relation to law enforcement, border protection and legal assistance initiatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint visit with Minister for Immigration and Citizenship to meet ministerial counterparts and key regional partners on irregular migration, people smuggling and trafficking matters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of Minister’s travel</strong></td>
<td>$15,603.00</td>
<td>$2,576.00</td>
<td>$981.00</td>
<td>$2,340.00</td>
<td>$7,196.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of Minister’s accommodation</strong></td>
<td>$2,552.00</td>
<td>$577.00</td>
<td>$784.00</td>
<td>$472.00</td>
<td>$1,306.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of Minister’s other costs</strong></td>
<td>$790.00</td>
<td>$38.00</td>
<td>$252.00</td>
<td>$223.00</td>
<td>$5,993.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Minister’s Costs</strong></td>
<td>$18,945.00</td>
<td>$3,191.00</td>
<td>$2,017.00</td>
<td>$3,035.00</td>
<td>$14,495.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of accompanying staff</strong></td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of staff travel</strong></td>
<td>$15,603.00</td>
<td>$6,066.00</td>
<td>$981.00</td>
<td>$2,340.00</td>
<td>$7,114.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of staff accommodation</strong></td>
<td>$2,226.00</td>
<td>$740.00</td>
<td>$784.00</td>
<td>$455.00</td>
<td>$636.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of staff other costs</strong></td>
<td>$244.00</td>
<td>$96.00</td>
<td>$33.00</td>
<td>$514.00</td>
<td>$428.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total staff costs</strong></td>
<td>$18,073.00</td>
<td>$6,902.00</td>
<td>$1,798.00</td>
<td>$3,309.00</td>
<td>$8,178.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of accompanying family</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Three***</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of spouse travel</strong></td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>$2,501.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$6,939.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of spouse accommodation</strong></td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>Included in Minister’s Costs</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Included in Minister’s Costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of spouse other costs</strong></td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$314.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tuesday, 12 May 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Attorney-General</th>
<th>Attorney-General</th>
<th>Minister for Home Affairs</th>
<th>Minister for Home Affairs</th>
<th>Minister for Home Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total spouse costs</td>
<td>$-</td>
<td>$2,501.00</td>
<td>$-</td>
<td>$-</td>
<td>$7,253.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of accompanying Departmental officials</td>
<td>Two (AGD)</td>
<td>Four (AGD)****</td>
<td>One (AFP)</td>
<td>Three (AGD)****</td>
<td>Three (One AFP, One AGD, One ACS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Departmental officials travel</td>
<td>$23,916.00</td>
<td>$10,216.00</td>
<td>$3,235.00</td>
<td>Included in AG Visit # 2</td>
<td>$21,662.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Departmental officials accommodation</td>
<td>$4,350.00</td>
<td>$1,439.00</td>
<td>$399.00</td>
<td>$3,120.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Departmental officials other costs</td>
<td>$2,821.00</td>
<td>$1,007.00</td>
<td>$31.00</td>
<td>$2,647.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Departmental costs</td>
<td>$31,087.00</td>
<td>$12,662.00</td>
<td>$3,665.00</td>
<td>$-</td>
<td>$27,429.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL COST OF VISIT*</td>
<td>$68,105.00</td>
<td>$25,256.00</td>
<td>$7,480.00</td>
<td>$6,344.00</td>
<td>$57,355.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

* - Information in relation to costs has been provided by the Department of Finance and Deregulation (DoFD) as well as overseas posts, and relevant portfolio agencies. The figures are correct as at 22 October 2008. Total costs may increase once acquittal process are finalised through DoFD.

** - The Attorney-General’s visit to New Zealand was for a total of four days, with two of these days taken as leave approved by the Prime Minister. All costs borne during the period of leave were met personally by the Attorney-General.

*** - The Attorney-General was accompanied by his wife and by two children on the visit to New Zealand. All costs associated with the children were met personally by the Attorney-General.

**** - The four Department officials who accompanied the Attorney-General and Minister on the visit to New Zealand also participated in other meetings, and some of their costs relate to this work. One official travelled primarily for the treaty signing and related meetings, and did not attend SCAG.

Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law: Overseas Travel
(Question No. 719)

Senator Minchin asked the Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law, upon notice, on 25 August 2008:

Did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary within the Minister’s portfolio travel overseas during July or August 2008; if so:

1. Where did the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary travel.
2. What was the duration of the travel.
3. What was the purpose of the travel.
4. For each country visited, what was the total cost to the taxpayer of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.
5. How many personal staff accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
(6) How many family members accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary.

(7) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of: (a) travel; (b) accommodation; and (c) any other expenses.

(8) (a) How many departmental officers accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary; and (b) what was the total cost of their: (i) travel, (ii) accommodation, and (iii) any other expenses.

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

Trip no. 1. - Canterbury, New Zealand

(2) What was the duration of the travel? Two days (departed Australia on 24/7/08 and returned on 25/7/08)

(3) What was the purpose of the travel? To attend and chair the Ministerial Council for Corporations (MINCO) Meeting.

(4) (a) What was the total cost to the taxpayer of travel? $2435

(4) (b) What was the total cost to the taxpayer of accommodation? $957* individual accounts not available therefore this is the cost for Senator Sherry and his Chief of Staff.

(4) (c) What was the total cost to the taxpayer of any other expenses? $142

(5) How many personal staff accompanied the Minister? One

(6) How many family members accompanied the Minister? Nil

(7) (a) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of travel? $2435

(7) (b) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of accommodation? * Included with Minister’s costs

(7) (c) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of any other expenses? $38

(8)(a) How many departmental officers accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary? Nil

(8)(b) What was the total cost of their: (i) travel (ii) accommodation (iii) any other expenses? Nil

Trip no. 2. - New York and Washington D.C., U.S.A.

(2) What was the duration of the travel? Seven days (departed Australia on 20/8/08 and returned on 27/8/08)

(3) What was the purpose of the travel? To sign the Framework Agreement between the US and Australia on Mutual Recognition of Securities Regulation in Washington; to meet ministerial counterparts and finance regulators and discuss securities market regulation, the global financial and credit situation and banking operations.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
(4) (a) What was the total cost to the taxpayer of travel? $15,384

(4) (b) What was the total cost to the taxpayer of accommodation? $1414* (individual accounts not available therefore this is the cost for Senator Sherry and his Chief of Staff). $801

(4) (c) What was the total cost to the taxpayer of any other expenses? $801

(5) How many personal staff accompanied the Minister? One

(6) How many family members accompanied the Minister? Nil

(7) (a) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of travel? $16,013

(7) (b) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of accommodation? * Included with Minister’s costs

(7) (c) In regard to staff and family accompanying the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, what was the total cost of any other expenses. $613

(8) (a) How many departmental officers accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary? Nil

(8) (b) What was the total cost of their: (i) travel (ii) accommodation (iii) any other expenses? Nil

Prime Minister and Cabinet: Media Contracts
(Question No. 747)

Senator Ronaldson asked the Minister representing the Prime Minister, upon notice, on 25 September 2008:

(1) How many contracts has the department or agency engaged in for the provision of media services since November 2007.

(2) What was the total cost of these contracts.

(3) What work have the contractors engaged in specifically or what work do they expect to undertake.

(4) Was the contractor selected by tender; if so, was the tender select or open; if not, why not.

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

Department of Finance and Deregulation:

(1) None.

(2) N/A.

(3) N/A.

Australian Electoral Commission:

(1) One.
QUESTIONs ON NOTICE

(2) The final total cost of the contract will be based on the level of media monitoring services provided in accordance with the contract and at the prices outlined in the contract, over the three year contract period. Expenditure from November 2007 to 25 September 2008 is $90,661.

(3) Media Monitoring Services.
(4) Yes, open tender process.

ComSuper:

(1) One.
(2) The final total cost of the contract is anticipated to be $20,400. Expenditure as at 25 September 2008 is $2,944.
(3) Media Monitoring services.
(4) Yes, select tender.

Future Fund Management Agency:

(1) None.
(2) N/A.
(3) N/A.
(4) N/A.

Australian Reward and Investment Alliance:

(1) One.
(2) The final total cost of the contract will be $38,700. Expenditure as at 25 September 2008 is $4,053.
(3) Media monitoring services.
(4) No Tender. The total cost of the contract is under the $80,000 threshold for an open tender process.

Prime Minister’s Science and Engineering Innovation Council

(1) The position has been filled.

Professor Graeme Turner, Director, Centre for Critical and Cultural Studies, University of Queensland was appointed to the position on 9 October 2008 for three years. Members are appointed by the Prime Minister.

Professor Turner was appointed as a personal member to the Prime Minister’s Science, Engineering and Innovation Council due to his extensive expertise in the humanities and social sciences. This is consistent with the Government’s intent to use a more inclusive definition of science, including the social sciences.

Defence: Budget

(Question Nos 800 and 801)

Senator Johnston asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, upon notice, on 13 November 2008:

For each agency within the responsibility of the Minister:
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

(1) (a) In the period 1 April to 30 September 2008, what discussions or meetings were conducted regarding the Government’s ‘Razor Gang Mk II’; and (b) has the razor gang indicated any cuts or savings to be made by the department or agency.

(2) (a) What special accounts does the agency currently hold; (b) as at 30 September 2008, how much is in these accounts; (c) does the agency use the interest from these accounts to fund ongoing operations; and (d) has the razor gang given any indication about the future of these accounts.

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

(1) (a) None.

(b) No.

(2) (a) and (b) please see below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account Name</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defence Endowments Account (Defence)</td>
<td>$300,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fedorczenko Legacy Fund Account (Defence)</td>
<td>$156,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Trust Moneys Account (Defence)</td>
<td>$2,410,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services for Other Governments and Non-Agency Bodies Account (Defence)</td>
<td>$49,891,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Endeavour Youth Program Operating Fund Account (Defence)</td>
<td>$897,945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Material Special Account (DMO)</td>
<td>$7,781,661,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Trust Money – Defence Materiel Organisation Special (DMO)</td>
<td>$809,205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) No. Where the benefit of interest earned is retained, as is the case for the Defence Endowments Account and the Fedorczenko Legacy Fund Account, it is used in accordance with the purpose of the account. In regard to the Young Endeavour Youth (YEY) Program Operating Fund Account, approval has been sought from the Minister for Finance and Deregulation to have interest equivalency payments made to the account. When first established, the YEY Program Trust Deed envisaged that the interest earned on monies collected from the public would be applied to further YEY Program activities.

(d) No.

Immigration and Citizenship: Program Funding

(Question No. 876)

Senator Ronaldson asked the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, upon notice, on 25 November 2008:

In regard to the Minister’s administered portfolio area, for the 2008 calendar year, can lists be provided for: (a) the top 5 program overspends and their costs; and (b) the top 5 program underspends and their costs.

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

Given that funding for administered programs is provided on a financial year basis, and that unused administered appropriations lapse each financial year, calendar year information on program overspends and underspends is both difficult to extract and could be misleading to users.

As an alternative, the top five overspends and underspends for the 2008 financial year are provided below.

2008 Financial Year – Ended 30 June 2008

(a) Top five program overspends were:
### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

#### Human Services: Program Funding

**(Question No. 880 amended)**

**Senator Ronaldson** asked the Minister for Human Services, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:

In regard to the Minister’s administered portfolio area, for the 2008 calendar year, can lists be provided for: (a) the top 5 program overspends and their costs; and (b) the top 5 program underspends and their costs.

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

1. **Department of Human Services**

   The Department provides the following information to clarify its earlier response to this question.

---

#### Program Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Budget ($'000)</th>
<th>Cost ($'000)</th>
<th>Overspend ($'000)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offshore Asylum Seeker Management</td>
<td>21,482</td>
<td>23,362</td>
<td>1,880</td>
<td>The overspend relates to unanticipated additional costs, as a result of the closure of Offshore Processing Centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants for migrant community services</td>
<td>32,019</td>
<td>32,021</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Expenditure is slightly higher than forecast.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB** – No further overspends to report for the 2008 financial year.

(b) **Top five program underspends were:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Budget ($'000)</th>
<th>Cost ($'000)</th>
<th>Under-spend ($'000)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Migrant English Program</td>
<td>167,495</td>
<td>157,826</td>
<td>(9,669)</td>
<td>The AMEP is a demand driven program which was underutilised by eligible clients in 2007-08.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcement of Immigration Law</td>
<td>28,255</td>
<td>20,755</td>
<td>(7,500)</td>
<td>This item relates to write off of detention debts where recovery is considered unlikely. Lower detainee numbers in 2007-08 resulted in lower total detention debts. Consequently, the amount of debt actually written off was also lower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee &amp; Humanitarian</td>
<td>34,110</td>
<td>33,699</td>
<td>(411)</td>
<td>While the allocated funding for the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme was based on an estimate of 2,000 persons, the actual number of persons assisted for 2007-08 was 1,867.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12,811</td>
<td>12,129</td>
<td>(682)</td>
<td>As a result of: Migration Agent Registration Fees, collected by the department and transferred directly to the Migration Agent Registration Authority (MARA), being slightly lower than estimated Lower number of Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minor wards than anticipated. Final payments to community grants were carried over as some activities were not completed until the next financial year. Fewer Act-Of-Grace claims lodged than anticipated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB** – No further underspends to report for the 2008 financial year.
(a) The Department did not overspend administered funds appropriated to it in the 2008 calendar year.

(b) The Department did underspend administered funds appropriated to it in the 2008 calendar year.

The Department manages two Administered programs:

1. payments to cover shortfalls in the Child Support Trust Fund; and
2. other.

In respect of the first program, the Department draws from a Special Appropriation each year, to make child support payments to custodial parents whenever there is a payment delay from the non custodial parent. The Department subsequently recovers such payments from the non custodial parent and returns such recovered funds to Budget.

For the 2007/08 financial year it was estimated that $75.669 million would be required for this purpose, with only $72.882 million required to be paid. Thus $2.787 million was not drawn from the Special Appropriation. Of the $72.882 million paid, $72.539 million was recovered and the balance will be recovered in the following year.

In respect of the Department’s Administrative appropriation of $150.649 million for 2007/08, the Department spent $147.626 million and $3.023 million was returned to Budget.

**Medicare Australia**

(a) Nil.

(b) Nil.

**Centrelink**

(a) Nil.

(b) Nil.

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**Treasury: Program Funding**

(Question Nos 881 and 884)

**Senator Ronaldson** asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:

In regard to the Minister’s administered portfolio area, for the 2008 calendar year, can lists be provided for: (a) the top 5 program overspends and their costs; and (b) the top 5 program underspends and their costs.

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

**Australian Accounting Standards Board**

The AASB has a nil response.

**Australian Bureau of Statistics**

The ABS has a nil response.

**Australian Competition and Consumer Commission**

ACCC does not undertake administered program expenditure.

**Australian Office of Financial Management**

The Australian Office of Financial Management (AOFM) has only one administered program – Commonwealth Debt Management.

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
From 1 January 2008 to 30 June 2008 AOFM incurred expenses of $2,697.103 million (before unrealised mark-to-market re-measurements) compared to a budgeted $2,639.937 million (as per 2007-08 MYEFO). This represents an overspend of $57.166 million, attributable to higher interest costs on the debt portfolio due to an increase on domestic interest rates.

The Treasurer announced on 20 May 2008 an increased issuance of Treasury Bonds for 2008-09 to enhance the liquidity of the Treasury Bond markets. The proceeds from the additional issuance were invested in fixed interest investments to offset the cost and risk of the additional issuance. As a result for the period from 1 July to 30 November 2008 the AOFM incurred higher gross interest costs on debt, but this has been more than offset from the income generated from investing the proceeds of the additional issuance.

As a result from 1 July 2008 to 30 November 2008 the AOFM incurred expenses of $2,227.172 million (before unrealised mark-to-market re-measurements) compared to a budgeted $1,991.424 million (as per 2008-09 Budget Estimates). This represents an overspend of $235.748 million.

**Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority**

APRA had no material administered programmes over the calendar year 2008.

**Australian Securities and Investment Commission**

ASIC had two Administered programmes in the 2007-08 financial year, these were the ‘Banking Act’ and ‘Other’ programme. The actual surplus for the ‘Other’ programme was $21m higher than estimated in the 2007-08 Portfolio Additional Estimates. The increase in revenue was due to an increase in Corporation Act fees collected. The variance in ‘Other’ expenses primarily relates to unspent Act 1 appropriation which has now lapsed.

All figures are in $’000’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administered Programme</th>
<th>Budget (2007-08 PAES)</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banking Act</td>
<td>35,000 (22,000)</td>
<td>39,457</td>
<td>(4,457)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>537,544 (36,717)</td>
<td>550,398(28,602)</td>
<td>(12,854)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIC total</td>
<td>572,544 (24,315)</td>
<td>589,855(52,917)</td>
<td>(17,311)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revenue: $500,827; Expenses: $15,142; Variance: ($365,685)

Note: ASIC’s budget and financial results are collated on a financial year basis so we have answered this question for the 2007-08 financial year.

**Australian Taxation Office**

(1) (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>2007-08 Actual ($ mil)</th>
<th>2007-08 MYEFO/PEFO ($ mil)</th>
<th>Variance ($ mil)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Super co-contribution</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>1189</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel tax credits</td>
<td>4757</td>
<td>4507</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Tax Benefit</td>
<td>2278</td>
<td>2070</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super Guarantee</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Bonus</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Expense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>2007-08 Actual ($ mil)</th>
<th>2007-08 MYEFO/PEFO ($ mil)</th>
<th>Variance ($ mil)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Film &amp; TV</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaner fuel for better environment</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>-34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Corporations and Markets Advisory Commission**

Not applicable - CAMAC does not have any administered activities.
Inspector-General of Taxation
It is not possible to provide the information sought on a calendar year basis.

National Competition Council
The National Competition Council underspent for the calendar year to date (1 January 2008 to 22 December 2008) is $1,670,829 (program: Other Departmental).
The National Competition Council received no administered funding. Nil overspend or underspend of administered funding.

Productivity Commission
The Productivity Commission does not have administered programs.

Royal Australia Mint
The Royal Australian Mint has a nil response.

Treasury
No. Treasury budgets on a financial year basis.

Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs: Program Funding
(Question No. 888)

Senator Ronaldson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:
(a) For the 2008 calendar year, can lists be provided for the department’s top 5 program overspends and their costs.
(b) For the 2008 calendar year, can lists be provided for the department’s top 5 program underspends and their costs.

Senator Chris Evans—The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question.
Actual overspends and underspends against appropriations are determined after the end of a financial year because funding is appropriated on a financial year basis.
(a) The department had 3 administered programs which were overspent in the 2007/08 financial year as listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Budget $'000</th>
<th>Actual $'000</th>
<th>Overspend $'000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex-Gratia Assistance for East Timor Medical Evacuees</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconnecting People Assistance Package</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payments under s33 of FMA Act 1997</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Overspends</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) The department’s top 5 administered programs which were underspent for the 2007/08 financial year are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Budget $'000</th>
<th>Actual $'000</th>
<th>Underspend $'000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Development and Employment Program</td>
<td>223,187</td>
<td>192,534</td>
<td>-30,653*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>93,766</td>
<td>83,283</td>
<td>-10,483#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>77,198</td>
<td>73,732</td>
<td>-3,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>65,682</td>
<td>62,394</td>
<td>-3,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Relationships</td>
<td>77,413</td>
<td>74,544</td>
<td>-2,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 5 Underspends</td>
<td>537,246</td>
<td>486,487</td>
<td>-50,759</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
The $30.653m underspend is proportionally overstated because it includes an amount of $24.4m transferred between departments as part of Administrative Arrangements Order (AAO) changes. The actual annual underspend for CDEP program is $6.2m.

# Underspend in 07-08 related to delays in tender round caused by change of Government.

**Health and Ageing: Media Monitoring**  
*(Question Nos 905 and 920)*

**Senator Ronaldson** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health and Ageing, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:

What is the aggregate amount spent by the department on media monitoring during the 2008 calendar year.

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

Costs incurred by the Department (includes three Ministers and one Parliamentary Secretary) on media monitoring during the period 1 January 2008 to 24 November 2008 total $722,813 (excl GST).

**Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs: Media Monitoring**  
*(Question No. 906)*

**Senator Ronaldson** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:

What is the aggregate amount spent by the department on media monitoring during the 2008 calendar year.

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

For the period 1 January 2008 to 24 November 2008 the department spent $465,887.12 on media monitoring.

**Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government: Media Monitoring**  
*(Question No. 908)*

**Senator Ronaldson** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:

What is the aggregate amount spent by the department on media monitoring during the 2008 calendar year.

**Senator Conroy**—The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

Information on departmental contracts is available on the department’s website.

**Attorney-General’s: Media Monitoring**  
*(Question No. 913)*

**Senator Ronaldson** asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:

What is the aggregate amount spent by the department on media monitoring during the 2008 calendar year.
**Senator Wong**—The Attorney-General has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

The aggregate amount spent by the Attorney-General’s Department on media monitoring during the 2008 calendar year to 24 November 2008 was $233,966.

**Immigration and Citizenship: Consultancies**
(Question No. 924)

**Senator Ronaldson** asked the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, upon notice, on 24 November, 2008:

For the 2008 calendar year, can details be provided of the start date, duration, cost and nature (direct source or open source) of tender for each individual consultancy contract with the department dealing with: (a) media relations; (b) public relations; (c) public events management; (d) communications; and (e) communications strategy.

**Senator Chris Evans**—The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship has three contracts to report. They are:

**Public relations**
Business name: Royce (Vic) Pty Ltd
Start date: 25 July 2007
Duration: A deed of standing offer for Royce (Vic) Pty Ltd commenced on 25 July 2007 and continued until 30 June 2008.
Total value of contract: $220,000 (GST inc)
Expenditure for the 2008 calendar year: $110,000 (GST inc), up to 30 June 2008 when the contract was finalised.
Nature of tender: Select tender from a shortlist of companies provided by the Government Communications Unit of the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet.

**Communications Strategy**
Business name: The Open Mind Research Group Pty Ltd
Start date: 2 June 2008
Duration: A contract commenced on 2 June 2008 and continued until 30 June 2008.
Total value of contract: $100,000 (GST inc)
Expenditure for the 2008 calendar year: $100,000 (GST inc) up to 30 June 2008 when the contract was finalised.
Nature of tender: Select tender.

**Media Relations**
Business name: Cultural Perspectives Pty Ltd
Start Date: 25 July 2007
Duration: A deed of standing offer for Cultural Perspectives Pty Ltd commenced on 25 July 2007 and continued until 30 June 2008.
Total value of contract: $200,000 (GST inc)
Expenditure for the 2008 calendar year: $10,120 (GST inc) up to 30 June 2008 when the contract was finalised.
Nature of tender: Select tender from a shortlist of companies provided by the Government Communications Unit of the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet.

**Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government: Consultancies**

*(Question No. 931)*

**Senator Ronaldson** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:

For the 2008 calendar year, can details be provided of the start date, duration, cost and nature (direct source or open source) of tender for each individual consultancy contract with the department dealing with: (a) media relations; (b) public relations; (c) public events management; (d) communications; and (e) communications strategy.

**Senator Conroy**—The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

Contract details for contracts above $10,000 are available on the AusTender website.

**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy: Consultancies**

*(Question No. 932)*

**Senator Ronaldson** asked the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:

For the 2008 calendar year, can details be provided of the start date, duration, cost and nature (direct source or open source) of tender for each individual consultancy contract with the department dealing with:

(a) media relations;
(b) public relations;
(c) public events management;
(d) communications; and
(e) communications strategy.

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

**Orima Research – communications strategy for digital switchover**

Contract signed -10 July 2008  
Duration of contract – 9 July 2009  
Value of contract: $901,188.00 GST inclusive  
Expenditure to 24 November: $416,940.73  
Select procurement method

**Trinity P3 – public relations for digital switchover**

Signed contract 24/9/2008  
Duration of contract: 1/10/2008  
Value of contract: $7480.00 GST inclusive  
Expenditure to 24 November: $7480.00  
Select procurement method
BMF Advertising – public relations for digital switchover
Contract signed on 12/10/2008
Duration of contract (deed of standing offer): March 2009
Value of contract: $2,750,000.00
Expenditure to 24 November: $341,740.91
Select procurement method

Mary Dickie Issues Management Pty Ltd – public relations for the 2008 National E-security Awareness Week
Duration: 30 June 2008.
Value of contract: $214,543.00
Expenditure to 24 November: $214,543.00.
Select procurement method

Wallis Consulting Group Pty Ltd – communications for annual client service satisfaction survey
Contract signed 7 March 2007.
Duration: 30 June 2008.
Expenditure to 24 November: $535,774.24.
Select procurement method

303 Advertising Ltd – public relations for the Protecting Australian Families Online program.
Duration: 30 June 2008.
Value of contract: $1,235,405.13 GST inclusive
Expenditure to 24 November: $1,235,405.13.
Select procurement method

Woolcott Research Pty Ltd – communications for research on the Clever Networks program
Duration: 11 June 2008.
Value of contract: $79,500.00 GST inclusive
Expenditure to 24 November: $79,500.00.
Open procurement method

Quantum Market Research (Aust) Pty Ltd – communications for telecommunications consumer information campaign
Contract signed 12 December 2006.
Duration: 29 June 2008.
Value of contract: $374,434.760 GST inclusive
Expenditure to 24 November: $374,434.760.
Open procurement method

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
**Innovation, Industry, Science and Research: Consultancies**  
(Question No. 933)

Senator Ronaldson asked the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:

For the 2008 calendar year, can details be provided of the start date, duration, cost and nature (direct source or open source) of tender for each individual consultancy contract with the department dealing with: (a) media relations; (b) public relations; (c) public events management; (d) communications; and (e) communications strategy.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Supplier Name</th>
<th>Cost and Nature</th>
<th>Direct/Open source</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-Nov-2007</td>
<td>30-Jun-2008</td>
<td>Science in Public</td>
<td>$25,000 for 2007-08 review of the Prime Minister’s Prizes for Science</td>
<td>Direct sourcing</td>
<td>d) communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-Sep-2007</td>
<td>30-Jan-2009</td>
<td>Haystac Public Affairs</td>
<td>$908,820 for the development and implementation of a marketing and communications strategy</td>
<td>Open Tender</td>
<td>e) communications strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Foreign Affairs and Trade: Media Monitoring**  
(Question No. 949)

Senator Ronaldson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:

1. Can details be provided, as of 24 November 2008, of the total number of all staff in:
   (a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and
   (b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

2. Can details be provided of the aggregate salary and superannuation costs during the 2008 calendar year for all staff in:
   (a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and
   (b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

3. Can details be provided of the aggregate travel costs during the 2008 calendar year for all staff in:
   (a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and
   (b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.
(4) Can details be provided of the aggregate mobile phone costs during the 2008 calendar year for all staff in:

(a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and

(b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

(5) Can a breakdown be provided of every review, inquiry and committee which is being conducted in the department that has been announced since 1 December 2007.

(6) (a) How many of the department’s reviews, inquiries and committees are in progress or incomplete as of 24 November 2008; and (b) what are their reporting dates.

(7) In regard to each of the department’s review, inquiry and committee (completed and incomplete as of 24 November 2008) that has or is being conducted during the 2008 calendar year:

(a) what is the number of departmental staff allocated to each;

(b) what is the aggregate number of departmental staff allocated to all;

(c) were external consultants engaged to assist in any; if so, which consultants and how much has each consultancy cost (please itemise for each); and

(d) what have been the travel costs associated with those staff involved in each (please itemise for each).

(8) For the 2008 calendar year, what is the total cost of each departmental review, inquiry and committee, including staff wages, consultancy costs, travel and any other associated expenditure (please itemise for each).

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

(1) (a) Two, both of whom were employed under the MoPS Act. (b) In addition to the department’s official spokesperson (Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary and Media Branch), the department had at 24 November 2008 seven media liaison officers in the Media Liaison Section in Canberra.

(2) (a) The salary and related costs of the two staff were the responsibility of and borne by the Department of Finance and Deregulation. The Department of Finance and Deregulation has advised the department that the annual salary ranges of the two staff at 24 November 2008 were: between $85,500 and $116,400 plus $17,719 annual ministerial staff allowance; and between $62,124 and $74,516 plus $16,550 annual parliamentary staff allowance. (b) The annual salary ranges of the eight staff at 24 November 2008 were:

One SES Band 1 employee: between $127,981 and $141,097 plus $15,410 annual parliamentary restriction allowance;

One EL2 employee: between $96,477 and $111,593;

Two specialist EL1 Public Affairs Officers: between $85,653 and $96,477;

Three APS6 employees: between $65,103 and $73,105;

One APS4 employee (position filled from 1 October 2008): between $54,503 and $57,537.

Depending on their individual circumstances, employees may be eligible to be a member of the CSS, PSS or PSSap. Employer superannuation contribution rates for these funds vary, with the maximum at 18.4 per cent of salary and relevant allowances.

(3) (a) The travel costs of the two staff were the responsibility of and borne by the Department of Finance and Deregulation. The Department of Finance and Deregulation has advised the department

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
that the travel costs of the two staff from 1 January 2008 to 24 November 2008 were $138,394.78 (GST exclusive). (b) The travel costs of the eight staff from 1 January 2008 to 24 November 2008 were $108,151 (GST exclusive).

(4) (a) The mobile phone costs of the two staff from 1 January 2008 to 24 November 2008 were $6,689.04 (GST exclusive). (b) The mobile phone costs of the eight staff from 1 January 2008 to 24 November 2008 were $8,871 (GST exclusive).

(5) Between 1 December 2007 and 24 November 2008, the department undertook two reviews: a root and branch review of the department’s resources; and the Mortimer Review of Export Policies and Programs, which incorporated assessment of the Export Market Development Grant (EMDG) scheme and of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs).

(6) (a) The root and branch review (see 6 (b)). (b) Work on the root and branch review has been subsumed into preparations for the 2009-10 Budget.

The Mortimer Review reported to the Minister for Trade on 2 September 2008.

(7) (a) At its peak, six departmental staff were allocated to the root and branch review. The Department of Finance and Deregulation also provided two staff.

Five departmental staff were allocated to the Mortimer Review Secretariat. Other staff allocated to the Mortimer Review Secretariat were provided by Austrade (four), Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (one) and Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (one). There were also two contracted support staff provided by Austrade.

(b) 10 – at the conclusion of the Mortimer Review, one departmental employee transferred from the Mortimer Review staff to the root and branch review staff

(c) None for the root and branch review.

The Mortimer Review was conducted by two panel members (see below) supported by a Secretariat as outlined above. The assessment of FTAs was also supported by a reference group of experts (see below). Consultants were engaged to assist with specific aspects of the review. A list of consultants and their costs are outlined below.

Mortimer Review Panel Members
- Mr David Mortimer AO, Chairman of Leighton Holdings and Australia Post (Chair of the Review)
- Dr John Edwards, Chief Economist at HSBC (also on short-term placement with Treasury during the period of the Review).

FTA Reference Group of Experts
- Prof Kym Anderson, Professor of Economics at the University of Adelaide
- Mr Andrew Stoler, Executive Director of the Institute for International Trade
- Mr Peter Gallagher, Managing Director of Inquit
- Dr Nicholas Gruen, CEO of Lateral Economics.

No fees were paid to Panel Members or FTA Reference Group Experts for their roles as panel members and reference group experts, but travel costs were met by the Commonwealth to enable them to participate in consultations.

Consultants
- Inquit Pty Ltd – $7,425 (FTAs – business survey)
- Lateral Economics – $84,772 (econometric assessment of EMDG scheme)
- Wallis Consulting – $81,800 (survey of EMDG clients).
(d) The travel costs associated with departmental staff involved in the root and branch review were $5,324.31. The travel costs for Mortimer Review Secretariat staff, panel members and reference group experts were approximately $68,650.

(8) The total cost of each review is as follows:

**Root and Branch Review**

The root and branch review was conducted within the department’s existing resources:
- staff wages – nil; all departmental staff were deployed from line areas within the department
- consultancy costs – nil
- travel – $5,324.31
- other associated expenditure – nil.

**Mortimer Review**

The total cost of the Mortimer Review was approximately $424,310. This cost was shared between the department (45 per cent) and Austrade (55 per cent). This excludes Review Secretariat staff wages which were absorbed by the respective home departments. This also excludes some Secretariat on-costs (telephones, computers etc.) which were absorbed by the department.

A breakdown of estimated costs is outlined below:
- consultancy costs – $173,997
- contract staff – $53,787
- travel for Secretariat, panel members and reference group experts – $68,650
- advertising for consultations – $20,920
- editing & publication costs – $102,451
- other administrative costs – $4,506.

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1 These employees’ duties were not limited to media relations and advice, but also included policy research, liaison and advice as well as other operational duties to support the Minister in his portfolio responsibilities.

2 Salary ranges are provided in (2) (a) and (b) so as not to disclose the exact salary of individual employees.

**Finance and Deregulation: Media Monitoring**

*(Question No. 953)*

*Senator Ronaldson* asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:

(1) Can details be provided, as of 24 November 2008, of the total number of all staff in:

(a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and

(b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

(2) Can details be provided of the aggregate salary and superannuation costs during the 2008 calendar year for all staff in:
(a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and
(b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

(3) Can details be provided of the aggregate travel costs during the 2008 calendar year for all staff in:
(a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and
(b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

(4) Can details be provided of the aggregate mobile phone costs during the 2008 calendar year for all staff in:
(a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and
(b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

(5) Can a breakdown be provided of every review, inquiry and committee which is being conducted in the department that has been announced since 1 December 2007.

(6) (a) How many of the department’s reviews, inquiries and committees are in progress or incomplete as of 24 November 2008; and (b) what are their reporting dates.

(7) In regard to each of the department’s review, inquiry and committee (completed and incomplete as of 24 November 2008) that has or is being conducted during the 2008 calendar year: (a) what is the number of departmental staff allocated to each; (b) what is the aggregate number of departmental staff allocated to all; (c) were external consultants engaged to assist in any; if so, which consultants and how much has each consultancy cost (please itemise for each); and (d) what have been the travel costs associated with those staff involved in each (please itemise for each).

(8) For the 2008 calendar year, what is the total cost of each departmental review, inquiry and committee, including staff costs, consultancy costs, travel and any other associated expenditure (please itemise for each).

Senator Sherry—The Minister for Finance and Deregulation has supplied the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

1 Two staff members are the primary contacts for media and public affairs. Five other staff members in the Communications and Public Affairs section undertake a variety tasks focussed primarily on internal communications and the management of Departmental events.

2 Salary range is provided so as not to disclose the exact salary of the individual employee.
Figure represents the combined salaries and superannuation of the two staff members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of review</th>
<th>Total no. of reviews not completed as at 24 November 5</th>
<th>If not completed likely reporting date</th>
<th>No. of Departmental staff allocated to each review</th>
<th>Total no. of staff allocated to all reviews</th>
<th>External consultants used for each review</th>
<th>Travel expenses for Departmental staff</th>
<th>Total cost of each review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Review of Grants Administration</td>
<td>Com完成ed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$444,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(this includes officers seconded to Finance from other agencies)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Element 1 – Mr Peter Grant PSM $132,690</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Element 2 – Dr Joanne Kelly $51,987</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff costs – $251,840 Consultancy costs – $182,690 Reimbursement of travel expenses to consultant – $1,987 Printing costs – $8,200 Total – $444,717</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Review of Climate Change Programs</td>
<td>Com完成ed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$513,400</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(this includes officers seconded to Finance from other agencies)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Roger Wilkins – $75,000 Also reimbursed travel expenses of – $15,128</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff costs – $412,227 Consultancy costs – $75,000 Travel – $16,173 Printing costs – $10,000 Total – $513,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6) (a)</td>
<td>(6) (b)</td>
<td>(7) (a)</td>
<td>(7) (b)</td>
<td>(7) (c)</td>
<td>(7) (d)</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray Review of Operation Sunlight</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Andrew Murray conducted the review in his (then) capacity as a member of Parliament. Staff costs (support by the Department to Senator Murray) – $14,792 Printing costs – $1,022 Total – $15,814</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Pension Indexation In Australian Government Civilian and Military Superannuation Schemes</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mercer (Australia) Pty Ltd – $11,000 Australian Government Actuary’s Office – $5,500</td>
<td>$750 Staff costs – $132,370 Consultants – $16,500 Travel (includes travel from UK of reviewer) – $31,600 Hearings – $4,663 Secretariat support for reviewer – $7,702 Couriers – $595 Total – $193,430 Staff costs – $47,305</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of the Australian Government Superannuation Administration Arrangements</td>
<td>April 2009</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
<table>
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<tr>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6) (a)</th>
<th>(6) (b)</th>
<th>(7) (a)</th>
<th>(7) (b)</th>
<th>(7) (c)</th>
<th>(7) (d)</th>
<th>(8)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review of Commonwealth Property Disposals Policy</td>
<td>February 2009</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff costs – $73,515</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Audit Update Review</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff costs – $16,781</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gershon review</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sir Peter Gershon – $35,733</td>
<td>Staff costs – $331,123</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$95,000</td>
<td>Consultants –</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plus travel – $51,511</td>
<td>– $375,153</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oakton – $260,577</td>
<td>Travel (including staff and consultant) – $87,244</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statistician –</td>
<td>General expenses (venue hire, statistics from ABS, Ovum report, stationery) – $26,489</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– $14,288</td>
<td>Total – $820,009</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Editor – $4,050</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Graphic Designer – $1,238</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Senator Ronaldson asked the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:

1. Can details be provided, as of 24 November 2008, of the total number of all staff in:
   (a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and
   (b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

2. Can details be provided of the aggregate salary and superannuation costs during the 2008 calendar year for all staff in:
   (a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and
   (b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.
(3) Can details be provided of the aggregate travel costs during the 2008 calendar year for all staff in:
   (a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and
   (b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

(4) Can details be provided of the aggregate mobile phone costs during the 2008 calendar year for all staff in:
   (a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and
   (b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

(5) Can a breakdown be provided of every review, inquiry and committee which is being conducted in the department that has been announced since 1 December 2007.

(6) (a) How many of the department’s reviews, inquiries and committees are in progress or incomplete as of 24 November 2008; and (b) what are their reporting dates.

(7) In regard to each of the department’s review, inquiry and committee (completed and incomplete as of 24 November 2008) that has or is being conducted during the 2008 calendar year: (a) what is the number of departmental staff allocated to each; (b) what is the aggregate number of departmental staff allocated to all; (c) were external consultants engaged to assist in any; if so, which consultants and how much has each consultancy cost (please itemise for each); and (d) what have been the travel costs associated with those staff involved in each (please itemise for each).

(8) For the 2008 calendar year, what is the total cost of each departmental review, inquiry and committee, including staff wages, consultancy costs, travel and any other associated expenditure (please itemise for each).

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

(1) (a) Three, (b) Thirty.

(2) (a) *The salary range only is provided so as not to identify personal information of individual employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Salary Range</th>
<th>Allowance</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Media Adviser</td>
<td>$85,500 to $116,400</td>
<td>$17,719 MSA*</td>
<td>From 28 January 2008 onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Adviser</td>
<td>$62,124 to $74,516</td>
<td>$16,550 PSA**</td>
<td>Employee 1: From 1 January 2008 onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employee 2: From 5 May 2008 onwards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Ministerial Staff Allowance
** Parliamentary Staff Allowance

Depending on their individual circumstances, employees may be eligible to be a member of the CSS, PSS or PSSap. Alternatively, employees under the Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Collective Agreement 2006-2009 may have an employer superannuation contribution of 15.4 per cent paid to an eligible superannuation fund of their choice, while employees above the level of Adviser may have an employer superannuation contribution of nine per cent paid to an eligible superannuation fund of their choice. Individual details are not supplied due to privacy reasons.

(b) $2,241,376
(3) (a) —

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Travel Costs***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Media Adviser</td>
<td>$16,414.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Adviser (Employee 1)</td>
<td>$60,040.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Adviser (Employee 2)</td>
<td>$33,212.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Travel costs:</td>
<td>$109,667.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Travel costs are up to and including 24 November 2008

(b) $100,689.96

(4) (a) $8,264.94

(b) $2,479.82

(5) Since 1 December 2007, the following reviews are or have been conducted in the department:

- Department Review of Questacon ‘Stepping up to meet national needs’
- The Review of Australia’s Automotive Industry
- The Review of Australia’s Textile, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) Industries
- The Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) Intergovernmental Agreement Review
- The National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) Roadmap Review
- The Review of the National Innovation System
- The Review of Australia’s Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) program (this review was undertaken under the broader examination of the Review of the National Innovation System)

(6) (a) and (b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Reporting Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department Review of Questacon ‘Stepping up to</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>28 July 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meet national needs’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Review of Australia’s Automotive Industry</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Interim report was delivered on 31 March 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and a final report on 22 July 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Review of Australia’s Textile, Clothing and</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footwear (TCF) Industries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB)</td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>Progress Report – 11 November 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental Agreement Review</td>
<td></td>
<td>Draft final report for Review of the IGA –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25 January 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final report for the Review of the IGA –</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24 February 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) Roadmap Review</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>4 September 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Review of the National Innovation System</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>9 September 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Review of Australia’s Cooperative Research</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>August 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centres (CRC) program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(7) (a), (c) and (d)

Department Review of Questacon ‘Stepping up to meet national needs’
(a) Ten part time Staff  
(c) Ms Marea Fatseas of Ideas Connect Pty Ltd: $27,500 (GST exclusive)  
(d) $1,904.87 (GST exclusive)

The Review of Australia’s Automotive Industry

(a) Five Staff  
(c) Four consultants  
  Australian Automotive Intelligence: $1,320.00 (GST inclusive)  
  Internationale Consultancy Technologie Overdracht: $15,306.12 (GST N/A)  
  Lateral Economics: $2,145.00 (GST inclusive)  
  Techstrat Research Pty Ltd: $28,000.00 (GST inclusive)  
(d) $77,653.77 (GST inclusive)

The TCF Review

(a) Four Staff  
(c) Two consultants  
  Dr Phillip Toner: $74,080.00 (GST inclusive)  
  Associate Professor Richard Denniss: $37,175.00 (GST inclusive)  
(d) $26,700.00 (GST inclusive)

The ABCB Intergovernmental Agreement Review

(a) Three part time Staff  
(c) The Allen Consulting Group (contract amount): $243,636 (GST exclusive)*  
(d) Nil  
  *Funds for this contract were drawn from the ABCB Special Account, following joint agreement on 4 July 2008 by the Minister Innovation, Industry, Science and Research and State and Territory Ministers responsible for building regulation (Ministers party to the Intergovernmental Agreement for the Australian Building Codes Board).

The NCRIS Roadmap Review

(a) Two part time staff  
(c) Two Consultants  
  Radar Investor Relations: $67,927.00 (GST exclusive)  
  Paul C Davis and Associates Pty Ltd: $46,900.00 (GST exclusive)  
(d) $1,600.00 (GST exclusive)

The Review of the National Innovation System

(a) Eleven full time Staff (A number of other staff contributed to the Review on an Ad Hoc Basis)  
(c) One Consultant – Terry Cutler $281,222.47  
  Eleven Panel and Working Group members $149,620.35  
  Four International Advisors $128,903.23  
  Eight Contractors for Writing and Design $55,682.87  
(d) $141,243.79 (GST exclusive)

The Review of Australia’s Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) program

(a) Seven staff
(c) Professor Mary O'Kane: $165,000.00 (GST Inclusive)
(d) $41,642.34 (GST Inclusive)
(7) (b) Fifteen part-time staff and twenty-seven full time staff were allocated to all the Departments reviews, inquiries or committees
(8) Department Review of Questacon ‘Stepping up to meet national needs’
Total Cost: $228,299.01 (GST Inclusive)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total (GST exclusive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>$27,500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>$1,904.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Costs</td>
<td>$158,049.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other costs</td>
<td>$40,844.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$228,299.01</td>
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</table>

The Review of Australia’s Automotive Industry
Total Cost: $702,803.85 (GST Inclusive)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total (GST Inclusive)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review leader (Mr Bracks)*</td>
<td>$36,250.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expert Panel Members*</td>
<td>$75,711.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>$46,771.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>$77,653.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>staff costs</td>
<td>$364,446.49</td>
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<td>Other Costs</td>
<td>$101,970.74</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>702,803.85</td>
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</table>

*In the table above, remuneration and travel costs for, or in respect of, Mr Bracks and the expert panel members have been included in the respective amounts for the ‘Review Leader’ and ‘Expert Panel Members’.

The TCF Review
Total cost: $964,691.00 (GST inclusive)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total (GST Inclusive)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Reviewer</td>
<td>$210,583.00</td>
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<td>Reference Group</td>
<td>$62,298.00</td>
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<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>$263,165.00</td>
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<td>Travel</td>
<td>$26,900.00</td>
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<td>Staff costs</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>$122,413.00</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>$964,691.00</td>
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The ABCB Intergovernmental Agreement Review
$155,206.27 (GST exclusive)

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<th>Total (GST exclusive)</th>
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<td>$136,206.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>$19,000.00</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>$155,206.27</td>
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The NCRIS Roadmap Review
$246,798.00 (GST exclusive)
Consultancy $114,827.00
Travel $16,600.00
Staff Costs $80,000.00
Other Costs $10,236.00
Total $221,663

The Review of the National Innovation System
$1,956,052.86 (GST inclusive where applicable)

<table>
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<th>Total (GST inclusive where applicable)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>$784,447.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>$362,824.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other costs</td>
<td>$193,351.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$1,956,052.86</td>
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The Review of Australia’s Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) program
$410,957.36 (GST inclusive)

<table>
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<td>Consultancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>$337,440.60</td>
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<td>Travel Costs</td>
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<td>Other costs</td>
<td>$21,983.70</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>$575,957.36</td>
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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: Media Monitoring
(Question No. 961)

Senator Ronaldson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 24 November 2008:

1. Can details be provided, as of 24 November 2008, of the total number of all staff in: (a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and (b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

2. Can details be provided of the aggregate salary and superannuation costs during the 2008 calendar year for all staff in: (a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and (b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

3. Can details be provided of the aggregate travel costs during the 2008 calendar year for all staff in: (a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and (b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

4. Can details be provided of the aggregate mobile phone costs during the 2008 calendar year for all staff in: (a) the Minister’s office whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy; and (b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.
egy; and (b) the department whose job description involves: (i) media relations, (ii) media advice, (iii) public relations, (iv) public affairs, (v) communications, and (vi) communications strategy.

(5) Can a breakdown be provided of every review, inquiry and committee which is being conducted in the department that has been announced since 1 December 2007.

(6) (a) How many of the department’s reviews, inquiries and committees are in progress or incomplete as of 24 November 2008; and (b) what are their reporting dates.

(7) In regard to each of the department’s review, inquiry and committee (completed and incomplete as of 24 November 2008) that has or is being conducted during the 2008 calendar year: (a) what is the number of departmental staff allocated to each; (b) what is the aggregate number of departmental staff allocated to all; (c) were external consultants engaged to assist in any; if so, which consultants and how much has each consultancy cost (please itemise for each); and (d) what have been the travel costs associated with those staff involved in each (please itemise for each).

(8) For the 2008 calendar year, what is the total cost of each departmental review, inquiry and committee, including staff wages, consultancy costs, travel and any other associated expenditure (please itemise for each).

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

(1) (a) At 24 November 2008, there were 2 full-time equivalent staff employed in my office undertaking media and communications work.

(b) As at 24 November 2008 the department had 49.1 full time equivalent staff whose job description involved media relations, media advice, public relations, public affairs, communications, and communications strategy.

(2) (a) The salary range only is provided so as not to identify personal information of individual employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Salary Range</th>
<th>Allowance</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior media adviser</td>
<td>$85,500 to $116,400</td>
<td>$17,719 MSA*</td>
<td>From 11 February 2008 onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adviser</td>
<td>$74,516 to $109,967</td>
<td>$17,874 PSA**</td>
<td>From 24 July 2008 onwards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Ministerial Staff Allowance
** Parliamentary Staff Allowance

Depending on their individual circumstances, employees may be eligible to be a member of the CSS, PSS or PSSap. Alternatively, employees under the Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Collective Agreement 2006-2009 may have an employer superannuation contribution of 15.4 per cent paid to an eligible superannuation fund of their choice, while employees above the level of adviser may have an employer superannuation contribution of nine percent paid to an eligible superannuation fund of their choice. Individual details are not supplied due to privacy reasons.

(2) (b) The estimated salary and superannuation costs of staff whose job description involved media relations, media advice, public relations, public affairs, communications, and communications strategy during the 2008 calendar year, based on the department’s response to part 1 of this question, is $4,742,590.

(3) (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Travel Costs***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Media Adviser</td>
<td>$55,630.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adviser</td>
<td>$5,608.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Travel Costs:</td>
<td>$61,239.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Travel costs are up to and including 24 November 2008.

(b) The precise detail requested in the question is not readily available and it would be an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources to ascertain this information.

(4) (a) and (b) The precise detail requested in the question is not readily available and it would be an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources to ascertain this information.

(5) From 1 December 2007 to the question on notice date, the following reviews, inquiries and committees conducted by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry have been announced:

- the Review of Quarantine and Biosecurity Arrangements (Beale Review) (announced February 2008)
- the National Drought Policy Review (announced April 2008)
- the 2008 Dairy Quota Review (announced April 2008)
- a review of the feasibility of alternatives to the cancellation provisions under the Fisheries Management Act 1994 (election commitment)
- an internal government review of biofuels policy (announced May 2008)

No major reviews, committees, taskforces or inquiries have been started or formed since 24 November 2008.

(6) The reporting deadlines for those reviews, inquiries and committees that are in progress or incomplete as at 24 November 2008 are outlined below.

National Drought Policy Review

- The assessment of the impact of climate change on the nature and frequency of exceptional climate events by the Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO is complete and was publicly released on 6 July 2008.
- The assessment of the social dimensions of the impacts of drought on farm families and rural communities by an expert social panel is complete and was publicly released on 23 October 2008.
- The Productivity Commission’s draft report inquiring into government drought support was publicly released on 30 October 2008. The commission’s final report was provided to the government on 27 February 2009.

I will draw on the findings of these assessments and consultations with key stakeholders, including state and territory agriculture ministers, to develop an improved drought policy. An improved policy will be finalised and announced once this has occurred.

1994 National Recreational Fishing Policy Review

This review is part of the development of a new Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy—a three-year initiative stemming from an election commitment to the fishing industry. An independent committee will advise me on recreational fishing related issues and undertake the review. The committee is chaired by Mr Chris Natt and comprises of nine other members with relevant recreational fishing sector experience. The committee held its first meeting on 25–26 February 2009.

Review of the feasibility of alternatives to the cancellation provisions under the Fisheries Management Act 1994

The review is being conducted by the department in consultation with stakeholder groups, including the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, Attorney-General’s Department and representatives of the Commonwealth Fisheries Association, Department of Primary Industries Tasmania, Department of...
Fisheries Western Australia, and Recfish Australia. A draft report is expected to be released for public comment in the second half of 2009.

**Internal government review of biofuels policy**

The department and the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism are undertaking an internal government review of existing Australian biofuels programs and policies. The review report is currently being considered by government.

(7) (a) The response to this question has been presented in two ways, first, as the total number of people and secondly, expressed in terms of the equivalence to a full time officer (FTE). As the reporting period for this question—1 December 2007 to 24 November 2008—is approximately one year, the FTE has been calculated based on 260 days (i.e. 52 working weeks). The calculation of FTE takes into account the length of the review/committee and the proportion of the officers’ time spent working on this task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review / Inquiry / Committee</th>
<th>No. dept staff</th>
<th>FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beale Review</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National drought policy review</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 Dairy Quota Review</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994 National Recreational Fishing Policy Review</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of the feasibility of alternatives to the cancellation provisions under the <em>Fisheries Management Act 1994</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal government review of biofuels policy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat Industry Expert Group</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^calculation based on months served rather than working days.

*as this review commenced after the reporting period for this question the allocation of departmental staff has not been determined at this time.

#this figure does not include staff from the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism involved in the review.

¥ an estimation of the FTE has not been provided. A small number of officers were involved in these processes as part of their normal duties. The level of engagement of these officers varied depending on the complexity and nature of the work involved.

(b) Based on the table above, the aggregate number of departmental staff specifically dedicated to these processes was approximately 15.89 FTE.

(c) Where external consultants have been engaged to conduct the review or inquiry or as a member of a committee, the costs associated with this during the 2008 calendar year are outlined below.

**Beale Review**

The review of Australia’s quarantine and biosecurity arrangements was undertaken by an independent panel comprising Mr Roger Beale AO (chair), Dr Jeff Fairbrother AM, Mr Andrew Inglis AM and Mr David Trebeck.

The panellists’ sitting fees totalled $664,449. Under the Privacy Act 1988, the department is unable to release personal information without the express consent of the individual concerned—accordingly, individual remuneration details have not been provided.

**Drought Policy Review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultant</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO</td>
<td>Climatic assessment</td>
<td>$135,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Social Panel</td>
<td>Social dimensions of drought assessment</td>
<td>$172,210 (sitting fees only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tuesday, 12 May 2009

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Consultant | Task | Cost
---|---|---
Cox Inall | Promoting the expert social panel’s consultative process | $72,375

Total |  | $380,416

Note: Costs associated with the Productivity Commission’s inquiry into government drought support are not included in the above table as these costs are borne by the commission.

2008 Dairy Quota Review

The 2008 Dairy Quota Review was undertaken by an independent panel comprising Mr John McQueen (Chair), Mr David Harris and Dr Sandra Welsman. The panellists’ sitting fees totalled $106,180.

In addition, an administrative assistant was employed temporarily to assist with the review—total cost $20,313.

1994 National Recreational Fishing Policy Review

No external consultants have been engaged.

The committee was appointed on 5 February 2008 and comprises Mr Chris Natt (Chair), Ms Ann Garard, Mr Doug Joyner, Mr David Kramer, Mr Phil Laycock, Mr Len Olyott, Mr Michael Sawyer, Mr William Sawynok, Ms Lisa Sharp and Mr Ross Winstanley. The advisory committee will be paid Category 2 level daily fees as holders of part-time public office in accordance with Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2008/07 (chair daily rate of $495, member daily rate of $366) for attending to formal committee business.

(7) (d) The travel costs for the department’s reviews, inquiries and committees being conducted during the 2008 calendar year are outlined in the table below. The travel costs are for both departmental staff and external consultants (where engaged) and include travel costs and allowances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review / Inquiry / Committee</th>
<th>Travel costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beale Review</td>
<td>$300,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National drought policy review</td>
<td>$281,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 Dairy Quota Review</td>
<td>$17,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994 National Recreational Fishing Policy Review</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of the feasibility of alternatives to the cancellation provisions under the Fisheries Management Act 1994</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal government review of biofuels policy</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat Industry Expert Group</td>
<td>$33,947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee met for the first time in February 2009. No travel costs were incurred during the reporting period.

^any travel undertaken for the internal government review of biofuels policy was part of the normal duties of the officers involved and as such the travel costs have been absorbed within departmental appropriation.

(8) The total cost of each departmental review, inquiry and committee (including staff wages, consultancy costs, travel and any other associated expenditure) for the 2008 calendar year is outlined in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of review/ inquiry/ committee</th>
<th>Dept. Staff</th>
<th>Consult.</th>
<th>Travel</th>
<th>Associated</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beale Review</td>
<td>$684,275</td>
<td>$664,449</td>
<td>$300,721</td>
<td>$92,344</td>
<td>$1,741,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National drought policy review</td>
<td>$806,184</td>
<td>$380,416</td>
<td>$281,190</td>
<td>$213,514</td>
<td>$1,681,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy Quota Review 2008</td>
<td>$81,218</td>
<td>$106,180</td>
<td>$17,473</td>
<td>$27,889</td>
<td>$232,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994 National Recreational Fishing Policy Review</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

**Name of review/ inquiry/ committee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of review/ inquiry/ committee</th>
<th>Dept. Staff</th>
<th>Consult. costs</th>
<th>Travel</th>
<th>Associated costs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility of alternatives to cancellation provisions under <em>Fisheries Management Act 1994</em></td>
<td>$115,276 -</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
<td>$15,738</td>
<td>$132,814</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal government review of biofuels</td>
<td>¥$42,091 -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>¥$42,091</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat Industry Expert Group</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>$33,947</td>
<td>$14,412</td>
<td>$48,359</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# the associated costs for the drought policy review include $147,810 for a literature review and data analysis by the Bureau of Rural Sciences to support the expert social panel. Associated costs also include official hospitality, legal costs, publications and marketing and production of publications.

§ the total cost of the drought policy review does not include costs associated with the Productivity Commission’s inquiry (approximately $0.753 million at 31 October 2008).

* the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee met for the first time in February 2009.

¥ this does not include staff from the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism involved in the review.

### Treasury: Commonwealth Credit Cards

(Question Nos 974, 992, 993 and 1000)

**Senator Ronaldson** asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, upon notice, on 25 November 2008:

1. How many Commonwealth credit cards have been issued to departmental and agency staff within the Minister’s portfolio.
2. How many Commonwealth credit cards have been issued to departmental and agency staff that fall within the responsibility of the Minister’s associated Parliamentary Secretary or Secretaries.
3. Within the Minister’s portfolio, how many Commonwealth credit cards have been issued to: (a) staff employed under the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984; (b) the Minister; and (c) the Minister’s associated Parliamentary Secretary or Secretaries.
4. For each Commonwealth credit card issued in (3) above, what was the date of its issue.

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

**Australian Accounting Standards Board**

The AASB has a nil response.

**Australian Bureau of Statistics**

1. The ABS currently has 1737 active credit cards.
2. N/A.
3. N/A.
4. N/A.

**Australian Competition and Consumer Commission**

1. The ACCC has 63 credit cards issued.
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. N/A
Australian Office of Financial Management
(1) Two AOFM staff have been issued with credit cards.
(2) N/A.
(3) N/A.
(4) N/A.

Australian Prudential Regulation Authority
(1) As at 1 December 2008, APRA has 455 Commonwealth credit cards issued.
(2) N/A.
(3) N/A.
(4) N/A.

Australian Securities and Investment Commission
(1) ASIC currently has 777 corporate credit cards issued to staff.
(2) N/A.
(3) N/A.
(4) N/A.

Australian Taxation Office
(1) As at 27/11/08, the ATO has 294 credit cards on issue. This includes ATO staff and AVO staff.
(2) N/A.
(3) N/A.
(4) N/A.

Corporations and Markets Advisory Committee
(1) As at 27/11/08, CAMAC has 2 credit cards issued to staff.
(2) N/A.
(3) N/A.
(4) N/A.

Inspector-General of Taxation
(1) One Commonwealth credit card is currently on issue to the Inspector-General of Taxation staff.
(2) N/A.
(3) N/A.
(4) N/A.

National Competition Council
(1) The National Competition Council has issued seven credit cards.
(2) Nil.
(3) (a) Nil. (b) seven. (c) Nil.
(4) Cards issued as follows:
  2007 – 4 cards issued – one each in the months of May, July, August and November – 2 cards issued in September.
  2008 – one card issued in July.
Productivity Commission
(1) 23 as at 25 November 2008.
(2) N/A.
(3) N/A.
(4) N/A.
Royal Australian Mint
(1) The Royal Australian Mint has 21 credit cards issued.
(2) N/A.
(3) N/A.
(4) N/A.
Treasury
(1) The Treasury has 44 credit cards issued.
(2) Nil.
(3) (a) The Office of the Treasurer has 3 Commonwealth credit cards issued to staff employed under the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984.
   The Office of the Assistant Treasurer has no Commonwealth credit cards issued to staff employed under the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984.
   The Office of the Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law has 2 Commonwealth credit cards issued to staff employed under the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984.
   (b) Nil.
   (c) Nil.
(4) The dates of issue for Commonwealth credit cards within the Office of the Treasurer are:
   14 February 2008
   18 February 2008
   19 February 2008
   The dates of issue for Commonwealth credit cards within the Office of the Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law are:
   21 May 2008
   22 May 2008

Health and Ageing: Commonwealth Credit Cards
(Question Nos 980, 1001 and 1003)
Senator Ronaldson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health and Ageing, upon notice, on 25 November 2008:
(1) How many Commonwealth credit cards have been issued to departmental and agency staff within the Minister’s portfolio.
(2) How many Commonwealth credit cards have been issued to departmental and agency staff that fall within the responsibility of the Minister’s associated Parliamentary Secretary or Secretaries.
(3) Within the Minister’s portfolio, how many Commonwealth credit cards have been issued to:
   (a) staff employed under the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984;
   (b) the Minister;
(c) the Minister’s associated Parliamentary Secretary or Secretaries.

(4) For each Commonwealth credit card issued in (3) above, what was the date of its issue.

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

As at 28 November 2008, in the Health and Ageing portfolio there were:

1. 1,538 credit cards issued to departmental and agency staff.
2. One currently issued to the Departmental Liaison Officer in The Parliamentary Secretary’s Office.
3. (a) None; (b) None; and (c) None.
4. Not applicable.

Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion and Parliamentary Secretaries: Overseas Travel

(Question Nos 1005, 1006, 1007, 1031 and 1036)

Senator Ronaldson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Education, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and the Minister for Social Inclusion, upon notice, on 25 November 2008:

Has the Minister or any associated Parliamentary Secretary travelled overseas on parliamentary or ministerial business since 25 November 2007; if so, for each trip: (1) What was the purpose. (2) How many nights were spent overseas. (3) What were the dates and venues. (4) How many meetings did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary attend. (5) How many departmental and/or personal ministerial staff accompanied the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary. (6) What was the aggregate cost. (7) Can an itemised account be provided of the costs for the following: (a) transportation; (b) travel allowance; (c) accommodation; (d) meals; and (e) other expenses, paid for by the Commonwealth in relation to the Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and their staff.

Senator Carr—The Minister for Education, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and the Minister for Social Inclusion has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

Ministerial business travel undertaken by portfolio Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries and personal ministerial staff is reported on twice yearly in Parliamentarians’ travel costs paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation. It provides details of the dates and purpose of the Ministers’ and associated Parliamentary Secretaries’ and personal ministerial staff travel, the countries of destination and the costs. Further information on ministerial visits is also available from ministerial web sites and in media releases and media reports.

There are two trips where departmental staff have accompanied the portfolio Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries since 25 November 2007:

**Trip 1**

In June 2008, the Parliamentary Secretary travelled to Peru for the Education Minister’s Conference, accompanied by three departmental employees.

Departmental Employee 1

The table below details the dates and destination/s of each visit, including all cities visited and on what dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canberra, Australia</td>
<td>8 June 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auckland, New Zealand (stop-over)</td>
<td>8 June 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Location Date
Santiago, Chile 8 June 2008 – 9 June 2008
Lima, Peru 9 June 2008 – 12 June 2008
Santiago, Chile (stop-over) 12 June 2008
Auckland, New Zealand (stop-over) 14 June 2008
Canberra, Australia 14 June 2008

Note: In travelling to Chile, the departmental employee crossed the international dateline.
The Parliamentary Secretary attended 1 meeting that the departmental employee also attended.
The total cost of the accompanying departmental employee was $16,294.91. A breakdown of the costs are:
• Airfares $12,919.83
• Accommodation $2,319.02
• Allowances $753.
• Other $303.05

Departmental Employee 2
The table below details the dates and destination/s of each visit, including all cities visited and on what dates.
Location Date
Brisbane, Australia 9 June 2008
Los Angeles, USA (stop-over) 9 June 2008
Lima, Peru 9 June 2008 – 12 June 2008
Santiago, Chile (stop-over) 12 June 2008
Auckland, New Zealand (stop-over) 14 June 2008
Canberra, Australia 14 June 2008

Note: In travelling to Chile, the departmental employee crossed the international dateline.
The Parliamentary Secretary attended one meeting that the departmental employee also attended.
The total cost of the accompanying departmental employee was $19,635.48. A breakdown of the costs are:
• Airfares $17,326.62
• Accommodation $1,687.36
• Allowances $369.05
• Other $252.45

Departmental Employee 3
The table below details the dates and destination/s of each visit, including all cities visited and on what dates.
Location Date
Canberra, Australia 8 June 2008
Auckland, New Zealand (stop-over) 8 June 2008
Santiago, Chile 8 June 2008 – 9 June 2008
Lima, Peru 9 June 2008 – 12 June 2008
Cerro Candela, Peru 10 June 2008
Santiago, Chile (stop-over) 12 June 2008
Auckland, New Zealand (stop-over) 14 June 2008
Canberra, Australia 14 June 2008
Note: In travelling to Chile, the departmental employee crossed the international dateline.
The Parliamentary Secretary attended five meetings that the departmental employee also attended.
The total cost of the accompanying departmental employee was $20,074.97. A breakdown of the costs are:
- Airfares $18,084.08
- Accommodation $1,254.44
- Allowances $439.47
- Other $296.98

Trip 2
In June/July 2008 the Minister travelled to the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Singapore, accompanied by one departmental employee.
The table below details the dates and destination/s of each visit, including all cities visited and on what dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canberra, Australia via Los Angeles, to Washington DC</td>
<td>21 June 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney, Australia (stop-over)</td>
<td>21 June 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles, United States of America (stop-over)</td>
<td>21 June 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington DC, United States of America</td>
<td>22 June 2008 – 27 June 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York, United States of America</td>
<td>27 June 2008 – 29 June 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London, United Kingdom</td>
<td>29 June 2008 – 02 July 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>02 July 2008 – 04 July 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra, via Sydney</td>
<td>04 July 2008 – 05 July 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Minister attended 45 meetings that the departmental employee also attended. This total does not include additional meetings that may have been organised during the trip.
The total cost of the accompanying departmental employee was $28,022.63. A breakdown of the costs are:
- Airfares $20,145.65
- Accommodation $6,102.86
- Allowances $1,720.52
- Other $53.60

Treasurer: Overseas Travel
(Question No. 1008)

Senator Ronaldson asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, upon notice, on 25 November 2008:
Has the Minister or any associated Parliamentary Secretary travelled Overseas on parliamentary or ministerial business since 25 November 2007; if so, for each trip:
(1) What was the purpose.
(2) How many nights were spent overseas.
(3) What were the dates and venues.
(4) How many meetings did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary attend.
(5) How many departmental and/or personal ministerial staff accompanied the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary.
(6) What was the aggregate cost.

(7) Can an itemised account be provided of the costs for the following: (a) transportation; (b) travel allowance; (c) accommodation; (d) meals; and (e) other expenses, paid for by the Commonwealth in relation to the Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and other staff.

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

**Trip no. 1 - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - Bali, Indonesia 9-13 Dec 2007**

| (1) What was the purpose                      | To attend Finance Ministers’ Meeting on Climate Change |
| (2) How many nights were spent overseas      | Three |
| (3) What were the dates and venues           | 9-11 Dec 2007 – Bali, Indonesia |
| (4) How many meetings did the Minister attend| 12 (includes official functions and speeches) |
| (5) How many departmental and/or personal ministerial staff accompanied the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary | Departmental – Five Ministerial – Two |
| (6) What was the aggregate cost              | A$52,080.00 |
| (7) Can an itemised account be provided of the costs for the following: | Minister’s costs – Please refer to the report ‘Parliamentarians’ travel costs paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation’, which is tabled biannually and gives details of the dates and purpose of the travel, the countries of destination and the costs of the visits |
| (a) transportation;                         | Departmental officials costs – provided below |
| (b) travel allowance;                       | A$42.18 |
| (c) accommodation;                         | A$1425.92 |
| (d) meals;                                 | A$3846.16 |
| (e) other expenses, paid for by the         | Included in (b) |
| Commonwealth in relation to the Minister,   | A$73.06 |
| Parliamentary Secretary and other staff     | |

**Trip no. 2 IMF/ World Bank Spring meetings - Washington, USA – 10-15 Apr 2008**

| (1) What was the purpose                      | To attend the Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank |
| (2) How many nights were spent overseas      | Three |
| (3) What were the dates and venues           | 10-13 April 2008 - Washington D.C |
| (4) How many meetings did the Minister attend| 23 (includes official functions and speeches) |
| (5) How many departmental and/or personal ministerial staff accompanied the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary | Departmental – Four Ministerial – One |
| (6) What was the aggregate cost              | A$89,827.00 |
(7) Can an itemised account be provided of the costs for the following:

- **Minister’s costs** – Please refer to the report ‘Parliamentarians’ travel costs paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation’, which is tabled biannually and gives details of the dates and purpose of the travel, the countries of destination and the costs of the visits
- **Departmental officials costs** – provided below

(a) transportation;  
(b) travel allowance;  
(c) accommodation;  
(d) meals; and  
(e) other expenses, paid for by the Commonwealth in relation to the Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and other staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) transportation;</td>
<td>AS135.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) travel allowance;</td>
<td>AS3303.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) accommodation;</td>
<td>AS11394.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) meals; and</td>
<td>Included in (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) other expenses, paid for by the Commonwealth in relation to the Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and other staff</td>
<td>AS372.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Trip no. 3 - Paris, France; London and Edinburgh, UK; Beijing, China; Osaka, Japan, 3 – 15 June 2008**

(1) **What was the purpose**

- France: To attend the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting;
- UK and China: To undertake a series of bilateral meetings;
- Japan: To attend the G8 Finances Ministers’ Outreach meeting.

(2) **How many nights were spent overseas**

12

(3) **What were the dates and venues**

- 4-5 June 2008 – Paris, France
- 5-6 June 2008 – Edinburgh, UK
- 6-8 June 2008 – London, UK
- 9-12 June 2008 – Beijing, China
- 12-14 June 2008 – Osaka, Japan

(4) **How many meetings did the Minister attend**

40 (includes official functions and speeches)

(5) **How many departmental and/or personal ministerial staff accompanied the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary**

- Departmental – Three
- Ministerial – Two

(6) **What was the aggregate cost**

AS143,492.00

(7) Can an itemised account be provided of the costs for the following:

- **Minister’s costs** – Please refer to the report ‘Parliamentarians’ travel costs paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation’, which is tabled biannually and gives details of the dates and purpose of the travel, the countries of destination and the costs of the visits
- **Departmental officials costs** – provided below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) transportation;</td>
<td>AS59.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) travel allowance;</td>
<td>AS2831.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) accommodation;</td>
<td>AS7365.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) meals; and</td>
<td>Included in (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) other expenses, paid for by the Commonwealth in relation to the Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and other staff</td>
<td>AS296.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Trip no. 4 - Annual meeting with NZ Finance Minister Cullen - Wellington, New Zealand 16 - 18 Jul 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) What was the purpose</td>
<td>To attend bilateral meetings with the New Zealand Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, the Hon Dr Michael Cullen MP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) How many nights were spent overseas</td>
<td>Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) What were the dates and venues</td>
<td>16-18 July 2008, Wellington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) How many meetings did the Minister attend</td>
<td>Nine (includes official functions and speeches)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) How many departmental and/ or personal ministerial staff accompanied the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary</td>
<td>Departmental – One, Ministerial – Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) What was the aggregate cost</td>
<td>A$12,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Can an itemised account be provided of the costs for the following:</td>
<td><strong>Minister’s costs</strong> – Please refer to the report ‘Parliamentarians’ travel costs paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation’, which is tabled biannually and gives details of the dates and purpose of the travel, the countries of destination and the costs of the visits. <strong>Departmental officials costs</strong> – provided below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) transportation;</td>
<td>A$28.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) travel allowance;</td>
<td>A$352.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) accommodation;</td>
<td>A$400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) meals; and</td>
<td>Included in (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) other expenses, paid for by the Commonwealth in relation to the Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and other staff</td>
<td>A$20.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Trip no. 5 – New York Visit and IMF/ World Bank Annual Meetings - Washington, USA 8 - 14 Oct 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) What was the purpose</td>
<td>To meet Senior financial market officials in New York and to attend the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) How many nights were spent overseas</td>
<td>Four</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| (3) What were the dates and venues                                       | New York – 8-9 October 2008  
Washington – 9-12 October 2008                                                                 |
| (4) How many meetings did the Minister attend                            | 25 (includes official functions and speeches)                                                                                       |
| (5) How many departmental and/ or personal ministerial staff accompanied the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary | Departmental – Four, Ministerial – Two                                                                                               |
| (6) What was the aggregate cost                                          | A$121,694.00                                                                                                                         |
(7) Can an itemised account be provided of the costs for the following:

Minister’s costs – Please refer to the report ‘Parliamentarians’ travel costs paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation’, which is tabled biannually and gives details of the dates and purpose of the travel, the countries of destination and the costs of the visits

Departmental officials costs – provided below

(a) transportation; A$117.82
(b) travel allowance; A$4451.19
(c) accommodation; A$14,298.70
(d) meals; and Included in (b)
(e) other expenses, paid for by the Commonwealth in relation to the Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and other staff A$97.80

Trip no. 6 – Sao Paulo, Brazil (G-20 Finance Minister’s and Central Bank Governors Meeting); New York, U.S.A.; Washington, U.S.A (G-20 Leaders Summit on the Finance Markets and the World Economy) – 6-17 November 2008

(1) What was the purpose

Brazil: To attend the G-20 Finance Ministers’ and Central Bank Governors’ Meeting;
USA: To participate in the Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy.

(2) How many nights were spent overseas

nine

(3) What were the dates and venues

Brazil: 6-9 November 2008 – Sao Paulo
USA: 10-15 November 2008 - Washington DC

(4) How many meetings did the Minister attend

26 (includes official functions and speeches)

(5) How many departmental and/or personal ministerial staff accompanied the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

Departmental – Three
Ministerial – Three

(6) What was the aggregate cost

Minister’s costs – Please refer to the report ‘Parliamentarians’ travel costs paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation’, which is tabled biannually and gives details of the dates and purpose of the travel, the countries of destination and the costs of the visits

Departmental officials costs – A$80,980

(7) Can an itemised account be provided of the costs for the following:

Minister’s costs – Please refer to the report ‘Parliamentarians’ travel costs paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation’, which is tabled biannually and gives details of the dates and purpose of the travel, the countries of destination and the costs of the visits

Departmental officials costs – provided below

(a) transportation; A$716.80
(b) travel allowance; A$5265.41
(c) accommodation; A$11,258.19
(d) meals; and Included in (b)
(e) other expenses, paid for by the Commonwealth in relation to the Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and other staff

A$103.35

Trip no. 7 – Free trade negotiations – China 6-8 December 2008

(1) What was the purpose To discuss a framework for concluding negotiations for the Australia-China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA) with Chinese ministerial counterparts.
(2) How many nights were spent overseas two
(3) What were the dates and venues 6-7 December 2008 - Beijing
(4) How many meetings did the Minister attend Five (includes official functions and speeches)
(5) How many departmental and/or personal ministerial staff accompanied the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary Ministerial – Two

(6) What was the aggregate cost

Minister’s costs – Please refer to the report ‘Parliamentarians’ travel costs paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation’, which is tabled biannually and gives details of the dates and purpose of the travel, the countries of destination and the costs of the visits
Departmental officials costs – Nil

(7) Can an itemised account be provided of the costs for the following:

(a) transportation; As above
(b) travel allowance; As above
(c) accommodation; As above
(d) meals; and Included in (b)
(e) other expenses, paid for by the Commonwealth in relation to the Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and other staff As above

Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Parliamentary Secretaries: Overseas Travel
(Question No. 1015)

Senator Ronaldson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, upon notice, on 25 November 2008: Has the Minister or any associated Parliamentary Secretary travelled overseas on parliamentary or ministerial business since 25 November 2007; if so, for each trip:
(1) What was the purpose.
(2) How many nights were spent overseas.
(3) What were the dates and venues.

(4) How many meetings did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary attend.

(5) How many departmental and/or personal ministerial staff accompanied the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary.

(6) What was the aggregate cost.

(7) Can an itemised account be provided of the costs for the following: (a) transportation; (b) travel allowance; (c) accommodation; (d) meals; and (e) other expenses, paid for by the Commonwealth in relation to the Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and their staff.

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

Yes, Parliamentary Secretary Bill Shorten travelled to Beijing to attend the Paralympic Games.

(1) The purpose of the visit was to support the Australian paralympic team as Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children’s Services, participate in medal ceremonies and attend meetings.

(2) Mr Shorten stayed six nights in Beijing.

(3) Mr Shorten travelled from 12-19 September 2008 and he stayed at the Swissotel in Beijing.

(4) Mr Shorten attended six bilateral meetings, attended paralympic events and visited a welfare centre for disabled children.

(5) Mr Shorten was accompanied by one Senior Adviser.

(6) The Department of Finance and Deregulation is responsible for overseas travel by Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries and they report every six months on costs associated with overseas travel undertaken, including details of the dates and purpose of the travel, countries of destination. Further information on ministerial visits is also available on ministerial websites and in media and media reports.

(7) (e) Other expenses, paid for by the Commonwealth in relation to Mr Shorten’s travel included interpreter costs which totalled RMB12,000 (approximately $2,000 Australian dollars) for the whole trip.

Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and Parliamentary Secretary: Overseas Travel

(Question No. 1017)

Senator Ronaldson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, upon notice, on 25 November 2008:

Has the Minister or any associated Parliamentary Secretary travelled overseas on parliamentary or ministerial business since 25 November 2007; if so, for each trip:

(1) What was the purpose.

(2) How many nights were spent overseas.

(3) What were the dates and venues.

(4) How many meetings did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary attend.

(5) How many departmental and/or personal ministerial staff accompanied the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary.

(6) What was the aggregate cost.

(7) Can an itemised account be provided of the costs for the following: (a) transportation; (b) travel allowance; (c) accommodation; (d) meals; and (e) other expenses, paid for by the Commonwealth in relation to the Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and their staff.
Senator Conroy—The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

The Hon Gary Gray AO MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Northern Australia has not undertaken any international travel since 25 November 2007.

International travel undertaken by the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government since 25 November 2007 and up until 25 November 2008 is detailed below.

**Jakarta – 30 January to 1 February 2008**

1. The purpose of this trip was to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Transport Sector and its annex and to sign the Aviation Security Terms of Reference.
2. A total of 2 nights were spent outside of Australia.
3. The Minister and party travelled to Jakarta from 30 January – 1 February 2008.
4. The Minister attended 3 meetings in Jakarta.
5. The Minister was accompanied by 1 member of his ministerial staff and 1 departmental representative.
6. The Department does not have these details.
7. The Department does not have these details.

Costs for accompanying Departmental staff are (a) Fares - $17,035.76 (b) Accommodation and allowances – $3,473.24. Note: These costs also include fares and accommodation costs for on travel to London for a Quadrilateral transport security meeting between the United States of America, Australia, Canada and the European Union.

**New Zealand – 13 to 14 June 2008**

1. The purpose of the trip was to attend the Australia New Zealand Leadership Forum.
2. A total of 1 night was spent outside Australia.
4. The Minister did not hold any meetings outside of the Australia New Zealand Leadership Forum.
5. The Minister was accompanied by 1 member of his ministerial staff. The Minister was not accompanied by any Departmental staff.
6. The Department does not have these details.
7. The Department does not have these details.

**Europe – 28 June to 13 July 2008**

Please refer to response under Senate Question on Notice No. 700.

**Singapore – 28 to 31 October 2008**

1. The purpose of the trip was to address the Aviation Outlook Asia Conference and meet with Singaporean officials to discuss infrastructure development priorities, responses to urban transport and congestion, maritime issues and climate change.
2. A total of 3 nights were spent outside Australia.
4. The Minister attended 8 Meetings in Singapore.
5. The Minister was accompanied by 1 member of his ministerial staff and 1 departmental representative.
6. The Department does not have these details.
Senator Ronaldson asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, upon notice, on 25 November 2008:

Has the Minister or any associated Parliamentary Secretary travelled overseas on parliamentary or ministerial business since 25 November 2007; if so, for each trip:

(1) What was the purpose.
(2) How many nights were spent overseas.
(3) What were the dates and venues.
(4) How many meetings did the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary attend.
(5) How many departmental and/or personal ministerial staff accompanied the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary.
(6) What was the aggregate cost.
(7) Can an itemised account be provided of the costs for the following:
   (a) transportation;
   (b) travel allowance;
   (c) accommodation;
   (d) meals; and
   (e) other expenses, paid for by the Commonwealth in relation to the Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and their staff.

Senator Wong—The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Since 25 November 2007 the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts has travelled overseas on Ministerial business for the following purposes:
   • Bali, Indonesia – To attend the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP13) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
   • Papua New Guinea – To attend the Australia-PNG Ministerial Forum.
   • UK, France, Belgium & Germany – To attend the OECD Environment Minister’s Meeting and the OECD Roundtable on Sustainable Development and to hold bilateral meetings with his European counterparts.
   • Chile and the USA – To attend the 60th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission and hold meetings with his counterparts, and with the Californian Government and Industry regarding Energy Efficiency, and with representatives of the US and Australian film industry.
   • New Zealand – To hold meetings with his counterparts to advance key portfolio interests in Whale Conservation and Arts and Culture.

(2) The total number of nights spent overseas was thirty two (32). Some nights were lost due to travelling time and date lines.

(3) The dates of travel are as follows:
Indonesia – 9-16 December 2007
UK, France, Belgium & Germany – 24 April – 4 May 2008
Chile & USA – 22 June – 2 July 2008
New Zealand – 8-11 September 2008

(4) Based on information available at the time of writing:

• In Bali, Indonesia, the Minister attended the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP13) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and held twenty six additional meetings.
• In Papua New Guinea the Minister attended the Australia-PNG Ministerial Forum and held five additional meetings.
• In the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and Germany the Minster attended the OECD Environment Minister’s Meeting and the OECD Roundtable on Sustainable Development. He also held twenty five additional meetings.
• In Chile and the United States of America the Minister attended the 60th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission and also held fourteen additional meetings.
• In New Zealand the Minister held sixteen additional meetings.

(5) The Minister was accompanied by one ministerial staff member and two departmental officers in Bali, Indonesia.

The Minister was accompanied by one ministerial staff member and two departmental officers while in Papua New Guinea.

The Minister was accompanied by one ministerial staff member, one Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts officer and one Department of Climate Change officer while in Europe.

In Chile, Minister Garrett was accompanied by two ministerial staff members and one departmental officer. A further six departmental officers accompanied the Minister in Chile as part of the Australian delegation to the 60th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission.

In the US, Minister Garrett was accompanied by one ministerial staff member and one departmental officer. One further departmental officer on official travel to the US accompanied the Minister for one day in that country.

The Minister was accompanied by one ministerial staff member and one departmental officer while in New Zealand.

(6) The aggregate cost was $160,264.56, correct as at 30 January 2009.

(7) Costs of official overseas travel by Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, accompanying spouses (where relevant) and accompanying staff employed under the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 are paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation. Dates, destinations, the purpose and aggregate costs of all official overseas travel are tabled in the Parliament every six months in a report titled Parliamentarians’ Travel Paid By The Department of Finance and Deregulation. Further information on Ministerial visits is also available on ministerial web sites and in media releases and media reports.