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SITTING DAYS—2009

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FORTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—SIXTH 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
Temporary Chairs of Committees—Senators Guy Barnett, Cory Bernardi,
Thomas Mark Bishop, Carol Louise Brown, Patricia Margaret Crossin,
Michael George Forshaw, Gary John Joseph Humphries, Annette Kay Hurley,
Stephen Patrick Hutchins, Gavin Mark Marshall, Julian John James McGauran,
Claire Mary Moore, Stephen Shane Parry, Hon. Judith Mary Troeth and Russell Brunell Trood

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

[The above ministers constitute the cabinet]
RUDD MINISTRY—continued

Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Hon. Alan Griffin MP

Minister for Housing and Minister for the Status of Women
Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP

Minister for Home Affairs
Hon. Brendan O’Connor MP

Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health and Regional Services Delivery
Hon. Warren Snowdon MP

Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy, Minister Assisting the Finance Minister on Deregulation and Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs
Hon. Dr Craig Emerson MP

Assistant Treasurer
Senator Hon. Nick Sherry

Minister for Ageing
Hon. Justine Elliot MP

Minister for Early Childhood Education, Childcare and Youth and Minister for Sport
Hon. Kate Ellis MP

Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change
Hon. Greg Combet AM, MP

Minister for Employment Participation and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Government Service Delivery
Senator Hon. Mark Arbib

Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
Hon. Maxine McKew MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support and Parliamentary Secretary for Water
Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM, MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Western and Northern Australia
Hon. Gary Gray AO, MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services and Parliamentary Secretary for Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction
Hon. Bill Shorten MP

Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance
Hon. Bob McMullan MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs
Hon. Duncan Kerr SC, MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Parliamentary Secretary for Trade
Hon. Anthony Byrne MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector and Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Inclusion
Senator Hon. Ursula Stephens

Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services
Hon. Laurie Ferguson MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Employment
Hon. Jason Clare MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Health
Hon. Mark Butler MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Industry and Innovation
Hon. Richard Marles MP
**SHADOW MINISTRY**

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<tr>
<td>Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>The Hon. Julie Bishop MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Trade, Transport, Regional Development and Local</td>
<td>The Hon. Warren Truss MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government and Leader of the Nationals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy</td>
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<td>and Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research and</td>
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<td>The Hon. Andrew Robb AO, MP</td>
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<td>Assisting the Leader on Emissions Trading Design</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Finance, Competition Policy and Deregulation</td>
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<td>The Hon. Ian Macfarlane MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and</td>
<td>The Hon. Tony Abbott MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Special Minister of State and Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water</td>
<td>The Hon. Greg Hunt MP</td>
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[The above constitute the shadow cabinet]
SHADOW MINISTRY—continued

Shadow Minister for Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law
The Hon. Chris Pearce MP

Shadow Assistant Treasurer
The Hon. Tony Smith MP

Shadow Minister for Sustainable Development and Cities
The Hon. Bruce Billson MP

Shadow Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs and Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House
Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP

Shadow Minister for Housing and Local Government
Mr Scott Morrison

Shadow Minister for Ageing
Mrs Margaret May MP

Shadow Minister for Defence Science and Personnel and Assisting Shadow Minister for Defence
The Hon. Bob Baldwin MP

Shadow Minister for Veterans’ Affairs
Mrs Louise Markus MP

Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education, Childcare, Status of Women and Youth
Mrs Sophie Mirabella MP

Shadow Minister for Justice and Customs
The Hon. Sussan Ley MP

Shadow Minister for Employment Participation, Training and Sport
Dr Andrew Southcott MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern Australia
Senator the Hon. Ian Macdonald

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Roads and Transport
Mr Don Randall MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development
Mr John Forrest MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance and Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous Affairs
Senator Marise Payne

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Energy and Resources
Mr Barry Haase MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities, Carers and the Voluntary Sector
Senator Mitch Fifield

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Water Resources and Conservation
Mr Mark Coulton MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Health Administration
Senator Mathias Cormann

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence
The Hon. Peter Lindsay MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Education
Senator the Hon. Brett Mason

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Justice and Public Security
Mr Jason Wood MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Citizenship and Shadow Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Leader in the Senate
Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells
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Tuesday, 27 October 2009

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

BUSINESS

Days and Hours of Meeting

Senator LUDWIG (Queensland—Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (12.31 pm)—At the request of Senator Stephens, I move:

That the days of meeting of the Senate for 2010 be as follows:

Autumn sittings:
Tuesday, 2 February to Thursday, 4 February
Monday, 22 February to Thursday, 25 February
Tuesday, 9 March to Thursday, 11 March
Monday, 15 March to Thursday, 18 March

Budget sittings:
Tuesday, 11 May to Thursday, 13 May

Winter sittings:
Tuesday, 15 June to Thursday, 17 June
Monday, 21 June to Thursday, 24 June

Spring sittings:
Tuesday, 24 August to Thursday, 26 August
Monday, 30 August to Thursday, 2 September
Monday, 20 September to Thursday, 23 September
Tuesday, 28 September to Thursday, 30 September

Spring sittings (2):
Monday, 25 October to Thursday, 28 October
Monday, 15 November to Thursday, 18 November
Monday, 22 November to Thursday, 25 November.

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (12.31 pm)—by leave—I move the following amendments together:

After “Monday, 15 March to Thursday, 18 March”, insert:

Monday, 12 April to Thursday, 15 April
Monday, 19 April to Thursday, 22 April.

After “Monday, 21 June to Thursday, 24 June”, insert:

Monday, 2 August to Thursday, 5 August
Monday, 9 August to Thursday, 12 August.

We now have from the government a proposal for one of the shortest sitting years in history for next year after an extremely short sitting period for the Senate this year. There is a longstanding average of about 70 sitting days for the Senate, and a quick look at the recent performance since the Howard government got a majority in the Senate and tended to treat it like a rubber stamp shows less and less sitting time. So we are now sitting more like 50 days rather than 70 days. There is no good argument for that. The country has not been faced with less legislation, fewer problems or less for its MPs to do; in fact, quite the reverse is the case. As we all know in this chamber, we are now confronted with some tension over sittings between now and Christmas because while the opposition, for example, is arguing that there needs to be further debate on the emissions trading scheme and is proposing that that be debated into the new year, the government is saying it wants it through and would potentially propose that we sit longer. But the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Minchin, has written to the government saying that we will not sit longer.

The Greens have repeatedly raised the issue of the Senate being treated a bit like the House of Representatives, and that is as a captive of the executive. And it is not. This is the chamber for reviewing legislation and for making sure that the government gets it right in the interests of the people as a whole. We are looking at pretty monumental legislation like the emissions trading scheme legislation, like the new legislation to do with telecommunications in this country and legislation
which has to help manage the economy at the time of the global financial crisis and the much longer crisis for the environment which faces not only this country but the planet. To be able to argue in the midst of that we should be sitting less and less—I have not heard that argument; I simply see here a prescription for the government for that outcome. It is not acceptable, nor is it acceptable for the government serially to keep thinking that at the end of the year you can have late-hour Senate sittings, extra morning sittings, the potential for Friday sittings, the threat of weekend sittings and chaos by pressure at the end of each year. It is not sensible. We should be planning much better than that. If you cannot budget the Senate sitting hours, how can you be expected to come up with better budgeting for arguably more important things for the nation?

This amendment from the Greens says: ‘Let us sit an extra 16 days next year. That would bring the total to 66, still below the average.’ We know it is an election year. We know that in election years both houses of parliament tend to sit less, not more, because governments want to get out as early as they can once they have got an election date fixed in their mind. But that is not in the interests of the nation. What is in the interests of the nation is us sitting reasonably long times—not to pad out anything but to deal properly with legislation.

The government should look seriously at this, and I hope the opposition will as well. It is a very reasonable amendment that I am putting forward on behalf of the Greens, and I hope that the Senate will adopt it, remembering of course that it is up to us, if we find that we have more sitting time than required, to very simply go home. What is not so easy to arrange is if there are not sufficient sitting hours and we have to sit more, when senators have made arrangements for all manner of other communications, events and functions in their electorates and on the national scene. This is pure and simple good management that the Greens are proposing here. I hope that the government and the opposition will agree with it.

Senator XENOPHON (South Australia) (12.38 pm)—I indicate my support for the Greens motion. In my time as a member of the Legislative Council in the South Australian parliament, I was long an advocate for longer sitting days. The Senate has a key role in ensuring that the executive arm of government is accountable. I am concerned that there has been a reduction in sitting days in the last few years in the order of 30 per cent or so. I think it is important to support the amendment by Senator Bob Brown, because it is a sensible addition to the number of sitting days.

It is misleading, though, to say that this is all we do. As some have referred to in the media, this is not just the be-all and end-all. It is important that it is acknowledged that senators—invariably those who are not ministers—are involved in Senate committees. There is an enormous amount of work done with respect to that. There is our work with constituents—and, despite what members in the other place say, we do have constituents—and we deal with issues with individuals, community groups and key stakeholders in relation to a number of pieces of legislation. That is a key part of what we do. That is part of our job.

But I am concerned that the reduction in sitting days does not reflect our workload and does not allow adequate time for debate. Therefore I support Senator Bob Brown’s amendment to this motion, because I think it strikes a sensible balance in terms of additional sitting days for the Senate to do its job, to scrutinise legislation and the executive arm of government.
Senator LUDWIG (Queensland—Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (12.39 pm)—I was going to allow the opposition to speak first, because I might otherwise be perceived as closing the debate.

Senator Minchin—No. We would like to hear your argument. We would like to hear your view.

Senator LUDWIG—Thank you. I just did not want the perception that I might be closing the debate in relation to this matter.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Hutchins)—No. You are speaking to the amendments. You are in order.

Senator LUDWIG—I understand that, but there might be some on the other side who do not follow those niceties.

The program that is now being put forward is very similar to the program that was put forward last year. I will take the Senate through the program briefly. We usually come back around the first week in February, and in this case we are doing so again. We usually sit for two weeks then. In addition, we have to fit in the supplementary estimates, which are again there for a week for the Senate. If you look between February and April, you see that Easter comes early next year, which effectively limits the amount of time we can sit up to Easter. We are sitting quite a number of days during that period.

The Senate, like the House, has a non-sitting period between the end of Easter and May, for the budget to be able to be delivered on 11 May. The government would argue strenuously against the addition of two weeks of sitting in the middle of that period. That period is taken up by the Senate in two ways. It deals with committee inquiries that are put forward in February or which have been carried over from the previous year. The work of the Senate of course is not only within the chamber when the chamber is sitting but also dealing with committees. We also have a number of select committees currently operating—more than at any time in the past, I would imagine. In addition to that—and this is a matter that I might raise in another motion—there is substantial committee work now being referred by the opposition and the Greens to committees of the Senate to be dealt with. The Senate needs time to be able to deal with those references in a sensible way.

The period between the budget and July follows the usual sitting pattern. The budget week is, as usual, three days, when the budget work is dealt with. Then we have budget estimates, which follow that for two weeks, which is also the usual sitting pattern. Then we come back to deal with the budget bills for two weeks before what is commonly referred to as the winter recess. The second half of the year provides ‘two on, two off’—two weeks on followed by two weeks off—right through to the end of November.

I think you have to put this into two other frames. The first frame is that next year is a year in which an election could fall. Two things come from that. The first is that you would expect less legislation to occur during that period. The second is that you would expect, depending on how things occur, that part of the sitting pattern would then not be completed, although I cannot second-guess what the Prime Minister may determine.

The second frame—and this is always an issue that is raised—is that, if there are requirements for additional sitting days, the government can request those. In the past, that has generally met with agreement from the Senate, where it can be demonstrated that the government does have legislation to be dealt with and passed and there is work of the Senate to be done.

There is little practical benefit in scheduling sitting days where it could be perceived
that there is no practical work—and that is a matter that has been complained of in the past with respect to bills and sitting days. As always, if there is a requirement for additional work the government has a prerogative to add sitting days to the program. In the past we have expanded the program or set aside particular times to accommodate bills.

I do not agree with Senator Brown’s proposition that we could schedule additional sitting days and then simply go home early. I think the reverse of that is a much better position to adopt. If there are bills to be dealt with, the government can indicate that additional time is required and then we can negotiate, depending on what particular type of bill it is. We can request those additional hours or days for the legislation to be dealt with. That is the process that has been adopted in the past and it is a more sensible program to adopt.

With Easter, the winter recess and what could happen in the course of the year, the 2010 sitting pattern allows the legislation of the Senate to be dealt with in a sensible way. In addition to that, in an election year the legislative requirements are sometimes slightly less. Senator Xenophon indicated that he prefers longer sitting days for the Senate. I agree with that, and that does occasionally occur. We usually deal with bills in the usual way. We ensure that we can have the second reading debate on Monday or Tuesday nights. The Senate has had long experience and practice in managing its program based on the government’s prerogative to put forward a program that is sensible and pragmatic—and the 2010 program recognises the realities of 2010.

Senator Brown has brought forward a range of arguments in this debate. I do not necessarily agree with Senator Brown’s arguments, but I do understand that the Senate always manages to deal with the legislative program and, up to this point, has been dealing with it in the way you would expect. The Senate does get through its legislative requirements in a workmanlike way.

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (12.48 pm)—In a decade’s time, if we go the way we have gone in the last decade, we will be sitting for something like 30 days a year. Ten years ago it was 79 days, and it is proposed that we sit for 50 days next year. What a joke! The government should be able to organise the sitting weeks such that we are not left rushing things through in an ad hoc way because of deadlines and trying to get extra sitting days at the last minute. It is a shambles! Clearly the government does not have a good handle on managing business in this chamber. There has been a 37 per cent drop in the number of sitting days since 10 years ago. At the same time, there has been a 40 per cent increase in the pay of MPs. Of course, we cannot spend all our time here—we have work to do in our electorates—but, when you get down to 50 days, the balance is out of kilter.

The government say they are quite happy about openness, transparency and scrutiny—but they want to have a lack of scrutiny of their legislation in the parliament. They cannot justify a proposal to sit for 50 days next year. No way! But they think they can just come in here and slip it through. I am hoping the opposition will show a bit of backbone and, rather than just talking about the government not being able to manage their business, say that we need to have extra sitting days scheduled for next year. The opposition cannot justify 50 days and then stand up here tomorrow and say: ‘The government cannot run their business; they cannot manage the process. They cannot come in here and try to squeeze it through in the few days we have got left.’ You cannot say that today, tomorrow, next week or in the next sitting period. You have to stand up here today and say,
The government have lost the plot in trying to manage their business in this chamber, and you have to vote for extra sitting days next year. Extra sitting days next year is not too much to ask for. This is a new government and the legislation they are putting forward needs proper scrutiny in this chamber. The opposition cannot come in here and argue that we should not sit more hours because the government cannot order their business. They have to be very careful about the decision they make on this.

Extra sitting weeks for next year need to be agreed to. It is extremely important. Scrutiny of legislation is important. Debate is important. Unfortunately this government want to rush things through and not have proper debate in this chamber. In 1999 there were 79 sitting days. In 2000 there were 71 sitting days. Under the Rudd government we have 52 days, 52 days and 50 days. In 2008 we had 52 days. In 2009 we had 52 sitting days. In 2010 we will have 50 sitting days. It is going in the wrong direction; it needs to go up. So Family First will be supporting the extra sitting weeks for next year.

It needs to be planned; it needs to be orderly. Coming in here at the last minute to try to get extra days and hours here is not right. Again, the pressure is going to be on the opposition here to argue the case for not having extra sitting weeks next year. We needed more sitting weeks this year, but it needed to be planned; there should not have been an attempt to do it at the last minute, as if a gun were being held against our head. This needs to be put through and the government needs to come in here and explain why there are only 50 days. Why is it not back up around 70 days? It needs to be back up around that level. You cannot justify it not being at that level.

Senator PARRY (Tasmania) (12.52 pm)—There is a simple solution to this: re-elect a coalition government and we will increase the sitting hours and sitting weeks. If that message got out loud and clear, that would solve all these problems. We agree with the Greens, Family First and Senator Xenophon that the government has not planned sitting hours well for this year or, indeed, next year.

Senator Bob Brown—Nor did the coalition.

Senator PARRY—The coalition planned for a lot more sitting weeks, if I could take the interjection from Senator Brown. We need to have more sitting weeks in a year; there is no argument about that. There is an overriding premise, though, that the government of the day sets the agenda. The government of the day will set the sitting agenda for each year. It is something that we have always agreed with and supported. However, I give notice to the government for the future. Hopefully we will be back on the treasury bench for the next sitting calendar scheduling but, if we are not and if the government does not set it correctly, we will then support the minor parties—if they are still here as well—in setting a better sitting time frame for each year.

I have been on the record on three separate occasions this year indicating that the sitting schedule has not been long enough. You cannot just come to the last two or three weeks of a sitting schedule and say we need to increase the hours now. This should have been done when we needed to set the calendar at the beginning of the year. We are going to ensure that the government has the running of the program, but again the warning to the government is there: if it does not set adequate hours, we will move away from that long-held tradition of letting government set the sitting pattern and start to run interference in that program to make sure that we have adequate sitting times.
I indicate that the opposition has been reluctantly supportive of occasional extended hours when the government have come to us to ask for them. But, going back to the middle of the year, I indicated that this would not go on forever. We are not going to constantly prop up a government that does not set enough hours in its program. We even had the ludicrous situation earlier in the year where the government deliberately filibustered debate in a very light sitting year in order to negotiate with minor parties. We wasted days upon days with negotiation when that could have been usefully utilised for legislation. We will not be supporting the Greens with their amendment, purely on the basis that the government of the day should be enabled and should be given the right to set a sitting schedule, but again the warning is there: set it better or we will start to interfere.

Senator IAN MACDONALD (Queensland) (12.55 pm)—Poor decision making is becoming a hallmark of this government, putting Australia’s future at risk. One of the reasons why it is important to have the maximum number of sitting days is to ensure that the government is totally accountable for the poor decisions that it has made. The Greens come in without any warning and move this motion for additional sitting days and then rail against how unaccountable the government is, but you can rest assured that at the next election, whenever it is, the Greens will again prefer the Labor Party, as they have done throughout their history.

Senator Bob Brown interjecting—

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Senator Brown, it is a bit like the Queensland election, when you railed against the Traveston Crossing dam and told everyone how terrible it was and how it was an environmental nightmare. Then you gave preferences to the Labor Party in Queensland to ensure their re-election.

Senator Bob Brown—Mr Acting Deputy President, on a point of order: if the honourable senator wants to go to the coalition’s plan for 11 extra dams in Queensland, he should address the chair, not me.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Hutchins)—That is no point of order and you know that.

Senator Bob Brown—He should address the chair, not me. That is a point of order and you should adopt it.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT—He is getting around to it; there is plenty of latitude. There is no point of order.

Senator Bob Brown—If there is not a point of order that the speaker should address the chair, I would ask you to refer that to the President for a further ruling.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT—You should address the chair on the issue, Senator Macdonald.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Thank you, Mr Acting Deputy President. I will continue to address you, as I was doing until interrupted by an interjection from Senator Brown, who seems to be very keen on applying the standing orders when they relate to others but not when they relate to him. Of course, he should know that interjecting is disorderly and is not allowed. But that is typical of the Greens: one rule for them and different rules for everybody else.

I can understand why Senator Brown is very sensitive about the issue of supporting the Labor Party. I continue to raise the issue of the Traveston Crossing dam in Queensland; the Greens railed against it but then supported the Labor Party, who are hell-bent and determined to build the Traveston Crossing dam. It just shows the hypocrisy, yet again, of the Greens. They will continue to
support the Labor Party at the next election, which means supporting this shorter sitting period.

It is absolutely disgusting of the Labor Party to continually reduce the number of weeks that we sit every year. Under the Howard government there was a very substantial increase in the sitting weeks because we were a government that was accountable and we wanted people to understand and to be able to challenge the then government and to look very carefully at legislation that came before the parliament. The poor decisions of this government that are putting Australia’s future at risk should be subject to scrutiny, but it should be up to the government, as Senator Parry has said, to set the program so there is the maximum number of days.

We all know that there will be an election next year. That is going to mean that whatever we decide today is going to be of little consequence because, as I say, the election is due about this time next year and so the sitting days for the balance of next year will be a matter for the new government. Hopefully, it will be a government that will have the maximum sitting hours available.

The one thing on which I do agree with the Greens is how this government has continually cut back on debate and then filibusters its own legislation to stop other parties from properly debating and discussing important legislation before the chamber. We then get this hypocrisy from the Labor Party pleading for extra days because they cannot get their legislation dealt with. They should have thought about that this time last year when they set the program and they should be thinking about that today in looking at next year’s program.

I would urge the government to withdraw this sitting program and to come back to the Senate with a new program that does allow the scrutiny that Mr Rudd is so vocal about giving. He continues to say how open and accountable his government is and yet the hallmark, the measure of this issue, is how many days the parliament sits. We know in the other chamber there is never any debate; every single bill is cut off by the government so that it cannot be properly debated by the House of Representatives. We know because of the numbers over there that the Liberal and National parties have no opportunity to oppose those cut-offs, those guillotines, that are so often applied by the other chamber. But here in the Senate chamber we do have an ability to hold the government accountable. I would urge Senator Ludwig to withdraw this sitting program and to come back to the Senate with a sitting pattern that does allow for the proper scrutiny without begging and bullying the other parties in this chamber for additional days and additional hours towards the end of every sitting.

Question put:

That the amendments (Senator Bob Brown’s) be agreed to.

The Senate divided. [1.06 pm]

(The Acting Deputy President—Senator SP Hutchins)

Ayes............  7
Noes............. 37
Majority........ 30

AYES
Brown, B.J. Hanson-Young, S.C. Milne, C. Xenophon, N.

NOES
Abetz, E. Bilyk, C.L. Bishop, T.M. Brown, C.L. Cameron, D.N. Colbeck, R. Cormann, M.H.P. Eggleston, A.

Fielding, S. Ludlam, S. Siewert, R. *

Fisher, M.J.  
Humphries, G.  
Hutchins, S.P.  
Landy, K.A.  
McLucas, J.E.  
Parry, S.  
Polley, H.  
Ryan, S.M.  
Sterle, G.  
Trood, R.B.  
Wortley, D.  
Furner, M.L.  
Hurley, A.  
Ludwig, J.W.  
McEwen, A.  
O’Brien, K.W.K.  
Payne, M.A.  
Pratt, L.C.  
Stephens, U.  
Troeth, J.M.  
Williams, J.R. *

* denotes teller

Question negatived.
Original question agreed to.

BUDGET
Consideration by Estimates Committees
Meeting
Senator LUDWIG (Queensland—Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (1.10 pm)—At the request of Senator Stephens, I move:

(1) That estimates hearings by legislation committees for 2010 be scheduled as follows:

2009-10 additional estimates:
Monday, 8 February and Tuesday, 9 February 2010, and, if required, Friday, 12 February 2010 (Group A)
Wednesday, 10 February and Thursday, 11 February 2010, and, if required, Friday, 12 February 2010 (Group B).

2010-11 Budget estimates:
Monday, 24 May to Thursday, 27 May 2010, and, if required, Friday, 28 May 2010 (Group A)
Monday, 31 May to Thursday, 3 June 2010, and, if required, Friday, 4 June 2010 (Group B)
Monday, 18 October and Tuesday, 19 October 2010 (supplementary hearings—Group A)

Wednesday, 20 October and Thursday, 21 October 2010 (supplementary hearings—Group B).

(2) That the committees consider the proposed expenditure in accordance with the allocation of departments and agencies to committees agreed to by the Senate.

(3) That committees meet in the following groups:

Group A:
Environment, Communications and the Arts
Finance and Public Administration
Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

Group B:
Community Affairs
Economics
Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

(4) That the committees report to the Senate on the following dates:

(a) Tuesday, 23 February 2010 in respect of the 2009-10 additional estimates; and
(b) Tuesday, 22 June 2010 in respect of the 2010-11 Budget estimates.

Question agreed to.

BUSINESS
Rearrangement
Senator LUDWIG (Queensland—Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (1.10 pm)—I move:

That government business notice of motion no. 3 standing in the name of the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (Senator Conroy) for today, relating to consideration of legislation, be postponed till the next day of sitting.

Question agreed to.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE (CIVIL LITIGATION REFORMS) AMENDMENT BILL 2009
Second Reading
Debate resumed from 10 September, on motion by Senator Ludwig:

That this bill be now read a second time.
The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Hutchins)—I call Senator Bishop.

Senator Mark Bishop—I cede the call to Senator Abetz.

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania) (1.11 pm)—I thank the Senate and in particular Senator Bishop for allowing the normal formalities with bills to proceed. On this occasion I am standing in for our very excellent and very learned shadow Attorney-General, the Hon. George Brandis SC. The Access to Justice (Civil Litigation Reforms) Amendment Bill 2009 is principally directed to the case management processes in the Federal Court of Australia, although there are some relatively minor amendments also directed to the Family Court and the Federal Magistrates Court. Case management is the practice whereby judges control the progress of a case through the preliminary stages prior to trial to ensure that the parties keep to an appropriate timetable so that the issues in the dispute are narrowed and that unnecessary costs and delays are avoided.

The bill introduces an overarching purpose to case management, which is to facilitate the just resolution of disputes according to law as quickly, inexpensively and efficiently as possible. This is further defined inter alia to require the resolution of disputes at a cost that is proportionate to the importance and complexity of the matters in dispute. Parties to a dispute must conduct the litigation in a way consistent with the overarching purpose, and legal practitioners will be obliged to assist their clients to comply with that duty. Costs orders will be used to compel compliance and they will also be available against lawyers personally. Other sanctions may include orders for the dismissal of proceedings or limitation of the case a party may wish to present. In addition, there are amendments to curtail appeal rights in respect of interlocutory orders to refer any matter for alternative dispute resolution and to charge the heads of each federal court with a responsibility for the effective discharge of the business of the court.

At the time this bill was first introduced there was a particular concern that it did not sufficiently recognise the tension that can exist between the concepts of efficient case management and the interests of justice. This issue was highlighted by the High Court in the case Queensland v JL Holdings Pty Ltd 1997. However, the court revisited the issue in Aon Risk Services Australia Ltd v Australian National University on 5 August 2009. The decision recognises that the function of case management is the delivery of justice and provides guidance to lower courts to prevent their processes being distorted, thus frustrating the proper functions of the courts. This bill sits happily with that clarification.

The bill proposes that certain alternative dispute resolution processes be used in federal civil proceedings as a means by which disputes may be resolved more cost effectively and efficiently. Alternative dispute resolution is a general turn referring to processes other than litigation used to assist people to resolve various disputes. It is important to note that there are different types of such processes, and particular types of alternative dispute resolution processes suit particular types of disputes. This bill was referred to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee for inquiry and it reported on 17 September. The only substantive submission received was that from the Law Council of Australia. The Law Council generally welcomed the reforms which are the subject of the bill. In its submission the Law Council stated:

The concept of ‘mega-litigation’ has in recent times drawn attention to the impact that private disputes can have on the courts and the strain that such litigation can impose on the scarce public resources required to fund the court system.
The costs of lengthy and inefficient litigation are carried not only by the parties themselves but also by taxpayers, who fund the operation of the justice system. Judicial salaries, court officer and registry staff salaries and court premises costs are incurred unnecessarily by litigation that is not efficient or cost effective. If inefficient litigation monopolises court resources then those that cannot afford protracted litigation are prevented from accessing the justice system.

Subject to one amendment, which will be moved in the committee stage, the coalition supports this bill. The amendment to which I refer is a matter on which Senator Bob Brown and I have been campaigning quite vociferously in Tasmania, and that is for a full-time registrar of the Federal Court to be positioned in Hobart. The Senate has carried motions to that effect. I personally have pursued the matter at Senate estimates on the last two occasions and of course Senator Bob Brown has himself pursued the matter as well. In discussions with the government it seems that the best way forward is to have an amendment, which I understand has now been circulated on sheet 5937, revision 2. I commend that amendment to the Senate.

I conclude my comments in relation to the amendment by saying that it is vitally important that the Federal Court has an appropriate jurisdiction in every single one of the founding states of the Commonwealth. Tasmania is one of those founding states. It is called the Federal Court and one would imagine that, in the basics of the Federal Court administration, there would be equity between the States and they would all have a full-time registrar. The move undertaken by the Federal Court is at best—at very best—about saving $200,000, but we still have not got to the bottom of that because at Senate estimates we were promised that there was no surplus of staff at the Melbourne registry, but all the work in Hobart could be undertaken by the Melbourne registry, although when the Hobart registrar had to fly to Melbourne to help them with their workload it was not because there was a surplus of work in Melbourne registry.

I invite people to read the Hansard and then go figure because quite frankly the explanations provided defied the pub test, defied logic, defied common sense. It seems as though it had more to do with empire building within the registry systems rather than the good management of judicial processes. We were also promised that with less the Hobart registry figures would be even better than they are now. If that is the way to administer court registries one wonders why all the court registries do not slash staff and as a result improve their outputs. I must say, politely, the logic sought to be provided to us by representatives of the Federal Court administration lacked substance.

As a result we in the coalition believe it is justified to move the amendment that Senator Bob Brown will be moving to ensure that the Hobart court registry is reinstated to its proper place and position. It also seems that there is a bizarre demarcation dispute between the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the Federal Court registry because we were told that the Hobart registrar, when he was full-time, did quite a bit of work for the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. However, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal did not want to make a contribution to the salary of the Federal Court registrar in Hobart and so now the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, also run by the government and so also run by the Australian taxpayer, will have to find somebody else to do the Administrative Appeal Tribunal work. Whilst the Federal Court potentially might save some money it is quite clear that another arm of government will have to spend more money on servicing the Administrative Appeals Tribunal aspect in
Hobart and as a result the so-called savings in globo will be substantially diminished.

I have indicated to the Federal Court that in future Senate estimates I will be inquiring into the actual alleged savings, but if this amendment is carried one hopes that everything will be reinstated, as it should be, and as a result we will not need to pursue those questions at future estimates. In brief, the coalition commends to the Senate both the bill and the amendment co-sponsored by Senator Bob Brown and me.

Senator MARK BISHOP (Western Australia) (1.21 pm)—I am pleased to be able to support the Access to Justice (Civil Litigation Reforms) Amendment Bill 2009 before the chair today. It represents much needed reform in an area of traditional resistance to change. I am reminded of the wonderful story Bleak House by Charles Dickens. The story concerns a family dispute in chancery over a fabulously wealthy estate. The fate and fortune of so many characters is dependent upon a settlement which seems to drag on year in, year out—in fact, interminably. The only hearings in chancery were to consider applications for costs from a horde of parasitic lawyers; it was never, ever about the merits of the particular case. Eventually, as always happens, the case was brought to a close simply because the entire estate had been consumed by costs. Those who depended so much on an outcome received nothing; the lawyers, the lot. That is simply a bit of romantic background but with, of course, serious overtones. It reminds us of the real evils of a legal system which is not too many years behind us.

The bill before us today seeks to introduce a number of reforms. The first brace of these is aimed at introducing some discipline into the system, a system which for too long has simply responded to demand without proper consideration of need and good sense. The second is about improving the efficiency of the Federal Court. It is a foundation stone of our constitutional democracy that we have a system of law and a judicial system capable of dispensing justice fairly and efficiently. That has been the ambition anyway. Of course, it has not always been achieved. Too often, the system has been slow and litigious, with too much time spent on process and not enough on adjudication on the merits of the particular matter in dispute. The courts themselves are responsible for some of that, but governments more so. For too long we have been cowed by fine notions of due process. The legal profession too has much to account for due to its behaviour and self-interest.

As we all know, so much legal activity is locked up in process. It is the old standby for lawyers, who know full well that the other side can be exhausted before merits even get questioned or considered. For too long it has been a ploy as part of the battle. It is the very worst of legal behaviour, which in fact denies justice and makes a mockery of the law and proper legal process. One recent case of notoriety reminding us of this continuing failure was The Bell Group Ltd v Westpac Banking Corporation in 2007. Here, two well-fed commercial giants slugged it out in what has become known as the C7 case. Justice Sackville made particular comment on the excessive costs, which I understand to have been unbelievably in the order of $200 million. The costs were totally disproportionate to the issue at stake. Again in 2007, we saw the case of Seven Network Ltd v News Ltd. Once again, two media giants argued themselves to a standstill for no real purpose except commercial pride. Both cases were obviously a complete waste of public resources.

It seems that once the legal profession joins battle there is no backing down. It is interesting to note that in the examination of this bill in the Senate Legal and Constitu-
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Despite the complaints, justice is more accessible these days. But, equally, we must ensure that demand is not open-ended as this allows petty litigious behaviour to keep driving the supply side without limit. Lawyers have a responsibility here. This bill now provides that there will be penalties for them where they fail to control or properly advise litigious clients. Proposed section 43 makes specific provision for lawyers to bear costs personally. One hopes that that might make some of them think twice. The proposed section also gives the Federal Court other discretionary powers with the same end. The court may make awards for costs at any stage in a proceeding, make different awards in relation to different parts of a proceeding and make orders specifying proportions. Just as important, however, the court will be given new powers to deal with minor matters. There is some hope that this will sort out the litigious, for whom court action for too long has been a tool of the trade.

Through this bill, the court is being given new powers, including consideration without oral hearing. With or without the consent of the parties, the court will be able to dismiss frivolous and vexatious cases, those where there appears to be solid precedent rendering a case unnecessary and those where the case is adequately expressed on the written submissions. These measures are very practical indeed—so much so that one can only wonder why it has taken so long to arrive at this point. Perhaps it just goes to show how resistant the legal profession is to change. The overarching principles that drive this reform bill also make it clear that behaviour must change. Obviously, law such as this cannot be prescriptive. Hence we have in this bill a requirement that legal behaviour must be consistent with the overarching purposes of the bill—that is, a set of principles which can be applied with the court’s discretion. For example, the court’s resources must be used...
efficiently, cases must be determined in a timely manner and costs must be in proportion to the complexity of the matter before the court.

In applying these principles, the court, in exercising its discretions on costs, may take certain behaviours into account—for example, unreasonable refusal to participate in mediation and conciliation; failing to act in good faith in achieving resolution; unreasonably rejecting offers of settlement; and otherwise being vexatious and frivolous. By this means the court may dismiss cases outright, strike out claims, disallow evidence and award costs accordingly. In this context, I must also make mention of the new emphasis placed on mediation and conciliation. It is regrettable that the use of these means of reaching settlement in disputes is not used as actively as it should be. The National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Council, whose advice was sought by the Attorney-General, responded with a recommendation that alternate dispute resolution be mandated in law. That is exactly what the Attorney has done in this bill. It is a very salutary innovation. Reference to the council’s work is recommended because it is clear that it is not as simple as it might appear. For example, it is easier to apply in civil circumstances than it is where there is a public defendant. Discretion might be limited by law, not just government policy. Nevertheless, it is important wherever possible that government agencies also adopt the principles of ADR to the maximum extent possible. Indeed the history of Defence Legal in the last five to eight years, in its way of litigating and exhausting opponents through extensive use of the courts, is a reminder to us that it would be quite appropriate for a bill sometime in the future to mandate these principles for large government departments or agencies.

Finally, let me turn briefly to the second brace of changes proposed in the bill. These relate principally to the jurisdiction of the Federal Court and the management of appeals. Put simply, these changes streamline the way appeals are managed. From judgments of single judges, and the relationship between those appeals and the engagement up to and involving the full court, these changes also alter the means by which some matters might proceed on to the High Court, freed of some of the current wasteful process and delay experienced. These changes also include the streamlining of the way interlocutory matters are considered. These seem to me to be sensible procedural changes which should simplify the way the court works, to the greater benefit of both the court and those who use it on a regular basis.

I commend this bill, and I also commend the consideration given to it by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee. During that process it is clear that many interested parties made valuable contributions and in large part supported the provisions before us today. Clearly, when you look at the submissions, there were some exceptions. However, in my view, those criticisms do not change the major impact that the bill should have and seeks to have. Quite clearly the consultative process has been quite thorough, and it is pleasing to see the industry, and many people who made submissions, respond so effectively. In that light, I support the bill.

Senator WONG (South Australia—Minister for Climate Change and Water) (1.33 pm) I table an addendum to the explanatory memorandum relating to the Access to Justice (Civil Litigation Reforms) Amendment Bill 2009. Can I thank all senators who have contributed to this debate and can I also, consistent with some of the contributions, thank the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, who delivered their report on this bill in September. Their inquiry was conducted in a
short time frame and the government is aware that at the same time the committee was considering a number of other bills and conducting major inquiries into access to justice in Australia’s judicial system and the role of judges.

The committee found that there is widespread support for the reforms contained in the bill. There were two specific recommendations made. The first was to clarify the scope and operation of proposed section 37N(1), which requires parties to act consistently with the new overarching purpose. I am advised that the government has clarified this by circulating the addendum to the explanatory memorandum. The second recommendation was to make sure that security for cost orders can still be appealed. The government has responded to this recommendation by moving a government amendment to the bill. In addition to responding to the committee’s recommendations, the government has made a further amendment to encourage judicial transfers. As some senators have recalled, the government expects numerous benefits from Commonwealth participation in a one-way transfer of a Federal Court judge to state supreme courts. These include enhanced knowledge and experience of judicial officers, retention of experienced officers for longer periods and a more consistent body of national decision making in areas of common jurisdiction. This amendment also sends a clear message that the Rudd government intends to be proactive in working with the states to pursue national court excellence. Both Senators Abetz and Brown referred to the issue of the Federal Court registry in Hobart. I can indicate that the government will support the new amendments moved by Senator Brown in the committee stage and I will make some further comments at that point.

These case management provisions are timely. High Court Chief Justice French has observed that in the Federal Court the intensity of judicial case management has been increasing, and the High Court’s recent decision on case management in the AON case will reinforce the case management reforms being introduced by this bill to effect a cultural change in the way litigation is conducted in the Federal Court, a change that leads to improved access to justice. I commend the bill to the Senate.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

In Committee
Bill—by leave—taken as a whole.

Senator WONG (South Australia—Minister for Climate Change and Water) (1.36 pm)—I table a supplementary explanatory memorandum relating to the government amendments to be moved in this bill. I am advised that the memorandum was circulated in the chamber today. I seek leave to move government amendments (1) to (5) on sheet BX225 together.

Leave granted.

Senator WONG—I move:

(1) Clause 2, page 2 (at the end of the table), add:
4. Schedule 4 The 28th day after the day on which this Act receives the Royal Assent.

(2) Schedule 2, item 13, page 10 (lines 27 and 28), omit paragraph (1AA)(c).

(3) Schedule 2, item 32, page 14 (lines 8 and 9), omit paragraph (4A)(c).

(4) Schedule 2, item 32, page 14 (lines 20 and 21), omit paragraph (4B)(d).

(5) Page 22 (after line 23), at the end of the bill, add:

Schedule 4—Appointment of Federal Court Judges to State Supreme Courts
Federal Court of Australia Act 1976

1 Subsection 6(7) (at the end of the definition of prescribed court)
I will just outline briefly some of the issues in these amendments. As I indicated in the second reading debate, the government proposes some amendments to the bill, in particular to schedule 2. Schedule 2 contains amendments which provide for more streamlined appeal pathways to reduce confusion for litigants and aid the Federal Court of Australia in the efficient management of its resources. Amendments are also proposed to insert a new schedule 4 into the bill. Schedule 4 clarifies that a judge of the Federal Court of Australia, other than the Chief Justice, may hold a concurrent appointment as a judge of one or more state supreme courts.

The specific amendments moved on sheet BX225 implement a recommendation from the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. Recommendation 2 of the Senate report recommended that proposed paragraph 24(1AA)(c) be deleted from schedule 2 of the bill so that interlocutory decisions relating to security for the payment of costs by a single Federal Court judge can continue to be appealed to the full Federal Court. In submissions to the committee, the Law Council of Australia and the Australian Network of EDOs, environmental defenders offices, strongly supported retaining the right to appeal for security of costs decisions. This is based on the view that removal of this right of appeal could effectively stifle the litigation as parties would be taking a large financial risk irrespective of the merits of the case. The government accepts the view of the Senate standing committee report that removing the right to appeal interlocutory decisions relating to security for the payment of costs by a single Federal Court judge could have the unintended consequence of limiting access to justice for litigants. I note that the requirement to seek leave to appeal these decisions under section 24(1)(a) of the Federal Court of Australia Act enables the Federal Court to manage any potential delays caused by appeals against such interlocutory decisions relating to security for the payment of costs by a single Federal Court judge.

In relation to amendments (3) and (4), although not specifically referred to by the Senate committee or the Law Council of Australia the government proposes that, for consistency reasons, similar paragraphs 33(4A)(c) and 33(4B)(d) also be deleted. These paragraphs provide for no avenue of appeal for decisions relating to security of costs to the High Court when made by the full court exercising original jurisdiction and a single judge or full court in the appellate jurisdiction respectively. The deletion of these paragraphs will continue current arrangements and ensure that security for costs orders will continue to be appealable.

In relation to amendment (5), this amendment clarifies that a judge of the Federal Court of Australia, other than the Chief Justice, may hold a concurrent appointment as a judge of one or more state supreme courts. I suggest to the Senate that this is neither a controversial nor a complex amendment. It will involve amendment to section 6 of the Federal Court of Australia Act to include the supreme court of a state within the definition of a prescribed court.

In March 2008, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General first agreed to the development of an exchange program between judicial officers of interested jurisdictions. The Federal Court Act does not currently preclude appointment of Federal Court judges to state courts. The amendment will encourage existing arrangements for the temporary transfers of Federal Court judges to state supreme courts. The government’s expectation is that the transfer of Federal Court judges to hear matters in superior state courts will enhance the knowledge and ex-
perience of Federal Court judges, benefit other jurisdictions with new ideas and improvements to their courts and result in a more consistent body of national decision-making in areas of common jurisdiction. As I said, this demonstrates the government’s commitment to working with the states and territories in pursuing court excellence on a national basis. I commend the amendments to the Senate.

Question agreed to.

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (1.41 pm)—I have just been having a little chat with Senator Abetz about this amendment. I want to draw Senator Wong’s attention to the fact that I am, at the moment, staying with the wording revision on sheet 5937 and I move:

(1) Page 22 (after line 23), at the end of the bill, add:

Schedule 5—Registries

Federal Court of Australia Act 1976

1 At the end of section 34

Add:

(3) The Registrar shall cause at least one Registry in each State to be staffed on a full-time basis with the complement of staff in each such Registry to include a full-time Registrar.

The argument here has always been that there should be a registrar, understood to be a full-time registrar, in each state and that includes one in Hobart. To refresh the minds of senators, the problem for Tasmanian senators has been that the court has moved to eliminate the job of registrar in Hobart. We do not accept that and want that job maintained.

The government, I am given to believe and I know Senator Wong will speak on this, was happy for the registrar position to be maintained but not if the word ‘full-time’ was in front of it. I will allow her to put the government’s position on that. The opposition wants that terminology maintained and I can see why, because the Greens have also been committed to keeping the registrar’s position in Hobart on the same basis as the position is maintained in all the other state capitals.

I think Senator Abetz, a while ago, was referring to the extra duties that the registrar in the past has performed with the Australian Administrative Appeals Tribunal to complement the work that is done in Hobart. I will not go right through the argument we have had in this place before, about maintaining that position in Hobart, suffice to say it is an important part of the functioning of the Federal Court for Tasmanians just the same as it is for Queenslander, Western Australians or the people of New South Wales.

The decision by the court to abolish the position was strange given that clause 18N of the court legislation says that the district registry must have a district registrar. The way of getting around that was to say: ‘The registrar for Hobart will be the one who is in Melbourne.’ We do not accept that. As far as we are concerned, ought to be a registrar in Hobart. The legal establishment in Tasmania is very keen to see that the registrar’s position is maintained. Senator Abetz, as he said, has raised this a number of times in committees. Frankly, the reasoning for abolishing the registrar’s position in Hobart simply has not been validated and the Federal Court should maintain that position. So the amendment is as circulated on sheet 5937 revised 2.

Senator WONG (South Australia—Minister for Climate Change and Water) (1.45 pm)—Obviously Senator Brown is entitled to move the amendment if he wishes. It is disappointing, because the government had understood that as a result of negotiations with the Attorney-General’s office—and I have some emails that have been for-
warded to me from your staff, Senator Brown—a wording that the government could support had been agreed with the Australian Greens. We would have been able to support such an amendment. I will quote from what was sent to us:

*The registrar shall cause at least one registry in each state to be staffed on a full-time basis, with a complement of staff in each registry to include a registrar.*

It is very unusual for Senator Brown to do something that Senator Abetz wants, but clearly on this occasion it seems that there has been a meeting of minds whereby the Greens are now supporting the position that the opposition are putting, as opposed to what we understood had been negotiated with the government. That may not be your understanding, Senator Brown, but that was my advice.

This is an issue about the effective use of resources. The government, in good faith, sought to negotiate with the crossbenchers to enable a provision in the bill that talks about staffing on a full-time basis but recognising that whether or not the registrar needs to be full time should properly be a decision of the court and should take into account the efficient use of resources. I will not traverse the issues any further, unless the Senate desires it. The government is not in a position to support the amendment as moved. We were in a position to support the amendment as moved. We were in a position to support the amendment that we had previously understood would be moved.

**Senator Bob Brown** (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (1.46 pm)—Senator Wong is quite right: we had agreed to the change in terminology. But the opposition does not agree, and that is consistent with the position that it should be spelt out that the position is full time. Let me cut to the chase here. If the opposition does not support the amendment, it will not succeed in this place. The government and Greens cannot make it happen and I want to see that this does happen, so this is simply reiterating the position we have carried all the way through.

If the amendment succeeds—and I see that it will—I would then expect to have some talks with the minister and the minister’s representatives, because this is not the biggest ticket item that this Senate has dealt with in history. This is a very, very small amount of money. In fact, we are talking about an impost on the people of Tasmania if the government does not ensure that this position is funded, and it can do that without interfering in the workings of the court. So I am sure that a bit of negotiation can come to a common-sense outcome here, but I am not prepared to see the amendment lost in this place, which would therefore mean we would not have an outcome until sometime next year at the earliest.

**Senator Abetz** (Tasmania) (1.48 pm)—Can I briefly indicate that an amendment circulated in my name on sheet 5974 is not an amendment that I intend to pursue. It is in virtually identical terms to that moved by the Leader of the Australian Greens and, as was indicated earlier, I support the wording in his amendment. As for the wording in his amendment, I am not sure where it had its genesis, but I do know that I was provided with a copy of an amendment yesterday in which I understand—and this is the way it ought to work, I would suggest to the minister—the Attorney’s office suggested a form of words which did not have the word ‘full-time’ in front of the word ‘registrar’. Of course, when I saw it I invited my colleague to request that the word ‘full-time’ be inserted in front of ‘registrar’.

Why did I seek to do that? The reason is that you can have a full-time registry by having a receptionist answering the phone from...
nine till five. That is a full-time registry. But of course most people go to a registry not for the purpose of talking to a receptionist but to get the benefit of the registrar. So I saw it originally as some very neat framing out of the Attorney-General’s office which neatly sidestepped the actual issue, which is the need for a full-time registrar. That is why I then requested that the word ‘full-time’ be inserted in front of the word ‘registrar’—so that the registry in each state is to be staffed on a full-time basis with the complement of staff in each such registry to include a full-time registrar.

For whatever reason—and I do not understand it, quite frankly—the government seems to have locked in behind the administration of the Federal Court in relation to this matter. Having done so, it is clear to me at least that there would be a very strong temptation for the next Senate estimates to bounce back to me that we had amended the legislation without the requirement for a full-time registrar, just for a full-time registry. Of course, you can achieve that by simply having a full-time receptionist rather than the actual service that you want there, which is that of a registrar. That is why the wording needs to include that addition of which the minister complained.

As for the minister’s understanding, I would have been, quite frankly, gobsmacked if in all the times this has been raised in this place, in the media and in Senate estimates by both me and Senator Brown the message had not got through that the issue was a full-time registrar. I am sure that message had got through, so the concept of putting “full-time registrar” into the amendment should not have come as a surprise. That makes it absolutely watertight and absolutely clear what the intention of the opposition and the Greens is in relation to this matter. So can I indicate the coalition’s support and co-sponsorship of this issue with Senator Brown.

Question agreed to.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments; report adopted.

Third Reading

Senator Wong (South Australia—Minister for Climate Change and Water) (1.53 pm)—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH AGENCY BILL 2009

First Reading

Bill received from the House of Representatives.

Senator Wong (South Australia—Minister for Climate Change and Water) (1.53 pm)—I move:

That this bill may proceed without formalities and be now read a first time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Senator Wong (South Australia—Minister for Climate Change and Water) (1.54 pm)—I table a correction to the explanatory memorandum relating to the bill and I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

The speech read as follows—Preventive health measures work.
This has been demonstrated by our experience in smoking, the impact of HIV/AIDS, the road toll, seat belts, heart disease and even bicycle helmets. But in some areas we are facing many challenges that could put these successes at risk unless we take effective action now.

This is why today I rise to introduce a measure to focus and revitalise Australia’s preventive health capacity - the Australian National Preventive Health Agency Bill 2009.

The establishment of the ANPHA has been recommended by both the Health and Hospitals Reform Commission, and the National Preventative Health Taskforce. In fact, the creation of a national preventive health agency was proposed at the 2020 summit. So we have listened and we are now acting.

These reviews confirm for us that the rising incidence of chronic illness, combined with the ageing profile of the population, mean that sitting on our hands is not an option in terms of both the cost to our health system, and more importantly in terms of the human cost of illness and lost productivity.

This Bill establishes a national infrastructure to help drive major change in the way we behave and how we look after (or don’t look after) our own health.

It is widely appreciated that the ageing of our population is one of the major challenges to our health and prosperity. But there are also major pressures arising from our changing lifestyles and consumption patterns.

Between 1950 and 2008, more than 900,000 Australians died because they smoked - despite the fact that there was from about 1950 clear evidence on the dangers of smoking.

Thanks to preventive health measures we now have one of the lowest smoking levels in the world, and yet nearly three million Australians continue to smoke.

Of all cancers lung cancer remains our biggest killer of both men and women.

While less people are smoking than ever before, thousands of young people continue to take up the habit each year and tobacco remains the single-biggest preventable cause of death and disease in Australia.

In fact, 25 per cent of cancer deaths are attributable to tobacco and alcohol, and as such are avoidable, and a key job of the new Agency established by the Bill before us will be to ensure that we reduce this burden.

The Preventative Health Taskforce set a target of reducing smoking rates to less than 10 per cent. This would mean approximately one million fewer smokers in Australia, and according to the Taskforce would prevent the premature deaths of almost 300,000 Australians.

Similarly, with alcohol, barely a day goes by without newspapers outlining the severe impact of alcohol abuse in our community.

In contrast to tobacco, our overall per capita consumption of alcohol is high by world standards. One in four Australians drink at a level that puts them at risk of short-term harm at least once a month. Around 10 per cent of Australians drink at levels that put them at risk of long term harm.

And on top of that, we are now among the most obese nations in the world.

The National Preventative Health Taskforce stated that if obesity trends are left unchecked, the life expectancy for Australian children alive today will fall two years by the time they are 20 years old. This would represent the life expectancy levels we saw for males in 2001 and for females in 1997.

The Taskforce Chair is right when he says this is not a legacy we should be leaving for our kids.

These examples illustrate why the Government has made prevention a key focus of our reform agenda.

We must ensure that Australia does not go backwards in health status.

And we have to make our health system sustainable in the long term.

We need to reduce the burden preventable health problems are already placing on an ageing workforce, and ensure Australia’s productive capacity is maintained.

In the past the prevention effort has been neglected. We currently spend less than two per cent of the health budget on preventive health, and to
make matters worse in many respects, current arrangements are fragmented, lack cohesion and focus.

Success in changing lifestyles takes a long term, systematic approach informed by the latest evidence and ongoing evaluation of results.

In part this is because the skills and efforts required go beyond the capacity of any single sector, government or portfolio.

It cannot be about Governments imposing solutions on the community. It needs engagement, action and responsibility to be taken by individuals, families, communities, industries and businesses.

But as a national government, we can play a leadership role by gathering and analysing and disseminating the best available evidence, and the best evidence-based programs.

We need to bring together the best expertise in the country, and we need to engage employers, businesses, other sectors and the wider community in prevention.

A new approach is needed, and the new Australian National Preventive Health Agency will play a key role in achieving this ambition through the deployment of a skilled and dedicated team which can work flexibly and responsively.

The Rudd Government takes preventive health seriously. Under the auspices of COAG we reached agreement with the states and territories in November last year to a National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health, which will reform how the Commonwealth and the states work together on preventive health. This Agreement, funded by the Government at $872 million, provides the largest single investment in health promotion in Australia’s history.

A key initiative of that Prevention Partnership is establishing the Agency today.

The Agency’s staff will include population health and other experts. It will have responsibility for providing evidence-based policy advice to health and other ministers interested in preventive health and will administer social marketing programs and other national preventive health programs which it may be tasked with by Health Ministers. It will have responsibility for stakeholder consultation, and overseeing surveillance and research activities.

Initially it will have $133 million allocated, including funds to assist with the establishment and operation of the Agency ($17.6 million), social marketing targeting obesity and tobacco ($102 million) and to support preventive health research, especially the translation of research into practice ($13.1 million).

It will also form partnerships with industry, as well as the community and non-government sectors.

I am therefore pleased to present the Australian National Preventive Health Agency Bill 2009 to establish the Australian National Preventive Health Agency.

The Bill establishes the Agency as a statutory authority under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997, or FMA Act, and specifies its functions, governance and structure.

Health Ministers have agreed to the Agency being established under the FMA Act and were consulted about the broad provisions in the Bill. The Australian Local Government Association was consulted in relation to it being a named entity in the Bill.

Provisions have been made to allow the Agency to manage pooled funds through a Special Account if other organisations, including states and territories, choose to contribute financially to its operations. This provision reflects the Government’s commitment to work with the states and also with other interested groups to achieve the preventive health outcomes this country needs.

A Chief Executive Officer will manage the Australian National Preventive Health Agency and will be directly accountable to the Federal Health Minister for the financial management of the Agency and to the Australian Health Minister’s Conference, via the Minister for Health and Ageing, for the Agency’s performance. This provision reflects that the Agency is a COAG mandated body and that it has been established to support all Health Ministers in tackling the complex challenge posed by preventable chronic disease.

The Australian National Preventive Health Agency will have an Advisory Council which will consist of state, territory and Commonwealth
government representatives and other individuals with expertise relating to preventive health.

Both the CEO and Advisory Council members will be appointed by the Minister, consulting with the Australian Health Ministers’ Conference.

Preventive health is a policy area which the Government has given the highest priority. The establishment of the Australian National Preventive Health Agency is a key component of this Government’s health reform agenda.

It is important that the Bill is passed in the Spring sittings to allow the Agency to commence operations on 1 January 2010.

Once established it will mean that for the first time, Australia will have a dedicated organisation to help us combat the complex challenges of preventable chronic disease.

It will benefit all Australians, now and into the future, and will play a significant role in putting Australia on the path to becoming the healthiest country in the world.

Senator CORMANN (Western Australia) (1.54 pm)—The Australian National Preventive Health Agency Bill 2009 is a piece of legislation that is being introduced now so that the government can look busy in the health portfolio. The reason they want to look busy in the health portfolio is so that they can make people believe that they are actually doing something. We have to remember that in the health portfolio the Rudd Labor government promised the world before the last election, and they have delivered next to nothing. They have been a great disappointment in the health portfolio. All we have had is reviews, reviews and more reviews—and the occasional lazy budget cut, usually targeted at those Australians who access their healthcare services through the private system.

One of those many reviews which the government commissioned was a review into the very important area of preventive health with the national Preventative Health Taskforce. The minister commissioned it in April 2008. For 15 months they worked very thoroughly through all the issues. They came up with a whole series of recommendations on how they thought the government should proceed in the preventative health area. The government received that report on 30 June. That is four months ago. Since then the government have been sitting on that report. They have not come out and made any response whatsoever in terms of which measures they will support and which measures they will oppose. We are none the wiser. And here we have this bill proposing to set up another layer of bureaucracy before we actually know what direction the government are intending to take in the preventative health area. We have a lot of talk and no action.

Mr Acting Deputy President, I will draw your attention to a few of the recommendations, because at the core of our concern is that we are faced with a government which
has been absolutely unable to make a single hard decision in the health portfolio. They have not been able to make a single hard decision. Whenever they are faced with a difficult decision they set up another committee, they set up another review or they set up another consultation round, or they set up a propaganda tour around Australia where the Prime Minister and the Minister for Health and Ageing appear at a hospital near you for a nice little photo opportunity. They are trying to look as if they are doing something by being busy.

We on this side of the chamber are very supportive of effective preventive health measures. But we are not in favour of setting up another bureaucracy without a clear purpose. This is exactly why we will be moving a second reading amendment, which I hope will be supported by the Senate, which calls on the government to table forthwith its response to all of the recommendations of the Preventative Health Taskforce. The government has been sitting on those recommendations for the last four months. We in this Senate had to shame the government into releasing the report in the first place. It took them two months before they were prepared to release it publicly—all the while leaking it bit by bit whenever they needed another distraction out there in the media. We want to know what the government are proposing to do in relation to the recommendation—for example, to make tobacco products more expensive by raising the average price of a packet of 30 cigarettes to at least $20 within three years. Is the government supporting that or is it opposed to them? Is the government supporting them in part? If yes, to what extent?

Senator Abetz—They’ll go to Indonesia for the solution.

Senator CORMANN—Exactly, they will go and find an Indonesian solution. Then there is the issue of the restriction of alcohol promotion and marketing—

Debate interrupted.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Asylum Seekers

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS (2.00 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Evans. What will be the cost of the Prime Minister’s ‘Indonesian solution’? Is it $50 million, or is this just the starting point?

Senator CHRIS EVANS—I thank Senator Fierravanti-Wells for the question, but there will be no chocolates today! The start of the ‘Indonesian solution’, if you want to describe it as that, was probably taken by John Howard in about 2002. In terms of expenditure already, certainly the construction of the new detention centre that the previous government authorised and funded was about $7 million—

Senator Abetz—Which you opposed.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—No, that is not right, actually, Senator. That cost about $7 million. The Australian government has, for many years now, helped support proper processing of asylum-seeking claims in Indonesia. We have funded the UNHCR in its work in making the assessments and we have funded the international office of migration in supporting asylum seekers and caring for them during those processes. Those arrangements, as I say, were put in place during the first decade of this century by the Howard government. This government has looked to provide additional support for the UNHCR. We have increased funding to the
UNHCR. We have increased funding for the international office of migration in order to provide more care for those seeking asylum in Indonesia and we have also helped fund some staff and training requirements to make the centre that was funded under the Howard government operational, to try and improve the skills of those in charge of the centre and to support their staffing needs.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells—Mr President, I rise on a point of order. I did not ask the minister for a history lesson; I asked him a specific question—that is, on the Prime Minister’s Indonesian solution. Is the $50 million just the starting point or is that the cost of the package? It was a very specific question.

The PRESIDENT—Order! You have 24 seconds remaining, Senator Evans. I draw your attention to the question.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—Thank you, Mr President. The point I am making is that our engagement with Indonesia on these matters is longstanding and that funding of these measures has been going for many years under successive governments. If the senator’s reference is to media reports of a figure of $50 million, we made clear that there were ongoing negotiations with the Indonesian government about measures under a new framework under the Lombok treaty. (Time expired)

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Minister, reports have emerged of overcrowding and abuse within Indonesian detention facilities. What assurances has the Prime Minister received from the Indonesian government that Australian funded Indonesian detention facilities meet appropriate international standards?

Senator CHRIS EVANS—In terms of what arrangements the former Howard government made when commissioning the building as to whether it met appropriate standards, I will have to take that on notice. I will go back in the files and examine what arrangements were made by the Howard government when they authorised the construction.

My understanding is that the detention centre in question currently has 80 or 90 detainees and has capacity for about 600, so it is not overcrowded and there is remaining capacity. But we have encouraged the Indonesians to provide accommodation for families outside the detention centre. Their usual practice is to do so, and we have encouraged
them to provide alternative accommodation for families seeking asylum. We do note that, despite not being signatories to the convention, Indonesia’s record on nonrefoulement is excellent. (Time expired)

Climate Change

Senator CROSSIN (2.06 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Wong. Is the minister aware of a report from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts and their inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities? Given that I am aware that this report specifies some concerns about Kakadu National Park and I am a senator for the Northern Territory, can the minister outline some of the key findings of this report?

Senator WONG—I thank Senator Crossin for the question and for her interest in climate change, our response to it and the risks for the Northern Territory as well as for the rest of Australia. This report is an important and timely reminder of the significant impact that climate change will have in this nation if we do not act now to reduce Australia’s contribution to climate change. As the report notes, the majority of Australians—some 85 per cent of the population or thereabouts—live in the coastal zone, and climate change impacts on the Australian coastal zone include rising sea levels, more intense storms, larger wave and storm surges, altered precipitation and run-off, and ocean acidification. The report said that the concentration of Australia’s population and infrastructure along the coast makes us particularly vulnerable to the coastal erosion and inundation that will accompany increases in sea levels.

The report highlights some of the costs of climate change for Australia’s coastal communities. Coastal flooding, erosion and other hazards currently cost New South Wales around $200 million a year. Twenty per cent of Tasmania’s coastline would be at risk from sea-level rise and more severe storm surges associated with climate change. A 10-centimetre rise in sea levels would mean up to six times as many extreme events as there are currently in a range of cities, including Darwin. According to one submission referenced in the report, preliminary estimates of the value of property in Australia exposed to the risk of land being inundated or eroded by rising sea levels range from $50 billion to $150 billion. This gives us some sense of the economic costs of climate change and of the urgency of action now to reduce Australia’s contribution to climate change.

Senator CROSSIN—Mr President, given that no-one from the opposition was listening to the answer, I am tempted to ask the same question again. But I ask a supplementary question. Can the minister outline to the Senate the government’s response to the report? What action is the government planning to take on climate change?

Senator WONG—We on this side do take climate change seriously. We also honour our commitment to the Australian people to act on climate change and we look forward to the legislation being passed through the parliament. The government will carefully consider the findings of the inquiry and work closely with other levels of government, the private sector, management bodies and experts. We are already progressing a range of initiatives. First, there is the National Coastal Vulnerability Assessment, which I anticipate being able to release soon, which will improve our understanding of the risks that communities around Australia’s coastline face, including to residential housing. An economic analysis of climate change impacts on nationally significant infrastructure is already underway. We have already provided some $2.3 million to over 90 councils to undertake climate change risk assessments and
to develop adaptation action plans. And we announced $10 million to fund research into the human health impacts of climate change earlier this year. (Time expired)

Senator CROSSIN—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Finally, in addition to outlining how the government is planning to respond to the impact of climate change on our coast, what steps is the government taking to help avoid climate change?

Senator WONG—I think it is timely for all of us in this place to remember that this generation has lost the chance to avoid climate change altogether because there is already enough carbon pollution in the atmosphere to lock in some climate change.

Senator Abetz—How much?

Senator WONG—What we do have is the opportunity to reduce the risk, and thank you for that interjection, Senator Abetz. I note Senator Abetz has made some reference to the response to this report. He said:

Chances are you would have to go into the business of making gumboots, because people will be getting very wet feet.

I assume that that is Senator Abetz’s version of why it is we need to act on climate change, and if that is his motivation I thank him for that, as long as it does bring him to a point where he is able to support the government’s legislation to take action on climate change. If he does vote for it on the basis that it is good for the gumboot makers, certainly the government would be happy to have him help see passage of the legislation. (Time expired)

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT—Order! I draw the attention of honourable senators to the presence in the chamber of a parliamentary delegation from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On behalf of all senators, I wish you a warm welcome to Australia and, in particular, to the Senate.

Honourable senators—Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

National Security

Senator BACK (2.12 pm)—My question is to the Minister representing the Prime Minister, Senator Evans. Has the government received advice from Defence, Foreign Affairs and Australian intelligence agency sources that groups supportive of the Tamil Tigers are operative within Australia?

Senator CHRIS EVANS—Can I first say to Senator Back that of course I would not be discussing what intelligence advice the government received from those agencies. I think that was the policy of the previous government and it is a well-established policy in terms of Australian government procedures. But there is no doubt we receive intelligence reporting on any potential activity of organisations that may be of concern, both internationally and in Australia. As you know, Senator, there has been action taken regarding fundraising efforts inside this country in support of the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka.

I will take on notice the detail, but my memory—I will correct this if I am wrong—is that the previous government made a change in about 2001 which banned the practice of fundraising and financing the Tamil Tigers in Australia. I will correct that immediately if I am wrong, but I think it was around 2001 that the previous government put that arrangement in place to try to combat concerns that the Tamil Tigers were being financed out of Australia and allegedly by the Tamil community in Australia. Similar activities have been taken by other nations where it was thought the Tamil diaspora might be funding the LTTE and some of their activities. That was certainly a concern of the previous government and arrangements were
put in place to try to prevent that funding occurring and, as you know, through AUSTRAC and other measures we have sought to ensure that financing of such organisations does not occur. Obviously I cannot report on more recent intelligence response advice other than to say that we of course continually receive that advice from the relevant Australian agencies.

Senator BACK—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Can the government then assure the Australian people that Tamil guerrillas are not being given asylum as a result of the relaxed Labor policy which has laid out a very large welcome mat, with a new boat arriving nearly every day into Australian waters?

Senator CHRIS EVANS—I thought better of Senator Back than that he would take the low road. We have heard Senator Johnston talk about the threat of disease, we have heard Mr Tuckey talk about terrorist threats and today we have had the shadow spokesperson making claims about increases in Centrelink benefits—all untrue and all unfounded. I can assure senators that we have mandatory detention of offshore arrivals and we have processing on Christmas Island. These are exactly the same arrangements that were in place under the Howard government. As part of that processing, there are health, identity and security checks undertaken by Australian security agencies. They are rigorous and they are applied in the same way for many years in Australia. They are all conducted on Christmas Island, and no-one is released onto the mainland with a visa without having had those checks successfully completed. (Time expired)

Senator BACK—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Given that the Secretary of the Australian Federation of Tamil Associations has stated that former Tamil Tiger guerrillas are ‘definitely among the influx of boat people to arrive on our shores’, can the government state unequivocally that they have not, through their irresponsible border protection policies, let Tamil terrorists into Australia?

Senator CHRIS EVANS—Again, this is an outrageous claim, a beat-up made to whip up fear. I think they can do better. I think they should be able to do better. This is a real public policy challenge which this government is working hard on meeting. I made it clear that exactly the same security, identity and health checks are conducted on Christmas Island as were conducted under the previous government. We seek the assurance of the relevant security agencies before decisions on visas are made. They use their best officers and their facilities to ensure that we protect the Australian community. Those checks are in place. They are rigorous, they are fulsome and they are the same security checks that were in place under the previous government. I urge the Liberal Party to think about where they are going with this. I know they are desperate and I know their polling is shocking, but they should just think about this. There is a need for public policy debate. They do not need to go down the low road. They can deal with this in a mature manner if they choose to. (Time expired)

Afghanistan

Senator FORSHAW (2.17 pm)—My question is directed to Senator Faulkner, the Minister for Defence. Can the minister advise the Senate on the outcomes of the NATO defence ministers meeting held in Bratislava? Also, what approaches are the ISAF nations considering as a result of General McChrystal’s review?

Senator Abetz interjecting—

Senator Chris Evans interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Order! It is disorderly to be debating across the chamber...
when I am waiting to call the minister to answer the question.

Senator Faulkner—I am pleased to report to the Senate that the ISAF defence ministers meeting in Bratislava was an important opportunity to review developments in Afghanistan and, of course, represent Australia’s interests. Discussions covered Commander ISAF General Stanley McChrystal’s assessment of the campaign, the need to support the ongoing growth and development of the Afghan national security forces and the importance of complementing our military efforts with civil assistance and governance improvements at all levels.

I reiterated Australia’s commitment in Afghanistan and emphasised our focus on training and mentoring the Afghan National Army 4th Brigade in Oruzgan province so that they are able to take responsibility for the security and stability of the province. I would like to take this opportunity to endorse NATO Secretary General Rasmussen’s comments that:

…transition cannot be solely military and that, in addition to a strong army and police, Afghanistan needs a credible government taking active, visible steps to show that it is cleaning up corruption, improving efficiency and delivering services to the people effectively.

The coalition is focused on developing an approach that integrates military, political and governance strategies to achieve sustained security and stability.

Senator Forshaw—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Thank you, Minister. I note in your answer to the primary question you referred to our operation in Oruzgan province. Given reports that the NATO defence ministers have considered General McChrystal’s assessment, can you inform the Senate whether this has resulted in any changes to our approach within Oruzgan province?

Senator Faulkner—I thank Senator Forshaw for that supplementary question. I am pleased to advise that ISAF defence ministers did broadly support General McChrystal’s overall counterinsurgency approach. Important decisions in response to General McChrystal’s assessment are yet to be taken, as I am sure senators are aware, by the US administration and other ISAF partners. It is, I think, proper that we allow that to take the necessary time. What I can say is that I certainly welcome the rigour of General McChrystal’s analysis, with its focus on protecting the civilian population and training the Afghan national security forces. These features of General McChrystal’s analysis are strongly reflected in the approach that Australian forces are taking in Oruzgan, working side by side with their colleagues in the Afghan national armed forces. (Time expired)

Senator Forshaw—Mr President, I have a further supplementary question. I ask the minister: have any further decisions been made in relation to the proposed Dutch withdrawal and their relinquishment of leadership in Oruzgan Province, anticipated in August 2010?

Senator Faulkner—Certainly as I understand it, a final decision by the Dutch government on the type of commitment that they intend to maintain after 2010 is yet to be made. Needless to say, Australia enjoys an excellent relationship with the Netherlands. Today, as I have done in the past, I commend them for the outstanding job they have done. We would very much like to see the Dutch continue their valuable role, and I took the opportunity to make this point to my Dutch counterpart, Minister Middelkoop. That decision is in the hands of the Netherlands government, as every senator would understand. I can say that I took the opportunity to strongly emphasise to NATO the importance of appropriate leadership arrangements being
in place in the event of the anticipated Dutch drawdown of forces in 2010. *(Time expired)*

**Asylum Seekers**

Senator CASH (2.23 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Evans. How many of the illegal entrants currently in the Christmas Island detention centre have no supportive documentation as to their identity?

Senator Bob Brown—Mr President, I raise the same point of order that I raised yesterday.

*Opposition senators interjecting—*

The PRESIDENT—Order! Senator Bob Brown is entitled to be heard in silence.

Senator Bob Brown—I ask you to rule on standing order 73, which, as I read it, prohibits that terminology of ‘illegal’ immigrants or entrants in Christmas Island. It is factually wrong and pejorative and has implications which should not be allowed in such a question.

The PRESIDENT—Senator Bob Brown, you did write to me on this matter this morning and I have written back to you outlining that I would allow the question to stand yesterday and I will allow the question to stand again today.

Senator Bob Brown—Well, you shouldn’t.

The PRESIDENT—that might be your view, but I am ruling that way. The question is in order. The question is to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Evans.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—I note the deliberately provocative language, but I can inform Senator Cash that, in terms of the irregular maritime arrivals, all persons who are intercepted seeking to enter Australia in an unauthorised manner by boat are taken to Christmas Island for processing. The processing includes, in the initial stages, an interview and further processing for the purposes of establishing identity, health status and security checks. I made that clear in the earlier answer to Senator Back. The number of people who arrive with sufficient papers for identification varies. I do not have the exact figure. Some arrive with a passport or an identity document and others arrive with nothing at all. Some have other personal information. Many have virtually no personal possessions other than the clothes they stand up in.

What we do as a government is use the relevant agencies to interview and work with those asylum seekers to establish their identity, to ensure that they have no communicable diseases and that they are healthy and we begin a process of providing the appropriate security checks—exactly the same type of operation that occurred under the previous government. As we know with arrivals by air, many people have arrived by air with false documentation. So the mere possession of documentation would not be sufficient to identify the person. We do the appropriate checks through relevant Australian agencies to identify persons before they are processed.

Senator CASH—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. How did these people get into Indonesia prior to embarking for Australia without supportive documentation?

Senator CHRIS EVANS—I suppose the first thing to say is: probably the same way people did in 1999, 2000, 2001 and nearly every year since.

Senator Cash—Take responsibility for your failed policies.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—Senator Cash, this may go down well in the right wing of the Liberal Party in Western Australia, but it is no substitute—

*Senator Johnston interjecting—*
Senator CHRIS EVANS—Senator Johnston, that is a very revealing interjection. I take that interjection.

Senator Johnston interjecting—

Senator CHRIS EVANS—Senator Johnston, I remind you that you are in opposition—a short period as a minister and you end up in opposition.

Senator Ian Macdonald—Mr President, I rise on a point of order. The Leader of the Government in the Senate has been here long enough to know that he should be addressing his remarks through the chair and not direct to senators.

The PRESIDENT—Senator Evans, you should be addressing your remarks through the chair. You have 37 seconds remaining.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—As I say, people arrive with various levels of documentation. Some may have had documentation at earlier stages of their transit. We do have a series of measures that seek to try to work with our neighbouring nations to improve their entry and checking arrangements at their borders. The previous government and this government have invested a lot in border management in Indonesia to try to improve their systems. But, as you know, Senator, it is an archipelago—it has thousands of ports, thousands of entry places. They are developing a more sophisticated system. (Time expired)

Senator CASH—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Will any of these illegal entrants be allowed into the Australian community prior to their full antecedents being verified?

Senator Bob Brown—Mr President, I rise on a point of order. As the term ‘illegal entrants’ is a lie, I ask you to have it withdrawn.

The PRESIDENT—Senator Bob Brown, I have ruled before. The question will stand.

Senator Birmingham—Mr President, I rise on a point of order.

The PRESIDENT—Is it on the same point of order?

Senator Birmingham—No, it is a new point of order.

Government senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Order! Wait a moment, Senator Birmingham. You are entitled to be heard in silence.

Senator Birmingham—Mr President, under standing order 196, tedious repetition, I ask you to rule on Senator Brown’s continued points of order with regard to this matter—which you indicated you have already ruled upon.

The PRESIDENT—There is no point of order.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—Clearly, today and yesterday mark a departure in tactics by the opposition. It was only two days ago that we had the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Turnbull, rebuking Mr Tuckey for his comments and allegations. In the last two days, we have had Senator Johnston alleging that people are bringing disease into the country that will destroy animal and human stock and Mr Tuckey alleging that they are all terrorists. And today we have had the opposition spokesman claiming that they are all Centrelink bludgers and that somehow they are entitled to Centrelink under us when they were not under the previous government.

Senator Cash—Mr President, I rise on a point of order regarding relevance. The minister has had over 30 seconds to answer the question, and he has yet to address it. I asked quite clearly: will any of these illegal entrants be allowed into the Australian community prior to their full antecedents being verified? I would now appreciate an answer in the remaining 23 seconds.
Senator Ludwig—Mr President, on the point of order: what we again have is abuse of the taking of a point of order in order to restate the question. The minister is being responsive to the question and providing an answer. I would ask that you rule the point of order out of order and remind those opposite that they should not use a point of order to restate their question. It is a poor tactic and it reflects badly on them.

The PRESIDENT—I remind Minister Evans that there are 23 seconds remaining to answer the question that has been asked.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—Thank you, Mr President. I remind Senator Cash that on three or four occasions already in question time I have reinforced the fact that health, identity and security checks are taken.

Senator Cash interjecting—

Senator CHRIS EVANS—Senator, you asked me whether there were identity checks; I have told you three or four times already.

The PRESIDENT—Senator Evans, ignore the interjection; address the chair.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—Senator Cash, you ought to listen to the debate before you read out the same old question. I urge you not to go down the low road; it is very unbecoming. (Time expired)

Timor Sea Oil Spill

Senator SIEWERT—My question is to Senator Faulkner, the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Could the minister tell us: when was the Commonwealth first aware that oil from the Montara oil spill had crossed into Indonesian waters? Which minister or department contacted which authorities and when? What arrangements, if any, have been made to monitor and assess the impacts of the oil on Indonesian waters? Are there any clean-up or compensation arrangements?

Senator FAULKNER—I will try and deal with those important questions with the information I have available. The first date I am aware of is when the incident itself took place, which was 21 August 2009. As Senator Siewert and other senators would be aware, it is the Australian Maritime Safety Authority’s responsibility to coordinate the clean-up under the National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil and other Noxious and Hazardous Substances. I can say that the majority of the oil remains within the vicinity of the platform and the closest sheen to the mainland is reported to be at least 200 kilometres from the Australian coast.

I also can say that the area affected is being closely monitored by regular daily flights arranged by AMSA. As I understand it, AMSA has been keeping Indonesian authorities informed about the progress of any oil sheen near Indonesia. I can also inform the Senate that Indonesian officials have taken part in a daily observation flight aboard the AMSA Dornier search and rescue aircraft. In addition, I can say that reports taken on 25 October indicate patches of sheen to be around 230 kilometres from the Indonesian coast. (Time expired)

Senator SIEWERT—I thank the minister for his answer. Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Is the minister aware of reports that there are in fact significant impacts on the livelihoods of at least 300 seaweed farmers on Rote Island and on some subsistence fishers in Indonesian waters? This has been reported in the Indonesian media. Is the government aware of this? Has the government responded and has it taken any steps to validate that this is oil from the Montara spill?

Senator FAULKNER—I thank Senator Siewert for her supplementary question. I am personally not aware of those reports and I do not know if any government agencies are,
so all I can do there is undertake to find that out for you, Senator. I will do that. My understanding is that the oil spill is not in Indonesian territorial waters but, as I have indicated, some 230 kilometres from the nearest Indonesian coastline. That is the only information I have available to me, Senator Siewert. I can say that Indonesian authorities have been kept informed, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, of the location of the residual oil sheen and progress with the oil spill response and the relief well drilling operation. *(Time expired)*

**Senator SIEWERT**—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Once again I thank the minister for his answer. If the minister could take that on notice, it would be appreciated, because there are reports that the Indonesian authorities have been informed that oil has in fact entered Indonesian waters. If it has and if it is impacting on the livelihoods of some of the local Indonesians, could the minister also inform the Senate as to what obligations there are on the company to provide any redress and cover the costs incurred outside of Australian territorial waters? What actions, if any, has the government taken to pursue these matters?

**Senator FAULKNER**—I thank Senator Siewert again for her supplementary question. As I have said, I am not aware of those specific reports. I have undertaken to find that out, and I will. Additionally, to assist Senator Siewert, I will ask about any obligations that might exist. I am sure that Senator Siewert would appreciate that that might mean that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade might need to establish that, possibly with other agencies. But I am happy to give the senator an undertaking that I will ensure that, if there is reason to answer that element of her question—obviously it is dependent on the threshold issue of where any oil sheen might be. I am certainly happy to undertake to do that, as I have outlined.

**Illegal Fishing**

**Senator COLBECK** (2.38 pm)—My question is to the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Carr. Can the government confirm that one of Australia’s key fisheries protection ships, the *Oceanic Viking*, has been unable to carry out its fisheries protection duties because it has instead been a home for unauthorised arrivals for more than nine days due to the government’s bungled border security crisis? Will the government inform the Senate whether or not Australian Fisheries Management Authority officers assigned to the ship are able to carry out their normal duties?

**Senator CARR**—I thank the senator for his question. I am advised that the government has funded the vessel for additional northern waters protection. I have no further information in regard to that matter, and I will be happy to take further requests for information on notice.

**Senator COLBECK**—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Will the government inform the Senate when the *Oceanic Viking* will be able to resume its important duties of protecting Australia’s fisheries and apprehending illegal fishermen, or has its role now been consigned to rescuing the Prime Minister’s bungled unauthorised arrivals policy?

**Senator CARR**—When it is not undertaking specific tasks in the Southern Ocean, the *Oceanic Viking* is available for other border protection duties, under the control of Border Protection Command. In May 2009, the budget provided for additional funding for the *Oceanic Viking* to be used for an extra 80 days per annum in northern waters in response to maritime people smuggling.
Senator COLBECK—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. I would invite the minister to read comments coming out of the CCAMLR meeting that is being conducted in Hobart at the moment about the protection of Australia’s Southern Ocean fisheries. Is the government’s decision to assign fishing protection resources, such as the Oceanic Viking, to housing unauthorised arrivals opening up Australia’s fisheries to illegal fishing boats, allowing them to exploit our fishing stocks and putting at risk the livelihoods of Australia’s hardworking fishermen—including the tuna fishing fleet at Port Lincoln, which has been devastated by recent cuts to quota?

Senator CARR—The senator has clearly had difficulty hearing my original two answers, in which I have indicated to him, now on two occasions, that the government has provided additional resources—through additional funding in the budget—to provide for this particular function. The Australian government is fighting illegal foreign fishing in our northern waters to protect our seafood industries and our environment. Illegal fishing impacts on the sustainability of our fish stocks. The government does not resile from that commitment in any way, and we are undertaking all the necessary measures to guard this country against illegal foreign fishing.

Automotive Industry

Senator McEWEN (2.42 pm)—My question is also to the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Carr. Can the minister inform the Senate what the government is doing in response to the announcement by Bridgestone Australia on Friday, 23 October 2009 that it would be closing the tyre manufacturing plant in northern Adelaide in 2010? What support will be provided to retrenched workers? What arrangements have been made with the government of South Australia and other stakeholders to ensure that support is coordinated effectively? What specific employment services will workers have access to, and what role will the government’s car plan play in helping them to adjust?

Senator CARR—I thank Senator McEwen very much for that question. It is an important matter. The decision of Bridgestone Australia to close its tyre factory at Salisbury by next April is evidence of the pressures that are now bearing down on Australian industry. Those pressures have been intensified by the global recession, which is not yet over. This is not the time to relax our vigilance, and that is why the Commonwealth has acted swiftly, in partnership with the government of South Australia, to support the 600 workers employed at the Salisbury plant. We have established a Commonwealth-state task force to oversee the delivery of services to the affected workers. The task force has also involved senior company representatives and unions.

Bridgestone has said publicly that workers will receive their full entitlements. The Commonwealth will provide a $4.7 million package of measures to support job search and job training. We want to ensure that workers get back into the workforce as quickly as possible. All Bridgestone workers are eligible for intensive employment services under the government’s Automotive Industry Structural Adjustment Program, which is part of the New Car Plan for a Greener Future. AISAP offers workers who are made redundant from the automotive manufacturing company stream free assistance from a local Job Services Australia provider. Providers will help workers develop a tailored employment pathway plan and provide additional assistance to help them find new employment.

Workers will also be supported by a local employment coordinator for the Northern
and Western Adelaide Priority Region, where the plant is located. Senator Arbib is responsible for that particular aspect of the program. We will be standing shoulder to shoulder with the 600 workers, and their families, who have been displaced by the decision of Bridgestone Australia. (Time expired)

Senator McEWEN—I thank Senator Carr for that answer. Mr President, I ask a supplementary question: would the minister to explain to the Senate what support retrenched Bridgestone workers will receive for retraining, given that that may be critical to their re-employment prospects? What assistance will they be eligible for through the Automotive Industry Structural Adjustment Program and other Commonwealth programs? What new qualifications will they be able to pursue and how will this improve their employability?

Senator CARR—I thank the senator for her question. Retraining will play an important part in ensuring that retrenched Bridgestone workers find quality, sustainable new jobs. Funding to retrain workers will be made available through the Commonwealth’s Productivity Places Program, which is delivering 711,000 new training places over five years. This includes 10,000 structural adjustment places for retrenched workers. Workers will also get additional Employment Pathway Fund credit to help them with training as part of their AISAP entitlements. They will be able to gain a certificate III, certificate IV or diploma qualification, giving them the skills to win jobs in fields where employment is growing. The Commonwealth is exploring other training opportunities with the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology. I repeat: we will be standing shoulder to shoulder with these workers. (Time expired)

Senator McEWEN—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Can the minister also advise the Senate what challenges Australian manufacturing companies, such as Bridgestone, face in the present environment? What are the specific challenges facing firms in automotive manufacturing? To what extent are recent trends in the manufacturing sector the result of long-term developments and to what extent are they a consequence of the global recession? What measures have the government taken to support our car and vehicle component makers and to drive the modernisation of Australian industry more generally?

Senator CARR—The Bridgestone closure highlights the acute competitive pressures facing Australian manufacturing, and Australian automotive manufacturing in particular. Increasing competition from low-wage producers, the high rate of the Australian dollar, changing consumer preferences and, more recently, the worst global downturn in a lifetime have all had an impact. There are no simple answers to these challenges. That is why the Australian government is working on many fronts to secure high-wage, high-skilled jobs for the future—not least through the $6.2 billion A New Car Plan for a Greener Future. Powering Ideas, our new 10-year innovation agenda, is backed by an immediate injection of $3.1 billion in new funding over the next four years. We are giving Australian manufacturing the support it needs to retool—(Time expired)

Telstra

Senator MINCHIN (2.48 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Conroy. I refer to the minister’s extraordinary incompetence in mistakenly tabling yesterday parts of the ACCC report which contained highly confidential informa-
tion about the value of Telstra’s network assets. Will the minister accept full responsibility for this latest blunder, and has he personally apologised to Telstra for the disclosure of this very sensitive commercial information?

Senator CONROY—Yes, I take full responsibility; and yes, I have spoken to David Thodey. Let me also confirm that the documents tabled yesterday in relation to the NBN request for proposal expert panel report inadvertently contained confidential information provided to the expert panel by the ACCC. Let me be very clear: Senator Minchin has been demanding the release of this information and we have been stating from day one that we would not do that. So yes, it was a mistake. But let us be clear: Senator Minchin and those opposite are demanding the release of more confidential information.

Opposition senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Order! Senator Conroy, resume your seat. When there is order, we will proceed.

Senator CONROY—they are demanding more confidential information be released from other participants in the tender process. They have gone to the extraordinary length of putting a blanket ban on dealing with any broadband or NBN related bill until we release all of that confidential information. So do not come in here pretending to cry on behalf of Telstra or cry on behalf of Telstra’s shareholders when you are demanding this information be released. I note that Telstra has made a statement to the stock exchange today on this issue. I quote:

Telstra refers to an article in today’s Australian Financial Review regarding the National Broadband Network and notes that the figures quoted are from an ACCC report tabled in Parliament yesterday that relate to regulatory cost modelling provided to the Expert Panel as part of the Government’s 2008 National Broadband Network (NBN) Request For Proposals …

This is the very information you are demanding. (Time expired)

Senator MINCHIN—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. I ask the minister: doesn’t this most serious breach of confidentiality seriously compromise NBN negotiations between the government and Telstra, which could be to the detriment of either the Australian taxpayers or Telstra shareholders—or, more likely, both? Does it not compromise the ACCC in its role in access determinations?

Senator CONROY—It regrettable, as I have said, that an unfortunate error resulted in this confidential information not being removed before it was tabled. I take personal responsibility. I have made that absolutely clear. We have admitted the mistake.

Senator Ian Macdonald—Resign.

Senator CONROY—even Senator Minchin is not going that far, fair dinkum.

Opposition senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Order! Senator Conroy, address your comments to the chair. Ignore the interjections. The interjections are disorderly.

Senator CONROY—we are confident that constructive talks with Telstra can continue. The value of network assets is a subject of talks with Telstra and we have already indicated that we will not be discussing or giving a running commentary on these discussions. But, as I said, once again the gross hypocrisy of those opposite is on display in relation to this issue. Senator Minchin has expressed concerns about the release of the data, and we share those concerns. However, the effect of the motion being debated, which those opposite have championed in order to block NBN deals, would require the government—(Time expired)
Senator MINCHIN—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Given the minister’s incompetent revelation of highly confidential information about Telstra’s network, why should other telecommunications companies and utilities trust this minister with the handling of their sensitive network information which the government insists on acquiring for the conduct of the NBN implementation study?

Senator CONROY—Senator Minchin again demonstrates his hypocrisy. Senator Minchin wants information that is supplied by companies in confidence as part of a tender process to be released into the public domain. He asked for this information. In actual fact, his office put out its 164th press release yesterday before they had read the information condemning me for not releasing more information. Read No. 164. This shows that Senator Minchin’s real agenda is to block and spoil our reforms to the sector and the rolling out of the NBN. Senator Minchin is not interested in improving broadband services for Australians, he is not interested in lower broadband prices for Australians, he is not interested in faster speeds for Australians and he is certainly not interested in regional and rural Australians closing the gap that exists at the moment in broadband services.

(Time expired)

Employment

Senator BILYK (2.54 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Employment Participation and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Government Service Delivery, Senator Arbib. Can the minister update the Senate on the impacts of the global recession on the regional areas of Australia? Can the minister outline how unemployment is affecting different regions? Can the minister further explain any measures that the government has taken to address unemployment in regions hardest hit by the global recession?

Senator ARBIB—I thank the good senator from Tasmania for the question. As I told the Senate yesterday, there are some great regional variations in both unemployment and the effect that unemployment is having on our community. The coalition have outlined their plan to roll back the stimulus. Their idea is that there is no need for infrastructure to go into regions, but we have seen the response by the Secretary of the Treasury, Ken Henry, that over 100,000 Australians would lose their jobs—

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Order on both sides! Resume your seat, Senator Arbib. When there is order, we will proceed.

Senator ARBIB—We know from the Treasury secretary that the jobs of 100,000 Australians would be in jeopardy if we rolled back the stimulus. I have been travelling with my Parliamentary Secretary for Employment, Jason Clare, around the country, and unemployment is affecting the regions in a major way. Look at south-west Sydney—

Senator Ian Macdonald—What have you done for Cairns?

The PRESIDENT—Order! I am entitled to hear Senator Arbib’s answer. Senator Arbib, you may continue.

Senator ARBIB—Look at south-west Sydney where unemployment is up over 8.6 per cent and where teenage unemployment is now around 47 per cent. This is why the government supports the stimulus package and this is why we will continue to roll it out across the country. I note that Senator Macdonald has made a number of interjections concerning Cairns. That is something that I do want to talk about. Cairns is a community that has been hardest hit by the global recession, and what does Senator Macdonald want to do about Cairns? He wants to rip infrastructure projects away from Cairns, putting small businesses and tradesmen out of busi-
ness. Plumbers and electricians in Cairns would be put out of business. This is the senator who comes from North Queensland, and that is his plan for Queensland: strip away stimulus, strip away funds and strip away projects. That is the Liberal Party’s response to unemployment. That is why they should be ashamed— (Time expired)

Senator BILYK—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question.

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Order on both sides! I need silence so that I can hear the question.

Senator BILYK—I thank the Minister for Employment Participation for that information. My first supplementary question is: could the minister outline to the Senate any further efforts that the government will make in priority employment areas to address unemployment issues? Where do these communities go from here to address unemployment? How will the government continue to monitor and address rising unemployment in these critical regions? Can the minister outline the decision to appoint local employment coordinators to the priority employment areas? What is the role of the local employment coordinators and what type of work—

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Order on both sides! There needs to be order so that the question can be heard.

Senator BILYK—I will just repeat that last question—

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Order on both sides! Continue, Senator Bilyk.

Senator BILYK—Can the minister outline the decision to appoint local employment coordinators to the priority employment areas? What is the role of the local employment coordinators and what type of work will they be doing in their communities?

Senator ARBIB—Can I confirm to the Senate again that the Jobs Fund is providing jobs throughout Australia—6,100 jobs are being provided through the Jobs Fund. But the Jobs Fund has also been tailored to include the Apprentice Kickstart—a tripling of the commencement bonus to just under $5,000—and it is going to have an effect. As I said yesterday, the shadow minister for employment participation said that it is training for training’s sake. But these are apprentices. I have a letter from Mr Jim Turnour—

Senator Ian Macdonald interjecting—

Senator ARBIB—It was a letter from Skill360, Senator Macdonald, which is an organisation that provides apprenticeships and training in Cairns. What do they say concerning this? They say:

The local effects of the global financial crisis are having a detrimental effect on the creation of job opportunities for apprentices, and in this context the Australian government’s Apprentice Kickstart is welcome.

This is what the government is doing in Cairns. What is the Liberal Party doing for Cairns? It is stripping away projects.

Senator BILYK—Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. How will the Apprentice Kickstart initiative help address rising unemployment, particularly in the regions? Can the minister outline the reaction of people or organisations in regional areas, particularly those with issues around unemployment and youth unemployment, to the new Apprentice Kickstart initiative? Could the minister also outline ways that areas of high unemployment can participate in this important initiative?

Senator ARBIB—In relation to Apprentice Kickstart, as I was saying, I have correspondence from Skill360 and they are actually going to run a marketing campaign to
recruit apprentices for local industry and local business on the back of Apprentice Kickstart. This is the government working cooperatively with Cairns employers and training organisations to fight rising unemployment, unlike what the coalition is doing.

I just want to go through a couple of the projects that Senator Macdonald would like to see knocked off and not started in Cairns: Building the Education Revolution, 304 projects in Leichhardt; and Primary Schools for the 21st Century, 103 projects. These would be gone under Senator Macdonald. Seven science and language centres—

Senator Ian Macdonald interjecting—

The PRESIDENT—Senator Macdonald, constant interjection is disorderly, and you know it. Please continue, Senator Arbib; you have 15 seconds remaining.

Senator ARBIB—Seven science and language centres would be gone under Senator Macdonald and the Liberal Party. This is the hypocrisy of the Liberal Party. They say we should be supporting jobs, but on the ground they want to strip away the projects that lead to jobs and support jobs. This is the Liberal Party: no plan for jobs. (Time expired)

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: ADDITIONAL ANSWERS

National Security

Senator CHRIS EVANS (Western Australia—Minister for Immigration and Citizenship) (3.03 pm)—I wish to provide some additional information in response to a question I received from Senator Back. I can confirm that the LTTE, otherwise known as the Tamil Tigers, has been listed under Australian law for a number of years now for asset-freezing purposes under the Charter of the United Nations Act. As I understand it, that makes it a criminal offence for any person to make assets available to the LTTE. That was a change made under the previous government.

Aged Care

Senator LUDWIG (Queensland—Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary) (3.03 pm)—I wish to provide additional information to an answer to a question Senator Williams asked me, as Minister representing the Minister for Health and Ageing, during question time on 17 September 2009. The question was, ‘Can the minister indicate how many aged-care providers have handed their licences back and closed down in the past year, and their reasons for doing so?’ The Minister for Health and Ageing has provided the following answer, that in the last financial year, 2008-09, no providers handed back their places and also closed down. Five hundred and seventy-one provisionally allocated residential places were surrendered, 29 operational aged-care places were relinquished by providers and 15 provisionally allocated places lapsed. Providers are not obliged to give reasons for returning places and to the extent that they do it may not be the case that the explanation they give reflects all the factors leading to their decision. The 29 operational residential aged-care places were relinquished due to low occupancy. None of the residential aged-care services to which these places pertained closed.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS

Asylum Seekers

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS (New South Wales) (3.04 pm)—I move:

That the Senate take note of the answers given by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship (Senator Evans) to questions without notice asked by Senators Fierravanti-Wells, Back and Cash today relating to border protection and to the Tamil Tigers.
Today we had contrived indignation from the minister in relation to the use of the word ‘illegal’ in response to questions asked by Senators Back and Cash. It is all very well when the Prime Minister uses the word. For example, on PM with Mark Colvin, the Prime Minister says, ‘I make absolutely no apology whatsoever for taking a hard line on illegal immigration to Australia.’ So it is all very well for the Prime Minister to use that terminology but, of course, when we use that terminology, there is indeed a different standard. I have to say that is really quite hypocritical.

I wish to pick up on a couple of points in the time available to me. The minister absolutely failed to answer my question in relation to the Indonesian plan. At estimates on 22 October, the Ambassador for People Smuggling Issues said, ‘We haven’t actually sat down with the Indonesians yet to negotiate what this framework will look like or what forms our support will take.’ But, the day after, we get reports in the paper about the so-called $50-plus million plan where Labor will be outsourcing its border protection policy failures to the Indonesians. Today I asked the minister to clarify that and to tell us what the cost is. He gave us a diatribe and avoided answering the question, which makes me think that $50 million is just, in effect, a starting point.

Opposition senators interjecting—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Order! There are far too many conversations on my left. Could you please conduct your conversations outside of the chamber.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS—Of course, $50 million is just the starting point. In the end, this is going to cost the Australian taxpayers a lot of money and, quite frankly, Minister, the Australian public is entitled to know, up-front, what their obligations are going to be and how much it is going to cost them. Yet we are not aware of what the negotiations are between Australia and the Indonesian government. Is there going to be a bounty on every boat that is caught or a bounty on every asylum seeker? The reality is that this government has totally lost control. It has effectively, over the last year, dismantled so many aspects of our immigration policy that, as a consequence—

Senator Marshall—Like what? Which bits? They’re just words!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Senator Marshall, you will have your chance later.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS—Senator Marshall, thank you for that interjection. Of course, if you had bothered to follow all the legislative changes that your government has put through in this chamber in relation to immigration matters, you would know. Perhaps you might like to go and read the minister’s evidence.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Senator Fierravanti-Wells, address the chair.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS—But I would like to focus on one aspect in the time available to me, and that is the issue of security checks. It is appropriate that this question is asked, because the minister maintains the assurances that are given in relation to security checks. Labor did promise that it would complete its processing in the same times. It keeps saying that this is what the Howard government did. But reports being produced show that the time that is now being taken in relation to security checks certainly does not fall within the time parameters.

Security checks are very important. Why do people arrive with no documents? Why do people destroy their documents? In my time—over 20 years—of working at the Australian Government Solicitor I did my fair share of immigration law, and you can bet your bottom dollar that when people destroy
their documents they do so for a reason. They want to hide their identity. They want to hide their past. And they also do so with the objective of deliberate delay and obstruction of processes, because they think it is going to make it a lot harder to find out who they actually are. It is legitimate for us to ask the question and get assurances about proper security checks.

Senator CAMERON (New South Wales) (3.10 pm)—I am pleased to rise in this debate and take up the points that Senator Fierravanti-Wells has raised. One point she raises is that the government has lost control. What hypocrisy from an opposition whose deputy leader describes that opposition as ‘rabble’—something I have been describing the opposition as for some time. I am glad the deputy opposition leader now agrees with my view of the opposition as a rabble.

This issue is a complex and important one. The issue of asylum seekers fleeing from Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan will be an ongoing problem for this community, this nation and the United Nations. I just want to bring this debate back to exactly what we are talking about. We are talking about refugees. We are not talking about illegal immigrants; we are talking about refugees. Look at article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—and I note that earlier Senator Cash was talking about how she analysed this. Well, Senator Cash is a lawyer; I am not sure if she has looked at article 14 recently. It says:

Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

People who are persecuted are entitled to seek asylum.

The 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, provide a definition of the term ‘refugee’. The definition is that a refugee is someone who:

… owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or … unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country …

This is about people who are in trouble. This is about people who are fleeing wars, who are fleeing persecution in their own country. And what do we have from the opposition? We have the lowest common denominator—the fear factor. When you do not have a policy, when you do not have any ideas, when you have no way of dealing with the issue, start a fear campaign! And that is typical of the opposition: a fear campaign against the weakest, most vulnerable people in the world—refugees. You should be ashamed of where you have taken this debate, because this debate should be about ensuring some fairness, some dignity and some protection for people who are fleeing war zones, are looking for protection and want to ensure that they can be safe from persecution in the country that they are fleeing from.

But it is so easy when you are a rabble to actually adopt the rabble approach, and the approach of the rabble is not to think the issues through; the approach of the rabble, which is the coalition in this place, is to go after the weak and exposed. It is to make sure that you hide your incapacity to develop a policy on the treatment of refugees coming to this country, to make sure that you hide your incapacity to formulate a policy of fairness and equity and of treating refugees with dignity. The Secretary-General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon, has spoken about intolerance. Let me tell you that the coalition’s intolerance has been on show for the public to see. Your intolerance is reprehensible. Your intolerance is borne of no capacity to develop policy. Your intolerance is an absolute disgrace to this country. (Time expired)
Senator CASH (Western Australia) (3.15 pm)—The answers of the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship in question time today proved yet again how chronically negligent Labor are when it comes to ensuring the security of this nation. Labor have failed the first responsibility of a Commonwealth government—to ensure the security of the nation and its people. Its continued claims that there is no causal link between the winding back of the strong Howard government policies and the increase in the number of unlawful arrivals on Australia’s shores become more absurd and more far fetched every single day as another boat arrives.

Let us run through the statistics again. There have been 17 unauthorised boat arrivals in the last eight weeks, 44 unauthorised boats since the Rudd government began their dismantling of Australia’s border protection regime and over 2,069 people have now risked their lives to come to Australia. For a Prime Minister who in a speech to the parliament in 2002 acknowledged that a government must be judged on its actions, not through the political rhetoric of government, this evidence shows that he stands condemned. He stands condemned for his government’s actions and the failure of his government when it comes to border security, condemned out of the words of his own mouth. The minister and the government are an abject failure when it comes to discharging border security policy.

If you want to talk about rhetoric, Annabel Crabb sums it up nicely today in her article: … anyone who in the past 10 days has been knocking the top off a cold one every time the Prime Minister describes his own immigration policy as “unapologetically tough” would by now be too plastered to read this column.

Labor is contemptuous of its fundamental responsibility to maintain border security. Labor has shown contempt for the people of Australia by abrogating to the people smugglers the right to determine who comes to this country lawfully. But further, and more shamefully, Labor is contemptuous of those people who seek to enter this country lawfully through recognised migration channels.

What message is the Labor Prime Minister of Australia giving to those hundreds of thousands of people who are currently housed in United Nations refugee camps around the world and who have made proper applications—they have gone through medical and other screening tests—in an effort to seek lawful entry into Australia and other countries around the world? Mr Rudd’s message to those people who attempt to go down the legal route is this: ‘Thanks for doing the right thing, mate, but sorry—we can’t assist you because we’ve abrogated Australia’s lawful right to decide who enters our country to the people smugglers.’ What sovereign government abandons the refugees who want to enter Australia lawfully—because that is what they have done—and lets the people smugglers decide who can come to this country?

There will always be push factors across the world, but what we do not need is the foot on the accelerator approach taken by the government through a set of pull factors created by them. The reality for Rudd Labor is that, as long as it continues to dismantle the coalition’s strong border protection measures and put out the Rudd welcome mat to the people smugglers, the pull factors will see a surge in people smuggling continue. Mr Rudd must take decisive and direct action to stop this despicable trade. How much more money from Australian taxpayers will Mr Rudd pay to Indonesia to keep his own hands clean? How many more people will put their lives at risk as a result of Labor’s softened border protection policies? Mr Rudd and the minister, Senator Evans, must stand before the Australian people and admit to them that Labor has failed on border protection.
Senator MARSHALL (Victoria) (3.20 pm)—There is often debate in this chamber. Because there is an opposition and a government, often that debate has differences of opinion. It can be quite aggressive from time to time, but I must say I have never contributed in a debate in this place that has actually sickened me like this debate. What really sickens me is the approach of the opposition in the way they attack some of the most defenceless and vulnerable people, who are not here illegally. They are here because they are seeking asylum. If it is proved that they are not genuine refugees and therefore here as illegal entrants, they are moved away. But the most defenceless people come here seeking refuge—refuge from some of the most hideous and sickening circumstances that exist in the world today. The political opportunism, the absolute low road, of the opposition does this country no credit, it does this Senate no credit, it does our people no credit and it makes me sick.

We had to hear Senator Fierravanti-Wells ask, ‘Why do people arrive without documents?’ and go on and make the suggestion that people who arrive here without documents have destroyed them. Then she asked, ‘What sort of people are they?’ What Senator Fierravanti-Wells should understand is that people arrive here more often than not with only the shirt on their back. The reason they have fled is that they have been displaced, and they have been displaced because their village may have been burnt to the ground or their whole family may have been murdered. Maybe those are their circumstances. Maybe they have just been moved on in packs by either military regimes or dictatorships or any of the other horrendous circumstances that millions and millions of people find themselves in, through no fault of their own. Instead of any semblance of compassion, all we get is the opposition attacking the weak and the vulnerable. I think it is a disgrace. They should take a long, hard look at themselves.

We heard Senator Back in his question today make the absolute suggestion that this process is about terrorism importation. Really, come on. Get a grip. The process of checks that goes on at Christmas Island involves security checking and health checking. It is the same format that is well established in this country. It was going on under the previous government and it has not changed. It has not changed. Senator Fierravanti-Wells knows that because we went through this in Senate estimates for hour after hour and that was the evidence of all the officials and the minister. She knows the facts but conveniently leaves that out and again simply takes the low road—the politics of dog whistling. It is shameful. You should be ashamed of yourself.

Senator Cash of course introduced the issue of queue-jumping. Well, she really took us back. She started quoting John Howard. I love it when they quote John Howard now because they pretend he has gone and then they go and quote his ideas. It was all about queue-jumping—again accommodating the lowest common denominator argument. If you want to actually have a mature debate about these issues then you really should get a grip on some of these issues and understand what the serious push factors are—the fact that there are 42 million displaced people in the world at the moment. And you want to run those lines.

Senator Cash interjecting—

Senator MARSHALL—Well, you tell me where all those queues are, Senator Cash. When a village is burnt to the ground and people are moved on, and they are desperate to go, are you saying that they should go halfway around the world to get in some non-existent queue? Really, it is a silly argument.
It is not done to actually have a serious debate about these issues; it is done by resorting to the lowest common denominator, trying to evoke emotional support for their low-road politics. Through all of this, did we hear Senator Fierravanti-Wells actually suggest what the coalition might do on any of these things? She talked about some of the changes we have made, and I wish I had time to go through those things. But all the changes we made were ultimately supported in this place by the coalition. Every single one of them was supported by the coalition. We make no excuse for treating the most vulnerable people in this world with humanity. We do it in a properly regulated, tough manner—where if you come here seeking asylum, you are treated with dignity; and if you are here illegally, you get deported. (Time expired)

Senator BERNARDI (South Australia) (3.25 pm)—Politics is like a pack of cards: you can always tell when the government are out of aces because they only have one card left to play. It is no longer their tough talk of ‘We’re going to turn back the boats,’ as we heard Mr Rudd say when he was opposition leader; it is now Senator Marshall’s ‘compassion card’. As if somehow letting through any Tom, Dick or Harry who wants to come here in a boat is compassionate. It is not. It is not compassionate to encourage or provide incentives or opportunities for people to hop into leaky, crowded boats and cross dangerous seas in the hope that they will be intercepted by an Australian naval vessel and brought to this country, where they can claim asylum. It is not compassionate to do that.

Let me dispel a couple of other myths that Senator Marshall has put forward. He talked about how these people come from unfortunate circumstances. I would agree, and I am sure they do. I accept that there are many ‘maybes’ that Senator Marshall raised, and many people do come from extreme hardship and extreme poverty, and from areas and circumstances which are very difficult for us to comprehend. But let us not lose sight of the facts. The facts are that millions of people who are displaced, according to Senator Marshall, are doing the right thing—millions of them are doing the right thing and going to United Nations refugee camps. They are waiting their turn. They are applying appropriately and seeking a better life for themselves and their families.

The people Senator Marshall is talking about are fleeing impoverished circumstances and dangerous circumstances. But how, then, are these people paying thousands, sometimes tens of thousands, of dollars to people smugglers to enter Australian waters illegally? That is why these vessels are called suspected illegal entry vessels because they are entering our waters illegally. These are people who are, in many cases, trash ing their identification and making up a past—making up a number of circumstances so they can get into Australia, where of course life is better. Life is better in Australia, even if you are on the dole, than it is in many other places. Does that mean we should allow people to jump the queue and stop people from coming to this country via the appropriate humanitarian channels? I would say no. And to encourage anyone to enter this country illegally and take such extreme risks for themselves and their family, and to put other people’s lives at risk, is, quite frankly, irresponsible.

Once you get past the emotive arguments which tug at the heartstrings, arguments which are completed devoid of any real substance, which Senator Marshall offered, we have to come back to the facts and let logic determine how we should approach this. Here are the facts: the Rudd government changed the laws about illegal boats coming into this country and how we treat asylum seekers or illegal entrants. And what has hap-
pened? We have seen an explosion—you cannot describe it in any other way—in illegal entry vessels coming into this country. In 2002 and 2003 we had none. We had three boats in 2003-04, zero in 2004-05, eight in 2005-06, four the following year and three in 2007-08. Then the Rudd government comes in and we have 22 boats, with 1,039 people, entering our country illegally via illegal entry vessels. In 2009-10 we have had 20 boats so far, with another 964 people. The facts speak for themselves.

The Rudd government wound back effective policy that deterred people from taking unnecessary, unwarranted and very, very dangerous chances with their own lives and with other lives. And now what happens? We have the Bart Simpson of Australian politics, Mr Rudd, saying: ‘I didn’t do it. It wasn’t me.’ Let me tell you: there is a direct link. Labor changed the laws, and the boats, the hordes, started coming. The people smugglers went back into business because they knew that Australia had become a soft target under this government.

I do not know anyone who does not support Australia playing a compassionate and humanitarian role in dealing with displaced people, but it is not compassionate, it is not humanitarian, to support the business of people smugglers, who prey on the vulnerable and weak—and rich. They ignore the truly vulnerable, the impoverished, those who have no opportunities and no chance.

Question agreed to.

**Timor Sea Oil Spill**

*Senator SIEWERT (Western Australia)*

(3.31 pm)—I move:

That the Senate take note of the answer given by the Minister for Defence (Senator Faulkner) to a question without notice asked by Senator Siewert today relating to the Montara oil spill in the Timor Sea.

I note with extreme interest that Indonesian officials have been taking part in the daily observation flights that AMSA has been running. This surely indicates that there is some concern that the oil spill may be impacting on Indonesian waters. Certainly satellite photos indicate that the oil slick is, in fact, in Indonesian waters. It has also been reported in the Indonesian media, and to me, that Indonesian authorities have taken oil samples from Rote Island and West Timor and are seeking to have them analysed, which seems to me to indicate that they do have some significant concerns around the impact of the oil spill on the area.

In fact, the Indonesian media has been reporting the oil spill. The *Jakarta Post* says:

Pollution in the Timor Sea caused by an oil spill from the Australian Montara oil field off Darwin, has damaged more than 1,000 hectares of ready-to-harvest seaweed along the coastal area of Rote Island …

At least 300 seaweed farmers have stopped harvesting seaweed in the past week as the oil spill has destroyed the plants along the coastal area of the island.

One of the local farmers is reported as saying:

"Usually, we catch hundreds of red snappers a night, now we only catch three or four. In fact, we have spent millions on operational costs," Sadly said.

The point here is that we do not know.
ous that they have been informed, given that Indonesian authorities are on these flights. I acknowledge that at the moment it is unknown whether it is oil from the Montara oil spill that is impacting on these seaweed farmers on Rote. In the Indonesian media, fish deaths have been reported as well. It is unknown whether it is the oil and, for that matter, the chemical dispersants that have impacted on these fishers and on these seaweed farmers—and, in fact, whether they have had any other impacts in Indonesian waters.

The point here is that we should know and there should be some monitoring of the impacts on Indonesian waters. There should be some assessment of the damage, if there has been any damage, caused by the oil spill. Also, if the oil spill has gone that far, it would indicate that the slick and the spill are impacting on a much larger area than has previously been reported.

The question here is: who is liable for the costs of clean-up and for any compensation to seaweed farmers, local fishers and other people on Rote Island or West Timor if they have been damaged by this oil spill? It is very unclear to us whether the company can be held responsible for the oil spill once it has left Australian territorial waters. That issue, we believe, needs urgent following up.

We are seeking a commitment from the federal government to liaise with the Indonesian government about the potential impacts and to ensure that a thorough assessment of the impacts is carried out to see whether it is in fact the oil from this spill that is impacting on these activities. If it is, what is the extent of that? If it is impacting, what compensation is liable to be paid to these people, because it will have a significant impact on their livelihoods—potentially a devastating impact on their livelihoods, bearing in mind that their very livelihood is threatened, potentially, not just this season but into the future? What is the Australian government intending to do about that impact? Also, specifically, it needs to be talking to the company involved, PTTEP, to look at what that company’s liabilities are, what that company’s commitments are, to help the Indonesian fishers and those affected, if they are affected. The government needs to liaise with PTTEP and outline very clearly a commitment from that company to help those people and to pay them just and fair compensation, not only for the loss of their livelihood but for any environmental damage, both short and long term, that is caused in Indonesian waters. As far as we can see, it is extremely unclear that the company’s liabilities extend outside Australian territorial waters. (Time expired)

Question agreed to.

PETITIONS

The Clerk—A petition has been lodged for presentation as follows:

Education

To the Honourable President and members of the Senate in Parliament assembled: The petition of the undersigned shows:

The current Award Modernization—Education Services (Other than Higher Education) (AM2008/33) which seeks to bring Early Childhood teachers currently working under the Early Childhood Award under the same award as those employed under the Child Care Award.

In this case we will see university trained professionals being paid the same as 18 year TAFE trained staff.

Positioning our C&K teachers under this award will make it very difficult to retain qualified Early Childhood teachers within our kindergartens. The wages and conditions available in schools and other areas will be more attractive and thus more sought by our highly respected and qualified teachers. Furthermore, and even more importantly the educational outcomes for children within the kindergarten program will be severely affected.

Your petitioners request that your office:
Seek to allow Early Childhood teachers and assistants working in non-government pre-schools and kindergartens and in long day care services to be preferably included under the ‘Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010’ or alternatively a certified amendment added to the proposed ‘Children’s Services and Early Childhood Education Industry Award 2010’ which caters for qualified Early Childhood Teachers and Assistants working in these areas.

by Senator Mason (from 150 citizens)

Petition received.

NOTICES

Presentation

Senator Cormann, Senator Fielding and Senator Xenophon to move on the next day of sitting:

That items 42698, 42701, 42702 and 42718 in Part 3 of Schedule 1 to the Health Insurance (General Medical Services Table) Regulations 2009, as contained in Select Legislative Instrument 2009 No. 272 and made under the Health Insurance Act 1973, be disallowed.

Senator Moore to move on 16 November 2009:

That the Senate—

(a) applauds the Government’s increase of total health funding in the foreign aid budget and an increase in spending to maternal, newborn and child health and acknowledges that this is much needed when in our region, including South Asia, 200 000 mothers and 3.2 million children are dying every year from preventable causes;

(b) notes that:

(i) Australia still requires an increase in total health funding in the foreign aid budget to progress towards Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5 by 2015,

(ii) MDG 4, to reduce child mortality by two-thirds, and MDG 5, to reduce maternal mortality by three-quarters, have made the slowest progress of all the MDGs and are off-track to being achieved by 2015,

(iii) MDG 5 has made virtually no progress globally and has reversed in most of sub-Saharan Africa in the past 20 years and it is the only MDG not making progress of any significance, and

(iv) the health MDGs are achievable but require increased effort and greater cooperation from all developing and developed countries, given that evidence indicates that successful proven, cost-effective strategies exist that can reduce child deaths by at least 60 per cent and maternal deaths by 75 per cent, saving the lives of 240 000 children and 26 000 mothers in our immediate region each year;

(c) acknowledges the importance of the Australian Government increasing its support for health systems in the Asia-Pacific region and in Africa (through coordinated mechanisms including the international Health Partnership) to ensure that adequate, coordinated, long-term and predictable donor resources are available to support effective basic and reproductive health plans and systems in each developing country in our region;

(d) recognises that greater focus must be placed on training health professionals and midwives to ensure significant reductions in newborn, child and maternal mortality and that system strengthening must also be ensured to provide incentives for staff to remain in country and in areas of need; and

(e) recognises that an increase in Australian support for maternal and child health related spending is required to support the provision of basic health services and strengthened health systems and that this will demonstrate Australia’s leadership and commitment to ending the preventable deaths of children and mothers globally.

CHAMBER
Senator Fisher to move on the next day of sitting:

That—

(a) when the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Legislation Committee meets to consider additional estimates in 2010:
   (i) the committee further examine Fair Work Australia, and
   (ii) the President of Fair Work Australia appear before the committee to answer questions; and

(b) on each subsequent occasion on which the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Legislation Committee meets to consider estimates in relation to Fair Work Australia, the President of Fair Work Australia appear before the committee to answer questions.

Senator Milne to move on the next day of sitting:

That the following matters be referred to the Economics References Committee for inquiry and report by 31 March 2010:

(a) a reconsideration of the committee’s findings in relation to Australia’s Mandatory Last Resort Home Warranty Insurance Scheme, in light of:
   (i) the 2008 Federal Ombudsman’s report that demonstrated that last resort home warranty insurance is the worst performing insurance in the nation,
   (ii) the Essential Services Commission’s review of the Victorian Domestic Insurance Scheme which demonstrates that there is virtually no benefit to anyone other than the insurers and their brokers of this insurance product,
   (iii) evidence to these inquiries which demonstrate that the Senate’s conclusions were based on information now shown to be wrong, including the fact that the Senate estimated that less than 10 per cent of builders provided securities whereas 44 per cent of those in Victoria have done so since 2002,
   (iv) the lack of competition in the market which is now down to three insurers, and
   (v) the questionable legality of the deeds of indemnity, bank guarantees and securities demanded by insurers as a condition of eligibility for warranty insurance;

(b) any reforms which may lead to appropriate consumer and builder protection and improved housing affordability; and

(c) any related matters.

Senator Ludwig to move on the next day of sitting:

That the Senate notes that the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Competition and Consumer Safeguards) Bill 2009 proposes legislative reforms to enhance competitive outcomes in the telecommunications industry and strengthen consumer safeguards, and is independent of the Government’s new National Broadband Network legislation, and is therefore exempt from the order of the Senate of 13 May 2009 relating to the consideration of that legislation.

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

That the Senate agrees with a recent European Union resolution on Sri Lanka, that:

(a) deplores the fact that approximately 250,000 Tamil civilians are still held in camps, contrary to undertakings given by the Colombo Government, and calls on the Government to return them to their homes and give humanitarian organisations free access to the camps to provide necessary humanitarian assistance;

(b) Tamil leaders must commit themselves to a political settlement and renounce terrorism and violence once and for all;

(c) the Government must respect human rights in the conduct of trials of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam members;

(d) the Sri Lankan Government must cease its repression of the media in the name of its anti-terrorist legislation, which must be
overhauled, and press freedom must be recognised; and
(e) the Sri Lankan Government must put more effort into clearing minefields, which are a serious obstacle to reconstruction and economic recovery, and must comply with the Ottawa Treaty (Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction).

Senator Milne to move on the next day of sitting:
That the Senate—
(a) notes that:
(i) the Renewable Energy Target Scheme allows renewable energy certificates to be generated from the installation of solar hot water and heat pumps, even though these are energy efficiency measures and not renewable energy generators,
(ii) this, as predicted by the industry and the Australia Greens, has collapsed the price, and
(iii) many hundreds of jobs are at risk in the coming months, unless the problem is fixed; and
(b) calls on the Government to immediately reintroduce Renewable Energy Electricity legislation to address the problem by making the credits from these technologies additional to the renewable energy target.

Postponement
The following items of business were postponed:

Business of the Senate notice of motion no. 2 standing in the name of the Leader of the Family First Party (Senator Fielding) for today, proposing a reference to the Environment, Communications and the Arts References Committee, postponed till 28 October 2009.

General business notice of motion no. 591 standing in the name of Senator Xenophon for today, proposing the introduction of the Poker Machine (Reduced Losses—Interim Measures) Bill 2009, postponed till 28 October 2009.

COMMITTEES
Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee
Meeting
Senator O’BRIEN (Tasmania) (3.37 pm)—At the request of the Chair of the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, Senator Crossin, I move:

That the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee be authorised to hold a public meeting during the sitting of the Senate on Thursday, 29 October 2009, from 3.30 pm, to take evidence for the committee’s inquiry into the provisions of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Serious and Organised Crime) Bill (No. 2) 2009.

Question agreed to.

National Capital and External Territories Committee
Meeting
Senator O’BRIEN (Tasmania) (3.37 pm)—At the request of the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, Senator Lundy, I move:

That the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories be authorised to hold public meetings during the sittings of the Senate as follows:
(a) on Wednesday, 28 October 2009 from 12.30 pm to 2 pm; and
(b) on Thursday, 29 October 2009 from 10 am to noon.

Question agreed to.

Public Accounts and Audit Committee
Meeting
Senator O’BRIEN (Tasmania) (3.37 pm)—At the request of Senator Lundy, I move:
That the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit be authorised to hold public meetings during the sittings of the Senate, from 11.45 am to 1.30 pm, to take evidence for the committee’s inquiry into the review of Auditor-General’s reports, on Wednesday, 28 October, Wednesday, 18 November and Wednesday, 25 November 2009.

Question agreed to.

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee: Joint Meeting

Senator O’BRIEN (Tasmania) (3.37 pm)—At the request of the Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Senator Forshaw, I move:

That the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade be authorised to hold a public meeting during the sitting of the Senate on Wednesday, 28 October 2009, from 11 am, to take evidence for the committee’s inquiry into Australia’s trade and investment relations with Asia, the Pacific and Latin America.

Question agreed to.

Economics References Committee Meeting

Senator PARRY (Tasmania) (3.38 pm)—At the request of the Chair of the Senate Economics References Committee, Senator Eggleston, I move:

That the Economics References Committee be authorised to hold a public meeting during the sitting of the Senate on Wednesday, 28 October 2009, from 5 pm, to take evidence for the committee’s inquiry into the GROCERYchoice website.

Question agreed to.

Corporations and Financial Services Committee Meeting

Senator PARRY (Tasmania) (3.38 pm)—At the request of the Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services, Senator Mason, I move:

That the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services be authorised to hold a public meeting during the sitting of the Senate on Wednesday, 28 October 2009, from 5 pm, to take evidence for the committee’s inquiry into financial products and services in Australia.

Question agreed to.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee Extension of Time

Senator PARRY (Tasmania) (3.38 pm)—At the request of the Chair of the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee, Senator Nash, I move:

That the time for the presentation of the report of the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee on rural and regional access to secondary and tertiary education opportunities be extended to 11 December 2009.

Question agreed to.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee Reference

Senator MILNE (Tasmania) (3.38 pm)—I, and also on behalf of Senators Heffernan and Xenophon, move:

That the following matter be referred to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee for inquiry and report by 30 November 2009:

The possible impacts and consequences for public health, trade and agriculture of the Government’s decision to relax import restrictions on beef, especially relating to the import of beef from countries previously affected by bovine spongiform encephalopathy, otherwise known as mad cow disease, and any related matters.

Question agreed to.
PARALLEL IMPORT RESTRICTIONS ON BOOKS

Senator MILNE (Tasmania) (3.39 pm)—I ask that general business notice of motion No. 594 standing in my name and the name of Senator Ludlam for today, relating to territorial copyright protection for books, be taken as a formal motion.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Is there any objection to this motion being taken as formal?

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (3.40 pm)—I seek leave to make a short statement.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—There being no objection, leave is granted for two minutes.

Senator FIELDING—Notice of motion No. 594 calls on the government to abandon plans they inherited from the Howard government to remove or restrict territorial copyright protection for books. This is a bit like stifling debate. I am not saying I am for it or against it, but having a notice of motion like this on an issue that we really need to spend time debating is not the right way of proceeding on this issue. It calls on the government to abandon plans before we even have a debate in the chamber about it. I tend to think this is not the way to go on an issue that clearly needs debate and that we should not stifle debate on such an issue. It is pre-empting something before we even get there.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Is there any objection to this motion being taken as formal? There being none, I call Senator Milne.

Senator MILNE (Tasmania) (3.41 pm)—I, and also on behalf of Senator Ludlam, move:

That the Senate:

(a) notes that:

(i) the experience from around the world does not support claims from the Productivity Commission and others that removing territorial copyright protection would reduce the market price for books, and

(ii) there is ample evidence that removing territorial copyright protection would hurt Australia’s writers, publishers and printers, damaging both Australia’s culture and economy; and

(b) calls on the Government to abandon the plans, inherited from the Howard Government, to remove or restrict territorial copyright protection for books.

Question put.

The Senate divided. [3.45 pm]

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

Ayes............ 6

Noes............ 39

Majority........ 33

AYES

Brown, B.J. Hanson-Young, S.C.
Ludlam, S. Milne, C.
Siewert, R. * Xenophon, N.

NOES

Adams, J. Back, C.J.
Bernardi, C. Bilyk, C.L.
Birmingham, S. Boswell, R.L.D.
Boyce, S. Brown, C.L.
Cameron, D.N. Cash, M.C.
Colbeck, R. Coonan, H.L.
Cormann, M.H.P. Crossin, P.M.
Farrell, D.E. Feeney, D.
Ferguson, A.B. Fielding, S.
Fierravanti-Wells, C. Hurley, A.
Hutchins, S.P. Kroger, H.
Ludwig, J.W. Landy, K.A.
Marshall, G. McEwen, A.
McLucas, J.E. Minchin, N.H.
Nash, F. O’Brien, K.W.K.
Parry, S. * Polley, H.
Pratt, L.C. Poiley, H.

CHAMBER
ASYLUM SEEKERS

Senator HANSON-YOUNG (South Australia) (3.48 pm)—I move:

That the Senate—

(a) recognises each senator’s role as community leaders and the collective responsibility to conduct debates on matters of public importance in a respectful and accurate manner, using language that is constructive and appropriate; and

(b) agrees that all debate on the issue of asylum seekers and border protection is framed within the law, terms and definitions of the:

(a) United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951);

(b) Migration Act 1958;

(c) Criminal Code Act 1995;

(d) Racial Discrimination Act 1975; and

(e) Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW).

Question put.

The Senate divided. [3.50 pm]

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

Ayes............. 5
Noes............. 40
Majority........ 35

AYES

Brown, B.J. ............................ Hanson-Young, S.C.
Ludlam, S. .............................. Milne, C.
Siewert, R. * ............................

NOES

Back, C.J. ............................... Bernardi, C.
Bilyk, C.L. ............................... Birmingham, S.
Boswell, R.L.D. ......................... Boyce, S.
Brown, C.L. .............................. Bushby, D.C.
Cameron, D.N. ........................... Cash, M.C.
Colbeck, R. .............................. Coonan, H.L.
Cormann, M.H.P. ....................... Crossin, P.M.

Farrell, D.E. ............................ Feeney, D.
Ferguson, A.B. .......................... Fielding, S.
Fierravanti-Wells, C. .................. Hurley, A.
Hutchins, S.P. ........................... Kroger, H.
Ludwig, J.W. ............................ Lundy, K.A.
Marshall, G. ............................. McEwen, A.
McLucas, J.E. ............................ Minchin, N.H.
Nash, F. ................................. O’Brien, K.W.K. *
Parry, S. ................................. Polley, H.
Pratt, L.C. ............................... Ryan, S.M.
Stephens, U. ............................ Sterle, G.
Troeth, J.M. ............................. Williams, J.R.
Wortley, D. .............................. Xenophon, N.

* denotes teller

Question negatived.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS (New South Wales) (3.52 pm)—Mr Deputy President, I seek leave to make a short, two-minute, statement.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Leave is granted for two minutes.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS—On behalf of the coalition, I would like to place on the record our position in relation to the motion moved by Senator Hanson-Young and the basis for voting against it. At the outset, I would like to say that we are against the use of intemperate language. This is a difficult area and one where there is a diversity of views. Whilst there may be a divergence of views, it is important that we respect all views and the rights of senators to express those views and that we engage in a rational and orderly debate. However, Senator Hanson-Young’s motion seeks to shut down debate, and we are opposed to this.

The Australian public are concerned about the issue of unauthorised arrivals. Over the past year we have seen the dismantling of the strong immigration and border security framework inherited by Labor from the Howard government. Many are expressing their deep concerns over the policy failures and the government’s inability to manage our borders and maintain an orderly migration system. They are expressing those concerns
in correspondence, talkback and in the media. They expect their representatives to articulate those concerns in this place. Hence, any attempt to stifle or shut down debate must be resisted.

We have always sought to address the key issues which frame this debate and do so in a responsible manner. It is a debate over measures to address the abhorrent trade in people smuggling; it is not a debate over semantics. Therefore, we have not supported shutting down debate on this important issue which is at the forefront of current public debate.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG (South Australia) (3.54 pm)—Mr Deputy President, I seek leave to make a short statement.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Leave is granted for two minutes.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG—The reason that I moved this motion was that I think we can all agree that some of the language that has been used in this debate over the last few weeks has not been respectful, has not been appropriate and clearly has not been parliamentary. If we are to be honest about the fact that we are obviously going to continue discussing these difficult issues in this chamber then let us agree as a group of senators, as community leaders, that the type of language that we use is important when speaking about people and their motives. It needs to be done delicately. We do not want to see dog whistling. We do not want to see discrimination. We do not want to hear words used that have been used over the past few weeks, like ‘scum’, ‘terrorist’ and ‘illegals’. They are actually not helpful to the debate.

We need a level of maturity in this debate in order for us to come up with real solutions—a level of maturity which is actually much higher than what we have seen of late. If this is a commitment from both the members of the government and the members of the opposition, including Senator Fierravanti-Wells, to act more maturely, to treat people in this debate more respectfully, then I take that in good measure and I take that in goodwill. All I was asking for was a commitment on paper. I will take your word that you will be mature in this debate and that we will see a cessation in the use of words that are used to simply dog whistle hatred and disrespect.

PROTECTING PROBLEM GAMBLERS BILL 2009

First Reading

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (3.56 pm)—I move:

That the following bill be introduced:

A Bill for an Act to protect problem gamblers by reducing bet limits to $1 per spin and load up limits to $20, and for related purposes.

Question agreed to.

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (3.57 pm)—I present the bill and move:

That this bill may proceed without formalities and be now read a first time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (3.57 pm)—I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

The speech read as follows—

The Productivity Commission recently released a report into gambling which showed that Australians lost a massive $12 billion last year playing the pokies.
This is an astronomical figure but one which did not come as a surprise to Family First which has been campaigning on the issue of gambling for a long time.

Last year, Family First introduced both the Poker Machine Harm Minimisation Bill 2008 and the Poker Machine Harm Reduction Tax Bill 2008 which contain a raft of important measures aimed at reducing the terrible harm caused by gambling. Sadly, the Rudd Government has been unwilling to address the issues facing problem gamblers. Also sadly, for too long Australia has paid the high social costs from the wreckage that pokies cause to problem gamblers.

The release of the Productivity Commission’s report has once again highlighted just how serious this issue of gambling is, revealing that more than half a million Australians are at significant or moderate risk of suffering gambling problems. What’s more, Australia’s gambling problem is a crisis which is costing this country up to $5.6 billion dollars each year.

The problems associated with gambling are not limited to gamblers themselves but actually ripple throughout the community to family members, friends and work colleagues. For every single problem gambler, between 5 to 10 other people are affected.

There is a close link between poker machines and problem gambling with figures showing that poker machines account for 65 percent of total gambling revenue and 75 to 80 percent of problem gamblers.

What is clear from these figures linking poker machines and problem gambling is that there is no excuse not to act. The need to act is backed up by the Productivity Council’s report which states that given the significant social costs associated with problem gambling, even policy measures with modest efficacy will often be worthwhile.

In fact, a 10 percent sustained reduction in harm from gambling could provide a gain to society of nearly half a billion dollars annually.

This bill, the Protecting Problem Gamblers Bill, which is being put forward today would go a long way towards achieving this and addressing the issue of pokies addiction.

The measures set out in this Bill would do 2 important steps.

Place a limit on bets to $1 per spin
Establish load up limits of $20

Limiting bets to $1 is a sensible policy because it would help constrain the spend rate of problem gamblers. This would have little impact on recreational gamblers but it would act as an important tool to help minimise the losses suffered by problem gamblers.

Only 2.3 percent of non-problem gamblers bet above $1 per spin, however, this figure is higher for problem gamblers. This measure is, therefore, part of a carefully targeted strategy to prevent the harm caused to problem gamblers.

Putting in place a load up limits of $20 would act as a break on high intensity play and would stop gamblers from filling up their machines with high multiple denomination notes. By building in small breaks in play, problem gamblers would have a chance to stop and think about their playing intensity. This is particularly important for people playing the pokies for long durations.

Similarly, this measure to have $20 load up limits would not impact upon recreational gamblers, however, it could have enormous benefits to those gamblers for whom the stakes are much higher.

One of the biggest problems facing gamblers at the moment is that there is no appetite amongst the state governments to reign in the incredible amount of money which Australians lose on pokies each year. The state governments have become hopelessly addicted to the millions of dollars they receive in gambling revenue and are unwilling to do anything which would jeopardise this source of funding.

Like all addicts, the state governments don’t care about the costs involved in feeding their addiction so long as they get their fix.

It is now incumbent of the Federal Government to step in and address this shocking pokies plague which is wrecking families and communities.
The Federal Government needs to be proactive in its approach towards gambling rather than sitting back and hoping that the state governments will finally have the sense to detox themselves.

This bill does not seek to ban poker machine gambling, but only to minimise some of the awful harm that comes from the pokies.

Family First is determined to ensure that we do more than just sweep this issue under the carpet because Australian families and the Australian community deserve better than that.

Senator FIELDING—I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted, debate adjourned.

NORTHERN VICTORIA IRRIGATION RENEWAL PROJECT

Order

Senator BIRMINGHAM (South Australia) (3.57 pm)—I move:

That there be laid on the table by the Minister for Climate Change and Water, no later than noon on 29 October 2009, a copy of a letter to the Victorian Minister for Water (Mr Holding) relating to funding approval for stage 2 of the Northern Victorian Irrigation Renewal Project, referred to by Senator Wong in an answer to a question from Senator Wortley during the supplementary budget estimates hearings of the Environment, Communications and the Arts Legislation Committee on 20 October 2009 (ECA Hansard, p.128).

Senator LUDWIG (Queensland—Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary) (3.58 pm)—by leave—Senator Wong has confirmed that she does not intend to table her correspondence to the Victorian Minister for Water, Mr Tim Holding. However, Senator Wong confirmed on 30 June 2009 that the Victorian government submitted a business case for the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project stage 2 early works. On 7 October 2009 Senator Wong wrote to Minister Holding advising of her decision to approve only limited funding to those project components that did not entail capital works and associated water savings. The letter explained that this decision was based on advice from the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. Specifically, the department advised that the capacity to transfer water savings to the Commonwealth from Victoria’s early works proposal must be assured before investment in infrastructure can be agreed.

Earlier this year an order in council was prepared under the Victorian Water Act 1989 which would have enabled the transfer of the water savings to the Commonwealth from both the early works and the full NVIRP stage 2 project. However, as Senator Birmingham will be aware, on 12 August 2009, the Liberal, National and Greens parties acted to disallow this order in the Victorian upper house. While the Victorian Minister for Water submitted a second amendment on 1 September to enable the transfer of these water savings to the Commonwealth, this amendment is open for disallowance until 16 December 2009. Senator Wong indicated in her letter that, until the disallowance period for the Victorian government’s latest motion has passed, she is unable to approve funding for infrastructure works under the Victorian NVIRP stage 2 early works proposal.

Senator BIRMINGHAM (South Australia) (3.59 pm)—Mr President, I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT—Leave is granted for two minutes.

Senator BIRMINGHAM—I find it outrageous that, before a decision is even taken by this chamber, Minister Wong sends in the duty minister to state that she will not be providing the documents that this chamber may yet decide to request. Minister Wong chose in estimates last week to make a very clear political point in response to a Dorothy Dixer question. She used this letter to make a political point targeting the Liberal and National parties and the Greens and their ac-
tions in the Victorian parliament, actions which were very directly about water allocated for Victoria’s north-south pipeline. Their actions ensured that water infrastructure projects proposed by the Commonwealth—versus projects undertaken by the Victorian government—should be treated separately.

Minister Wong seemed to be mounting the argument that somehow they should be coupling them. That was an unacceptable argument at the time. Yet in Senate estimates the minister refused to provide the letter which she was quoting from. Now we have the proposition that somehow it might be refused to be tabled in response to a motion of this chamber. I find this incredibly disappointing. I hope the government will reconsider its decision with regard to this. It needs to reconsider because, if Minister Wong has written to the Victorian Minister for Water, Tim Holding, in the manner she has indicated—that is, that basically she agrees with him that the Victorian upper house should be held to ransom on this matter—it is an outrageous proposition. She knows full well that the Victorian upper house has no power to amend regulations—they can either accept or defeat. What she should be urging the Victorian water minister to do is decouple the two projects, stage 1 and stage 2 of the NVIRP, and ensure that the infrastructure she has promised can go ahead.

Question agreed to.

Senator O’BRIEN (Tasmania) (4.02 pm)—Mr President, I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT—Leave is granted for two minutes.

Senator O’BRIEN—The government opposes this motion. We recognise that with the opposition and the Greens voting together a majority is in favour of the motion. We will not call a division.

EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME
Order

Senator XENOPHON (South Australia) (4.02 pm)—I move:
That there be laid on the table by the Minister representing the Treasurer, no later than 4 November 2009, any modelling or analysis commissioned by the Department of the Treasury and/or the Department of Climate Change and all documents prepared by the Department of the Treasury in relation to the August 2009 Frontier Economics report, The economic impact of the CPRS and modifications to the CPRS.

Question agreed to.

Senator O’BRIEN (Tasmania) (4.03 pm)—Mr President, I seek leave to make a short statement.

Leave granted.

Senator O’BRIEN—The government opposes this motion. Senator Xenophon has the support of the opposition and the Greens for the motion. We recognise it is therefore carried and we will not call a division.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Climate Change

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—The President has received a letter from Senator Milne proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the Senate for discussion, namely:

The glaring disparity between the findings of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts of the impact of sea level rise on Australian coastlines and the Government’s climate change policies and targets.

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 DEPUTY 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 MILNE (Tasmania) (4.04 pm)—I rise today to note the report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts, *Managing our coastal zone in a changing climate: the time to act is now*. I note that at last we have a government committee saying what the Greens have been saying, what the scientists have been saying and what the community has been saying for decades. But the conclusion cannot be drawn that action on the very real threat of climate change to Australia’s coastal communities is going to be addressed by the government’s targets.

This is the most important thing: if we proceed with the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and a national reduction of emissions target of 5 to 25 per cent, we will lock in a high probability that we will see the worst case scenario in this report actually come to pass. That is the critical thing. There is a massive disconnect between what the science is saying and what the government is saying. It is irresponsible in the extreme for anyone to report that the CPRS or the national target will in any way mitigate climate change or avoid the worst case scenarios.

We are talking about the fact that we have in Australia 711,000 addresses within three kilometres of the coast. This is a very real risk to Australia’s coastal areas. We know that with sea level rise we will get thermal expansion of the oceans as a result of increased temperature and increased and rapid melt of the glaciers. At some point we will also run the risk of losing the West Antarctic ice sheet and the Greenland ice sheet. I would remind the Senate that the Greenland ice sheet is equivalent to seven metres of sea level rise and the West Antarctic ice sheet is the equivalent of six metres rise—13 metres in those two ice sheets. No-one is suggesting that they are going to be influencing sea level rise tomorrow by 13 metres; what we are saying is what the scientists are pointing out. I quote Dr John Church:

There is an important issue of thresholds. We are likely to cross a threshold leading to an ongoing disintegration of the Greenland icesheet—and remember that the Greenland icesheet contains the equivalent of seven metres of sea level rise. We could cross that threshold late this century. This is the key point:

At a 550 ppm CO2 equivalent level there is approximately a 50 per cent risk of crossing that threshold. That is not to say that the Greenland icesheet will disappear as soon as we cross that threshold, but unless we substantially reduce levels below that value there will be an ongoing disintegration of the icesheet ...

... and if we cross that threshold there will be major impacts over many centuries or perhaps even millennia.

At 550 parts per million we are running a 50 per cent risk of crossing the threshold and seeing the one-metre sea level rise that we are talking about, with the most conservative science in the IPCC’s fourth assessment report, and we are running a 50 per cent risk of crossing that threshold. At 550 parts per million, that is precisely what the Rudd government is talking about. When it goes to Copenhagen with its targets, it is talking about 550 parts per million or more, and the scientists tell us that we should be aiming for 350 parts per million.

Do not let anyone be under any illusion when we have a minister stand up in here, note the report from the House of Representatives and say, ‘That’s why five to 25 is what we need to do.’ No, it is not what we need to do. As we already know, the great fear for Copenhagen is that we will end up with Copenhagen agreeing to 550 parts per
million or more, and that is going to be locking in that kind of sea level rise. What we will then see is a tremendous risk to Australia’s coastline. Let me talk about some of the impacts of global warming on the coastline. Starting with the Great Barrier Reef, scientists are now very afraid of reaching a tipping point on ocean acidification. The CRC in Hobart talks about 450 parts per million as being the tipping point for ocean acidification. If you lose those structures in the Great Barrier Reef that hold the corals together, the corals are going to disintegrate and weaken, and when they are hit by a cyclone you will get a lot of destruction of the reef.

Let us look around the Australian coastline. We have Brisbane, which is incredibly low and vulnerable. The report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts says that in Tasmania 20 per cent of the coastline is already vulnerable. That is the kind of response we see. Looking around the whole country, it is not just coastlines but also estuaries. We are going to see flooding in those estuarine areas all around Australia. We have this suggestion that the federal government is in some way taking leadership on issues related to climate change and sea level rise, but I want to come back to Professor Steffen, who said:

Mitigation, as vigorously and rapidly as we can, is the best insurance against the worst of the projected coastal impacts. Obviously this is a global task, but as a country with a very high percentage of population and infrastructure in the coastal zone, it should be a high priority for Australia that the international community achieves an effective mitigation strategy at Copenhagen.

The government is running up the white flag on Australia’s coastline and the 711,000 residences on that coastline. For every metre of sea level rise, you can talk about up to 100 metres of incursion in vulnerable coastal areas. Australians must take notice of the House of Representatives committee report but they must then come back and say to the Prime Minister and to Minister Wong, ‘You cannot look us in the eye and tell us that your targets are in any way going to mitigate this outcome.’

Senator WORTLEY (South Australia) (4.11 pm)—Climate change and its devastating impacts now and into the future—including rising sea levels—are indeed matters of public importance. The Australian people recognise that. The Rudd Labor government recognise that.

In November 2007 Labor was asked by voters across the nation to, among other things, take on the mounting task of addressing climate change. Frustrated by years of inaction by the climate change sceptics—many of whom still sit opposite us—pulling the strings of Australia’s environmental policy, the Australian people spoke out at the ballot box. Since this government took office, tackling the very real and increasing threat of climate change has been a very high priority. The first act of the Prime Minister was to sign the ratification of the Kyoto protocol. Unlike those opposite, we acknowledge that climate change poses threats to our environment, our economy and our society. Unlike those opposite, we believe that Australia must take responsibility for our contribution to climate change and that we must act to reduce it.

This government has committed to dramatically cutting Australia’s greenhouse emissions and it is working with households, schools, communities, businesses and primary industries to reduce carbon pollution and adjust to the inevitable impact of climate change. The government has taken a seat at the world table, for the first time, in a collaborative effort to find global solutions to this global problem. The government has been working to support green jobs and in-
vestment now and into the future. The government introduced into this parliament legislation that could have brought into law a Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme—legislation that would have put the brakes on Australia’s rising greenhouse gas emissions. Unfortunately, in August, the Greens sided with the Liberals and the Nationals to vote down the CPRS.

The matter of public importance today relates to a report handed down by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts and this government’s climate change policies and targets. The report of the committee, Managing our coastal zone in a changing climate: the time to act is now, includes 47 recommendations. From what I know of the report to date, it makes for sobering reading. Even a snippet from its introduction is unequivocal. I quote:

Firstly, many thousands of kilometres of the Australian coastline have been identified as at risk from the threat of rising sea levels and extreme weather events due to the impacts of climate change. The concentration of Australia’s population and infrastructure along the coast makes our nation particularly vulnerable to the coastal erosion and inundation that will accompany increases in sea level.

The government do not shy away from this report or from its findings, as daunting as they may seem—quite the contrary. As the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Wong, said this morning on radio 2UE, we called for it. In fact, instigating this inquiry was one of our first steps in advancing a national approach to coastal policy. The government believe such a national coastal adaptation response is needed, and the Commonwealth has been working with the states and territories through COAG towards this end. We are already investing in a range of initiatives as part of our efforts to adapt to the climate change consequences we cannot avoid, in coastal areas and elsewhere. Such investments include the $12.9 billion Water for the Future plan and the $200 million Reef Rescue package. Of course, this committee report will be further examined and its recommendations considered in the light of what the government can act on and how the report will inform future policy. The Commonwealth will work with state and territory governments, coastal councils, natural resource management groups and other experts in developing a response to the report. As Minister Wong said today:

This is a report which confirms why we have to act on climate change. It confirms the sorts of impacts that we risk, and demonstrates yet again why we have to act as a nation to reduce our contribution to climate change.

… the committee has looked at a range of scientific opinion and has come to a view about the sort of risk we face from sea level rise. … I think it is quite clear from the consensus science that this is one of the consequences of climate change and we simply can’t ignore it. And we would be, I think, irresponsible as politicians, as community leaders, to just pretend that these risks don’t exist.

Indeed, this report is the latest in a long and growing list of examples of the negative results of climate change. As committee chair, Labor’s Jennie George MP, writes in her foreword, after an 18 month inquiry with 28 public hearings and 100 submissions:

It’s one thing to read about the science but another to see first hand, as we did, the obvious and early negative consequences of climate change on our coastal zone.

Ms George also says of the inquiry:

One clear message emerged—and that is the need for national leadership in managing our precious coastal zone in the context of climate change. I am optimistic that the Australian government will meet that challenge. Indeed, many of the initiatives already instituted by the Department of Climate Change head in that direction.
As we have been reminded since the release of this report, approximately 80 per cent of Australians live near the coast and more than 700,000 homes and businesses are within three kilometres of the coast where elevation is below five metres above sea level. Unlike those opposite, this government recognises the threat of rising sea levels. We recognise that Australia’s coastline is vulnerable to climate change due to our population concentration and the natural and built assets in those areas. We acknowledge that some of these areas have faced rapid population growth; they have suffered catchment degradation and have been subject to inappropriate development, all of which have made them susceptible. That is why, among other things, we are undertaking a $25 million assessment of coastal vulnerability. This national coastal vulnerability assessment will look at the threats to our coastline, its cities, towns and infrastructure, and its biodiversity. It will consider the environmental, economic and social impacts of anticipated sea level rise, extreme storms and other climate change events. In doing so, this assessment—due for release soon—will give us a better understanding of the risks and identify the priority areas for research and investment.

After the release of this assessment, the government has committed to holding a national forum through which to develop a national coastal adaptation agenda. True to form, the opposition would rather do nothing than act on the threat of rising sea levels. On being asked by a journalist today about the need to pass an emissions trading scheme sooner rather than later due to the risk posed to coastal homes and businesses by rising sea levels, Mr Tony Abbott MP said:

When it comes to rising sea levels I’m alert but I can’t say that I’m particularly alarmed. The fact is that sea levels have risen along the NSW coast by more than 20 centimetres over the last century. Has anyone noticed it? No they haven’t. Obvi-ously an 80 centimetre rise in sea levels would be more serious but I’m confident that we have the resources to cope.

Let us be thankful that this government is far more proactive than that. We are committed to working with local communities to address specific coastal challenges. In addition to the national coastal vulnerability assessment, our Caring for Our Coasts policy includes collaboration with coastal groups, academics, and state, territory and local governments to develop a blueprint for coastal towns and cities, enabling them to meet present-day and predicted climate change challenges. We are updating and upgrading the Disaster Mitigation Australia Package to take climate change weather events into account. We are investigating $100 million over five years in the Community Coastcare program—(Time expired)

Senator IAN MACDONALD (Queensland) (4.21 pm)—I do not think that anyone in this parliament—in fact, any Australians generally—would deny that our climate is changing. Of course, it has been changing for 95 million years and perhaps even longer. We read about the times when this globe was covered by ice. The ice melted some time back in Australia’s history and then the centre of Australia was a rich tropical rainforest. It is now a desert. We read about when there was an inland sea in Australia, and today it is all land. So quite clearly the climate is changing, but we do not accept the alarmist propaganda being put out by the Labor Party and, of course, by the Greens. We do know that in the last century there was a 20-centimetre rise in global sea levels, and that is significant. We also know that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has predicted that over the coming century there could be an impact of between 18 and 76 centimetres if no action whatsoever is taken. I point out there that the lower level predicted by the IPCC for the next century is 18
centimetres if nothing is done, whereas in the last century it was 20 centimetres. I am not saying that 18 centimetres is right, but it is within the range that the IPCC has given us, and that is if nothing is done. We also know that over the last 20,000 years there has been a 130-metre change in sea levels. Sea levels do change across the board. There was a 20-centimetre rise last century and there is a predicted rise of between 18 and 76 centimetres in the next century if nothing is done.

I am confident that something will be done at some time in the future. Indeed, it was the Howard government that first addressed this issue by setting up the world’s very first Greenhouse Office. This was the very first government office anywhere in the world that started looking at climate change issues. It was the Howard government that went to Kyoto and negotiated Australia’s targets at that time, targets that have been met by this country when they have been met by very few other countries.

We are concerned about alarmist hypocrisy from the Labor Party. You have only to look at what the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett, said when speaking to Tony Jones on Late line. He agreed that the upper level of rises in the global sea level could be as much as six metres—six metres!—by the end of this century. According to Mr Garrett, in 90 years time sea levels could rise by six metres. You do not need to be a great mathematician to work out that that is 66 millimetres every year for the next 90 years. This is what the Labor Party is going around trying to scare the Australian public into believing—that every single year for the next 90 years there will be a 66-millimetre increase in the sea levels around our coastline. It is absolutely ridiculous poppycock, and Mr Garrett should know it. It is typical of the scaremongering in which the Labor Party and the Greens have indulged in this debate.

It is also very interesting that the Labor Party has sent out a team of backbenchers to continue that scare campaign, that spin campaign, for which Mr Rudd and his government have become so well known. In a doorstep interview this morning, Mr Dreyfus, the member for Isaacs, was saying that Mr Rudd is going to reduce sea level rises. One might have thought that it was Moses reincarnated!

Senator Williams—Then he will walk on it!

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Perhaps he might walk on the water once he reduces the levels. Mr Dreyfus was asked by a journalist how much a five per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by Australia would mean to the increase in sea levels. He was then asked, ‘Will it be a couple of millimetres?’ Mr Dreyfus answered, ‘It will be more than that.’ So five per cent by Australia alone will mean that we will reduce sea levels by a couple of millimetres! Nobody in their right mind could possibly believe that sort of ridiculous rubbish, but it is part of the scaremongering campaign being undertaken by Mr Rudd.

The coalition’s position is quite clear. While none of us is understanding enough to be able to comment on whether the science of man-made emissions-causing climate change is true or not, I am one of those who goes along with the proposition because I am not a scientist—and the scientists seem to be evenly divided—but if everybody else in the world does it then Australia should do it too. However, we should not be destroying our economy in Australia and we should not be destroying the jobs of our fellow Australians by rushing into this ill-thought-out, poorly designed emissions trading scheme in front of the rest of the world.

Anyone with a modicum of sense would know that reducing emissions in Australia by five or even 25 per cent will not make any
difference to the changing climate of the world. It will make absolutely no difference to the changing sea levels of the world. What we have to get is agreement from the big emitters: America, China, India, Russia, Indonesia, Argentina, South Africa, Colombia—all of those places that compete with the commodities in which Australia trades. When the world does move, so should Australia. That has always been the coalition’s view. That is why we started this whole debate, with the report from the former Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Mr Shergold. We have been looking at this for a long time, but Australia cannot act by itself. Unless other countries are prepared to do their bit, nothing Australia does will make one iota of difference to the changing climate of the world.

That is why this mad rush before Copenhagen in less than two months time is so difficult to understand, unless it is part of the socialist conspiracy to destroy the Australian economy and have all of Australia entirely dependent upon government handouts. I fear that that is where Mr Rudd is going. He is creating a socialist society that Gough Whitlam could only have dreamed about. But Mr Rudd is doing it by making absolutely everybody dependent on government handouts. Mr Rudd is going to tax every Australian to the hilt. Every Australian’s electricity bill and every business that operates in Australia will be taxed to the hilt by this Labor government. It will come as no surprise because that is what Labor is renowned at doing: increasing taxes. What Mr Rudd will then do, having massively increased the tax take from all Australians, is decide who should be favoured and who gets the money that he has collected. He will socially engineer a country like Australia that has been built on free enterprise, choice and freedom. That is the design of Mr Rudd’s plan. There can be no other reason for taking this action well in advance of the rest of the world. It will make not one iota of difference to the changing climate of the world. That is why Mr Rudd and his scheme should be rejected. That is why most Australians want it delayed until we see what the rest of the world is doing in Copenhagen. I certainly hope Mr Rudd takes note.

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (4.31 pm)—This is a very serious matter which deserves very serious action from the government and the coalition. But that is not what we are seeing. I have just been looking at the front page of today’s Sydney Morning Herald which says that the report from the House Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts, following its investigation, enjoyed cross-party support. Under the caption ‘What lies ahead’ for New South Wales, the newspaper reports that 200,000 buildings are vulnerable to sea level rise this century because of climate change, 484,000 buildings are vulnerable nationally, up to $50 billion worth of property is at risk and 20 per cent of the Tasmanian coastline is under threat. In a specific case, looking at Narrabeen and Sydney’s northern beaches, with just a 20-centimetre rise—the level of rise being described by the previous speaker in the Senate—and a one-in-50 year storm surge, the coastline at Narrabeen would be pushed back 110 metres, causing $230 million in damage. We are talking here about people being removed from their living places and having to find elsewhere to live. We are also talking now about the increasing impossibility for people who are in climate change threatened properties on the Australian coastline to be able to get insurance. We know for certain that the insurance industry is going to get tougher, not easier, in deciding where it will not insure householders or business owners in Australia against storm surges of that var-
ety that are, one must think on the average of probabilities, going to happen in the coming decades at Narrabeen.

The problem is that the head is still stuck firmly in the sand. We hear people like the previous speaker saying that climates have changed on the planet over many millions of years and, quite falsely, that scientists are equally balanced on whether or not they think there is going to be climate change et cetera. The fact is that we are in an age of climate change. We are now facing sea level rises, and they are accelerating.

**Senator Ian Macdonald**—Six metres!

**Senator Bob Brown**—Six metres, says the previous speaker by interjection, and I note that he laughs at that. But he is the same senator from the coalition who laughed at me 13 years ago in this place when I predicted sea level rises of the sort that we are now having to talk about.

The problem here is the government’s target level for greenhouse gas emission reductions—from the country, Australia, which is the biggest per capita polluter on the planet—of five per cent over 2000 levels by 2020, four per cent if you take the Kyoto baseline of 1990. Measure that against, for example, Scotland’s legislated aim of a 42 per cent reduction, or Costa Rica, which has led the world for many years in environmental and social thinking, which wants a 100 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2030. The previous speaker, representing a strongly held feeling in this parliament, said that we must not act before the rest of the world. I disagree. We are the wealthiest country on earth per capita in resources and we have the biggest coastline per capita of all the wealthy countries on earth. We have the most to lose. These reports show that there are 700,000 vulnerable properties on the eastern seaboard alone. And these properties are being affected. We had a storm from the south in Tasmania within the last month of which old-timers said they had not seen the like in 60 years. It sank boats and washed others up on the shore. But the erosion along the coastline which came from that storm surge was massive. Near my own house a boulder of five to 10 tonnes, with a large tree, fell from the cliff line and washed into the beach from this storm surge. The tree and the boulder had been there for many decades. You can say that this is a once in so often storm, but that needs to be added on top of what Senator Macdonald agreed was an 18-centimetre sea level rise in recent years.

The portents are very clear for all of us. People like the Greens mayor Jan Barham and her council at Byron Bay have been trying to warn about this and even to plan for it, and what they have received in return is sniping and uninformed invective from, for example, the editorialist of the *Australian* that we will live to see seas go down, a marker of the head-in-the-sand inability to deal with the problem of climate change which marks this era. The government’s proposal for a five per cent, increasing to 25 per cent if there is global agreement, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is completely inconsistent with the threat and the damage which climate change is already bringing to the Australian coastline.

We have just heard a debate with vilification against people who are moving countries because they are threatened. Look at Bangladesh, where 80 per cent of disputes in the courts are now over erosion of land, a country with a massively increasing population, very much of it less than 10 metres above sea level and very vulnerable to increasing storms and floods as the glaciers in the Himalayas melt and their water comes down the Ganges and other rivers. According to the United Nations, we face the prospect of 150 million displaced people—
Bangladesh will supply many of them—by midcentury, and many of those people are going to come to Australia. That migration will make the current pressure on our seashores from so-called boat people look like nothing at all, and yet it is inherently being built into the future of this planet by the inaction of the Rudd Labor government and by the inaction of the Turnbull opposition. On top of this, in this country, now the world’s biggest coal exporter by a very big margin, Queensland Premier Bligh, with Senator Wong and Prime Minister Rudd, wants to put billions of dollars into infrastructure to accelerate the export of coal to be burnt elsewhere in the world, which will accelerate the problem of global warming in an age when people at Mildura, where there were plans for a large solar plant to produce renewable electricity without threatening the globe, have been unable to get the finance. It is a government which is failing to act on the simple, reasonable face of the facts.

There is now a House of Representatives report about the astonishing impact of climate change on Australia. With it comes the impact on the spread of diseases. With it comes the impact on the ability to produce food, which is diminished greatly; we have seen that in the Murray-Darling Basin. With it comes the loss of our ski fields and the glaciers which feed water to 1.5 billion people in South-East Asia to our north. For months of the year, very little water will run down their rivers. Those glaciers have fed those rivers throughout all of recorded human history. Yet the blinkers are on because of the power of the polluting industries over the two parties in this parliament. The power of the polluting industries goes against the nous of the majority of Australians, who want greater action on climate change and want to see some security, through government action, brought back to people living on the coastlines, and to Australians generally, for the future of this nation.

Senator McEWEN (South Australia) (4.41 pm)—I am very pleased to be able to contribute to the debate on this MPI today. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts into managing our coastal zone in a changing climate. In case people have the wrong idea, I note that this was indeed a bipartisan report, and the members of the opposition who participated in this inquiry are quite clearly signed up to the fact that climate change exists and is having a deleterious effect on our coastline. You may not have ascertained that from the comments by Senator Macdonald. The opposition members in this inquiry were Dr Mal Washer, the Hon. John Cobb, Ms Nola Marino, the Hon. Bruce Scott and Mr Jason Wood. I appreciate their contribution to this important report.

Comments are often made in the debate about climate change along the lines of ‘the climate of the world has always been changing’. Of course it has always been changing. We know there have been ice ages in the past. We know there were inland seas in Australia in the past. The difference now is that there are 22 million people living in Australia, 80 per cent of them close to the coast, means that the impact of climate change is going to be a lot different to what it was during the last ice age.

I am pleased to say not only that the Rudd Labor government acknowledge that climate change exists and is a problem for the population of Australia but that we have tackled the problem of climate change head-on. We
have accepted the science of climate change. We have accepted the consensus that global warming does exist, that human activity is causing global warming and that global warming is deleterious. Therefore, we accept that human activity should be modified to ameliorate the impact of global warming. We have accepted the view that we need to act now or our climate will change and the population of Australia, 22 million of us, will suffer serious consequences. The government recognises the destruction that climate change will have on our country should we fail to act, and we have devised a plan to begin to reduce the severity of climate change and to maintain an environment that will support the kind of human activity that we need and want for the generations to come.

It is well known from the science that, as a nation, we are highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change, and the House of Representatives report referred to in this motion before the chamber goes substantially to that issue. The effects that climate change will have on our environment, our economy and our lifestyle will be serious. The health of our population, the security of our water and energy supplies and the impacts on our coastal communities will all be significant. The nation, and indeed the whole world, is treading somewhat uncharted waters here. No-one can be exactly sure of the extent of the impact that climate change will have on our future, but we need to be prepared to accept the fact that there will be change and we need to do something about it, and that is what the Rudd government is doing.

In our relatively short time in government, the government have already proven to be a driving force for international action on climate change. Of course, the first action of the government was ratifying the Kyoto protocol, and that was seen by the world as a positive step in our commitment to stabilising the concentration in the atmosphere of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming. Additionally, the government have established a mandatory renewable energy target, implemented the Clean Energy Initiative, introduced energy efficiency measures and implemented a national water strategy. The government are taking lots of action now through a comprehensive plan of action to fight the war on climate change.

The matter before the chamber states that there is a disparity between the findings of the report of the House of Reps Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts and the government’s climate change policies. The report lists many recommendations but it is my view, having quickly looked at them today, that many of those recommendations are in fact already being addressed by the Department of Climate Change, by the Minister for Climate Change and Water and indeed by the government overall. We are heading in the right direction.

But government action to combat climate change has not come easily. As we have seen again in this debate just now, in government we continually come up against that bunch of climate change deniers—the sceptics in opposition who, with their usual ‘head in the sand’ attitude, hope that Australia will be fine and prefer to do nothing. Fortunately for Australia, the sceptics have not had it all their own way in the opposition party room, as we understand it. I know all of us in the chamber are awaiting with interest the progress of the CPRS legislation through this chamber in the next sitting.

The Rudd government, I am pleased to say, has invested heavily in all aspects of dealing with climate change, coastal zones included, and we are actively fighting the battle against climate change. We are acting to reduce carbon pollution and secure Aus-
Australia’s future prosperity. We have invested in clean energy programs, we are supporting businesses to take action against climate change and we are supporting households to take action. We have acted to monitor the nation’s carbon emissions levels with good, well funded science. As part of that, the government has dedicated a total of more than $15 billion to implementing a comprehensive response to climate change. The government’s climate change strategy provides the long-term framework and confidence for our nation to prosper in the shadow of climate change.

A report released earlier this year by Professor Will Steffen from the ANU Climate Change Institute found that our climate system appears to be changing faster than originally thought likely. That report, *Climate change 2009: faster change and more serious risks*, also found that the need for an effective reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is urgent to avoid the risk of crossing dangerous thresholds in the climate system. The report focused on rapidly changing areas of science of importance to Australia, such as the contribution of melting ice to sea level rise, acidification of the oceans and changing water availability. That report is like so many other scientific reports that are coming out now—and I think the CSIRO was here during the week. Indeed, a number of scientists have been here in Parliament House during the week, and overwhelmingly the science that they are presenting to senators and members demonstrates and reaffirms the fact that climate change is a reality and that human activity is contributing to it.

All of those reports also give us in the government the impetus to continue to act as quickly as possible to address this issue. The government has funded scientific endeavour in the Australian Climate Change Science Program to the tune of $31.2 million over four years. That will enable us to develop an even better understanding of the impacts of climate change and to develop stronger action plans to counter the effects. We have also invested $387.7 million over five years to fund infrastructure critical for climate change science.

I think it is slightly galling that this matter for discussion, which is of course critical of the government, was put up by the Greens. It is the kind of matter they usually put up when it is their turn to have an MPI, but we cannot let this debate pass without acknowledging that the Greens voted with the opposition when the CPRS legislation was before the chamber previously. It is hypocritical of them to come here and criticise the government when in fact they joined with the opposition to vote down that legislation. They voted with the opposition to prevent the first extremely important steps that the nation should take—a major initiative and an important initiative that the government are attempting to get underway so that we can begin to seriously address the effects of climate change in this nation.

**Senator Kroger** (Victoria) (4.51 pm)—I rise to speak on this matter for a few minutes, and I would firstly like to take note of the hysteria that is rising from the cross-benches and the comments that have been made by those on the opposite side of this chamber in relation to the evidence presented in this report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts. I would suggest that the hysteria that we have witnessed today is far more erosive for all Australians than the potential effect of rising sea levels on our coastal areas.

What we are hearing is a most excitable and emotional response to a report on rising sea levels given that sea levels, as we have already heard, have risen 20 centimetres over the last century. To put this into context, if I...
may, there has been a 130-metre change in sea level over the last 20,000 years. What we have heard is nothing but scaremongering, and it is not what we should expect from this chamber. A responsible government would take a reasoned and cautious approach to the findings of this report and consider the recommendations provided with a cool head. There is no place for a hysterical overreaction to the latest report. But, as we know, it is not a responsible government that has been determining the future of Australia and the generations to come. It is not a responsible government that has plundered our financial reserves and committed future generations to paying off a $315 billion debt.

What we have been saddled with instead is a Big Brother government determined to cast its authoritative hand over the lives of all rather than allowing individuals to have a greater say over their own lives. It is this Big Brother government that demands compliance from principals and parents to build a ‘Julia Gillard memorial hall’ rather than allowing them to determine where the stimulus money could be best spent—whether on shadecloth, whether on classrooms or whether on, dare I say, more books for the kids to learn from. It is this Big Brother government that believes that parents are incapable of supervising their children and wishes to introduce a mandatory internet filtering system. Filters are available now to parents for them to determine how they wish to protect their children from unwarranted and inappropriate sites. This is a government that believes it knows best and wishes to enforce this upon all parents.

Such is the arrogance of this government that they are even now seeking to censor the very people elected to this place so that they may not have the opportunity to question or criticise the actions of the government on behalf of those very constituents who elected them. So it is no surprise that those on the crossbenches and those on the other side of this chamber have sought to tie-in rising sea levels to the CPRS legislation. But I ask: how will a reduction in CO2 emissions by five per cent make any difference to a natural occurrence that has taken place for centuries? Minister Wong said in question time today that this was further proof of why we have to act now. Well, I ask Minister Wong: why do we have to act before Copenhagen? This report should not be used to justify the Rudd government’s political agenda to pass the CPRS before Copenhagen. It is deeply flawed and in its current form will cost jobs. It is going to cost industries. It will impact on our international competitiveness and it will affect us all for many generations to come. In its current form, it will hurt each and every household in terms of the significant rise in energy costs. It is for that very reason that the coalition have sought to amend the CPRS to protect those who are going to be most impacted by it and ensure that the jobs and safeguarding of all Australians is paramount.

Can I suggest that a government’s No. 1 priority is to protect and safeguard all Australians. Bringing the CPRS legislation into this chamber and ramming it through without consideration of amendments before Copenhagen does not do that, and that is why we do not resile from the fact that we want to address climate change. There has been no suggestion that we do not support what the Senate are trying to do here. What we wish to do is make sure that the final CPRS is not as flawed as it is in its current form. This report must be considered with reason and with a cool head. It is an interesting report. It is interesting that Mark Dreyfus commented on it this morning. We have heard already that he made the comment that it will reduce sea levels and suggested that the extent of that will be more than a couple of millimetres. I find it very interesting that Mark Drey-
fus has such a concern as the member for Isaacs—so concerned that he does not even live in his own electorate; he lives in Toorak, and his neighbours are not affected by this.

**DOCUMENTS**

**Tabling**

The **ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT** (Senator Troeth)—Pursuant to the resolution of the Senate of 6 September 1984 relating to the disclosure of joint committee documents, I present a report on access to documents of the Joint Committee on Social Security: *Release of records of Joint Committee—Report to the Senate*.

For the information of honourable senators, I advise the Senate that on 26 October 2009 the Presiding Officers granted access to the transcripts of evidence of the Joint Committee on Social Security, 1941-46. The transcripts did not appear to be in camera or include material which was supplied to the committee on a confidential basis. The evidence will be released to Dr Anne O’Brien, Associate Professor of History at the University of New South Wales, to support her research into religion and welfare funded by the Australian Research Council.

The Presiding Officers have authorised access to these transcripts on three previous occasions. Therefore, the Presiding Officers have also given authorisation for the transcripts to be opened for public access by the National Archives of Australia to facilitate the work of future researchers.

**Equal Pay for Women**

The **ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT** (Senator Troeth)—I present a response from the Deputy Prime Minister, Ms Gillard, to a resolution of the Senate of 8 September 2009 concerning Equal Pay Day.

*The response read as follows—*

Thank you for your recent letter, in which you transmit a resolution agreed to by the Senate on 8 September 2009 in respect of pay equity. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The Australian Government recognises that pay inequities continue to impact women’s economic security and is strongly committed to improving the economic outcomes of women and their families. The Government’s Fair Work Act 2009 (the Act) establishes a framework that provides fairness and flexibility for women and promotes equity in the workplace. In particular, the Act provides enhanced provisions that seek to address the gender pay gap by extending equal remuneration provisions to include the right to equal pay for work of equal or comparable value.

The Act also includes equal remuneration as a guiding principle for Fair Work Australia (FWA) in conducting its modern award and minimum wage fixing functions. The Act also provides FWA with the capacity to vary minimum wages in modern awards on work value grounds.

The Act establishes a new fair safety net of 10 National Employment Standards (NES) and modern awards that will provide all employees in the federal system with clear, comprehensive and enforceable minimum protections. This is particularly relevant as a significant proportion of women are award reliant compared with men (20 per cent compared with 13 per cent at August 2008). The NES and modern awards commence on 1 January 2010.

The Act also introduces special provisions for FWA to facilitate multi-employer bargaining for low paid employees who have not historically had the benefits of enterprise level collective bargaining. This includes areas like child care, aged care, community services and cleaning where female employment is high.

Further, the Act contains expanded anti-discrimination protections to prohibit an employer from taking adverse action; such as dismissing an employee, altering their position or paying them less; against an employee or prospective employee of the employer because of the person’s race, colour, sex, sexual preference, age, physical disability, marital status, family or carer’s responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin. Under the Act, modern awards, collective agree-
ments and individual flexibility agreements will not be able to include discriminatory terms.

As you are aware, Equal Pay Day was held on 1 September 2009. To coincide with this day, the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) launched a new tool kit to help employers audit pay equity. This tool kit will guide employers through the process of conducting a pay equity audit within their organisation and will assist in working towards narrowing the gender pay gap that currently exists.

The Government has also asked the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations, led by Ms Sharryn Jackson MP, to conduct an inquiry and report on pay equity and associated issues related to increasing female participation in the workforce. To date the inquiry has received 155 submissions and conducted 29 public hearings. The Government looks forward to the Committee’s report which is expected to be finalised in mid November 2009. The Government will consider all recommendations made by the Committee at that time.

In addition, on 1 June 2009, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for the Status of Women, announced a review of the EOWA and its underlying legislation. The review will examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the legislation to ensure it is well targeted and cost efficient. An issues paper commencing the public consultation phase of the review was released on 1 September 2009. It is expected that a report will be delivered to the Government at the end of 2009.

Thank you for bringing the resolution to my attention. I trust my comments are of assistance.

Parliamentary Service Commissioner

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT

(Senator Troeth)—I present the annual report of the Parliamentary Service Commissioner for 2008-09.

DELEGATION REPORTS

Parliamentary Delegation to 30th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly General Assembly, Thailand

Senator HURLEY (South Australia) (5.00 pm)—by leave—I present the report of the Australian parliamentary delegation to the 30th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, which took place in Thailand from 2 to 8 August 2009, and move:

That the Senate take note of the document.

I am pleased to speak to the report of the Australian parliamentary delegation to the 30th AIPA General Assembly. I was the leader and sole member of the Australian delegation to this year’s general assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, which was held in Pattaya City, Thailand. The delegation provided an important opportunity to reaffirm the very valuable relationships and cooperation which Australia has with ASEAN. It is a unique experience to go to AIPA with parliamentarians from the ASEAN region and countries from other parts of the world to hold dialogues, to establish friendships and to learn more about the culture of individual nations. It was a pleasure to participate in the general assembly, representing Australia as an observer country, and to discuss the interests and concerns shared with all the countries in our regions.

The 30th AIPA General Assembly follows the signing of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement in Thailand earlier this year, an agreement which opens up a new basis for Australia’s relationship with ASEAN countries at a time when all nations in the region are grappling with the impact of the global financial crisis.

The full ratification of the ASEAN charter and its coming into force in December 2008 was an important step in strengthening ASEAN as an organisation, and the continued commitment amongst ASEAN nations to
the establishment of an ASEAN economic community by 2015 is encouraging. The reduction of trade barriers resulting from the formation of an economic community would strengthen ASEAN’s capacity to function as a single market and production base. The dialogue session with Australia was well attended by parliamentarians from the ASEAN nations and provided an opportunity to hold constructive discussions on a range of topics, including regional security, environmental and sustainable development, drug smuggling and people smuggling.

In addition to the formal meetings and dialogues, the social events of the assembly were wonderful occasions on which to engage with our neighbouring parliamentarians and to gain an insight into each other’s cultures. It is clear that Australia is held in very high regard by the countries in our region. Many parliamentarians from ASEAN nations have strong connections with Australia, having been educated in Australia or having family living here. The delegation was very warmly received, and the engagement with our neighbouring parliamentarians provided opportunities to learn more about the issues being faced by their countries.

I would like to thank the host nation, Thailand, for the professional organisation of the 30th AIPA General Assembly. Thailand lived up to their legendary reputation for hospitality and I thank them personally for their warm and friendly reception.

I would also like to thank the Australian Ambassador to Thailand, Mr Paul Grigson, and his colleagues for the excellent briefing they gave us upon our arrival in Thailand. I believe that the 30th AIPA General Assembly presented a valuable forum for the further strengthening of bonds between the parliaments of ASEAN nations, encouraging cooperation and understanding of the many issues facing the region. I commend the document to the Senate.

Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES

National Capital and External Territories Committee

Membership

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Troeth)—Order! The President has received a letter requesting a change in the membership of a committee.

Senator STEPHENS (New South Wales—Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector and Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Inclusion) (5.04 pm)—by leave—I move:

That Senator Scullion be discharged from and Senator Humphries be appointed to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories.

Question agreed to.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS (INTERCEPTION AND ACCESS) AMENDMENT BILL 2009

First Reading

Bill received from the House of Representatives.

Senator STEPHENS (New South Wales—Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector and Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Inclusion) (5.00 pm)—I move:

That this bill may proceed without formalities and be now read a first time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Senator STEPHENS (New South Wales—Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector and Par-
That this bill be now read a second time.
I seek leave to have the second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

*The incorporated speech read as follows*—
1. Over the last few years Australians have rapidly increased their internet and computer use. More Australians than ever are communicating online to create and exchange information socially and for business.
2. Growth in the digital economy means that most Australian businesses now have an internet presence. Advances in technology together with consumer demand and cost effectiveness will drive further expansion into the online world.
3. This is very important for the Australian economy. Technology provides the opportunity to reduce the geographical isolation that we experience from major trading markets.
4. At the same time, the ease with which information can be collected and communicated means that even home users have sensitive personal information on their computer.
5. It goes without saying that employers often hold sensitive information about employees and customers such as banking details, medical records and contact details of family members. This information can be extremely valuable to cyber criminals rendering users vulnerable to credit and identity fraud and opening the door to large scale attacks on businesses and government agencies.
6. Securing such information from malicious access is critical to protecting Australians from criminal activity, building confidence in the digital economy, ensuring the integrity of key infrastructure and protecting private identity information from being stolen by criminal organisations.
7. Defending computer networks from criminal and malicious activities is an important first step. Currently, network operators can undertake protective activities once a communication becomes accessible from a computer server or at an earlier point with the consent of the persons using the network.
8. As attacks become more sophisticated, there is an increasing need for network operators to defend their network at the earliest point. Currently though, in the absence of the knowledge of users, such activities may be regarded as a breach of the Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979 (the Act).

While consent can easily be obtained from internal network users such as employees, external users may not be aware that their communications are being monitored.

Yet communications from external users generally pose the greatest risk to networks.
9. This bill amends the Act to ensure that network operators can undertake legitimate activities aimed at securing the integrity of their network and the information it contains.
10. Currently an exemption exists under the Act for network protection activities undertaken by designated security and law enforcement agencies.

Early last year the Parliament agreed to extend the operation of these provisions until 12 December 2009 while a broader solution relevant to all networks, both government and non-government, was developed.

11. The network protection regime proposed in this Bill is the result of active consultation with a broad range of stakeholders including representatives from the business community, law enforcement agencies and user groups.

I note that the Bill has been modified to address a number of concerns raised in submissions in order to strike an effective balance between protecting networks from malicious activities while protecting users from unnecessary or unwarranted intrusion.
12. Central to this, the Bill recognises the general prohibition against interception and clearly identifies the circumstances in which the access, use and disclosure of information for network protection purposes will be permitted.
The Bill does not oblige network operators to undertake network protection nor does it specify any type of technology that must be used. Rather, it focuses on providing clear guidance about when communications can be accessed for network protection activities and the legitimate use and disclosure of information obtained through these activities.

13. Under the proposed regime, network protection activities that copy or record a communication, without the consent of the sender, before that communication is available to the intended recipient will be unlawful unless certain conditions are met.

Interceptions must be carried out by a person lawfully authorised to carry out duties relating to the protection, operation, maintenance or in limited circumstances, appropriate use of that network.

In addition, interception of a particular communication must be reasonably necessary for the performance of those duties.

14. Once information has been collected it can only be disclosed to a designated person or, in limited circumstances, to a law enforcement agency.

Any such disclosure will be discretionary.

Law enforcement agencies will not be able to compel network operators or employers to provide information.

Nor can information be used or communicated if it is converted into a voice communication in the form of speech.

This means that telephone communications will not be accessible under these provisions, preserving the integrity of the interception warrant regime.

15. The Bill also enables designated government security authorities and law enforcement agencies to protect their networks against inappropriate use.

16. While the majority of threats come from external sources, in order to protect information held in sensitive networks it is also necessary to ensure that persons working in such organisations use the network appropriately or in accordance with the agreed use.

This capability is consistent with the current network protection provisions which enable these agencies to undertake network protection activities for this purpose.

17. As the description of an appropriate action will vary between these government organisations, the Bill limits network protection activities undertaken for this purpose to any reasonable uses and conditions set out in a user agreement.

It is anticipated that existing IT user agreements within these organisations will meet this condition.

Information suggesting inappropriate or illegal conduct by an employee or person working for one of these specified government organisations will be able to be communicated or used for disciplinary purposes as long as that communication or use does not contravene another Commonwealth, State or Territory law.

This specific preservation of State and Territory laws protects workers by ensuring that employers cannot avoid applicable State or Territory workplace relations requirements or workplace surveillance laws by accessing information under this Act.

18. Currently, no such protections exist in the Act. As network protection activities operate outside the scope of the Act there is no protection or guidance on the legitimate use and disclosure of information obtained by network owners for network protection purposes.

This means that in the absence of other relevant statutory duties, there is a real risk that information can be used inappropriately against network users.

The network protection regime set out in this Bill clearly addresses this gap providing specific direction to all network owners and operators about the circumstances in which communications can be accessed for the purposes of network protection activities and the legitimate purposes for which information can be used.

Other Amendments

19. The Bill also includes several amendments that will improve the effective operation of the Act.
20. The Bill amends the definition of ‘permitted purpose’ in relation to the New South Wales Police Integrity Commission to reflect an expansion in the Commission’s role.

Information intercepted in the course of investigating a serious offence will be able to be used for the purposes of investigating conduct relating to administrative officers of the New South Wales Police Force and officers of the New South Wales Crime Commission.

21. The Bill also clarifies that information that has been intercepted by the Australian Federal Police in the course of investigating serious offences, including terrorism offences, can be used by the Australian Federal Police for purposes associated with the making of Control Orders and Preventative Detention Orders under Divisions 104 and 105 of the Criminal Code.

22. Finally, the Bill makes amendments to the provisions of the Act that relate to evidentiary certificates. The Bill will enable the Managing Director of a carrier to delegate his or her authority to sign evidentiary certificates in relation to interceptions authorised under a warrant issued to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and information authorised under a stored communications warrant issued to a law enforcement agency.

23. These amendments replicate current provisions in relation to interceptions undertaken in relation to a warrant issued to law enforcement agencies.

24. The Bill also contains provisions enabling evidentiary certificates to be issued in relation to the access of telecommunications data.

The amendments will ensure that sensitive interception capabilities will not be exposed in the course of court proceedings.

25. These technical amendments will ensure that the Act continues to be clear and relevant in the obligations and powers it places on telecommunications carriers and law enforcement agencies.

**Conclusion**

26. This Bill will maintain the currency of the Act by ensuring it responds to new and emerging challenges.

The introduction of a comprehensive network protection regime will, for the first time, provide clear guidance on when network protection activities can be undertaken and the conditions that must be complied with when dealing with related information.

By enabling networks to protect their infrastructure and information while recognising the importance of user privacy, this Bill marks an important step in this Government’s commitment to building confidence in the online world.

Debate (on motion by Senator Stephens) adjourned.

**COMMITTEES**

Economics References Committee

Reference

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (5.06 pm)—I move:

That the following matter be referred to the Economics References Committee for inquiry and report by 4 February 2010:

The Reserve Bank of Australia’s subsidiaries, Note Printing Australia and Securency, with particular reference to:

(a) allegations of payments to overseas agents into offshore tax havens and corruption in securing note printing contracts and what the Reserve Bank, Austrade and the Australian Government knew about the alleged behaviour;

(b) any investigations conducted into those allegations;

(c) any actions taken to press charges against past and existing overseas agents; and

(d) action which may be taken to prevent improper dealings occurring again.

These are extraordinarily serious allegations which go to the behaviour of the Reserve Bank’s subsidiaries Note Printing Australia and Securency. Those allegations include corruption, bribery and the placement of multimillion-dollar sums into offshore tax havens for services that were being bid for by one or other of the agencies. I refer to a
report by Richard Baker and Nick McKenzie in the Age newspaper of 23 May this year under the heading ‘Revealed: the RBA’s dodgy global deals’. It says:

The Reserve Bank of Australia has been involved in the payment of multimillion-dollar commissions to shady middlemen in its drive to win bank note printing deals with foreign governments.

Securency Pty Ltd, a Melbourne-based bank note supplier half-owned by the RBA, has made a substantial number of “commission” payments to agents, including some previously implicated in corruption scandals.

The company, which has supplied polymer material to print money in Australia and 26 other countries, is chaired by the RBA’s assistant governor Robert Rankin. Its board has another two RBA appointees, as well as executives from British firm, Innovia Films, owner of the other half of Securency.

Some of Securency’s agents are closely tied to government or central bank officials in countries ranked by Transparency International as highly corrupt.

Several agents have been named in official corruption investigations in Africa and Asia. At least one has a criminal conviction for fraud.

The Reserve Bank of Australia’s own annual report for this year, on page 41, says:

The Board of Securency has measures in place designed to ensure the maintenance of high standards of integrity…

Later on it points to the allegations that I have just enumerated, raised first in the Age. It says this:

The allegations were therefore treated very seriously, and when they were first raised the Board of Securency promptly requested an independent investigation by the AFP. This investigation began immediately and the Board has ensured that all possible assistance has been given to the AFP.

The Board of Securency also engaged an external accounting practice to undertake a thorough independent review of the company’s policies and practices in relation to the use of these agents, to ensure that they remain at best practice. At the AFP’s request, Securency delayed the start of this review until the AFP had completed its initial assessment of the allegations. The review, which is now in progress, is expected to take several months to complete.

In other words, Securency held off an external accounting exercise until after the AFP had completed its initial assessment of the allegations, but the board of Securency itself is now proceeding with a review—that is, an inquiry of its own—into the probity of the behaviour of at least some of its agents and officers. That inquiry is continuing to take place.

I know there is always in these matters some concern, where the Australian Federal Police have been brought in, that the parliament not cross over with investigations that are therefore taking place. I would agree with that. However, it is to be noted that no less than the Nigerian parliament—one of the countries in which Securency is said to have been working to get very highly profitable engagement—has and is undertaking a major inquiry. The Age in fact reported on the 23rd of this month, under the heading ‘Nigeria to act on RBA bribe claim’, the following:

Nigeria’s National Assembly is to investigate the country’s former central bank governor over allegations he was bribed to award a contract to a company controlled by the Reserve Bank of Australia.

Nigeria’s House of Representatives has passed a motion requesting the assembly’s banking and justice committees investigate the Central Bank of Nigeria’s previous administrators for “brazen cases” of corruption, money laundering, reckless spending and issuing of non-performing loans.

A resolution read by representative John Halims Agoda and supported by 46 others said: “The committees are mandated to ascertain the veracity or otherwise of the widely reported claims by the local and international media that a company, Securency, is believed to have paid millions of dollars in bribe money to Nigerian officials to
secure the contract to print Nigeria’s new banknotes.”

The Australian Federal Police has told The Age that it is investigating Securency for alleged bribery after the company paid millions of dollars to two British-based businessmen with high-level Nigerian political contacts to win a banknote contract.

Securency, which is owned by the RBA and British firm Innovia Films, has supplied Nigeria with almost 2 billion polymer strips with which to print the nation’s banknotes.

Nigeria’s main newspapers have recently accused former CBN—

that is, the Central Bank of Nigeria—

governor Chukwuma Soludo of being among those officials suspected of accepting the alleged bribes in 2006—

that is, the bribes from this subsidiary company of the Reserve Bank of Australia. This report goes on to say:

Professor Soludo, who finished his term as CBN boss in May and is now running for governor of a Nigerian state, has vehemently denied the allegations, describing them as “wild”.

Nigeria’s Economic and Financial Crimes Commission is also expected to launch a separate investigation into the bribery claims surrounding the Securency contract.

In other words, there is a parliamentary inquiry going at the same time as the relative crimes commission in Nigeria is considering undertaking an inquiry. I cannot recall, except in the quite different case of the Australian Wheat Board’s involvement in Iraq, a case of such enormous concern for Australian corporations regarding allegations of criminal activity overseas.

It is not just incumbent upon but the responsibility of this parliament and, through this motion, the committee system to investigate these extraordinarily serious charges. The only debate that I think could be held on the matter is whether or not the fact that the Federal Police are investigating these matters ought to make us cautious about the inquiry. However, as I have just put to the chamber, both Securency itself and now the Nigerian parliament are undertaking inquiries at the present time.

I will be very keen to hear submissions from the government and the opposition, who are of course important in allowing this reference to proceed. I would point out that if parts (b) and (c) of the motion present any problem for the government and/or the opposition I would be prepared to amend the motion to delete them. That is the section which would have the inquiry look into any current investigations which are underway.

I do not think it would be an exercise in probity for this parliament to wash its hands of these extraordinarily serious claims, which have now been running for five or six months from the investigative unit of the Age newspaper without countermand that I know of, about major subsidiaries of the Reserve Bank of Australia. There is comment in those articles about the damage being done to the international reputation of the Reserve Bank by inference about the relationship to the Reserve Bank, and I think we should be very sure that we are doing all we can to protect that reputation and that relationship. We in this place know that the worst thing you can do to protect such a relationship is to ignore very serious charges that are being made. I would urge both sides of the Senate to consider these extraordinarily serious accusations and allegations—backed up by a great deal of material, I might add—of misbehaviour, not just in Nigeria and South Africa but in several other countries around the world, by agents employed by subsidiary companies of the Reserve Bank. I point out that senior officials of the Reserve Bank sit on or preside over—or have presided over—the boards of those subsidiary companies.
I have endeavoured through other ways—for example, estimates committees—to have the Reserve Bank governor or other senior officers questioned about these matters, but that has not been possible. I am not prepared to allow the matter to simply rest. It is too serious for that. It is serious enough for every senator to consider it. I believe that an inquiry should be undertaken. We have been able in the past to keep well clear of any way compromising police inquiries that have proceeded. For any senator who is thinking about the problem of there being a police inquiry concurrent to the Senate establishing an inquiry into these allegations against the subsidiaries of the Reserve Bank, I cite the fact that the collapse of Storm Financial and Opes Prime are matters that are being examined by the Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services at the moment while the matter is simultaneously being investigated by ASIC and the police. Forest managed investment schemes are being examined by the Senate Select Committee on Agriculture and Related Industries even though the matter is being simultaneously investigated again by ASIC and, according to media reports, the police could be investigating. The Privileges Committee is currently investigating a matter relating to Mr Grech while the police are also investigating matters pertaining to that person. In 1999, to go back a little, when a fraud of $8.72 million was committed against the department of finance, Senator Faulkner still questioned on the matter—and you can see how difficult it is to deal with such a matter while court proceedings are going ahead.

I think our committee is well able to steer clear of matters that the police might be looking at. We need to look at protecting the name of the Reserve Bank and the high esteem in which it is held. I do not think we can do that by ignoring these extraordinarily worrying charges and allegations that are now in the international press, not just the Australian press. I believe it is the duty, the obligation and the right of the Senate to undertake an inquiry and to try to ascertain the facts of the matter before the efflux of any further time.

Senator PARRY (Tasmania) (5.20 pm)—I indicate at the outset that the coalition will not be supporting the reference proposed by Senator Bob Brown. Senator Brown has spent a fair bit of time talking about the involvement of the Australian Federal Police in this matter, and that is primarily the reason. Senator Brown has highlighted some matters concerning Senate inquiries concurrent with AFP investigations. I might even suggest that some of those might have even been politically charged or motivated. The Reserve Bank of Australia is something that we need to be very careful with and maintain complete independence from. We would suggest that the Australian Federal Police investigation into this matter is appropriate at this time. That would not prevent the matter from being revisited at the conclusion of the Australian Federal Police investigation. That might be a more appropriate time to look at whether a Senate inquiry into this matter is necessary.

There are some interesting factors with this that are slightly more different to some of the matters that Senator Brown mentioned. Firstly, the allegations which have been suggested in relation to this matter may be outside the scope of a Senate inquiry—in particular, with witnesses not being resident or domiciled in Australia. In fact, a number of witnesses—I would suggest most witnesses—might be outside the jurisdiction of the Senate. Therefore, the Australian Federal Police would be a far better organisation to be looking at this. That is notwithstanding any of the international treaties that we currently have. The opposition will not be supporting the reference for those reasons. We
believe the Australian Federal Police at this point in time is the most appropriate and qualified agency to be investigating this serious matter.

Senator FARRELL (South Australia) (5.22 pm)—The government also will oppose this motion. This motion should not be supported by the Senate for the very simple reason that it is not appropriate for the Senate to be investigating this issue while the police are conducting an investigation. I am aware of the continuing media coverage alleging impropriety related to Securency’s activities—in particular, its use of agents as its representatives in developing countries. I am advised that the board of Securency have treated these allegations very seriously. The Australian Federal Police are currently investigating a range of issues in relation to this matter. I am also advised that this investigation is ongoing and, as such, it would be highly inappropriate for ministers to be commenting on the investigation and related matters. Equally, others who are readily offering comment on this case should consider whether making such comment is in the interests of a fair and thorough investigation. This includes debating these issues within the Senate or referring this to a Senate committee, as it could prejudice the outcome of the AFP investigation.

In its trade promotion activities, the government makes it very clear that it will not condone, under any circumstances, illegal activities by Australian companies overseas. Australian law criminalises the bribery of foreign public officials in business transactions whether committed here in Australia or by an Australian anywhere in the world. On 14 September 2009 the opposition supported the government to vote down the Greens’ Senate motion to inquire about the commissions paid by NPA and Securency for the service of representatives. I call on the opposition to again support the government—as they are doing on this occasion. We appreciate their support in this matter.

Senator BOB BROWN (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (5.25 pm)—I thank both the government and the opposition for their short contribution to this matter and I submit that they are both wrong. One only has to recollect the enormous and growing damage of the Wheat Board affair to know that. I also pointed out in my submission that the board of Securency itself has seen fit to hold an inquiry, but the government and the opposition say that the Senate should not. And the parliament of Nigeria is holding an inquiry, but the government and the opposition say that the Senate should not.

Senator Parry—I wouldn’t follow everything the parliament of Nigeria did.

Senator BOB BROWN—The opposition spokesperson says that he would not follow everything that the parliament of Nigeria does. I would suggest in response to that comment and the way in which it was pitched that I would expect better of the honourable senator opposite. I for one respect what the parliament of Nigeria and its members try to do and try to achieve.

I want to go back to some of the people who have been agents for the Reserve Bank subsidiaries, because I think that if we are not going to have a Senate inquiry we at least should have some public record of what it is that the members of the Senate—the Greens excepted—do not want to have inquired into at this time. One of those agents, according to the Age, is Mr Benoy Berry from Contec Global in London. Securency has paid millions of dollars to this London based businessman who heads a multinational technology firm, Contec Global. The firm has won large contracts across Africa, including in Sudan and Rwanda, but has also been implicated in a corruption inquiry in Uganda. In 2005, Contec Global was accused by
Uganda’s internal security organisation of making a bribe of at least $1.8 million to a cabinet minister responsible for a national ID card tender process. In 2006, an inquiry by Uganda’s Inspectorate of Government found the finance minister, Isaac Musumba, favoured Contec Global’s bid even though it did not meet the selection criteria and was by far the most expensive. The office of Uganda’s President alleged Contec Global had promised Musumba a share in money gained from its inflated bid. Musumba has denied any wrongdoing.

Securency has had financial dealings with companies linked to businessman Mr Donald McArthur, who was the head of a major company involved in South Africa’s biggest-ever corporate failure in 1999. In 2005, McArthur was arrested by South African police and charged with racketeering, fraud and corruption and accused of improperly pocketing money borrowed from banks. Last year he did a deal with the prosecutors and pleaded guilty to fraud and reckless trading. He paid a substantial fine instead of serving a two-year jail term. He was also forced to pay money into the proceeds of crime fund. McArthur worked for Vivian Reddy in 2005. McArthur repeatedly denied any association with Securency when contacted by the Age, although Securency has said that he has been an agent. Mr Reddy, referred to there, is a South African casino tycoon who won the rights to promote Securency’s banknotes in Africa a few years ago and has more recently declared that he will push the notes across half the continent within a decade. One of his senior employees said that Mr Reddy’s relationship with Securency was over but would not say when or why due to ‘confidentiality and nondisclosure issues’.

Reddy is a controversial figure in South Africa due to his political connections and his bankrolling of the recently elected president, Jacob Zuma. The magnate was ensnared in the South African government’s aborted corruption trial against Zuma, who was alleged to have accepted a bribe from a French defence contractor seeking to build four ships for South Africa’s navy. In a related corruption case against Zuma’s now jailed former financial adviser, prosecutors alleged that the charitable trust account set up by Reddy was used to hide payments from French defence firm Thales to a company owned by the financial adviser and then to Zuma. Reddy’s lawyer has rejected the claims of corruption made by state prosecutors.

When we go to Cambodia, we find that Melbourne barrister Daryl Dealehr is Securency’s agent and the director of mining company Cambodian Resources Ltd. Dealehr has ties to the families of Cambodia’s late and notorious national police chief Hok Lundy and Cambodia’s controversial Prime Minister, Hun Sen. Human rights groups and former senior Cambodian officials accuse Lundy, who died last year, of being responsible for dozens of murders. ‘There is hardly anyone in Cambodia who has shown more contempt for the arm of the law than Hok Lundy’, Human Rights Watch said.

Dealehr told the Age he was surprised he had not yet landed a banknote deal for Securency but said Cambodia’s reserve bank was conservative and wedded to paper banknotes. Dealehr said that he had been duped and that he had very good contacts with bank officials and had been Securency’s agent for many years. He was unable to speak further about Securency’s affairs due to private causes. In 2007, Dealehr’s mining company won the rights to develop iron ore, gold and so on in Cambodia.

Next door, in Vietnam, in 2002, as Vietnam switched from paper to plastic banknotes, Securency teamed up with Hanoi firm CFTD and its subsidiary Banktech. In early
2002, Banktech’s deputy director was Le Duc Minh, the son of the State Bank of Vietnam’s then governor, Le Duc Thoy, who was in charge of the deal. The bank governor denied his son was involved, but Banktech documents reveal they were the ‘exclusive suppliers’ of bank printing materials for Vietnam. Securency was listed as one of its ‘overseas partners’. In 2007, a Vietnam government inquiry reportedly found irregularities and weakness through the banknote project. It found that the bank governor had failed to include a comparison of the polymer banknotes in his submission to the Prime Minister. The inquiry concluded that the involvement of his son had created a lot of suspicion, affected the transparency of the project and damaged the governor’s reputation. Securency has paid millions of dollars in commissions to CFTD directors who are connected to Vietnam’s political personages.

We can go to many other matters, some of which I have raised before in this place. But, needless to say, when we hear the litany of connections with dodgy dealers, with corrupt officials, with shady persons, with people who have criminal records and with people who are involved in multimillion-dollar international deals, which include money being passed from agencies of the Reserve Bank to offshore tax havens for payment, we have to be very alarmed. This Senate and this parliament have to be very concerned indeed.

I have seen no comeback from the Reserve Bank or its subsidiary which substantially or effectively moves to answer these accusations. This is a case of the fourth estate—in this case, the investigating unit of the Age newspaper—writing front-page stories in relation to dealings of the Reserve Bank’s subsidiaries overseas with very questionable people. It has raised an alarm which the parliament is bound to respond to. I do not accept the argument that because it is a matter now put into the hands of the Australian Federal Police this parliament should not be looking at the probity with which the Reserve Bank board has viewed its subsidiaries. I remind the Senate that the deputy of the Reserve Bank board has been the president, the presiding officer, of one of the subsidiaries I am talking about. It is a matter of very great concern to me, and ought be to every senator, that we have had no response to this matter from the Reserve Bank. I would expect that even this debate ought to give rise to a rejoinder from the Reserve Bank of Australia to this parliament. That would be reasonable and expected on matters as major and concerning as this.

I think the government and the opposition are wrong. I think we are seeing in play here a respect for office—that is, for the Reserve Bank itself—which confuses the behaviour of people who might abuse that respect which the country and the body politic give to the Reserve Bank. The very fact that it is allegedly at arm’s length diminishes not one whit the responsibility of this parliament to ensure that its handling of matters are not only in the best interests of the nation but lawful in this nation and lawful anywhere else in the world. On the face of it, that is not the case with these subsidiaries.

The opposition and the government are in grave danger of preventing the process of clearing the air on these matters of great concern. I think they have made a mistake; nevertheless, these are matters that I will continue to pursue, and they are matters that I have no doubt the Prime Minister himself is very aware of. Inaction at the highest levels of government on this matter is something that may well come back to haunt those who have failed to take action. I do not know of any action that has been taken by the government. I would expect that the Treasurer and the Prime Minister have taken a very close interest in these extraordinary allegations of corruption infecting subsidiaries of
the Reserve Bank of Australia. If not then there is something wrong with the way the government has looked at these accusations. If so then I think that the Prime Minister and/or the Treasurer ought to have reported to this parliament.

I have a great sense of unease about the inertia with which the government has greeted the terrible news that is unfolding about the dealings of some of the people that the Reserve Bank subsidiaries have been involved with—and which, we must presume, the people on the board of the Reserve Bank knew about, to some degree, quite some time ago. I know that Securency did a review and stopped certain activities as far back as 2006, but we deserve to know why the parliament was not acquainted with that, why we have not heard of further action since then and why the accusations continue to roll without there being a response from the government. The government should come to the parliament with an explanation as to what it knows about these dealings which have involved members of the board of the Reserve Bank and do what it can in the current circumstances to clear the air.

Question put:
That the motion (Senator Bob Brown’s) be agreed to.

The Senate divided. [5.43 pm]
(The Acting Deputy President—Senator JM Troeth)

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Question negatived.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee Report

Senator NASH (New South Wales) (5.46 pm)—I present the report of the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee on the provisions of the Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Income Support for Students) Bill 2009, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee.

Ordered that the report be printed.

Economics References Committee Report

Senator EGGLESTON (Western Australia) (5.47 pm)—I present the final report of the Economics References Committee on the government’s economic stimulus initiatives, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee.

Ordered that the report be printed.
Senator EGGLESTON—by leave—I move:

That the Senate take note of the report.

The global financial crisis began about a year ago with the collapse of Lehman Brothers in the United States and was followed by the collapse of hundreds of banks in North America and Europe with a concurrent crisis in confidence which saw reduced consumer spending across the globe. It seemed as if the world was on the edge of a repeat of the Great Depression of the 1930s. However, a repeat of the Great Depression has not occurred and the world economy is now showing very definite signs of recovery.

Australia has come through the crisis particularly well. The committee examined whether the actions taken by the Australian government were appropriate, the various reasons underlying Australia’s strong performance and whether the package should now be wound back. The report showed there was a range of opinions from credible economists on the need for and the appropriate size of and the timing and duration of the economic fiscal stimulus in Australia. The report also showed there was a range of views as to the appropriateness of reconfiguring the package given the improvement in underlying economic conditions.

At one extreme was the view that a more rapid winding back of the fiscal stimulus would reduce economic growth and increase unemployment from what it would otherwise have been. An alternative view was that continuing an appropriate degree of poorly targeted fiscal stimulus would also have costs. These would include higher inflation, higher interest rates, a crowding out of more productive private sector investment and therefore higher unemployment. This shows that continuing with an inappropriate degree of fiscal stimulus is not a cost-less option. In this regard the committee noted that the Reserve Bank of Australia recently stated that its expansionary monetary policy settings are no longer appropriate and may indeed be imprudent:

In particular, underlying inflation was still, on the latest data, above the target and, while current forecasts suggested it would fall in the coming year, the expected trough in inflation was significantly higher than earlier thought. Keeping interest rates at very low levels for an extended period could therefore threaten the achievement of the inflation target over the medium term. More generally, very expansionary policy could result in the build-up of other imbalances in the economy, which would ultimately be detrimental to economic growth.

Overall, members concluded—that is, members of the Reserve Bank board—that, while downside risks to the domestic economy could not be ruled out, they had diminished significantly over recent months. This meant that the balance of risks was now such that the current very expansionary setting of policy was no longer necessary, and possibly imprudent. The Board therefore decided in favour of raising the cash rate.

This opinion lends weight to the view that an expansionary fiscal policy is also no longer necessary and possibly also imprudent, leading to the committee’s view that the fiscal stimulus package should also be recalibrated with a view to maximising value for money for all remaining projects.

There was a consensus view that a range of factors have contributed to Australia’s exemplary economic performance. These included the continuing strong growth of China and the demand for Australia’s exports; the legacy of rapid growth, strong budget position and sound prudential regulation of the financial system that was left by the previous coalition government; the rapid move to strongly accommodate monetary policy; the fall of the Australian dollar in the second half of 2008; and the fiscal stimulus...
package. There was a range of opinions as to the relative contribution of each of these factors to the exemplary performance of the Australian economy. What was clear, though, was that fiscal policy alone was not the only significant factor and that the twin factors of the basic underlying strength of the Australian economy and the resurgence of the Chinese economy, resulting in increased purchasing of commodities such as coal and iron ore from Australia, were among the most significant factors in protecting Australia’s economy.

As stated above, there is a strong view that an expansionary fiscal policy is no longer necessary and the fiscal stimulus package should be recalibrated. The overall stimulus imparted to the economy from fiscal policy could be reduced in a number of ways. One way would be to focus on the components of spending that are classed as part of the fiscal stimulus package and to reduce or reschedule these expenditures over a longer period of time. It would appear that out of the $45 billion over the forward estimates there is about $31 billion of discretionary stimulatory spending remaining out there unspent. Most of this funding is for useful infrastructure projects, and one option would be to consider reducing the annual expenditure levels while retaining the gross expenditure proposed. That means the government could, for example, extend the period over which this $31 billion was to be spent to 10 or 15 years, which would reduce the inflationary impact of the program. An alternative approach would be to reduce the total stimulus injected into the economy by identifying offsetting cuts to other areas of government spending.

The committee noted that the economy has strengthened and that the rationale for maintaining the spending levels proposed by the Rudd government is no longer valid, and it is of the firm opinion that the levels of spending need to be reduced, postponed or offset to prevent the economy from overheating, in line with the Reserve Bank’s view as expressed in their latest board minutes of 6 October 2009. Accordingly, the committee recommended that the government commission an urgent independent report to be prepared on the fiscal stimulus package; that it include a cost-benefit analysis of all the remaining projects, including the timing and implementation for spending on those projects and recommendations on the feasibility of reducing, postponing or recalibrating the remaining discretionary funding on a project-by-project basis; and that the report be published in the Treasury’s website within 14 days of receipt.

Senator CAMERON (New South Wales) (5.55 pm)—I must say I am not disappointed by the approach that has been taken by the opposition senators on this issue. They have run this argument about recalibration on a number of occasions. What ‘recalibration’ means is reducing the stimulus and forcing more Australians into unemployment. When I say I am not disappointed I mean I am not disappointed because the Australian public now see that any argument that the opposition have any economic credentials at all is swept away once and for all.

I go back to have a look at what this government was facing in terms of the global financial crisis. From the middle of 2007, the financial markets were showing signs of considerable turmoil. The realities of trade in exotic financial derivatives and the explosion in subprime lending that had characterised the finance market boom became clear. Inadequate regulation and greed on the part of the financial market players would set in train a sequence of events in the US, the UK and Europe that would culminate in the collapse, nationalisation or government bailout of major banks, insurers and credit providers. The list of failed financial institutions reads
like a who’s who of those who only months earlier would have considered themselves the masters of the universe; as we now know, these emperors had no clothes.

Following the collapse of Lehman Brothers, it was clear that the whole financial system was on the brink of collapse. Share markets experienced the steepest and most rapid falls in stock prices in nearly 80 years. Major currencies around the world, Australia’s included, came under abnormally heavy selling pressure. Market confidence crashed, creating the conditions for unprecedented falls in global trade, production and investment. It was clear that without government intervention every advanced economy was heading for a deep and protracted recession. Governments the world over put in place fiscal stimulus packages while central banks added monetary stimulus by reducing official interest rates to unprecedented lows.

The consequences of the global financial crisis have been pervasive. Since October 2008, there have been nearly 50 government sponsored bailouts of major banks around the world. Financial institutions have suffered losses and asset write-downs totalling around $1.9 trillion. The global financial crisis quickly developed into a global crisis of employment. In the United States alone almost six million jobs have been lost since September 2008, and the International Labour Organisation estimates that 60 million jobs will have been lost by the end of this year as a result of the global economic downturn.

The human impact of the global financial crisis has been severe, and it is not something that you see discussed or debated in the coalition report. There is no discussion about the human crisis, no discussion about the implications for families and no discussion about the implications for communities—only some esoteric economic analysis of Keynesianism versus laissez-faire economic policies. That is the level of the debate from the coalition senators on this issue. The government was determined not to enter into any esoteric debate. We determined to cushion Australians from the worst impact of the crisis. Protracted downturns result in permanent dislocation from the labour market, and skills atrophy and risk creating an entire generation of unemployed. We were not going to stand by idly and watch that happen. We were not going to ‘wait and see’, as was the proposal from the coalition senators.

If we had not moved, viable businesses would have been destroyed and productive investments foregone. Capital and skills destruction can permanently reduce an economy’s long-term capacity, to say nothing of the scarring effects of unemployment to the individuals involved. The government response was a coordinated one. It was coordinated nationally and internationally. The Secretary of the Treasury told the Senate Economics Committee inquiry into the government’s economic stimulus initiatives: I think the international consensus, including the OECD and the International Monetary Fund, is that Australia’s policy settings, at least to date, have been quite consistent with what is generally regarded as an appropriate stance, including in respect of timeliness and being temporary and well targeted.

So these academic economists who gave evidence—these blackboard economists who gave us lectures about Say’s law, who gave us lectures about crowding out, who were absolutely horrified that government would play any role in the economy—were wrong, absolutely wrong. The IMF say they were wrong, the OECD say they were wrong, the ACCI in Australia say they were wrong, the Australian Industry Group say they were wrong, other economists say they were wrong, and the Treasury and the Reserve Bank say they were wrong.
Yet what do we see? We see the opposition senators, on the basis of their dogma and with their view that this hidden, unseen hand will solve the problems, saying, ‘Let the market rip and everything will be okay.’ You have produced a report that has got no reality about what is facing this economy and facing the community in this country. There is no mention about what is happening to ordinary workers in your report, just this esoteric debate based on submissions from the academic, blackboard economists that you grab because you are sinking in a sea of irrelevance in terms of your economic credentials. You have no economic credentials—absolutely none on these issues. The Australian government has determined that we will take strong action and intervene on behalf of the Australian community, and that intervention has underpinned 210,000 jobs in the economy. What is clear is that the Secretary of the Treasury, Dr Henry, indicated that your argument to remove the stimulus would mean that immediately 100,000 jobs would be lost in the economy.

I am proud to be part of a government that has ensured that Australia is the only advanced economy to register positive economic growth. We have the second lowest unemployment rate of a major advanced economy. We have the lowest budget deficit of major advanced economies at 4.9 per cent, with the average deficit being 10.1 per cent of GDP in other advanced economies. We have the lowest debt of all major advanced economies. Government net debt as a share of GDP for the major advanced economies is to increase to 93.4 per cent. Australia’s debt will be 13.8 per cent of GDP by 2013 and will then decline. We are the only advanced economy not to go into recession, and if this stimulus had not been implemented, one million Australians would have been unemployed. That is our record against your theoretical, academic, blackboard economist analysis of the economy. It is no wonder you have no credibility with the Australian public, because you have no policies on the key issues that affect Australians in this country. You have just abandoned the Australian community in relation to your economic dogma. You did that with Work Choices. You are now doing it on economics, and you will pay a price for that. (Time expired)

Senator JOYCE (Queensland—Leader of the Nationals in the Senate) (6.06 pm)—I rise tonight to comment about the so-called stimulus package also; as a member of the Senate Standing Committee on Economics I think it is important that I do. I also put on the record that I have never supported any of the stimulus packages, even the first one. It is clearly on the Hansard that I noted that position.

I did not support them because they are a ridiculous and profligate waste of money that have increased our debt load and will have to be repaid. I did not support them because Australia still had the capacity at that point in time, with three per cent interest rates, to further reduce interest rates. It was a position which was not the same as that of other nations in the world, who had around a zero per cent interest rate, so they only had the fiscal lever left—they did not have the monetary lever.

I do this also as the only accountant in this place, so I am very much attuned to this—as opposed to the so-called blackboard economics that Senator Cameron was talking about. I actually lived, breathed and made my money by dealing with this sort of problem. Our nation now has, by reason of a fiscal stimulus package, a massive debt that has to be repaid. If you believe the proposition that the fiscal stimulus stimulated the economy, then of course you have to believe the proposition that paying it back and taking that money out is obviously going to have a huge
negative effect on the economy. But you are going to pay back more than the fiscal stimulus: you are going to pay back the interest on it as well.

Let’s look at what we could have done as an alternative. If we had stayed out of the economy at that point in time and, instead of going in and inspiring the dollar to appreciate, had taken the interest rates down and tried to devalue the dollar, then a lower dollar itself would have acted as a stimulant instrument in the economy and started driving the economy forward. But oh, no—they would not do that. Why did Labor not do that? Because the IMF told them that it was not the right way to go.

Of course, the IMF was talking to a whole range of nations that were in a different position to ours. Ours is predominantly an export-type nation. So this government has gone in and has borrowed up to the hilt. It has stacked us up with debt to the eyeballs and have the stimulus of the nation spread across the carpet on Christmas Day with ‘made in China’ written on the back. That is what the Labor Party has delivered to us as an outcome. Then they have the gall and the hide to say that their stimulus package is what kept us out of recession.

Senator Cameron—It’s got under your skin!

Senator JOYCE—I can hear Senator Cameron going on now, because he knows I am right. He knows I am right, because they have not got a clue how to run the show. This is where it started: $21.6 billion in cash we had in the bank before you fools turned up. Since that point in time we are now $110 billion in debt and the Labor state governments are $170 billion in debt. Debt up to our eyeballs! And what have we got to show for it? I will tell you, ladies and gentlemen of Australia: pink batts. We have got ceiling insulation in the roof for the rats and the mice to urinate on. That is what they have given us.

What else did they give us? Nine hundred dollar cheques so you could buy a plasma screen right near you, made from Seoul in Korea or made in Taiwan—

Senator Cameron—You are incompetent, Barnaby!

Senator JOYCE—not made in this nation, putting your workers out of a job, Senator Cameron. You are supposed to be looking after the working man, Senator Cameron, but oh no, you could not do that. And then you get upset.

Look at the ridiculous position they have now put us in. We are in a position of arbitrage and they created it: a position of arbitrage, where our interest rates are higher than the United States’s interest rates. They are going up, and you are forcing them up. That arbitrage itself is forcing up interest rates; it is putting pressure on every Australian working family—every per cent this interest rate goes up. It costs you $5,000 per per cent for bad Labor Party management: $5,000 per per cent per house facility for bad Labor Party management. This is what we have got.

What did you get for your $110 billion worth of debt, Australia? What did you get for your $170 billion worth of debt, states? What did they give you? They gave you high interest rates, they gave you a collapsing economy and they gave you a person with no idea. They are following the IMF and this is what we get. We have got higher interest rates forcing up. Now they are trying to explain to people that higher interest rates are what they are looking for. They are using higher interest rates as a recommendation for their government. That is what we have got: higher interest rates as a recommendation of the Labor government.
How long did it take them to get us to this position? They are not even through their first term. So now we have the position where we have got a major overhead on our economy that is going to suck the blood out of our economy. If we look at the stimulus package itself, if we had built some constructive assets with the money they wasted—even if they had built a pipeline to take the water out of the north and take it to the south, and if those pipes had rotted in the paddock, we would have got more stimulant out of that than what they delivered to us: no aggregate increase in our economy.

Then Mr Swan comes up and says, ‘I have saved you from the recession.’ The effect of the stimulus package was 0.8 of one per cent, but exports went up by 20 per cent. They say that their 0.8 per cent is better than the 20 per cent increase in exports. They say that their stimulus apparently put coal on ships, it put wheat on ships and it did all these marvellous things. Their stimulus did nothing but load you up with masses of debt! And now we have got a dollar that is appreciating because we have got an arbitrage in the interest rates. We have to attract money into the economy; but do not worry—it will turn around. In about May next year it will all turn around—the dollar will meet a point of equilibrium and it will start to fall over. What will we get as it falls over? Interest rate pressure on interest rate pressure. The Australian people can thank the Labor Party and that is why they are coming in because they know it is right. They are just like ferrets. They are running out of their little barrow and coming down to the chamber to try and protect their dear leader and the Treasurer. This is a sore point for the Labor Party. This is a sore point—their complete lack of acumen. Have you got one person who has ever run a business over there? One? One of you?

To add to this wondrous mix of Labor Party management, what have we got? The ETS. How are you going to prop up the parlous state of the finances? Where are you going to get the money from to pay for the interest bill? Where is that going to come from? It is going to come from the emissions trading scheme, this moral bulwark that they move out. They are going to cure the climate. They have stuffed up the books but apparently they can cure the climate. Today we had the Labor Party backbenchers talking about sea level rises. Apparently the ETS, like King Canute, is going to solve the tide. They can do everything! They are amazing! They are unstoppable! They are saving the tide and they are saving the climate but they are stuffing up the books. They could not run a chook raffle in a pub on a Friday night. They are beyond low contempt—they are hopeless.

We will wait. Every day you can ask, ‘How big is the debt today?’ It goes up and up; a billion dollars per week, Australia.

Government senators interjecting—

Senator JOYCE—In they come—they are coming in because they know it is right. They are just like ferrets. They are running out of their little barrow and coming down to the chamber to try and protect their dear leader and the Treasurer. This is a sore point for the Labor Party. This is a sore point—their complete lack of acumen. Have you got one person who has ever run a business over there? One? One of you?

Senator Sterle—Yes.

Senator JOYCE—I will take the interjection, Senator Sterle. What did you run—a truck up and down the highway? None of them have run a business. They have not got a clue.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Ryan)—Order! Senator Joyce, please address your comments through the chair.

Senator JOYCE—There are no business people there. There is no-one who has ever had an overdraft. None of them have ever had a business to support. They would not know—hang on, we have one.
Senator Sterle—Mr Acting Deputy President, on a point of order: that is a slur upon some members on this side of the chamber. There are a few of us who have run businesses. Unlike Senator Joyce, I have been out there and done it hard. I was not born with a silver spoon in my mouth.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT—There is no point of order. That is a debating point.

Senator Joyce—Apparently there are few of them who have run a business. How many of them are there on that side? We have three who have run a business, but they are running the nation into the ground. That is what they are doing. What have we got from the stimulus package? I am sure Mr Harvey Norman thought it was a great idea—a little bit of sugar for him but no sugar for the economy and no long-term effect on the nation. All we are left with is the major debt. Now they have admitted that there are only three people in the whole of the Labor Party who have run a business. What a recommendation for a political party. Over on this side I think that the vast majority of people have run a business. In the National Party, I know, we have all run a business, each one of us, as opposed— (Time expired)

Debate (on motion by Senator Williams) adjourned.

NOTICES

Presentation

Senator Stephens (New South Wales—Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector and Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Inclusion) (6.16 pm)—by leave—I give notice that, on the next day of sitting, I shall move:

That the Senate—

(a) notes that 28 October 2009 marks the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Goulburn congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, the first Mother House in regional Australia;

(b) acknowledges the contribution of the Sisters of Mercy to the development of education, nursing, pastoral care and care for the aged and disadvantaged in Australia; and

(c) congratulates the inspirational women of the Goulburn congregation on their colourful history and involvement in shaping the history of the region.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH AGENCY BILL 2009

Second Reading

Debate resumed.

Senator Cormann (Western Australia) (6.17 pm)—Before question time, when we started this debate, I was pointing out the absolute failure of the Rudd Labor government in the health portfolio. Senators would remember my comments before question time about how, before the election, the Rudd Labor government promised the world on health but have delivered next to nothing. All we have had is a whole series of reviews, followed now by reviews into those same reviews; a return to the bad, old-fashioned crusade against private health; and the occasional lazy, ill-thought-out, short-sighted budget cut, usually targeted at those Australians who access services through the private health system.

One of the reviews commissioned by the government upon coming into office was the National Preventative Health Taskforce. That review went for 15 months. It considered all of the issues. It considered the best way forward from its point of view. It made a whole series of recommendations. The minister received the report of the National Preventative Health Taskforce on 30 June and we were led to believe at the time that the report
would be released. At the last minute, the release of that report was canned because somebody in government, and I can only guess who, made a judgement that it was too hot to handle—some tough decisions would have had to be made and there may well have been some consequences in terms of public opinion. The government then sat on it for two months. It was only an order of this Senate which forced the government to publicly release the National Preventative Health Taskforce report on 1 September. It was a disgrace that we had to wait for those two months.

Since then, have the government done anything? Have the government made any announcements in relation to any of the recommendations: what should happen to the tobacco excise, what should happen to alcohol taxation, what should happen to alcohol advertising and what should happen to a whole series of other recommendations? No, they have not. In fact, when the Leader of the Opposition, in his budget reply speech, made the very sensible and constructive suggestion that we should increase the excise on tobacco by 12½ per cent, the government came out and opposed it. They pooh-poohed it. It was an eminently sensible suggestion. What is the minister scared of? What are the government scared of? Why are they not prepared to take on the tobacco companies? Why are they not prepared to make some tough decisions in the health portfolio about alcohol taxation or about a whole series of other issues?

The minister has been out there saying that the opposition want to delay or block this bill. We do not want to do anything of the sort. I cannot believe that the government would make such an incredibly unbelievable suggestion. If you look at the second reading amendment we have put forward, you can see that what we are saying is that this bill should be considered only after the government has tabled its response to all of the recommendations of its own National Preventative Health Taskforce review. That is eminently sensible. What it means is that, if the government were to come into this place today and tell us which recommendations they support and which ones they do not, we would be able to deal with it in very good time—before 1 January 2010, which is when this agency is supposed to come into effect.

We support effective preventative health measures, but we do not support just setting up another agency without a clearly articulated purpose. This government uses bureaucratic processes—it uses reviews, task forces, committees of inquiry, further reviews and new agencies—to avoid making decisions. This is a strategy to create the impression of a government that is busy—busyness instead of a focus on outcomes.

One of the real problems we have in the health portfolio and one of the things that any future Australian government will have to address is duplication in management of the health system. This is yet another bill which is going to create duplication. I would be very interested to hear the response from the government to the points I am about raise. We are here being asked to support legislation to set up the National Preventative Health Agency which will be funded at a total cost of $133.2 million over four years. This includes establishment costs of $17.6 million. It will oversee spending of $102 million on a national social marketing campaign targeting obesity and smoking and a total of $13.2 million in research spending to support policy development.

The federal Department of Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon’s own department, already spends $31 million per year in departmental expenses for two programs that administer $204 million in funding for disease prevention and strategy. Both those pro-
grams already include national-level social marketing campaigns targeting obesity and smoking. This figure includes—and this comes straight out of the budget papers—$152 million that has already been allocated for the existing drug strategy program in 2009-10, with $24 million of that total having been allocated for departmental expenses. In 2009-10, the department will continue a social marketing campaign aimed at raising awareness about the risks of overweight/obesity. In total, $52 million has been allocated, including the promotion of healthy lifestyles, reducing and preventing diabetes, and the detection and prevention of cancer. Of the total, $7 million has been allocated for departmental expenses. And the list goes on.

We support effective preventative health measures, but one of the other measures in the budget is going directly counter to that. Cataract surgery is a very effective and a very cost-effective preventative health measure. It helps to prevent falls, fractures and the mental distress from going blind. It helps to improve quality of life. It helps to prevent social isolation and early institutionalisation. It is one of the most effective and cost-effective preventative health measures currently being funded by the Commonwealth, yet this government wants to cut it in half.

Our main criticism with this legislation is that the government is putting the cart before the horse. It came with all these promises about what it was going to do in preventative health. In two years as Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon has not been prepared to make one single hard decision. We understand that there are some difficult decisions to be made in some of the areas this preventative health strategy focuses on, such as tobacco, alcohol, obesity and food, but the minister has not made them. The Rudd government has not made them. It had a 15-month review and nothing has happened since then. The minister has ducked for cover. She has refused to release the report for two months. She has been sitting on it for four months without making a decision. This minister is unable to make decisions right across her portfolio. We had her inability to make a decision on the ill-considered chemotherapy budget cut. She has been unable to make a decision on clinical treatment guidelines for ADHD, she has been unable to make a decision on any of the recommendations out of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission and she has been unable to make a decision on any of the recommendations in her own National Preventative Health Taskforce report.

We have got report after report piling up and we have got the minister ducking for cover. Instead of telling the Australian people how she proposes to move forward on the price of tobacco, alcohol taxation arrangements and various other issues such as advertising et cetera, she is ducking for cover and just going to set up another agency. We acknowledge that this agency can do some good work as long as it is well targeted and as long as it is focused on tangible, effective outcomes. But with this minister we are worried that this is just part of another delaying tactic and making people believe that she is doing something when she is doing nothing.

This is a very serious concern. The objectives of preventative health are obviously shared by all. We all agree that we should encourage healthier lifestyles and thereby reduce pressure on an already overburdened health system. I have already mentioned that the government’s decision on cataract rebates will actually put more pressure on our health system, particularly on our public health system. It will put more pressure on elderly Australians, which will result in more falls, more fractures, mental distress and early institutionalisation. We support strong preventative health measures, including on tobacco, alcohol, food et cetera. However, there is a
very fine line between giving people the information they need to make informed decisions and a nanny state telling people how to live their lives. We do not believe that preventative health should be about social engineering. We believe that preventative health should be focused on achieving serious, tangible and positive practical health outcomes.

On any of these counts, this minister has failed. She has failed to make tough decisions. She has failed to look the vested interests in the eyes and say, ‘This is the way forward.’ All we have got from this minister—

Senator Chris Evans—From you, on vested interests?

Senator CORMANN—I hear an interjection from Senator Evans. I am sure that you would do a better job in this portfolio, Minister. As a good senator from Western Australia, I think that you should go to the Prime Minister and ask him for the health portfolio. As a good senator from Western Australia, I think that you should do a better job. I can see him putting his hand up. Senator Sterle would do a better job. Senator Sterle would like to make a contribution in the health portfolio. I am sure that Senator Sterle would be able to make a few tough decisions because certainly Nicola Roxon is not able to make a tough decision. Nicola Roxon has been sitting on her hands for the last two years. She has been running review after review. We are now having this review into the review, with a propaganda exercise across Australia with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Health and Ageing going for photo opportunity after photo opportunity at a hospital near you, Mr Acting Deputy President. I am sure that Nicola Roxon and the Prime Minister will turn up for a photo opportunity at a hospital near you.

I am not sure how much that will achieve in terms of better health outcomes. In fact, I dare to say that it will not achieve any better health outcomes. If you look at all the data that has come out in recent times, the situation in our health system is worse today than it was when the Rudd Labor government was first elected to government. I will just recap. In health before the last election Australians were promised the world. They were promised that the Rudd Labor government had a plan to fix public hospitals, and if it would not achieve it by the middle of 2009 it would put a proposal to the Australian people for Canberra to take over the running of public hospitals. No progress has been made at all. After the election, rather than implementation of a plan we had a 20-month review which is now being followed by a review into the review. We were promised that the government was supportive of and committed to retaining the existing private health rebates and the overall private health policy framework, only to find out after the election that the government had returned to its bad, old-fashioned, inglorious past of running a crusade against private health. We were told that health was going to be a high priority area, only to find out that in two successive budgets, while there was reckless spending everywhere else in every other portfolio of government, in the health portfolio there is ill-thought-out, short-sighted budget cut after budget cut.

We are supportive of preventive health. We are supportive of effective preventive health measures. We are not interested in delaying this bill, but if our second reading amendment, which I will move now, is successful it is going to be up to the government how quickly we can deal with this. I move:

At the end of the motion, add “and further consideration of the bill be an order of the day for 3 sitting days after the Government has tabled a response to all of the recommendations of the
report of the National Preventative Health Taskforce’.

We would be able to deal with this before the end of the year very easily. All the government has to do is give us a list: yes, we support this one; no, we do not support that one; we may support part of this one but not in its entirety. The Australian people deserve to know what direction this government is proposing to take on preventive health, as the Australian people deserve to know what the direction of the Rudd government is going to be for the remainder of its term in the health portfolio generally. For two years it has been ducking and weaving for cover and we have not seen any serious answers. (Time expired)

Senator SIEWERT (Western Australia) (6.32 pm)—The Greens welcome the release of the Preventive Health Taskforce report and we believe it provides Australia with a strong strategy that would improve health outcomes for the Australian community. The Greens believe a greater focus on prevention in the health system is absolutely necessary to improve the overall health of our population and in the long run it will also result in reduced health costs associated with preventable hospital admissions and other health services and in overall improvement of our community’s health. The Greens believe that strong leadership is required in preventive health and that it needs to get the attention and funding it deserves and very strongly needs. Unfortunately, short-term political cycles have in the past and may in the future encourage governments to favour short-term fixes over long-term preventive health strategies. We believe that is one of the reasons why we need an agency and a longer term strategy to deal with preventive health. We have to focus on keeping people well and out of hospital and we believe we therefore need to start dealing with these issues around preventive health.

We have to invest in the future of the health of our people and our community or our health system will continue to suffer in the years to come. Without action now, the increases in chronic conditions and the ageing population will see health and aged care costs rise from about $84 billion in 2003 to a massive $246 billion in 2033. Figures from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare tell us that in 2008 only 2.5 per cent of Australia’s health budget was allocated to preventive health, with the remainder spent on care and treatment services.

It is generally considered that tobacco cessation or anti-smoking programs have been successful in Australia. The 30 per cent decline in smoking rates between 1975 and 1995 prevented over 400,000 premature deaths and saved costs of over $8.4 billion, more than 50 times greater than the amount spent on anti-smoking campaigns over that period of time. In other words, that investment was not only good for our health but was also good for the bottom line. Unfortunately, programs such as this have been spasmodic. In the past community organisations have had to lobby. There has not been an overall strategy about how to deal with preventive health programs, how to deal with these key chronic issues. This particular program in terms of an anti-smoking campaign or tobacco-cessation campaign, as it is sometimes called, was achieved through a combination of measures. There were price signals through higher tobacco taxes and information programs, which were also an essential part of the campaign. Restrictions on advertising, sale and consumption of tobacco were also important elements. Concerted efforts over more than 20 years have changed community attitudes towards smoking and this has also helped to make it socially less acceptable. In fact, it is considered positively antisocial by many people now. It has also helped to bring down our smoking rates.

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other words, there has had to be a strategy that has many elements over a number of years.

To some extent the lessons from this anti-smoking campaign can be applied to such things as alcohol and obesity. However, there are some key differences in those products. For example, for tobacco use there is no safe level, whereas we are not applying the same process to alcohol or to, for example, junk foods. Instead, consumers are advised to limit or moderate their consumption. It is not possible and it is not appropriate, many would argue, to make junk food or alcohol campaigns take the prohibition approach or the same way that smoking has been made socially unacceptable. We therefore need different approaches but we do again need long-term strategies and funding, and a combination of methods to start dealing with these issues.

According to figures in a recent report published by VicHealth on the health and economic benefits of reducing disease risk factors in Australia, 13 per cent of adults drink alcohol at a risky or high-risk level long term. Annually, Australians drink more litres of alcohol per capita—9.8—than Americans, at 8.4; Canadians, at eight; Swedes, at 6.6; and Norwegians, at 6.4. Brief alcohol interventions in primary care can reduce alcohol consumption by about 10 per cent, or approximately four standard drinks of alcohol per week.

In Australia, 62 per cent of men and 45 per cent of women are considered overweight or obese. High body mass contributes 7.5 per cent to the overall health burden in Australia, with type 2 diabetes, 40 per cent, and heart disease, 34 per cent, as the major risks. Obesity rates in Australia are generally increasing, so we quite clearly need to be addressing this issue.

Both these sets of statistics highlight some of the pressing problems facing Australians and their health and yet again highlight the need for preventative health agencies such as that proposed, along with long-term strategies and long-term commitment of funding to address these issues. We need much better data to continue to deal with some of these issues. We believe we also need innovative pilot programs. Currently in Australia the potential opportunity cost savings to the health sector are $812 million if we are able to eliminate, for example, just obesity issues.

I quote those statistics in order to give a brief snapshot of why we think it is so important that we start addressing these issues. Not only are there, as I said earlier, some very important economic considerations here but, most importantly, this is about the health of our community and ensuring that we have good health programs and are generally improving the health of the Australian community.

The National Preventative Health Taskforce made 34 recommendations and 135 subrecommendations to government. It did in fact call for the establishment of an agency with the capacity to effectively monitor, evaluate and build evidence. This can be achieved by commissioning surveys of activities undertaken by different sectors and looking at barriers to and enablers of action. The National Preventative Health Taskforce called for an agency that could facilitate a national prevention research infrastructure to answer the fundamental research questions about what works best. The task force called for an agency that could provide resources and advice for national, state and local policies; generate new partnerships for workplace, community and school interventions; assist in the development of the prevention workforce; and coordinate and implement a national approach to preventative health so-
cial marketing. These recommendations, we believe, are all important.

The Greens believe such an agency is important. We are, however, concerned with some of the aspects of the government’s approach to setting up the agency. While we strongly support the agency and strongly believe in the need for an agency, we think it needs to be well funded and set up appropriately if it is to do the job that the government assure us they are keen to see it do and that the Preventative Health Taskforce recommended that it do. We have no doubt that such an agency is needed, and we support the concept. However, we believe the agency should be more independent than what the government propose. We also think it is vital that consumers—health consumers, for example—are represented on the advisory council. In fact, we would prefer it if the model had been more along the lines of the establishment of a national agency with a board that was more independent than an advisory council. I will go into the details around those issues a bit further down the track.

We know that most interventions to prevent the harm caused by alcohol, tobacco and obesity attempt to change consumer behaviour. A common approach to attempt to change behaviour has been to run social marketing programs. In some areas these have been effective in the past and in some not. I think every Australian could name at least one successful social marketing program that has been targeted at good health outcomes. Successive governments have run advertising and information campaigns to improve diets and increase physical activity with the aim of preventing or reducing obesity. Despite these campaigns, obesity rates have unfortunately continued to rise. This suggests that to date some of these programs may well not have been effective and, if we are going to change behaviour, we need to provide different information, refocus our social marketing campaigns, deal with economic incentives and, in some cases, change our legislative base—for example, by banning junk food advertising, an approach that the Greens have been advocating for some considerable period of time.

We need to have a greater understanding of consumer interaction. This conclusion is supported by research in behavioural economics which has shown that, in many cases, even when consumers have ready access to understandable information, they may still fail to choose the products or the services that best suit their needs. This is because they may ignore and misinterpret relevant information or fail to act on the information because of other barriers to them changing their behaviour. Biases in consumer decision making are well known to traders of goods and services. They have large marketing budgets and present their products in the best possible light within the limits of the law. They may also exploit consumer biases to increase demand for their product. The large amount of advertising generated by the manufacturers of junk food, for example, makes it very difficult for healthy eating messages to be effective. Again, it highlights the need for strong programs and a variety of programs to tackle this problem from a variety of angles. It also highlights the need for consumers to be involved in assisting in the advisory process.

The Greens believe that the Preventive Health Agency could be better served with an increase in funding allocated to the program, particularly to social marketing. We also want to see key specific performance indicators in place to make sure that the agency is able to justify its activities with nationally agreed outcomes and that the programs it is advocating or putting in place are actually effective. We need a good, strong evidence base to make sure these programs
are well targeted. We understand that the government does not want to weigh down the Preventative Health Agency with unrealistic expectations when it first starts. However, we believe it is very important that a strategy is put in place and that funding is provided to allow this agency to be effective. If it does not receive the funding that is necessary, it unfortunately will not be able to be effective. The agency also needs to have the capacity to work across all government, including with those agencies that affect good health outcomes, such as those involved with housing, education, infrastructure, employment and economics as well as those directly involved with health. The Greens believe that if the Preventative Health Agency is to make any real progress in health prevention it must be independent.

We understand that this has been discussed at COAG and that the decisions about the structure have been made through the COAG process, talking to state and territory health ministers. While we understand the necessity to do that, we have come up against the same process as, for example, under the Safe Work Australia legislation—that is, decisions that have been made at COAG are locked in and the government then expects this chamber to rubber stamp those decisions. The Greens do not see that good legislative process works that way. The Senate deserves the right to review legislation and the Greens have reviewed this legislation.

Although we support the concepts and very strongly support the concept of an agency, we do have some concerns about its structure. We believe that a lot of the effectiveness of the agency will be restricted by the government essentially turning it into an advisory agency. It requires the same process that is in the Safe Work Australia legislation: the ministerial council signs off on strategies and on the operational plan. We do not believe that is effective. It then often comes down to the lowest common denominator. We may not have strong preventative health programs if it comes down yet again to the lowest common denominator. We have seen that in the debate over junk food advertising. We have seen that in self-regulatory bodies that look at alcohol advertising. We do not believe that is appropriate. We believe there should have been a board put in place to ensure that the Preventative Health Agency is more independent.

The Greens have a series of amendments that we are proposing to address the issue of independence. We are not taking it right back to the board approach, but we are seeking to make amendments that give the body a bit more independence and do not require the ministerial council to sign off on the strategy. It would require the agency to draft up the strategy and the operational plan and present those to the ministerial council. It would allow the minister to request for changes to be made, but it would not give the minister permission for the final sign off. That is an attempt to ensure that we do not yet again go back to the lowest common denominator—which, unfortunately, we have seen far too much of in a whole variety of areas, and water is an absolute classic example of that.

The changes the Greens are proposing will make a significant difference to the way the Preventative Health Agency carries out its work. The changes will make the agency much more independent and give it the capacity to deliver stronger and more effective strategies to address preventative health. We believe the agency should have an increasing budget into the future, so that as it builds up its evidence base and its strategies, working across state and territories, it will be able to deliver strong and effective programs.

We are also concerned that the way the bill has been drafted gives the CEO, rather
than the agency itself, objectives to implement. We are circulating amendments that address the issue of objectives for the agency. The agency itself does not have objectives. We believe it would be more appropriate for the agency to have objectives that it is supposed to achieve, as that is the reason for the existence for the agency in the first place. We also believe that there need to be consumer representatives on the advisory council. They are a key part of the preventative health strategy and it should be specified that they be on the advisory body. We are moving some amendments that would require at least two, and a maximum of three, consumer representatives on the body.

Debate interrupted.

**DOCUMENTS**

**The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT**

(Senator Troeth)—Order! It being 6.50pm, the Senate will proceed to consideration of government documents.

**Consideration**

The following government documents tabled earlier today were considered:

- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs—Report for 2008-09, including Aboriginals Benefit Account report for 2008-09 and financial statements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Account. Motion to take note of document moved by Senator Boyce. Debate adjourned till Thursday at general business, Senator Boyce in continuation.


Debate interrupted.

Australian Rail Track Corporation Limited (ARTC)—Statement of corporate intent 2009-10. Motion to take note of document moved by Senator Parry. Debate adjourned till Thursday at general business, Senator Parry in continuation.

The following orders of the day relating to government documents were considered:

Electoral reform—Strengthening Australia’s democracy—Green paper by the Special Minister of State, dated September 2009. Motion to take note of document moved by Senator Parry. Debate adjourned till Thursday at general business, Senator Parry in continuation.

Department of Finance and Deregulation—Campaign advertising by Australian government departments and agencies—Report for 2008-09 Motion to take note of document moved by Senator Parry. Debate adjourned till Thursday at general business, Senator Parry in continuation.


General business orders of the day Nos 10, 12 to 20 and 23 to 25 relating to government documents were called on but no motion was moved.

ADJOURNMENT

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Troeth)—Order! There being no further consideration of government documents, I propose the question:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

National Seniors Week

Senator BILYK (Tasmania) (6.55 pm)—I rise tonight to speak on National Seniors Week and specifically on the importance of our senior citizens in the community. National Seniors Week is a chance for our seniors to enjoy themselves, to find new hobbies and to learn new skills. It is an opportunity for them to join together to share their experiences and meet different people. For the younger people in the community, it is a great time to show elderly parents, grandparents, neighbours and friends that they really appreciate them.

This year I celebrated National Seniors Week in a couple of ways. Firstly, I held an afternoon tea in my office, to which local seniors from the Kingborough Bowls Club were invited. It was an opportunity for the bowling comrades to catch up away from the green and a good way for my staff and me to get to know more members of the community. A very enjoyable afternoon was had by all. There was a lot of laughter and jocularity, but there was also a serious side to the event and that was the opportunity it gave me to thank those members of the community that attended for the hard work that they put into the community.

I also marked the occasion by attending an afternoon tea hosted by the Huon Valley Council. This event was also attended by the Deputy Premier of Tasmania, Lara Giddings, and the state member for Franklin, Daniel Hume, and included entertainment by Victorian entertainer of the year Rodney Vincent. Mr Vincent, who was part of In Melbourne Tonight with Bert Newton and Graham Kennedy, told jokes and stories and sang a mixture of songs. Some of these were older but others were quite well-known more modern tunes. People joined in and sang along. There were over a hundred people in attendance. I put on the record my thanks to the Huon Val-
ley Council for hosting this event and for bringing so many members of the community together. The Huon Valley is in a regional area of southern Tasmania, so all those people appreciated being brought together.

In my home state of Tasmania, the theme for National Seniors Week this year was ‘A colourful week to be grey’ and it was officially held between 1 and 7 October. The 2006 census registered 97,051 people in Tasmania who were 60 years of age or older. That amounted to a bit over 20 per cent of the state’s population, and I imagine that that figure has increased quite significantly since then. Across Tasmania, there were over 360 events listed for the week and there was something for everyone to participate in. Just some of the events that seniors could partake of included taking a line dancing class, learning about powers of attorney, taking a river cruise, learning how to use a computer, going for a swim, attending a driving seminar and watching a movie. Many events were free, while others were available for a substantially reduced entry fee. I thank all the sponsors of Seniors Week in Tasmania and the Tasmanian government for their support and input into Seniors Week in Tasmania. As I said, I also thank the many and varied organisations that facilitated the event for those seniors.

It is important to note that senior citizens have contributed much to Australia over the course of their lives, and that they are still contributing every day. They have worked hard and paid taxes. They have served the nation at war. They have raised children and in some cases have raised their grandchildren, and they continue to do so. Many have been foster parents. They have made laws in our parliaments and saved lives in our hospitals. They have helped other elderly people who are not as healthy as they are. Many are still active as volunteers, and I note here my own parents, who are in their 80s and who still volunteer two or three days a week in community organisations and an aged-care facility. They are involved in many clubs, choirs and community organisations. I nearly have to make an appointment to catch up with them when I am home. Seniors have done all these things, and continue to do so, because they want to help others and because they know they have something to offer the broader community. And our seniors certainly do have much to offer younger people.

We can all learn a great deal from those who have more life experience than we do. While searching on the internet, I found a quote by Andy Rooney. He said, ‘The best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person.’ How true that is.

Not only can we learn from the more senior members of our community, we should also be inspired by them. For example, in Tasmania we are undergoing local government elections and there is actually someone 81 years of age, an ex-serviceman, standing at this month’s Waratah-Wynyard local government elections. Then we had the World Masters Games in Sydney. The games had a shot-putter who was 100, a sprinter who was 90 and a swimmer who was missing a leg from a shark attack over three decades ago. Canadian Olga Kotelko, aged 90, won both the 100 metre sprint and the shot-put in her age group. Her shot-put was a world record. Olga proudly stated, ‘There was no-one else my age, but it felt really good and I’m quite pleased.’ Australian competitor Carl Herbert, who is 69, decided to walk from Gympie to Sydney as a warm-up for his events. That is 1,100 kilometres. What an inspiring group of people.

Our seniors deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. They often lose much of what they took for granted when they were younger. Their hearing might fade, their vision may deteriorate and they may walk
slower or suffer from Alzheimer’s, dementia or other health problems. Or, indeed, they may be very physically fit and healthy but they may struggle adapting to life once they retire from the workforce. Equally, they may continue to throw themselves into life at full speed by taking up new hobbies or volunteer work. Seniors may have family to help them but sometimes they are completely on their own. Seniors, like any other group, should not be pigeonholed. They are all individuals and should be treated as such. So, what can be done to help the seniors around us? It might just be that you say hello to an elderly person at the letterbox as you are walking down the street. A quick word and a smile just might make their day. You might offer to help around the house or in the garden. Maybe they do not drive any more and need someone to take them to the doctor. It does not have to be a huge gesture. Like most people, they will appreciate whatever you do for them.

We all know that the Rudd government believe in a socially inclusive community and values equally all sectors of the community. As part of this belief, the government are doing everything possible to help the aged community. Firstly, we have recognised the work of the former Howard government in establishing the position of Minister for Ageing. We kept this ministry because it is essential to ensure that our senior citizens get the attention they deserve. We have increased the pension for all categories. This means that it is not only age pensioners who are receiving more. It means people who are seniors, but not yet old enough for the age pension, are getting an increase as part of whichever pension they are on. We have introduced the work bonus for age pensioners who have some form of income. We have introduced the pension supplement, which consists of a variety of payments that were previously paid in quarterly instalments. The pension supplement includes the telephone, utilities and pharmaceutical allowances and the GST supplement and is paid fortnightly. This will obviously help people with their budgeting.

Care of our seniors is an area of great importance and, like all areas of the health system, the aged-care sector is being considered as part of the National Health and Hospital Reform Commission. The Minister for Ageing, the Hon. Justine Elliot, states:

It is important that the health, hospitals and aged care systems work together to meet the care needs of older Australians in an affordable, accessible and sustainable way …

With more than 900,000 older Australians either in residential care or receiving help in their own home, it is essential we have the most efficient and effective system possible. The Rudd government is investing $19 million in an aged-care training package that is designed to create up to 4,600 new places in the aged- and community-care sectors. And, with Australians now having the longest life expectancy in the English-speaking world, we are responding to the challenges of our nation’s ageing population. In my home state of Tasmania, the Bartlett government also recognises the need to give seniors as much support as possible. The state government continues to fund pensioner discounts as part of the new water and sewerage billing process that is underway there.

Our senior citizens are an important part of our life. They have contributed much to our society and we must always remember that. National Seniors Week, as I said, was a chance for the older members of the community to come together, celebrate their lives—(Time expired)
Tonight I would like to speak to the Senate on the issue of family business in Australia. It is a sector to which we do not give sufficient consideration. Family businesses account for 67 per cent of the private business sector in Australia and employ more than half the country’s workforce. They make up the majority of the 1.9 million business owners that the ABS identified in Australia last year. In my home state of Queensland, the top 400 private companies, many family-owned, boast a combined turnover of $12.8 billion and employ 40,000 people. These companies were identified by the 2008 Queensland Business Review survey of private companies. And, globally, family businesses make up 80 per cent of all businesses.

So, whilst we here contend with policy and legislative issues such as climate change, industrial relations, financial products and services, access to credit, and, of course, tax in all its forms, why isn’t the term ‘family business’ constantly on our lips? Firstly because, like so many others, we confuse family business with micro and small business. Even the Australian Institute of Company Directors, in a recent editorial outlining their support for SMEs, went on to talk about ‘small’ family business. I imagine that many senators think of the local corner store, the newsagent or the neighbourhood mechanic when they think of family business, so we wrongly assume that by addressing the needs of small business we are also meeting the needs of family business.

The ABS and the ATO distinguish four categories of business size: microbusinesses, with fewer than five employees; small businesses, with 20 or less; medium businesses, with between 21 and 200 employees; and large businesses, with 200 staff or more. The majority of family firms are in the small to medium category—but not all of them. A significant number are large businesses. But we persist, as Pitcher Partners have pointed out, in assuming that all non-listed entities are SMEs. It is just not true. In fact, Pitcher Partners said they believed that ‘SME’ is one of the most misused terms in financial reporting circles across the globe. For example, the top private company in Queensland in 2008 was Teys Brothers, a family-owned meat processing company, with 2,718 staff. That is not a small business in anyone’s terms.

The Survey of Family Businesses 2009 published recently by KPMG and Family Business Australia further demonstrates that family business is not all small business. True, of the 613 Australian family businesses surveyed, the largest percentage, 36 per cent, had an annual turnover of between $1 million and $5 million. But four per cent had a turnover of between $50 and $100 million. Another three per cent had a turnover of between $100 million and $200 million. And another three per cent had a turnover of more than $200 million. That is 10 per cent of family businesses in Australia turning over more than $50 million a year.

So the first reason we do not hear the needs of family businesses frequently discussed in here is that we do not realise how big they are. The second and related reason is that not a lot of research, which would underpin policymaking, has been done on family businesses, and until recently that suited the owners of these businesses just fine. They are not called private companies for nothing.

In the past 15 or so years, advocacy organisations such as the family business association and academic groups such as the Australian Centre for Family Business at Bond University have begun teasing out the many issues that distinguish family business from
other business, listed and unlisted. And with this growing academic interest has come a growing, and overdue, legitimacy for family business as a discrete sector.

But as Professor Ken Moores and Dr Justin Craig from Bond University pointed out earlier this year, interpreting these research results to influence public policy is still very much in its infancy. And one of the reasons that this research is still in its infancy is the lack of information about the family business sector from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. I would have liked to tell the Senate today exactly how many Australian companies are family businesses, what their aggregated turnover is and how many staff they employ, but those figures are simply not available because the ABS does not collect all the data. Professor Moores and Dr Craig point out that the lack of quantitative data and strong theoretical research foundations have constrained the family business sector in its representations to decision makers. However, this weakness is now being overcome and as policymakers we must start to listen to the continuum of family businesses—small, medium and large.

Family businesses have some problems in common. Separating the family from the business, sibling rivalry and succession planning are just a few of them. But family businesses have many common strengths, including conservative borrowing patterns, flexible planning and structures, inbuilt experience and resilience. So, somewhat paradoxically, the third reason that we do not often talk of family business in this place is their quietly spectacular success as business entities. But this is the very reason we must listen. In the current economic climate, we ignore the lessons from successful business to our own detriment.

Big and small, family businesses generally outperform their non-family counterparts on a variety of measures. According to the 2009 KPMG survey, family businesses accumulate and preserve business assets and wealth in a different manner from their non-family counterparts. The family business model—a conservative approach with a long-term focus—is ideally suited to weathering economic downturns. In fact, the most important distinction between family business and other business is the notion of ‘patient capital’. Family businesses are not just about the short term, the quick buck, or fiddling with the share price to look good on June 30. Seventy-one per cent of the family businesses surveyed said the current downturn had had no impact, or only a small impact, on their business. More than half had not decreased staff and two-thirds had not experienced any changes to their terms of credit from banks and other financiers. Surprisingly, 25 per cent said that they were paying lower interest rates than a year ago.

But when it came to the Rudd government’s economic stimulus package, family businesses were less than impressed with this knee-jerk spending. Forty-four per cent thought the package would be positive short term, with 56 per cent neutral or negative. Long term—that is, looking five years out, as this group is wont to do—91 per cent of this group who actually understand economic conservatism think the results of Labor’s stimulus package will be neutral or negative. One retail business in a focus group identified the distortion inherent in the stimulus spending: ‘It throws into serious question what we do with our budget for the next autumn and winter because it has been a total distortion.’ This company is now budgeting on 85 per cent of 2009 sales in 2010.

There was one issue on which family businesses agreed with all other business—the stultifying effect of state imposed payroll tax on employment. Thirty-five per cent said
they would hire at least one extra full-time employee if payroll tax was abolished.

So, in summary, as the KPMG survey notes:
It is no exaggeration to suggest that family business is a vital contributor to the overall health of the national economy.
In my view, they are not just contributors; they should be national role models. We, as policymakers, must start listening to family business.

South Australia

Senator FARRELL (South Australia) (7.14 pm)—I had the good fortune on the weekend to hear the South Australian Treasurer, Kevin Foley, speak at the state ALP convention. He made the very salient point that not only is Australia the best-performing economy in the OECD but South Australia, my home state, is the best-performing state in the country. While the Adelaide Crows may not have won this year’s AFL premiership—nor for that matter did Port Adelaide—South Australia has delivered impressive results this year in growth and economic development.

As one of South Australia’s Labor senators, it gives me a great sense of pride to place my state under the spotlight because, despite the tough times our nation is currently experiencing, South Australia, led by the Rann Labor government, is leading the nation. Adelaide and South Australia have it all. Where else in Australia can you buy a three-bedroom town house within the city square mile for less than $400,000, have an airport 10 minutes from the CBD—you cannot have that in Hobart—and enjoy an old-fashioned counter meal in a city pub for less than $5 or dine out at a typical restaurant for $25 a head?

Senator McEwen interjecting—
way or in the pipeline. I will repeat that for you, Mr Acting Deputy President: $40 billion worth of projects either underway or in the pipeline.

The Rann Labor government was the first in Australia to draft a state strategic plan for economic and population growth, prosperity and wellbeing, with targets that were set over a decade and some stretching through to 2050. It initially contained 84 clearly defined targets covering areas as diverse as business competitiveness, sustainability, innovation and fostering closer communities. Last year, when the Rann government revised the plan and lifted the number of targets to 98, audits conducted by an independent and expert committee reported that the state had achieved, or was on track to achieve, more than 50 per cent of its targets.

South Australia’s economic strength is underpinned by the mining and defence industries, which in recent years have undergone unprecedented expansion. When the Rann Labor government came to office in 2002, South Australia had four operating mines. This year the number will reach double figures and by the end of next year it is expected to reach 16. Mineral exports for the year to February 2009 totalled $3.1 billion, which is around 30 per cent of our state’s total merchandise exports. The mining industry is not only delivering jobs and economic benefits to centres where these resources are located but creating opportunities in the engineering and science sectors, for tradespeople and for service industries in metropolitan Adelaide and regional areas.

The government has also fought aggressively to establish South Australia as the nation’s undisputed defence hub—including among the contracts it has won the $8 billion Air Warfare Destroyer project—while the federal government’s recently released defence white paper has confirmed that 12 next-generation submarines will also be constructed in Adelaide. That contract, believed to be worth $30 billion, represents the biggest defence contract ever awarded in Australia and helps to ensure the industry’s long-term future in South Australia.

South Australia is also taking a leadership role in the crucial area of renewable energy and currently has around half of Australia’s wind power capacity and about 25 per cent of the nation’s grid-connected domestic solar photovoltaic capacity. Since 2002, the state has attracted more than 90 per cent of the national investment in exploration and proof-of-concept projects for geothermal energy—or ‘hot rocks’, as it is known. I was up there at Geodynamics a couple of weeks ago. Geoscience Australia estimates that if just one per cent of Australia’s geothermal energy were extracted it would equate to 26,000 times the nation’s total energy consumption.

South Australia in 2007 became the world’s third jurisdiction to pass dedicated climate change legislation and has a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 60 per cent of 1990 levels by 2050. The state is also on target to reach its goal of generating 20 per cent of its power needs from renewable green sources by 2014. Of course, the new desalination plant will be entirely provided for by that energy. As a result, the South Australian government has set itself an even more ambitious target of sourcing 33 per cent of its power from renewable sources by 2020. Even by global standards that is a bold aim, particularly in a state that does not have any hydroelectricity.

Earlier this year, South Australia became the first Australian state to ban the single-use plastic carry bags issued by retail outlets. This ban will remove about 400 million plastic bags a year from the state’s waste and litter streams. South Australia recently launched Australia’s first and only television
and computer monitor glass recycling plant, which each year is expected to recycle glass from more than 300,000 TV and computer screens.

South Australia will spend a record $11.4 billion in infrastructure projects over the next four years, with this expenditure supporting an estimated 14,000 jobs over that period. South Australia is rolling out a range of projects, many of which are supported by the Rudd government. This includes a doubling of the capacity of the new $1.8 billion desalination plant to provide Adelaide with up to half its annual water use and assure its water supply for decades. South Australia leads the nation by currently recycling around 30 per cent of its waste water, with that level to be increased to 45 per cent by 2013. In conjunction with the federal government, South Australia is embarking on a 10-year, $610 million Murray Futures program to help protect the Murray River.

The Rudd government is also partnering with the Rann government in the upgrade and expansion of the state’s public transport networks, including the re-sleepering and electrification of the Gawler rail line and the extension of the Seaford line. The state government has also begun work on the extension of the tramline from the city proper to the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. In addition, its health services have received $200 million from the Rudd government to build a new health and medical research facility adjacent to the proposed new $1.7 billion Royal Adelaide Hospital. The new centre will house up to 675 researchers and become an integral part of this world-class health precinct. Of course, Adelaide is also famous for its festival of arts. It is little wonder that the Economist has voted it one of the world’s most liveable cities, offering a high quality of life and the lowest cost of living of all Australian mainland capitals.

Canberra

Senator HUMPHRIES (Australian Capital Territory) (7.25 pm)—I rise tonight to speak about an issue which is vexing many people who live in the national capital at the present time—that is, the toll which the Rudd Labor government has taken on the fabric and the direction of this beautiful city in the course of the less than two years that it has been in office as well as what could be fairly described as a measure of disdain shown by the Labor Party towards the Canberra community.

I have mentioned already several times in this chamber that Canberra is very obviously a carefully planned city. It is a city in which the design and the layout of its buildings and the approach to its future and its planning have been very much a matter of careful and considered human endeavour and spirit. The look and feel of the city is a constant subject of public discussion and debate—to no-one more so than the people who live here. Our newest visitors, the federal Labor government, are attempting to undo, in my view, the craftsmanship of many who have in the past contributed to the quality of life in this city and the way in which the city shapes and offers a reflection on the direction of Australia as a whole. I am concerned about the way in which costcutting and the avoidance of expenditure in this city is taking a toll on the quality of life and fabric of the city. If this government is nation building, perhaps its building licence needs to be rescinded.

Last month the Department of Defence announced that the annual ‘Beating the Retreat’ ceremony at Duntroon has been called off. This is nothing short of an insult to the local community and the stymieing of a very long and proud tradition in the Canberra community. This is an example of not just rampant costcutting but also disdain, even contempt, for the people who most benefit
from that institution—that is, the people of Canberra. This is, unfortunately, only one example of what we have seen under this government. Bodies such as the National Library, the National Museum, Questacon, the National Gallery of Australia, the Australian War Memorial and others have had to cope with very severe cuts to the size of their programs. All of those institutions have had to reduce the scope or the scale of what they do. Each of those institutions has been forced to reduce the level of their engagement with the Australian public—not just in Canberra but in outreach programs as well—in order to cope in the first year of this government’s tenure with the ill-conceived and, I am pleased to say, now partly abandoned efficiency dividend.

We learnt in the last sittings, for example, that Questacon, which quite evidently is a facility designed to provide children especially with an introduction to science, has had to cancel its birthday program celebrations and its program where children could stay overnight. In the school holiday period the programs at this institution were very popular, but now they are going out the door and another opportunity for children to interact with this important institution is disappearing. When a nation is led by a party which trumpets its belief in an ‘education revolution’ it is very disappointing to see opportunities for kids to learn more about science reduced. That is hardly what we were told we could expect from a Labor Party which so often proclaims its affection for and special commitment to the national capital.

We have seen severe cuts to the National Capital Authority, another indication of how badly this city has fared under Labor. It said before the election that it would make efficiencies by cancelling the overlap in the planning of areas of the city between the National Capital Authority and the ACT Planning and Land Authority. But in fact what it has done has been to cut much more than that, with the result that there have been decreases in services and attractions. Things like access to Blundell’s Cottage, tours of Anzac Parade’s major monuments and memorials and the operating hours of the Carillon have all been reduced significantly; and all of us are the poorer for it.

What is more concerning, perhaps, is the cuts to the capacity of the NCA to maintain the high standard of planning and level of provision for services and building maintenance in the national capital. In February last year, $46.3 million was taken from the budget for the upgrade of Constitution Avenue. That is a very large cut to make in any one city or community. In cutting the Griffin Legacy funding, the federal government halted much needed infrastructure work for Canberra, thereby negating the chance for jobs to be created, and it also reduced the capacity of the territory to grow and develop the Griffin Legacy, which so many subscribe to, including people in this place. Schools in the ACT have fared very badly, in spite of the rhetoric about an education revolution. Of course, we have the much vaunted computers in schools program, which has been affected here as much as anywhere else in Australia. In July, the federal government announced that 537 science laboratories and language learning centres were to be built or refurbished under the so-called education revolution. The ACT community expectantly put in bids for that funding. Despite the fact that more than $800 million was spent around the country in every state and territory, not one cent came to the Australian Capital Territory—not one. We are expected to believe, if we are to listen to what the minister said in estimates, that the 1,357 applications received from every state and territory in Australia were all superior to even the best submission made by an ACT school.
This is not the only area in which the ACT has been overlooked. Recently, $132 million of funding for projects under the Rudd government’s Jobs Fund was announced. Again, the only state or territory not to receive one cent of funding in that program was the ACT. In the latest round of allocations from the federal government there was a reduction in the amount provided for beds in the aged-care approvals round. As many beds have now been lost in the ACT this year as were lost for the whole of New South Wales and more than South Australia and Tasmania combined. The Rudd government touts itself as being a family-friendly government, yet so much of what has been cut from the ACT affects directly the quality of life of people in Canberra. Canberra is in need of a little more attention than it is getting from this government—a little more attention to the kind of real, local solutions which are necessary to keep a community like Canberra on its feet.

I contrast the performance of almost two years under the Rudd government to how well the ACT fared previously, under the coalition government. I will mention just a few of the many institutions and adornments that were added to this city. The National Museum of Australia of course was the most significant, but the Old Parliament House Gardens upgrade, the building of Commonwealth Place and Reconciliation Place, the national flag display, RG Menzies Walk, the National Emergency Services Memorial, Magna Carta Place, the Australian of the Year Walk, the Women’s Suffrage Commemorative Fountain and, most recently, the building of the National Portrait Gallery all attest to the commitment to the city of the former coalition government. What a pity that those who talk the talk cannot match the performance of that former government.

The legacy of the Liberal Party in this city is very proud. I am very concerned about the way in which Canberra is going under this government. There appears to be a quite concerted effort to reduce the investment that is made in this city and its institutions. When people make the flippant remarks ‘Canberra decided this’ or ‘Canberra has stopped that from happening,’ I remind them that the ACT returns just four representatives of the 225 or so members of the federal parliament. By contrast, a city like Brisbane returns something like 24 senators and members to the federal parliament. So why, when a decision is made by the federal government, is it not equally true to say that Brisbane has made the decision—or, equally, Melbourne, Sydney or Perth? It would be much truer to say that Melbourne has made the decision than Canberra. In this case, if Canberra were making the decisions, it certainly would not be sustaining the kinds of cuts and the kind of neglect that we have seen in the last 24 months. That is a matter which any government, proud of its national capital, wanting to make it a showcase where the best of Australian endeavour and achievement can be witnessed, ought to reverse.

I call on the government to understand how badly Canberra has fared under its regime and to reverse the decisions it has made to target this city unfairly.

**Economy**

Senator FEENEY (Victoria) (7.35 pm)—This evening I want to talk about Australia’s debt levels. This is a subject which those opposite usually do most of the talking about in the Senate, but I want to make it clear that this is a subject that government senators are not embarrassed about or keen to avoid. In fact, I am very happy to talk about debt because it is a subject on which the Rudd Labor government has a very strong story to tell. It is the story of how the Rudd government, faced with the greatest financial crisis in any of our lifetimes, took prompt and effective
action to stop us sliding into a deep and pro-
longed recession.

Part of that prompt and effective action was the guarantee given to Australia’s banks, and I decided to speak on this subject tonight after reading this morning’s opinion piece in the Melbourne Age by Tim Colebatch, a piece which is critical of the bank guarantee. Tim Colebatch has, unfortunately, penned some words today with which I have to disagree. In particular, I disagree with the dire picture he sought to paint in his article. He suggested that the debt levels of Australia’s banks are now so high that we are in danger of falling into the same situation as Iceland, which, as he says, has indeed been plunged into a deep depression, in fact to the brink of national bankruptcy, which has happened because of the need for Iceland to repay the unsustainable debts that were run up by its private banking sector. That would indeed be an alarming scenario if it were true in Australia, but Tim Colebatch ignores some very significant differences that exist between Iceland’s situation and our own.

According to the Central Bank of Iceland, at the time of the bank crash in Iceland, Icelandic banks owed the equivalent of more than A$80 billion to foreign lenders, or about $250,000 per head of the Icelandic population. An equivalent level of debt in Australia would be about $5.5 trillion. According to Tim Colebatch, Australia’s banks in fact owe $634 billion, or about $28,000 per head. So we can see immediately that the debts owed by Australia’s banks are, in per capita terms, only about 11 per cent of the debts owed by Icelandic banks.

Secondly, and more importantly, is the difference in the regulatory regimes of Australia and Iceland. In 2001 Iceland’s former Liberal government, inspired by the Reagan-Thatcher model of neoliberalism just at the moment in time when it was going out of fashion, completely deregulated its banking sector, with the result that the three private banks, as banks tend to do when they are not properly regulated, engaged in a variety of highly risky practices, incurring debts that they could not support, and that Iceland, a country with only 320,000 people, was not in a position to sustain. The result was the 2008 crisis of confidence in Iceland’s banks, including a run on their British retail banking arms, which in due course sent them all into insololvency. This forced the Icelandic government to nationalise the banks and take over their debts, which Iceland will be paying off for decades to come.

Now, with due respect to Tim Colebatch, nothing like this could be remotely possible in Australia. We have one of the safest and best regulated banking systems in the world. Our banking system has stood the test of the recent global financial crisis better than virtually any other banking sector in the world. According to Global Finance, Australia’s big four banks all rank in the world’s top 20 safest banks, based on their total assets and long-term credit ratings as assessed by Moody’s and Standard and Poor’s. There is simply no possibility that there will be a run on any one of our banks or that they will be allowed to take on unsustainable levels of debt.

Tim Colebatch’s fear that the government guarantee issued to Australian banks as a result of the global financial crisis will create the danger that the taxpayer will at some point become responsible for the total foreign debts of these banks is far-fetched. Even at the depth of the crisis at the end of last year, there was no danger of Australian banks getting into difficulties. The guarantee was a necessary boost to confidence, but the very fact that it succeeded in boosting confidence made it extremely unlikely that the guarantee would ever be required.
So I disagree with Tim Colebatch’s criticism of the Treasury Secretary, Dr Ken Henry, who gave an optimistic assessment of Australia’s economic position in his speech in Brisbane last week. Let me repeat what Dr Henry said:

The Australian economy has just demonstrated to the rest of the world that, for some time now, it has quite possibly been the best governed, most flexible, most resilient of all industrialised countries.

Tim Colebatch quotes those lines disparagingly, but I quote them with approval. They are correct and they should be a great source of pride for us all. I hope senators opposite would also approve of Dr Henry’s sentiments, because, of course, as Dr Henry was careful to say, Australia’s good fortune in having a well-governed, flexible and resilient economy has existed ‘for some time now’. It did not begin in November 2007. It began with the economic reforms of the Hawke and Keating governments, which received bipartisan support. It has continued since, and it continues today in the policies and the economic management credentials of the Rudd Labor government.

I hope that senators opposite would share in the pleasure that we on this side feel in knowing that Australia has been spared the worst of the global recession—a recession that has gripped most of the world since the end of last year. We have had only one quarter of negative growth, we have had lower than expected unemployment and we have not had a crisis in our financial system that wiped out the value of the Australian people’s investments and homes. Having said that, it is important to note that we did not escape the worst effects of the global recession merely by relying on the inherent strength of our economy. We did it by virtue of the bold, prompt and appropriate response of the Rudd government, the main elements of which were initially supported by Mr Turnbull and the opposition, although he later lost his nerve and reverted to knee-jerk opposition to everything the government was doing, which has so characterised his leadership. It was the Rudd government’s rapid response—the bank guarantees, the first and second stimulus packages, and the infrastructure projects through which we are now supporting jobs all over Australia—that stopped us following the US, Japan, Europe and others into a grave recession.

It is a pity that senators opposite have chosen to run a cheap and opportunistic scare campaign on deficit spending rather than comprehend and debate rationally the successful economic policies of this government. That way those opposite could have shared in the credit for Australia’s good fortune and current outstanding success. As it is, they have chosen to play the role of spoilers, and the Australian people will make their judgment on that at the appropriate time.

**Iraq: Camp Ashraf**

**Senator MARSHALL** (Victoria) (7.43 pm)—Tonight I rise to condemn the appalling attacks recently launched by Iraqi forces on the unarmed, defenceless residents of Camp Ashraf in Iraq. There continue to be grave concerns in the international community for the safety of the exiled Iranian dissidents living in Camp Ashraf. Camp Ashraf is located 60 kilometres north-east of Baghdad and is home to nearly 3½ thousand exiled Iranian dissidents who were members of the Iranian opposition, the People’s Mujaheddin Organisation of Iran, the PMOI. Many of them have lived in the camp for more than two decades. As opponents of the Iranian regime, they fled their homeland fearing persecution, torture and murder. For years they have opposed the brutal Iranian regime and survived in Iraq mainly due to their usefulness to the former dictator Saddam Hussein.
The name Camp Ashraf tends to conjure up the image of rows of tents and makeshift buildings, but this could not be further from the truth. Ashraf is a fully functioning, developed city that has served its residents’ needs well. The residents of Ashraf have built the city from nothing. When it was founded in 1986, it consisted of a few makeshift buildings in the Iraqi desert. Today, Ashraf is like any other developed city. It houses schools, a university, a hospital, bakeries, shops, sporting facilities and even a zoo. It has a vibrant cultural life and, until now, it has provided safety and security for its people, who have no other home.

When the US-led invasion took place in 2003, the Iranians at Camp Ashraf immediately turned over what weapons they had to the invading forces and willingly cooperated with them. After the invasion and the toppling of Saddam Hussein’s regime, US forces guaranteed the safety of Camp Ashraf’s residents, understanding that forcibly returning them to Iran would likely be a death sentence.

In January this year, the Americans handed over control of Iraq to the new Iraqi government. That transfer of power saw the Iraqi government also take direct responsibility for Camp Ashraf and its residents. When the United States forces withdrew from Camp Ashraf, the US and Iraq signed an agreement that the Iraqi government would guarantee the safety of the Iranians living in Camp Ashraf. That guarantee has now, it seems, been proven worthless.

The Iranians living at Camp Ashraf are classified as protected persons under article 27 of the fourth Geneva convention. On 28 July this year, Iraqi forces attacked the camp and its unarmed residents in a shocking display of violent human rights abuse. Eyewitness accounts and film footage of the attack have highlighted the brutality employed by the Iraqis in this event. Some media reports described the attack as a ‘clash’ between Iraqi security forces and the Iranian exiles. This language suggests that there was an almost even-handed fight. Having seen the film footage of the Iraqi attack on the camp, I find it difficult to understand how this event could be referred to as anything other than a brutal assault on a group of unarmed, defenceless people at the hands of well-armed, aggressive attackers. In a sickening display that harked back to the days of Saddam, the Iraqi forces used batons, chains, water cannons, bulldozers and firearms against the unarmed Iranians at Camp Ashraf. Film footage of the attack clearly shows Iraqi forces driving humvees at high speed into crowds of Iranians desperate to escape injury.

Up to a dozen Iranians were killed in this attack and hundreds were injured. The Iraqi forces took 36 Camp Ashraf residents into custody after the attack and they remained imprisoned with no charges laid against them for 72 days. It was only after two Iraqi court orders to release these detainees followed by a massive international outcry that the Iraqi authorities finally returned them to Camp Ashraf.

The outrage over this has been worldwide, yet there remains no firm commitment from the Iraqi government to ensure the safety and protection of the Iranians in Camp Ashraf. Members of the US congress, the European parliament, Amnesty International, the International Red Cross, Human Rights Watch as well as various churches and religious leaders along with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights have all called for the rights of Camp Ashraf residents, as protected persons under the Geneva convention, to be respected.

It has been suggested by many sources that the attacks on Camp Ashraf are a determined and organised attempt by the Iraqi
government to force the Iranian exiles to return to Iran where they face persecution, torture and possibly death. There appears little doubt that this is indeed the case. The increasingly close relationship between the Shiite-led government in Baghdad and the Shiite regime in Tehran is well documented, and Iraqi government members have spoken openly about the government’s intentions with regard to the Iranians at Camp Ashraf. Indeed, earlier this year, Iraq’s national security adviser, Dr Muwaffaq al-Rubaie, sat for an interview with Iraqi television in which he reportedly said that Iraqi authorities intend to gradually make the continued presence of the Iranian exiles in Camp Ashraf ‘intolerable’.

Iran’s so-called supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, met with Iraqi President Jalal Talabani in late February and left little doubt as to what he expected from the Iraqis. He was quoted as saying:

We await the implementation of our agreement regarding the expulsion of the hypocrites. On 17 June last year, the Iraqi Council of Ministers adopted a directive stating that members of the PMOI will be expelled from Iraq. The extremist regime in Iran has barely contained its delight at the attacks on Camp Ashraf, with senior members of the government, such as the speaker of the Iranian parliament, Ali Larijani, claiming the attack was long overdue. He said:

Although this measure was taken late by Iraq, it is admirable that they have decided to clear Iraq from terrorists.

According to a 4 August 2009 report by Reuters news agency, the regime in Tehran is particularly asking the Iraqi government to arrest and extradite 55 individuals who constitute the leadership of the PMOI at Camp Ashraf. The demand was repeated on August 18 this year by Iran’s foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, who, according to United Press International, asked Baghdad to extradite PMOI members.

I think it is important to note that the PMOI are a significant member of the wider coalition known as the National Council of Resistance in Iran—the NCRI. The Paris based NCRI have played a crucial role in exposing details of Iran’s secret nuclear programs. In this respect alone, they have performed an enormous service for the world. Their exposure of Iran’s secret nuclear programs has been hugely important in the struggle to ensure that Iran never acquires nuclear weapons. The West needs to recognise the importance of these acts. More importantly, we need to recognise that the exposure of these secrets has almost certainly further infuriated the regime in Tehran, almost guaranteeing that PMOI members returned to Iran would be subject to the most extreme persecution.

As a party to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Australia has a moral responsibility to help ensure the protection of the Iranians living at Camp Ashraf. Australia, when it joined the so-called coalition of the willing, took on a responsibility to the Iraqi people and to those exiled Iranians living in Iraq. Australia and the US, along with the international community, must press the Iraqi government to respect the human rights of exiled Iranian dissidents and to ensure that they return to Iran only when their safety and human rights have been guaranteed. Given the fact that it is impossible to fully trust the current regime in Tehran, the only circumstances under which a safe return to Iran could take place would be after a truly democratic government has come to power.

The silence of the Obama administration on this issue is particularly disturbing. The United States made specific guarantees of safety and protection to the Iranians at Camp Ashraf, and a failure to follow through on
those guarantees would be a grave betrayal of the Iranians that would likely end in further and even greater bloodshed. At the very least, the US forces remaining in Iraq must ensure that United Nations human rights monitors and representatives of the International Red Cross are allowed access to Camp Ashraf in order to ensure the safety of its residents until their final status can be established. The brutal and violent repression of Iranian protesters in the aftermath of Iran’s 12 June elections is just the latest example of the lengths that that country’s extremist regime will go to in order to maintain its grip on power. There can be no doubt that the forced return of these exiled Iranian dissidents will put them at direct risk of persecution, torture and murder.

**Battle of Fromelles**

**Senator MARK BISHOP** (Western Australia) (7.53 pm)—I have spoken many times on adjournment about the missing Australian diggers at Fromelles in northern France. It has been a story with many chapters. I am pleased to have been able to assist in getting the previous government to get on with the task many years ago. From the time Mr Englezos contacted my office seeking help, right through to the present, it has been a wonderful, wonderful story. Now, all has been revealed, except the identity of those 250 bodies recovered. For those listening and who may have missed the media coverage, I recommend that they log onto www.cwgc.org. That is the website for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in London, which is the agency that has the responsibility for the recovery and the construction of the new cemetery on our behalf. The Department of Defence in Australia also has an informative site. On this site, relatives can register for DNA matching.

Tonight I thought it would be useful to issue another chapter in the recovery of the missing at Fromelles. The 250 bodies from the six mass graves at Pheasant Wood have all now been exhumed. This is considerably fewer than the 400 originally expected—but the proportion of Australians, it appears, may be much higher. These soldiers have lain there since they were interred by the German army in late July 1916. The pits have been filled in and resown to pasture. Eventually, the site, which was donated by the owner, will become a commemorative site. It will be duly marked with a monument—and I understand planning is going on for a ceremonial event. Australian, British and French governments will participate in that ceremonial event. I also understand that it is considered appropriate that the German government be invited to participate. It is fitting, given the respect and care taken in the burial of these men so long ago.

Operating in parallel with the recovery, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is constructing a new cemetery close to Pheasant Wood. It will be near the village church and in line of sight. It is also in sight of the battlefield where almost 2,000 Australians lost their lives on 19 July 1916.

At present, the bodies recovered have been sampled for DNA testing purposes. They are in storage awaiting reburial. These samples will be analysed at LGC forensic laboratories in the United Kingdom. DNA samples considered viable—which is estimated at better than 75 per cent—will then be matched using samples provided by relatives. I understand that some identifications have been made from anthropological evidence found. First, this might comprise artefacts, of which there are many. For example, badges, personal belongings and remnants of uniforms help target likely identities. Fortunately, we have a list compiled from Red Cross records of those thought to be buried at that time by the German army. In some cases, there are dental records which are...
quite conclusive. For others, physical features such as height also narrow the task. The immature finger knuckles of one confirm an age of just 15. DNA, while difficult, is the final test—made easier if the sample is from the female line. We can only hope that this process, which is extraordinarily time consuming, will eventually reveal the identity of a greater number of men.

However, it is likely that, after all this time, some or many may remain unidentified. There may be no matches from living relatives or the DNA may be inadequate. As has been standard practice over time, those not identified will be marked by a headstone engraved ‘Known only to God’. I am advised that, as the cemetery becomes available, burials will commence with due ceremony until 19 July next year. At this time, the cemetery will be formally dedicated. Those whose identities become known over time will have their anonymous headstones replaced. Their names will be inscribed, as well as a family message—which was also the custom of the time. This, no doubt, will be a momentous day for all those who have followed this story over the last few years. No doubt, the DNA testing process will not be completed by that time. As has been the case with other discoveries, headstones will be replaced as identities become known over time. There will be many more stories of families being reunited with their deceased great uncles, grandfathers and great grandfathers.

The story of the missing at Fromelles has captured the imagination of many Australians. Just as interesting has been the story behind the story. The research, which has been conducted in Munich and Geneva in particular, has shown just how extensive the records are, especially those made by the German army. It is unfortunate, however, that so much was lost in London and Germany during the fires caused by bombing through World War II. In fact, as far as Fromelles is concerned, we are very lucky that Captain Mills was there. Captain Mills was an Australian POW in Germany at the time. After the armistice, he collected the particular records made for those thought to be buried at Fromelles. Otherwise, it seems verification may have been at least very difficult but, more likely, almost impossible.

In conclusion, I again congratulate those who have worked so hard to bring this project to fruition. I am certainly very pleased to have been able to assist, particularly in the earlier stages—simply by supporting the efforts in this place and by keeping the Howard government up to the mark from time to time. I am sure there will be more to report in due course, and I hope that those listening and those who have an interest will log onto the websites that I mentioned and discover more for themselves.

Australian Republican Movement

Senator McEWEN (South Australia) (8.00 pm)—It has been more than 14 years since Prime Minister Paul Keating made his republic speech—a speech that epitomised what many Australians were already thinking: it was time for the nation to assert itself, sever its ties with the monarchy and have a constitution that embraced and reflected Australia’s independence. Of course, we have in Prime Minister Kevin Rudd another Prime Minister who is a supporter of a republic—and indeed the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Malcolm Turnbull also supports a republic. I, too, firmly believe that it is time once again for us to seriously reconsider the idea of an Australian republic, a republic where we are able to stand up and revel in our independence, a republic where a resident of our nation rules our nation and a republic where Australia is free to shape its own future.

I am a member of the Australian Republican Movement. The slogan for the ARM,
‘There is no time like the present to shape the future,’ is particularly relevant to today’s society. An Australian republic is ultimately about securing both the immediate and the ongoing future identity of the country. It is about our nation finally having its own characteristics and its own place in the world. I have the greatest respect for Australia’s Governor-General, as I do for the state governors, and I have the greatest respect for the offices they hold. But I want to have an Australian President. I want an Australian head of state and I want to see a bill passed through this House that does not require royal assent. If we become a republic, Australia could have a constitution that reflects the sovereignty of the Australian people, and our children would grow up knowing that they could one day hold the highest office and that that office would not be a subset of a foreign nation.

The typical Australian value that we, mostly, live by has always been ‘a fair go’. In fact, in a Roy Morgan survey in the lead-up to Australia Day 2007, 91 per cent of voters participating in the survey voted ‘a fair go’ as their No. 1 Australian value. An Australian republic would enable us to further embrace egalitarian ways and to advance our ideals of mateship and a fair go. It will enable us to build on our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. Rather than being identified as a quasi-British nation, we would be able to celebrate our multiculturalism and immigrant heritage to forge a new national identity, one which recognises our past yet wholly embraces our future.

A republic for this nation would enable us to once and for all truly acknowledge our historic beginnings. Presently, we choose to recognise the prior ownership of this land by the Indigenous people when it suits us. As a republic, we would have the opportunity to redefine the relationship between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians. It would be a chance for us to formally recognise the prior ownership, the special status and the unique cultural identity of our country’s origins. Indeed, our Prime Minister has already taken a great step in building the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with last year’s apology to the stolen generation. A republic would give Australia a chance to move towards even greater reconciliation with our Indigenous sisters and brothers.

In 1996 former chair of ATSIC, Aboriginal community leader and well-known South Australian, Dr Lowitja O’Donoghue, in her take on the constitutional preamble, said:

We seek a united Australia that respects and protects the land and the Indigenous heritage values and the cultures of its peoples and provides justice and equity for all.

In 2009 we still seek those things. We are still awaiting a united Australia where cultures and traditions of our heritage are fostered and valued, and where every single person in the country is treated equally. Of course, a republic will not miraculously make that happen; but it would give us the impetus to do better than we have.

Next week, on 6 November, we will mark the 10-year anniversary of Australia’s last referendum on the republic. The 1999 republic referendum was not only a sad day for me but a classic example of how failure to stand together united behind a common cause with a coherent and consistent message can bring undone the most worthy campaign. It was also an entirely democratic decision and followed the Australian tradition of being wary of any changes to the Constitution.

While back in 1999, Australians had a chance to see real change, unfortunately the referendum saw 55 per cent of Australians vote against the question they were asked: vote yes or no to a proposed law to alter the...
Constitution to establish the Commonwealth of Australia as a republic with the Queen and Governor-General being replaced by a President appointed by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Commonwealth parliament. Interestingly, in my state of South Australia, which followed the national trend and voted no to the question, three federal electorates voted yes—the electorates of Adelaide, Boothby and Sturt, which at the time were all held by Liberal members of parliament, which indicates that the republic issue is a bipartisan and not one determined by which party you belong to.

In the 10 years since the referendum, there have been plebiscites, large community conferences, Senate inquiries and parliamentary groups formed to consider the idea of an Australian republic. The idea, though, seems somewhat stuck, and there is not much really happening to progress the idea of the republic at the moment. However, amongst many of us the passion for a republic is still there. Over the past 10 years the disappointment of the result of the 1999 referendum has somewhat lessened, but those of us who support a republic will not forget, and we will not stop campaigning for it.

In 2009—although it is possibly a bit late for this year—we are perhaps in an even better place to become a republic than we were 10 years ago. Many Australians believe that now is the time to finally cut our ties to the monarchy. In a 2008 Nielsen poll, support for a republic remained higher than support for the current arrangements. A poll earlier this year by Essential Research also showed that 52 per cent of Australians support being given the chance to vote on the republic issue again within the next few years. It is now an appropriate time for Australia to herald a new age of respect and inclusion; it is time for us to accept Aboriginal and Indigenous culture as our heritage and our future; and it is time for us to again consider asserting our place as an independent nation.

I mentioned the role of a republic in the context of a national identity. In the past, the majority of our nation’s migrants came from the United Kingdom. We are a nation which has always been seen by the rest of the world as a typically Anglo-Saxon nation, but increasingly we are not. We are seeing ethnic communities grow in cities cross the country. Migrants from Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and so many other countries are an integral part of who we are and they have shaped the nation that we are today. They help us grow our population and give us our new cultural identity, and we should take the opportunity to embrace the multicultural country that Australia has become.

We are a modern, independent nation in nearly all senses, and it does not make sense that we do not have a constitution and a governance system that reflect our independence, our identity and our maturity. I strongly believe that our relationship to the monarchy no longer reflects the fundamental democratic principles that underpin our nation. Our ties to the monarchy do not reflect or demonstrate the truly diverse country that we have become. The Australian Labor Party is committed to engaging the public in a process of ongoing constitutional reform to remove outdated and inappropriate provisions from the Australian Constitution and to modernise our democratic structures. Australia has matured and evolved as a society, and it is time we demonstrated that maturity by for once and all becoming a strong, independent nation—a republic on the world stage.

I would like to conclude my comments tonight by repeating the closing remarks of former Prime Minister Paul Keating in his compelling and memorable 1995 republic speech. He said:
We are all Australians. We share a continent. We share a past, a present and a future. And our Head of State should be one of us.

Senate adjourned at 8.09 pm

DOCUMENTS

Tabling

The following documents were tabled by the Clerk:

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

Civil Aviation Act—Civil Aviation Safety Regulations—Airworthiness Directives—

AD/ERJ 190/24—Ram Air Turbine [F2009L03968]*.

Part—

105—

AD/B727/219—Auxiliary Fuel Tanks [F2009L03938]*.

AD/B727/220—Vertical Stabiliser Kickload Beam Shear Tie and Web Post [F2009L03939]*.

AD/B747/80—Equipment Cooling System E30 Cooling Rack Orifice [F2009L03783]*.

AD/B767/254—Door Mounted Escape Slides and Slide Rafts [F2009L03936]*.

AD/BELL 205/19 Amdt 1—Transmission Support Case – Inspection [F2009L03853]*.

AD/BELL 205/43—Engine Air Inlet Screen – Inspection [F2009L03851]*.

AD/BELL 205/44—Cyclic Control Cylinder Assembly – Inspection of Piston Rods [F2009L03850]*.

AD/BELL 206/100—Main Rotor Blade Retaining Nuts P/N 206-011-119-1 [F2009L03792]*.

AD/BELL 206/101 Amdt 1—Tail Boom to Gearbox Attachment [F2009L03791]*.

AD/BELL 206/103—Tension/Torsion Strap Fitting [F2009L03788]*.

AD/BELL 206/119 Amdt 1—Main Rotor Flight Control System Bolts [F2009L03787]*.

AD/BELL 212/51—Fin To Tail Boom Junction [F2009L03919]*.

AD/BELL 212/56—Tailboom Doubler [F2009L03804]*.

AD/CESSNA 550/3—Cabin Door Frame – Inspection, Modification and Replacement [F2009L03806]*.

AD/CESSNA 550/4 Amdt 1—Main Gear Actuator to Strut Attach Stud – Inspection [F2009L03808]*.

AD/CESSNA 550/5—Elevator and Rudder Trim System – Inspection [F2009L03809]*.

AD/CESSNA 550/8—Nitrogen Bottle Installation – Inspection [F2009L03812]*.

AD/CESSNA 550/11—TKS Proportioning Unit Connections [F2009L03813]*.

AD/CESSNA 550/12—Elevator Trim Take-Off Range Marker [F2009L03814]*.

AD/CESSNA 550/13—Bleed Air Check Valve [F2009L03815]*.

AD/CESSNA 550/17 Amdt 1—Fuel Flow Transmitters [F2009L03816]*.

AD/CESSNA 550/18—Brake Shuttle Valve [F2009L03817]*.

AD/CL-600/2—Elevator Inboard Hinge/Fitting – Inspection and Replacement [F2009L03818]*.

AD/CL-600/4—Auxiliary Power Unit Load Control Valve – Special Check and Adjustment [F2009L03819]*.
AD/CL-600/30—Time Limits and Maintenance Checks [F2009L03823]*.
AD/DHC-8/5 Amdt 1—Fire Bottle Explosive Squib Wiring [F2009L03826]*.
AD/DHC-8/13—Landing Gear Control System [F2009L03827]*.

106—
AD/CON/90 Amdt 1—EQ3 Cylinders – Inspection for Cracks [F2009L03981]*.
AD/PORSCH/E/1—Camshaft Oil Feed Pipes [F2009L03929]*.

107—
AD/PR/1—Pitch Lock Cylinder – Modification [F2009L03932]*.
AD/PR/8—Hub Driving Centre – Modification [F2009L03931]*.
AD/PR/21—Hub Assembly – Inspection of Blade Sockets [F2009L03933]*.

Commissioner of Taxation—Public Rulings—
Product Rulings—
Taxation Determination—Addendum—TD 2009/18.


Fisheries Management Act—
Fisheries Management (Southern Bluefin Tuna Management Plan) Temporary Order 2009 [F2009L04004]*.

Private Health Insurance Act—Private Health Insurance (Benefit Requirements) Amendment Rules 2009 (No. 6) [F2009L04002]*.
Sydney Airport Curfew Act—Dispensation Report 09/09.

* Explanatory statement tabled with legislative instrument.

Tabling
The following government documents were tabled:
Administrative Appeals Tribunal—Report for 2008-09.
Army and Air Force Canteen Service (Frontline Defence Services)—Report for 2008-09.
Attorney-General’s Department—Report for 2008-09.
Australia Business Arts Foundation Ltd—Financial statements for 2008-09.
Australia Council for the Arts (Australia Council)—Report for 2008-09.
Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)—Report for 2008-09.
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research—Report for 2008-09.
Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)—Report for 2008-09.
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)—Report for 2008-09, including Australian Energy Regulator (AER) report for 2008-09.
Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS)—Report for 2008-09.
Statement of corporate intent 2009-10.

CHAMBER
Australian Industrial Relations Commission and Australian Industrial Registry—Report for 2008-09.
Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)—Report for 2008-09.
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority—Report for 2008-09.
Australian Postal Corporation (Australia Post)—Statement of corporate intent 2009-10 to 2011-12.
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)—Report for 2008-09.
Australian Rail Track Corporation Limited (ARTC)—Statement of corporate intent 2009-10.
Australian Reward Investment Alliance (ARIA)—Report for 2008-09, including financial statements for Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme, Public Sector Superannuation Scheme and Public Sector Superannuation Accumulation Plan.
Australian Strategic Policy Institute Limited (ASPI)—Report for 2008-09.
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC)—Report for 2008-09.
Australian War Memorial—Report for 2008-09.
Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation—Report for 2008-09.
Classification Board and Classification Review Board—Reports for 2008-09.
Comcare—Report for 2008-09.
Commissioner for Superannuation (ComSuper)—Report for 2008-09.
Commonwealth Services Delivery Agency (Centrelink)—Report for 2008-09.
Crimes Act 1914—Controlled operations—Report for 2008-09.
Customs Act 1901—Conduct of Customs officers [Managed deliveries]—Report for 2008-09.
Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits Authority (DFRDB)—Report for 2008-09.
Defence Housing Australia—Report for 2008-09.
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs—Report for 2008-09, including Aboriginals Benefit Account report for 2008-09 and financial statements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Account.
Department of Finance and Deregulation—Report for 2008-09, including Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs) report for 2008-09.
Director of National Parks—Report for 2008-09.
Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (EFIC)—Report for 2008-09.
Federal Court of Australia—Report for 2008-09.
Federal Magistrates Court of Australia—Report for 2008-09.
Finance—
Issues from the advances under the annual Appropriation Acts—Report for 2008-09.
Final budget outcome 2008-09—Report by the Treasurer (Mr Swan) and the Minister for Finance and Deregulation (Mr Tanner), September 2009.
Insolvency and Trustee Service Australia—Report for 2008-09.
Migration Act 1958—
Section 91Y—Protection visa processing taking more than 90 days—Report for the period 1 March to 30 June 2009.
Section 440A—Conduct of Refugee Review Tribunal reviews not completed within 90 days—Report for the period 1 March to 30 June 2009.
Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA)—Report for 2008-09.
Military Superannuation and Benefits Board of Trustees—Report for 2008-09, including financial statements for the Military Superannuation and Benefits Fund.
National Native Title Tribunal—Report for 2008-09.
National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority (NOSPSA)—
NOSPSA Board—Report for 2008-09.
Report for 2008-09.
Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General—Report for 2008-09.
Pensions System Board—Report for 2008-09.
Public Lending Right Committee—Report for 2008-09.
Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002—Report pursuant to subsection 16(8).
Reserve Bank of Australia—
Equity and diversity—Report for 2008-09.
Report for 2008-09.
Royal Australian Navy Central Canteens Board (RANCCB)—Report for 2008-09.
Screen Australia—Report for 2008-09.
Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Authority (Seacare)—Report for 2008-09.
Special Broadcasting Service Corporation (SBS)—Report for 2008-09.


Wet Tropics Management Authority—Report for 2008-09, including State of the Wet Tropics report for 2008-09.


Return to Order

Documents were tabled pursuant to the order of the Senate of 26 October 2009 for the production of documents relating to answers to questions on notice Nos 2043 and 2044.
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions were circulated:

Human Services: Hospitality

(Question No. 1806)

Senator Abetz asked the Minister representing the Minister for Human Services, upon notice, on 16 June 2009:

(1) (a) Can an itemised list be provided of how much the department has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007; and (b) of this, how much was spent on alcohol.

(2) For each Minister and any associated parliamentary secretary: (a) can an itemised list be provided of how much each office has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007; and (b) of this, how much was spent on alcohol.

Senator Ludwig—The Minister for Human Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) (a) Expenditure on hospitality between 24 November 2007 and 30 June 2009 totalled $55,283.51 (refer Attachment A).

(b) Answering this question would result in a considerable diversion of resources as the level of analysis required would necessitate recourse to staff located at numerous sites across Australia.

(2) (a) and (b) Expenditure for the Minister on hospitality between 24 November 2007 and 30 June 2009 was nil.

Attachment A

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<td>Catering Stakeholder meeting MELB</td>
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<td>31/03/2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Amount</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>30/05/2008</td>
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<td>Function for Family week - Tasmania</td>
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<td>17/06/2008</td>
<td>Catering for New Norfolk Community Information Sessions</td>
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<td>17/06/2008</td>
<td>Venue hire &amp; catering - Hobart regional office</td>
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<td>CRS Australia - Chamber of commerce breakfast</td>
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<tr>
<td>26/06/2008</td>
<td>Catering &amp; decorations 20th Birthday Woden</td>
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<td>Training room hire &amp; catering Ballarat Community Information Sessions</td>
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<td>Training room hire &amp; catering Bendigo Community Information Sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>30/06/2008</td>
<td>Catering for Community Information Sessions/ PAS to Ingham</td>
<td>342.50</td>
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<td>Babies Expo - CSA ACT office</td>
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<td>Community Information Sessions</td>
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<td>10/07/2008</td>
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<td>Hospitality NAIDOC Cabral Melbourne</td>
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<td>22/07/2008</td>
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<td>Catering for lunch Stakeholder Engagement Hobart</td>
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<td>NAIDOC Celebrations</td>
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<td>31/07/2008</td>
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<td>26/09/2008</td>
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<td>13/10/2008</td>
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<td>Launceston</td>
<td>Purchase for Community Information Sessions</td>
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<td>CRS Australia - employee awards - Food &amp; Beverages</td>
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<td>23/10/2008</td>
<td>Bundaberg Community Information Sessions expenses</td>
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<td>23/10/2008</td>
<td>Caboolture Community Information Sessions Expenses</td>
<td>545.45</td>
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<td>23/10/2008</td>
<td>Catering costs - Cherbourg</td>
<td>109.78</td>
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<td>23/10/2008</td>
<td>Catering for Community Information Sessions - Broome</td>
<td>187.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>23/10/2008</td>
<td>Catering for Community Information Sessions - Derby</td>
<td>55.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/10/2008</td>
<td>Catering for Community Information Sessions - Fitzroy Crossing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/10/2008</td>
<td>Catering for Community Information Sessions - Halls Creek</td>
<td>95.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/10/2008</td>
<td>Catering for Community Information Sessions - Kununurra</td>
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<td>23/10/2008</td>
<td>Hospitality for CSSEG</td>
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<td>27/10/2008</td>
<td>NLF Planning Day 22 Sept 08</td>
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<td>17/11/2008</td>
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<td>21/11/2008</td>
<td>Cool Night Classic-CRS HR 100% Sponsorship</td>
<td>150.00</td>
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<td>27/11/2008</td>
<td>Catering Hobart regional office</td>
<td>177.28</td>
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<tr>
<td>01/12/2008</td>
<td>Catering Hobart regional office</td>
<td>190.28</td>
</tr>
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<td>02/12/2008</td>
<td>CRS Australia - Lunch meeting with Australia Post</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/12/2008</td>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage for NLF and GM Awards</td>
<td>26,468.18</td>
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</table>
Tuesday, 27 October 2009

Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law: Hospitality

(Question No. 1807)

Senator Abetz asked the Minister representing the Minister for Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law, upon notice, on 16 June 2009:

(1) (a) Can an itemised list be provided on how much the department has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007; and (b) of this, how much was spent on alcohol.

(2) For each Minister and any associated parliamentary secretary: (a) can an itemised list be provided of how much each office has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007; and (b) of this, how much was spent on alcohol.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09/12/2008</td>
<td>CRS Australia - employer breakfast</td>
<td>163.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/12/2008</td>
<td>Catering services - Belconnen CSA office</td>
<td>50.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/12/2008</td>
<td>CRS Australia - business breakfast</td>
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<td>18/12/2008</td>
<td>Successful Jobseeker Function - Hobart</td>
<td>797.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>23/12/2008</td>
<td>CRS Australia - Client Christmas party</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/01/2009</td>
<td>CRS Australia - official hospitality Bunbury office</td>
<td>90.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/01/2009</td>
<td>Venue hire &amp; catering Adelaide</td>
<td>431.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/01/2009</td>
<td>Catering Launceston</td>
<td>109.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>15/01/2009</td>
<td>CRS Australia - Open Day - Catering BGO office</td>
<td>80.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>28/01/2009</td>
<td>CRS Australia - Aust Day Lunch, Queensland</td>
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<tr>
<td>30/01/2009</td>
<td>Aust Day celebrations catering Hobart</td>
<td>163.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/02/2009</td>
<td>CRS Australia - Hospitality - Client</td>
<td>41.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>06/02/2009</td>
<td>CRS Australia - Civic Breakfast</td>
<td>31.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>23/02/2009</td>
<td>Maroondah Business Breakfast</td>
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<td>23/03/2009</td>
<td>Biznet Networking Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/04/2009</td>
<td>TRDC Lead.Forum</td>
<td>31.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/04/2009</td>
<td>Marketing TChludil and Employ SA</td>
<td>36.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/04/2009</td>
<td>Community Information Sessions Venue Hire, Catering Melbourne</td>
<td>122.73</td>
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<td>20/04/2009</td>
<td>2009 LCC Annual Cocktail Party</td>
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<td>30/04/2009</td>
<td>Conference catering, hall hire Melbourne</td>
<td>159.09</td>
</tr>
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<td>04/05/2009</td>
<td>Party World, Hobart</td>
<td>292.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/05/2009</td>
<td>Weedong Party Hire, Launceston</td>
<td>108.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>06/05/2009</td>
<td>CRS Australia - TAFE Wagga-Awards</td>
<td>40.91</td>
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<td>13/05/2009</td>
<td>Catering for Community Information Sessions</td>
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<td>14/05/2009</td>
<td>CRS Australia - BEC Dinner</td>
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<td>14/05/2009</td>
<td>CRS Australia - employer meeting/WEPS/Jobs</td>
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<td>Hospitality - Sydney CSA regional office</td>
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<td>28/05/2009</td>
<td>New Starter Info Sessions prior to commencement</td>
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<td>01/06/2009</td>
<td>Catering - Melbourne central office</td>
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<td>03/06/2009</td>
<td>CRS Australia - Chamber of Commerce President Lunch</td>
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<td>23/06/2009</td>
<td>CRS Australia - catering for Employee awards</td>
<td>2,100.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>26/06/2009</td>
<td>Venue hire, catering Albury</td>
<td>159.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/06/2009</td>
<td>CRS Australia - Biznet networking event</td>
<td>27.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/06/2009</td>
<td>CRS Australia - Business Function</td>
<td>40.00</td>
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<td>30/06/2009</td>
<td>No Frills W7165 - Hobart regional office</td>
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<td>30/06/2009</td>
<td>Party World - Hobart regional office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>55,283.51</td>
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</table>

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Senator Sherry—The Minister for Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) For an itemised list of how much the Department of Treasury has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007, please refer to the Treasurer’s response to Senate Question on Notice No. 1788.

(2) There has been no hospitality expenditure for Minister Bowen, who for the period stated was the Assistant Treasurer.

Veterans’ Affairs: Hospitality
(Question No. 1808)

Senator Abetz asked the Minister representing the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs upon notice on 16 June 2009:

(1) (a) Can an itemised list be provided of how much the department has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007; and

(b) of this, how much was spent on alcohol.

(2) For each Minister and any associated parliamentary secretary:

(a) can an itemised list be provided of how much each office has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007; and

(b) of this, how much was spent on alcohol.

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

(1) (a) & (b) The Department of Veterans’ Affairs spent $61,460.53 on hospitality from 24 November 2007 to 16 June 2009. This figure includes the amount listed under part (2). As all hospitality expenditure is recorded by the Department under a single nominal code, it would be resource intensive to provide an itemised list or attempt to identify what proportion of this amount was spent on alcohol.

(2) (a) & (b) The Minister for Veterans’ Affairs spent $2,847.13 on hospitality from 24 November 2007 to 16 June 2009. Details of the expenditure, including the amount spent on alcohol where known, are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Total</th>
<th>(b) Cost of Alcohol</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$289.44</td>
<td>$142.11</td>
<td>13/5/08</td>
<td>Minister’s Office</td>
<td>Brief representatives of key national ex-service organisations on veterans’ issues in the 2008-09 Federal Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parliament House</td>
<td>Congratulate the winners of the Returned &amp; Services League (Queensland Branch) “Girl in a Million” contest</td>
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<tr>
<td>$127.00</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
<td>16/7/08</td>
<td>Minister’s Office</td>
<td>Meet soldier featured on the Anzac Day 2009 poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parliament House</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$64.00</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
<td>19/3/09</td>
<td>Minister’s Office</td>
<td>Identify lessons learned from the building of the British educational visitor centre opened at the Somme in September 2004 with the leader of the campaign group and discuss plans for the Western Front Interpretive Trail with him and a representative of the Imperial War Museum in London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUD 637.54</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
<td>20/4/09</td>
<td>London UK</td>
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</table>
(a) Total cost (b) Cost of Alcohol Date Location Purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUD</th>
<th>Not identified</th>
<th>24/4/09 Amiens, France</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$988.92</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss plans for the Western Front Interpretive Trail with the French Secretary of State for Defence and Veterans’ Affairs and the Australian Ambassador</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUD</th>
<th>$202.85</th>
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<tr>
<td>$740.23</td>
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<td>Brief representatives of key national ex-service organisations on veterans’ issues in the 2009-10 Federal Budget</td>
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**Housing, and Status of Women: Hospitality**

(Question Nos 1809 and 1810)

Senator Abetz asked the Minister representing the Minister for Housing and Minister for the Status of Women, upon notice, on 16 June 2009:

(1) (a) Can an itemised list be provided of how much the department has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007; and (b) of this, how much was spent on alcohol.

(2) For each Minister and any associated parliamentary secretary: (a) can an itemised list be provided of how much each office has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007; and (b) of this, how much was spent on alcohol.

Senator Wong—The Minister for Housing and Minister for the Status of Women has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) (a) The department’s financial system is not configured to provide this level of detail without significant resourcing implications; and (b) Expenditure on alcohol is only able to be approved by Senior Executive Staff of the department on some occasions for official hospitality purposes. The cost of expenditure on alcohol is not recorded separately within the department’s finance system and could not be provided without significant resourcing implications.

(2) This question should be referred to the Department of Finance and Deregulation. The Ministers’ and Parliamentary Secretaries’ offices have no hospitality budget funded by FaHCSIA.

**Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs: Hospitality**

(Question No. 1813)

Senator Abetz asked the Minister representing the Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs, upon notice, on 16 June 2009:

(1) (a) Can an itemised list be provided of how much the department has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007; and (b) of this, how much was spent on alcohol.

(2) For each Minister and any associated parliamentary secretary: (a) can an itemised list be provided of how much each office has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007; and (b) of this, how much was spent on alcohol.

Senator Sherry—The Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) For an itemised list of how much the Department of Treasury has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007, please refer to the Treasurer’s response to Senate Question on Notice No. 1788.

(2) There has been no hospitality expenditure for the Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs’ office.
Treasury: Hospitality
(Question No. 1815)

Senator Abetz asked the Assistant Treasurer, upon notice, on 16 June 2009:

(1) (a) Can an itemised list be provided on how much the department has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007; and (b) of this, how much was spent on alcohol.

(2) For each Minister and any associated parliamentary secretary: (a) can an itemised list be provided of how much each office has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007; and (b) of this, how much was spent on alcohol.

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

(1) For an itemised list of how much the Department of Treasury has spent on hospitality since 24 November 2007, please refer to the Treasurer’s response to Senate Question on Notice No. 1788.

(2) The GST exclusive cost, for Senator Sherry, who for the period stated was the Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>2,222.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alcoholic Beverages</td>
<td>957.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Alcoholic Beverages</td>
<td>29.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage Packages</td>
<td>765.00</td>
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<td>Other Associated Costs</td>
<td>444.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Hospitality Costs</td>
<td>$4,513.57</td>
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Foreign Affairs and Trade: Consultants
(Question Nos 1880 and 1881)

Senator Barnett asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) (a) Since November 2007, what is the total number of: (i) completed, and (ii) ongoing, consultancies in the portfolio/agency; and (b) for each consultancy: (i) who is the consultant, (ii) what is the subject matter, (iii) what are the terms of reference, (iv) what is its duration, (v) what will it cost, and (vi) what is the method of procurement (i.e. open tender, direct source, etc.).

(2) Can copies be provided of all the completed consultancies.

(3) (a) How many consultancies are planned or budgeted for: (i) 2009, and (ii) 2010; (b) have these been published in the Annual Procurement Plan on the AusTender website; if not, why not; and (c) in each case, what is the: (i) subject matter, (ii) duration, (iii) cost, (iv) method of procurement, and (v) name of the consultant if known.

Senator Faulkner—The Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade have provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

(1) All agencies subject to the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 are required to report Australian procurement contracts awarded where the contract value is $10,000 or more on AusTender, the government’s tender and procurement reporting system. From 3 September 2007, departments and agencies have been required to include on AusTender details of those contracts which are consultancies and the reason for the consultancy. The information sought by the honourable Senator in relation to consultancies valued at $10,000 or more will therefore be available on the AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au). Further to this, details of consultancies over $10,000 are also listed in Appendix 11 of the 2007-08 annual report of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (page 316).
To provide details of consultancies valued at less than $10,000 would entail a significant diversion of resources and, in these circumstances, I do not consider the additional work can be justified.

(2) As details of consultancies over the value of $10,000 can be obtained from the AusTender website, to provide the detailed information sought would entail a significant diversion of resources and, in these circumstances, I do not consider the additional work can be justified.

(3) (a) Six (6) consultancy areas are planned for 2009-10 Financial Year; and (b) they have been published in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2009-10 Annual Procurement Plan available on the AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au).

Austrade

(1) All agencies subject to the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 are required to report Australian procurement contracts awarded where the contract value is $10,000 or more on AusTender, the government’s tender and procurement reporting system. From 3 September 2007, departments and agencies have been required to include on AusTender details of those contracts which are consultancies and the reason for the consultancy. The information sought by the honourable Senator in relation to consultancies valued at $10,000 or more will therefore be available on the AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au). Further to this, details of consultancies over $10,000 for 2007-08 and 2008-09 are listed on Austrade’s website (www.austrade.gov.au).

To provide details of consultancies valued at less than $10,000 would entail a significant diversion of resources and, in these circumstances, I do not consider the additional work can be justified.

(2) As details of consultancies over the value of $10,000 can be obtained from the AusTender website, to provide the detailed information sought would entail a significant diversion of resources and, in these circumstances, I do not consider the additional work can be justified.

(3) (a) Austrade has not identified or budgeted for any specific consultancies for the remaining portion of 2009 or for 2010. (b) Austrade has advertised a Financial Management Consultancy and Solutions Panel in its Annual Procurement Plan. The new Panel will cater for ad-hoc consultancies that are yet to be identified but may exceed the tender threshold for conducting an open market approach. Austrade also has other existing Panel arrangements established via open tenders that can be utilised for procuring ad-hoc consultancy services as the need arises. All Austrade Panels have been advertised on AusTender. (c) When the need for a consultancy is identified, Austrade will seek competitive quotes from Panel Suppliers for the provision of the consultancy services. Any consultancy services procured under Panels that exceed $10,000 is advertised on AusTender and published on Austrade’s website (www.austrade.gov.au). A summary is also published in Austrade’s Annual Report.

AusAID

(1) All agencies subject to the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 are required to report Australian procurement contracts awarded where the contract value is $10,000 or more on AusTender, the government’s tender and procurement reporting system. From 3 September 2007, departments and agencies have been required to include on AusTender details of those contracts which are consultancies and the reason for the consultancy. The information sought by the honourable Senator in relation to consultancies valued at $10,000 or more will therefore be available on the AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au). Further to this, details of consultancies over $10,000 are also listed in Appendix G of the 2007-08 annual report of the Australian Agency for International Development (page 274).

To provide details of consultancies valued at less than $10,000 would entail a significant diversion of resources and, in these circumstances, I do not consider the additional work can be justified.
(2) As details of consultancies over the value of $10,000 can be obtained from the AusTender website, to provide the detailed information sought would entail a significant diversion of resources and, in these circumstances, I do not consider the additional work can be justified.

(3) The Australian Agency for International Development lists all likely procurements, including consultancies on its Annual Procurement Plan which is reviewed and updated bi-annually and available on the AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au).

**Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)**

(1) All agencies subject to the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 are required to report Australian procurement contracts awarded where the contract value is $10,000 or more on AusTender, the government’s tender and procurement reporting system. From 3 September 2007, departments and agencies have been required to include on AusTender details of those contracts which are consultancies and the reason for the consultancy. The information sought by the honourable Senator in relation to consultancies valued at $10,000 or more will therefore be available on the AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au).

To provide details of consultancies valued at less than $10,000 would entail a significant diversion of resources and, in these circumstances, I do not consider the additional work can be justified.

(2) Details of consultancies over the value of $10,000 can be obtained from the AusTender website.

(3) ACIAR has no consultancies planned for 2009-10.

**Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (EFIC)**

(1) (a) (i) Six (ii) Three. (b) Details of consultancies valued at more than $10,000 are provided in the following table. To provide details of consultancies valued at less than $10,000 would entail a significant diversion of resources and, in these circumstances, I do not consider the additional work can be justified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultant</th>
<th>Subject matter</th>
<th>Terms of reference</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Cost AUD</th>
<th>Method (open/direct)</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Government Solicitors</td>
<td>Powers and functions of EFIC</td>
<td>Legal advice</td>
<td>August 2008 - June 2009</td>
<td>13,553.00</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative leadership Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Audit</td>
<td>Assessment and review of internal committee</td>
<td>May - August 2008</td>
<td>17,600.00</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blake Dawson Waldron</td>
<td>General legal advice not relating to litigation</td>
<td>Legal advice</td>
<td>November 2007 - April 2008</td>
<td>16,694.00</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blake Dawson Waldron</td>
<td>General legal advice not relating to litigation</td>
<td>Legal advice</td>
<td>May - June 2009</td>
<td>13,041.00</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gildodri Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Trade finance advice service</td>
<td>Systems design and implementation</td>
<td>Maximum period of up to 20 weeks (11 December 2009)</td>
<td>90,000.00</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Climate Change and Water: Consultants**

*(Question No. 1888)*

**Senator Barnett** asked the Minister for Climate Change and Water, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

1. (a) Since November 2007, what is the total number of: (i) completed, and (ii) ongoing, consultancies in the portfolio/agency; and (b) for each consultancy: (i) who is the consultant, (ii) what is the subject matter, (iii) what are the terms of reference, (iv) what is its duration, (v) what will it cost, and (vi) what is the method of procurement (i.e. open tender, direct source, etc.).

2. Can copies be provided of all the completed consultancies.

3. (a) How many consultancies are planned or budgeted for: (i) 2009, and (ii) 2010; (b) have these been published in the Annual Procurement Plan on the AusTender website; if not, why not; and (c) in each case, what is the: (i) subject matter, (ii) duration, (iii) cost, (iv) method of procurement, and (v) name of the consultant if known.

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

1. All agencies subject to the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 are required to report procurement contracts awarded where the contract value is $10,000 or more on AusTender, the government’s tender and procurement reporting system. From 3 September 2007 departments and agencies have been required to include on AusTender details of those contracts which are con-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultant</th>
<th>Subject matter</th>
<th>Terms of reference</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Cost AUD</th>
<th>Method (open/direct)</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Balance Management Group Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Sustainability</td>
<td>Review of CSR/sustainability approach including peer review</td>
<td>Four months</td>
<td>11,440.00</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Waterhouse Coopers</td>
<td>Fraud awareness training</td>
<td>Develop &amp; implement online training course</td>
<td>December 2007 - February 2008</td>
<td>18,425.00</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serendis Executive Coaching</td>
<td>Executive coaching interview program</td>
<td>Business Analysis</td>
<td>2007-2010</td>
<td>67,650.00</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toppesfield Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Trade finance advice</td>
<td>Business Analysis</td>
<td>Maximum period of up to 22 weeks (18 December 2009)</td>
<td>82,500.00</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serendis Executive Coaching</td>
<td>Executive coaching interview program</td>
<td>2009/2010</td>
<td>25,000.00</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) To provide the detailed information sought would entail a significant diversion of resources and, in these circumstances, I do not consider the additional work can be justified.

(3) (a) (i), (ii): One. (b) As a Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 body, EFIC is subject to separate reporting thresholds under the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines. The value of the planned procurements were below these thresholds at the time of publication. (c) Figures for the 2009-10 financial year are provided in the table above.
sultancies and the reason for the consultancy. The information sought by the honourable senator in relation to consultancies valued at $10,000 or more will therefore be available on the AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au), noting that departments have six weeks to report procurement contracts on AusTender.

While AusTender and annual reports contain details of contracts valued at $10,000 or more, I consider that it is an unreasonable diversion of resources for my department to provide details of consultancies valued at less than $10,000.

(2) Details of consultancies over the value of $10,000 can be obtained from the AusTender website.

(3) Details of all planned and budgeted for consultancies have been published in the Department’s Annual Procurement Plan on the AusTender website.

Environment, Heritage and the Arts: Consultants
(Question No. 1889)

Senator Barnett asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) (a) Since November 2007, what is the total number of: (i) completed, and (ii) ongoing, consultancies in the portfolio/agency; and (b) for each consultancy: (i) who is the consultant, (ii) what is the subject matter, (iii) what are the terms of reference, (iv) what is its duration, (v) what will it cost, and (vi) what is the method of procurement (i.e. open tender, direct source, etc.).

(2) Can copies be provided of all the completed consultancies.

(3) (a) How many consultancies are planned or budgeted for: (i) 2009, and (ii) 2010; (b) have these been published in the Annual Procurement Plan on the AusTender website; if not, why not; and (c) in each case, what is the: (i) subject matter, (ii) duration, (iii) cost, (iv) method of procurement, and (v) name of the consultant if known.

Senator Wong—The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) All agencies subject to the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 are required to report procurement contracts awarded where the contract value is $10,000 or more on AusTender, the Australian Government tender and procurement reporting system. From 3 September 2007 departments and agencies have been required to include on AusTender details of those contracts which are consultancies and the reason for the consultancy. The information sought by the honourable member in relation to consultancies valued at $10,000 or more will therefore be available on the AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au), noting that departments have six weeks to report procurement contracts on AusTender.

The department’s Annual Report includes details of consultancies let during the financial year with a value of $10,000 or more and details of the department’s expenditure on both let and ongoing consultancies. The 2007/08 Annual Report is currently available on the department’s website (www.environment.gov.au) and the 2008/09 Annual Report is due to be published by 30 October 2009.

While AusTender and Annual Reports contain details of contracts valued at $10,000 or more, it is considered that it would be an unreasonable diversion of resources for the department to provide details of consultancies valued at less than $10,000.

(2) Details of consultancies over the value of $10,000 can be obtained from the AusTender website.

(3) The department’s Annual Procurement Plan (APP) for 2009-10 has been published on AusTender. Available information on planned or budgeted consultancies is published in the APP.
Attorney-General and Home Affairs: Consultants
(Question Nos 1890 and 1900)

Senator Barnett asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General and the Minister for Home Affairs, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) (a) Since November 2007, what is the total number of: (i) completed, and (ii) ongoing, consultancies in the portfolio/agency; and (b) for each consultancy: (i) who is the consultant, (ii) what is the subject matter, (iii) what are the terms of reference, (iv) what is its duration, (v) what will it cost, and (vi) what is the method of procurement (i.e. open tender, direct source, etc.).

(2) Can copies be provided of all the completed consultancies.

(3) (a) How many consultancies are planned or budgeted for: (i) 2009, and (ii) 2010; (b) have these been published in the Annual Procurement Plan on the AusTender website; if not, why not; and (c) in each case, what is the: (i) subject matter, (ii) duration, (iii) cost, (iv) method of procurement, and (v) name of the consultant if known.

Senator Wong—The Attorney-General and the Minister for Home Affairs have provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) (a) and (b) Detailed information on consultancies since November 2007 has been provided in response to the previous Question on Notice No. 163.

(2) Details of consultancies over the value of $10,000 can be obtained from the AusTender website.

(3) (a) to (c) Detailed information on planned or budgeted consultancies for 2009-10 has been provided in response to the previous Question on Notice No 163.

Human Services: Consultants
(Question No. 1895)

Senator Barnett asked the Minister representing the Minister for Human Services, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) (a) Since November 2007, what is the total number of: (i) completed, and (ii) ongoing, consultancies in the portfolio/agency; and (b) for each consultancy: (i) who is the consultant, (ii) what is the subject matter, (iii) what are the terms of reference, (iv) what is its duration, (v) what will it cost, and (vi) what is the method of procurement (i.e. open tender, direct source, etc.).

(2) Can copies be provided of all the completed consultancies.

(3) (a) How many consultancies are planned or budgeted for: (i) 2009, and (ii) 2010; (b) have these been published in the Annual Procurement Plan on the AusTender website; if not, why not; and (c) in each case, what is the: (i) subject matter, (ii) duration, (iii) cost, (iv) method of procurement, and (v) name of the consultant if known.

Senator Ludwig—The Minister for Human Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Answering this question would result in a considerable diversion of resources as the level of analysis required would necessitate recourse to staff located at numerous sites across Australia. However, all agencies subject to the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 are required to report procurement contracts awarded where the contract value is $10,000 or more on AusTender, the government’s tender and procurement reporting system.

From 3 September 2007, departments and agencies have been required to include on AusTender details of those contracts which are consultancies and the reason for the consultancy. The informa-
tion sought by the honourable member in relation to consultancies valued at $10,000 or more will therefore be available on the AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au).

(2) Copies of consultancies over the value of $10,000 can be obtained from the AusTender website.

(3) Department of Human Services (excluding CRS Australia)

(a) (i) 2009 - DHS does not have a fixed plan for future year expenditure. Consultancies are considered as the need arises.

(ii) 2010 – DHS does not have a fixed plan for future year expenditure. Consultancies are considered as the need arises.

(b) (iii) Some consultancies have not been published in the Annual Procurement Plan on the AusTender website as they are engaged through services panels already contracted to the agency and the business units within the agency do not always have prior knowledge of their requirements.

(c) —

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Matter</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Procurement Method</th>
<th>Consultant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review of Departments Governance Framework in consultation with stakeholders.</td>
<td>3 Months</td>
<td>$155,000</td>
<td>Open Tender</td>
<td>Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Management Services – IM Card Replacement Project</td>
<td>2.5 Months</td>
<td>$1,450,912</td>
<td>Open Tender</td>
<td>Oakton AA Services Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Plan for Service Delivery Reform</td>
<td>2 Months</td>
<td>$1,093,400</td>
<td>Open Tender</td>
<td>The Boston Consulting Group Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of Services for the Service Desk Improvement Project</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>$225,720</td>
<td>Direct Source</td>
<td>Computware Asia Pacific Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment Facilities/Transaction Subject Matter Expertise – IM Card Replacement</td>
<td>2.5 Months</td>
<td>$175,065</td>
<td>Open Tender</td>
<td>Oakton AA Services Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Department of Human Services - CRS Australia

CRS Australia has budgeted $1,497,000 for consultancies in the 2009-10 financial year. CRS Australia did not publish planned consultancies for 2009-2010 in the Annual Procurement Plan as the majority of budgeted consultancy procurements are not considered significant and will be engaged using existing portfolio consultancy panels as required during 2009-10.

Centrelink

Centrelink does not have a fixed plan for future year expenditure on consultancies. Consultancies are considered as the need arises. There are no consultancies listed on Centrelink’s Annual Procurement Plan as at 13 August 2009.

Medicare Australia

(a) Three (3) consultancy services have been raised by Medicare Australia in financial year 2009–10. In addition, there are four existing consultancy services from previous financial years that still have work to be carried out in financial year 2009-10.

(b) No consultancies were advertised on the Annual Procurement Plan for financial year 2009–10.
(c) Refer to Table below. Six of the seven consultancies mentioned in (3)(a) have been selected utilising existing panel arrangements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Matter</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Procurement Method</th>
<th>Consultant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provision of professional advice to Medicare Australia on request, including optometric practice</td>
<td>11 months</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
<td>Direct Source</td>
<td>Dr Steve Zantos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Diligence Assessment July 2009</td>
<td>5 months</td>
<td>$171,874</td>
<td>Open Tender</td>
<td>Price Waterhouse Cooper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of Legal Consultancy- advice on delegations and officers performing duties in two positions</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>$1,316</td>
<td>Open Tender</td>
<td>Australian Government Solicitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Management consultancy services</td>
<td>22 months</td>
<td>$233,000</td>
<td>Open Tender</td>
<td>KPMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Advice for ICT Procurement</td>
<td>26 months</td>
<td>$337,000</td>
<td>Open Tender</td>
<td>Minter Ellison Lawyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT Procurement Probit Advice</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>$158,000</td>
<td>Open Tender</td>
<td>Walter Turnbull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice on credit EFTPOS or EFTPOS refund functionality</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>$220,000</td>
<td>Open Tender</td>
<td>Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian Hearing
Not applicable.

Prime Minister and Cabinet: Staffing
(Question No. 1910)

Senator Barnett asked the Minister representing the Prime Minister, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) With reference to ministerial staff and departmental liaison officers for each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, since November 2007: (a) how many positions exist; (b) how many staff are employed; (c) how many vacancies exist; (d) what are the levels of these positions; and (e) what is the total cost of staff employed in these respective offices on an annual basis.

(2) Can a breakdown be provided of how many laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) the department provides to the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary.

(3) Are any departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary; if so: (a) how many; and (b) to whom.

(4) (a) How much did the department spend on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(5) For the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary: (a) what was the total amount spent on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(6) For the 2008-09 financial year, how much has the department spent on: (a) the hire of plants, either real or artificial; (b) the maintenance of these plants; (c) water coolers; and (d) television subscriptions.
(7) How many government credit cards does the department currently have on issue.

(8) (a) How many credit cards have been reported lost; and (b) in relation to the credit cards that have been reported lost: (i) how many have been cancelled, (ii) how many remain active, and (iii) what is the potential credit liability from the lost cards that remain active.

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

(1) Departmental Liaison Officers (DLOs): for 1(a), (b) and (d) see the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>No. of staff</th>
<th>Breakdown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SES Band 2, A/g EL2, EL1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Ludwig</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A/g SES Band 1, EL1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Arbib</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>EL1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary Byrne</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>A/g APS6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Includes two DLOs and a Senior Policy Liaison Officer.

2 Includes a DLO and a Cabinet Liaison Officer.

(c) There are no current vacancies for Departmental positions.

(e) Salary bands are set out in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Collective Agreement 2007-2010, available on the Department’s website.

For details of ministerial staff, please refer to table 2(a) in the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Annual Report 2007-08.

(2) The breakdown is as follows as at 9 September 2009:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Laptops</th>
<th>Mobile phones</th>
<th>Blackberries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Ludwig</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Arbib</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary Byrne</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) Includes seconded officers from the Department of Climate Change and the Treasury.

(4) Please refer to the answer to Question on Notice 1784 asked by Senator Abetz on 16 June 2009.

(5) Please refer to the answer to Question on Notice 1784 asked by Senator Abetz on 16 June 2009.

(6) (a) $849.85. (b) Included in hire costs. (c) Nil. (d) $11,496 for departmental Foxtel subscription.

(7) 282 as at 2 July 2009.

(8) (a) Three credit cards were reported lost in 2008-09. (b) (i) All three cards were cancelled. (ii) None. (iii) Not applicable.

Defence

(Question Nos 1916 and 1945)

Senator Barnett asked the Minister for Defence, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) With reference to ministerial staff and departmental liaison officers for each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, since November 2007: (a) how many positions exist; (b) how many staff are employed; (c) how many vacancies exist; (d) what are the levels of these positions; and (e) what is the total cost of staff employed in these respective offices on an annual basis.
(2) Can a breakdown be provided of how many laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) the department provides to the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary.

(3) Are any departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary; if so: (a) how many; and (b) to whom.

(4) (a) How much did the department spend on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(5) For the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary: (a) what was the total amount spent on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(6) For the 2008-09 financial year, how much has the department spent on: (a) the hire of plants, either real or artificial; (b) the maintenance of these plants; (c) water coolers; and (d) television subscriptions.

(7) How many government credit cards does the department currently have on issue.

(8) (a) How many credit cards have been reported lost; and (b) in relation to the credit cards that have been reported lost: (i) how many have been cancelled, (ii) how many remain active, and (iii) what is the potential credit liability from the lost cards that remain active.

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

(1) (a) and (b) The table below provides details on the allocation of Ministerial staff by office as at 2 July 2009, this information was provided to Defence by the Department of Finance and Deregulation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Number of Positions</th>
<th>Number of Staff Employed Against the Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tables below list the allocation of Departmental Liaison Officer (DLO) positions by office and the number of Departmental staff employed against these positions for the specified dates:

**Office - November 2007 – February 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>DLO positions per office and number of staff employed against the positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Science and Personnel</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Procurement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Office – February – June 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>DLO positions per office and number of staff employed against the positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Science and Personnel</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Office – June – July 2009 | DLO positions per office and number of staff employed against the positions
---|---
Minister for Defence | 2
Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science | 1
Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support | 1

(c) and (d) The following table provides details on the number of Ministerial staff vacancies by office as at 2 July 2009, this information was provided to Defence by the Department of Finance and Deregulation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Number of Vacant Positions</th>
<th>Level of Positions within the office*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Minister for Defence | 6 | Principal Adviser x 1  
Senior Adviser 1 (Cabinet) x 1  
Senior Media Adviser x 1  
Adviser x 4  
Assistant Adviser x 3  
Executive Assistant/Office Manager x 1  
Secretary/Administrative Assistant x 1  
Senior Adviser Chief of Staff (Non Cabinet) x 1  
Media Adviser x 1  
Adviser x 2  
Executive Assistant/Office Manager x 1  
Secretary/Administrative Assistant x 1  |
| Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science | 3 | Adviser x 1  
Assistant Adviser x 1  
Executive Assistant/Office Manager x 1  |
| Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support | 1 | Adviser x 1  
Assistant Adviser x 1  
Executive Assistant/Office Manager x 1  |

* The above information does not include electorate staff.

There are no departmental liaison officer vacancies. The levels of the departmental liaison officer positions are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Executive Level Two officer x 1; and Executive Level One officer x 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science</td>
<td>Executive Level One officer x 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support</td>
<td>Executive Level One officer x 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(e) Information relating to the costs of Ministerial staff can be found in the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Annual Report 2007-08 which was tabled on 23 December 2008 and is available on the Department of Finance and Deregulation website at http://www.finance.gov.au.

It would be inappropriate for the Department to provide specific details relating to the actual salary and other remuneration entitlements of certain Departmental staff employed in the Ministers’ offices. However, the estimated annual cost for the departmental liaison officers in each office is as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office – November 2007 – June 2008</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Cost per Level per annum ($m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>0.157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Science and</td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Procurement</td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support</td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Total Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.673</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office – July 2008 – February 2009</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Cost per Level per annum ($m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>0.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Science and</td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Procurement</td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support</td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Total Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.701</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office – February – June 2009</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Cost per Level per annum ($m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>0.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Science and Personnel</td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support</td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Total Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.566</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office – June – July 2009</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Cost per Level per annum ($m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>0.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science</td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support</td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Total Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.566</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures are costed at the top of the range for each classification and include superannuation contributions, departmental liaison officer allowance, leave and long service leave calculations.

(2) Please see the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>5 laptop computers, 4 mobile phones, 13 Blackberrys.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Office Equipment
Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science
2 laptop computers.
2 mobile phones.
10 Blackberrys.
Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support
2 laptop computers.
2 mobile phones.
4 Blackberrys.

(3) (a) and (b) Please see the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Departmental Officers on secondment (pending permanent filling of positions)</th>
<th>Military Escort Officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures do not include the four departmental liaison officers that are currently employed in these offices.

(4) and (5) Please refer to Senate Question on Notice No. 1790 and 1819.

(6) (a) and (b) Please see the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defence*</th>
<th>DMO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plants $125,000 (GST incl.)</td>
<td>$45,762.93 (GST incl.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Defence does not readily report to this level of detail, however, a high level review of known vendors and cost codes has provided an approximate amount.

(c) and (d) Defence – water cooler costs are in the order of approximately $145,000 (GST incl.). Defence – television subscription costs are in the order of approximately $280,000 (GST incl.). Please note that Defence’s and the DMO’s financial systems differ in the way they record transactions and expenses. Defence’s finance systems could only provide a high level review of water cooler and TV subscription expenses and as a result only approximate figures could be given. The DMO’s financial systems do not readily report this level of detail and they are unable to produce approximate figures. This is further complicated by the fact that the DMO has accommodation service agreements with each base where it has a presence. Therefore, there is no cost allocation against these criteria within DMO financial systems. For the DMO to produce figures relating to these expenses would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.

(7) 67,053. This comprises of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of card</th>
<th>Defence</th>
<th>DMO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defence Travel Card</td>
<td>53,912</td>
<td>7,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Purchasing Card</td>
<td>5,501</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59,413</td>
<td>7,640</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(8) (a) A total figure can not be provided as the systems in place are unable to distinguish between lost and stolen cards. In all circumstances where a card has been reported lost or stolen, the card is deactivated and a new card issued. All cards that have been reported lost or stolen are cancelled immediately.

(b) (i) All cards that have been reported lost or stolen are cancelled immediately. (ii) None.
Nil, as no cards remain active after they have been reported lost or stolen.
Foreign Affairs and Trade
(Question Nos 1917 and 1918)

Senator Barnett asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) With reference to ministerial staff and departmental liaison officers for each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, since November 2007: (a) how many positions exist; (b) how many staff are employed; (c) how many vacancies exist; (d) what are the levels of these positions; and (e) what is the total cost of staff employed in these respective offices on an annual basis.

(2) Can a breakdown be provided of how many laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) the department provides to the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary.

(3) Are any departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary; if so: (a) how many; and (b) to whom.

(4) (a) How much did the department spend on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(5) For the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary: (a) what was the total amount spent on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(6) For the 2008-09 financial year, how much has the department spent on: (a) the hire of plants, either real or artificial; (b) the maintenance of these plants; (c) water coolers; and (d) television subscriptions.

(7) How many government credit cards does the department currently have on issue.

(8) (a) How many credit cards have been reported lost; and (b) in relation to the credit cards that have been reported lost: (i) how many have been cancelled, (ii) how many remain active, and (iii) what is the potential credit liability from the lost cards that remain active.

Senator Faulkner—The Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade have provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) Questions relating to ministerial staff employed under the MOP(S) Act should be referred to the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

(a) Minister for Foreign Affairs: there are two Departmental Liaison Officer positions occupied by departmental staff;

Minister for Trade: there is one Departmental Liaison Officer position occupied by departmental staff;

Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs: there is one Departmental Liaison Officer position occupied by departmental staff.

(b) Minister for Foreign Affairs: two departmental staff are employed in the two Departmental Liaison Officer positions.

Minister for Trade: one departmental staff member is employed in the one Departmental Liaison Officer position.

Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs: one departmental staff member is employed in the one Departmental Liaison Officer position.

(c) None.

(d) Minister for Foreign Affairs: the APS levels of departmental staff employed as Departmental Liaison Officers are EL1 and EL2:
Minister for Trade: the APS level of the departmental staff member employed as Departmental Liaison Officer is EL2;

Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs: the APS level of the departmental staff member employed as Departmental Liaison Officer is APS6.

(e) Total Salary Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2008-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Smith’s Office</td>
<td>248,009.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Crean’s Office</td>
<td>168,328.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Kerr’s Office</td>
<td>99,904.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) As at 2 July, the department provides the following number of laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (‘Blackberries’) to MOP(S) Act staff and Departmental Liaison Officers in the Office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFICE</th>
<th>Mr Smith</th>
<th>Mr Crean</th>
<th>Mr Kerr</th>
<th>Mr McMullan</th>
<th>Mr Byrne</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackberry</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) No.

(4) Hospitality has an important facilitative role in the practice of diplomacy and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has long-established instructions on the proper management of representation funds. A comprehensive schedule defines admissible expenditure on representation. This expenditure is primarily intended to facilitate contacts with politicians, government, civic and military officials, business people, journalists, academics and other influential people and organisations in the host country that will assist officers in promoting Australia’s interests and policies and in seeking information that will form the basis of future reporting.

For expenditure to be claimable under the guidelines, activities must be clearly warranted and be of specific value to Australia. All staff are required to account fully and justify their use of the funds. They must maintain written records of purpose, attendees, venue and final costs of each item of expenditure and certify that the criteria for expenditure have been met. These records are maintained on individual files across DFAT’s Australian and overseas network.

(a) At its Canberra head office, eight State and Territory offices and 91 overseas missions, the department spent on hospitality (identified within the department’s financial management information system as representation and entertainment expenditure) (i) $4.067 million in the 2008 calendar year; and (ii) $4.155 million in the 2008-09 financial year.

(b) To provide details of each hospitality event including the date, location, purpose and cost specifically for the purpose of answering this question would be a major task and I am not prepared to authorise the expenditure and effort that would be required.

(5) Questions relating to expenditure by ministerial and parliamentary secretary offices should be referred to the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

(6) (a) & (b) For the 2008-09 financial year, the department spent $0.217m on hire and maintenance of plants in its Canberra head office, eight State and Territory offices and 91 overseas missions.

(c) The department does not report on the cost of water coolers separately in its financial management information system. To collect this information and provide details specifically for the purpose of answering this question would therefore be a major task and I am not prepared to authorise the expenditure and effort that would be required.

(d) For the 2008-09 financial year, the department spent $0.415m on television subscriptions; within this amount:
- $0.029m was spent in Australia; and
- $0.386m was spent at DFAT missions and residences overseas.

(7) As at 2 July 2009, the department had 193 government credit cards on issue.

(8) No departmental credit cards have been reported as lost between 3 December 2007 and 2 July 2009.

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
( Question No. 1923 amended)

Senator Barnett asked the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) With reference to ministerial staff and departmental liaison officers for each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, since November 2007: (a) how many positions exist; (b) how many staff are employed; (c) how many vacancies exist; (d) what are the levels of these positions; and (e) what is the total cost of staff employed in these respective offices on an annual basis.

(2) Can a breakdown be provided of how many laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) the department provides to the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary.

(3) Are any departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary; if so: (a) how many; and (b) to whom.

(4) (a) How much did the department spend on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(5) For the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary; (a) what was the total amount spent on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(6) For the 2008-09 financial year, how much has the department spent on: (a) the hire of plants, either real or artificial; (b) the maintenance of these plants; (c) water coolers; and (d) television subscriptions.

(7) How many government credit cards does the department currently have on issue.

(8) (a) How many credit cards have been reported lost; and (b) in relation to the credit cards that have been reported lost: (i) how many have been cancelled, (ii) how many remain active, and (iii) what is the potential credit liability for the lost cards that remain active.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minister/Parliamentary Secretary</th>
<th>(a) Number of positions as at 2 July 2009*</th>
<th>(b) Number of Staff employed as at 2 July 2009*</th>
<th>(c) Number of vacancies as at 2 July 2009*</th>
<th>(d) Level of positions as at 2 July 2009*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy
Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy

Departmental liaison officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>(a) Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27/05/08</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Meeting with Panel of Experts and Senior Officials from the NBN Taskforce regarding the NBN Project</td>
<td>$808.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/07/08</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Meeting with Panel of Experts and Senior Officials from the NBN Taskforce regarding the NBN Project. The cost of the function was inclusive of food and refreshments.</td>
<td>$3,816.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/10/08</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Hospitality to representatives of the press</td>
<td>$254.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/10/08</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Dinner with Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.</td>
<td>$510.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/10/08</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Hospitality to representatives of the press</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/08</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>NBN Taskforce offered drinks to the Panel of Experts and Specialist Advisers at the close of the Proponent presentations.</td>
<td>$144.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2008-09 financial year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>(a) Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29/07/08</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Meeting with Panel of Experts and Senior Officials from the NBN Taskforce regarding the NBN Project. The cost of the function was inclusive of food and refreshments.</td>
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<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Dinner with Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The above information does not include electorate staff.

(e) Information relating to the costs of Ministerial staff can be found in the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Annual Report 2007-08 which was tabled 23 December 2008 and is available on the Department of Finance and Deregulation website at http://www.finance.gov.au.

Departmental liaison officers total cost is $262,666 pa.

(2) Laptops – 10; Mobile Phones – 3; Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) – 10.

(3) nil

(4) (a) (i) $5,833.62
(ii) $5,447.01
(b) 2008 calendar year
Tuesday, 27 October 2009

Senator Barnett asked the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) With reference to ministerial staff and departmental liaison officers for each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, since November 2007: (a) how many positions exist; (b) how many staff are employed; (c) how many vacancies exist; (d) what are the levels of these positions; and (e) what is the total cost of staff employed in these respective offices on an annual basis.

(2) Can a breakdown be provided of how many laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) the department provides to the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary?

(3) Are any departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary; if so: (a) how many; and (b) to whom.

(4) (a) How much did the department spend on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(5) For the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary: (a) what was the total amount spent on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>(a) Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30/10/08</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Hospitality to representatives of the press</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/08</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>NBN Taskforce offered drinks to the Panel of Experts and Specialist Advisers at the close of the Proponent presentations.</td>
<td>$144.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/01/09</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Secretary’s Liquor cabinet for minor and irregular hospitality</td>
<td>$421.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>(a) Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/02/08</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Catering for CDMA Stakeholder Forum</td>
<td>$721.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/10/08</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Meal with Chair of Regional Telecommunications Independent Review</td>
<td>$216.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>(a) Total Cost</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Catering for CDMA Stakeholder Forum</td>
<td>$721.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/10/08</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Meal with Chair of Regional Telecommunications Independent Review</td>
<td>$216.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(6) (a) Department - $52,626.98, Ministers Office - $3,506.14; (b) nil – included in costs associated with the hire of these plants; (c) Departmental – nil, Ministers Office - $728.00; and (d) $8,008.94

(7) 84 cards are currently issued Department wide.

(8) (a) 2 credit cards have been lost since the formation of the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (05/12/07); (i), (ii) and (iii) nil - all credit cards are cancelled if lost.

Innovation, Industry, Science and Research

(Question No. 1924)

Senator Barnett asked the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) With reference to ministerial staff and departmental liaison officers for each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, since November 2007: (a) how many positions exist; (b) how many staff are employed; (c) how many vacancies exist; (d) what are the levels of these positions; and (e) what is the total cost of staff employed in these respective offices on an annual basis.

(2) Can a breakdown be provided of how many laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) the department provides to the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary?

(3) Are any departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary; if so: (a) how many; and (b) to whom.

(4) (a) How much did the department spend on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(5) For the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary: (a) what was the total amount spent on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
For the 2008-09 financial year, how much has the department spent on: (a) the hire of plants, either real or artificial; (b) the maintenance of these plants; (c) water coolers; and (d) television subscriptions.

How many government credit cards does the department currently have on issue.

(a) How many credit cards have been reported lost; and (b) in relation to the credit cards that have been reported lost: (i) how many have been cancelled, (ii) how many remain active, and (iii) what is the potential credit liability from the lost cards that remain active.

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

(1) Senator Carr

(a) 12
(b) 11
(c) 1
(d) Senior Adviser Chief of Staff (Cabinet) x 1
   Senior Adviser 1 (Cabinet) x 1
   Senior Media Adviser x 1
   Adviser x 3
   Assistant Adviser x 2
   Executive Assistant/Office Manager x 1
   Secretary/Administrative Assistant x 1
   Departmental Liaison Officer EL1 x 2

(e) Total annual cost for the DLO positions is $246,614. Information relating to the costs of Ministerial staff can be found in the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Annual Report 2007-08 which was tabled 23 December 2008 and is available on the Department of Finance and Deregulation website at http://www.finance.gov.au.

Parliamentary Secretary Marles

(a) 3
(b) 2
(c) 1
(d) Assistant Adviser x 1
   Executive Assistant/Office Manager x 1
   Departmental Liaison Officer EL1 x 1

(e) Total annual cost for the DLO positions is $110,947. Information relating to the costs of Ministerial staff can be found in the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Annual Report 2007-08 which was tabled 23 December 2008 and is available on the Department of Finance and Deregulation website at http://www.finance.gov.au.

(2) Minister Carr

12 laptops
11 mobile phones
10 Blackberry handsets.

Please note that eight staff members use their laptops at docking stations in place of desktop PCs.

Parliamentary Secretary Marles
4 laptops
2 mobile phones
2 Blackberry handsets.
Please note that four staff members use their laptops at docking stations in place of desktop PCs.

(3) (a) One.
(b) The Hon Richard Marles MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry.

(4) Please refer to the answer to Parliamentary Question on Notice 1798.

(5) Please refer to the answer to Parliamentary Question on Notice 1798.

(6) (a) and (b) $47,843. The Department was invoiced inclusively for the hire and maintenance of plants, as such separate costs are not able to be identified. The Department is currently canceling all contracts for plant hire and maintenance
(c) $5,117.
(d) $17,120.

(7) The Department has 1247 credit cards on issue.

(8) (a) For the 2008-09 financial year 25 cards were reported as lost
(b) (i) – (iii) Nil.

Environment, Heritage and the Arts

(Question No. 1926)

Senator Barnett asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) With reference to ministerial staff and departmental liaison officers for each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, since November 2007: (a) how many positions exist; (b) how many staff are employed; (c) how many vacancies exist; (d) what are the levels of these positions; and (e) what is the total cost of staff employed in these respective offices on an annual basis.

(2) Can a breakdown be provided of how many laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) the department provides to the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary.

(3) Are any departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary; if so: (a) how many; and (b) to whom.

(4) (a) How much did the department spend on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(5) For the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary: (a) what was the total amount spent on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(6) For the 2008-09 financial year, how much has the department spent on: (a) the hire of plants, either real or artificial; (b) the maintenance of these plants; (c) water coolers; and (d) television subscriptions.

(7) How many government credit cards does the department currently have on issue.

(8) (a) How many credit cards have been reported lost; and (b) in relation to the credit cards that have been reported lost: (i) how many have been cancelled, (ii) how many remain active, and (iii) what is the potential credit liability from the lost cards that remain active.
Senator Wong—The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

1. (a) There are 10 Ministerial staff positions and two Departmental Liaison Officer (DLO) positions in the office of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts.

   (b) There are 10 Ministerial staff and two DLO staff employed.

   (c) There are no ministerial staff or DLO vacancies.

   (d) The levels of ministerial staff positions are:

       Senior Adviser Chief of Staff (Cabinet) x 1
       Senior Adviser 1 (Cabinet) x 1
       Senior media Adviser x 1
       Adviser x 3
       Assistant Adviser x 2
       Executive Assistant/Office Manager x 1
       Secretary/Administrative Assistant x 1

   The levels of DLO staff are:

       Executive Level 1 x 2

   (e) The Department of Finance and Deregulation advises that information relating to the costs of ministerial staff can be found in the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Annual Report 2007-08 which was tabled on 23 December 2008 and is available on the Department of Finance and Deregulation website at [http://www.finance.gov.au](http://www.finance.gov.au).

   The total cost of the provision of DLOs to the Minister’s office for 2008/09 was $246,582.53.

2. The department has provided 12 laptop computers, three mobile phones and 13 personal digital assistant devices to the office of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts.

3. No departmental officers are on secondment to the office of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts.

4. (a) (i) In the 2008 calendar year, the official hospitality spend for the environment, heritage and arts elements of the department was $153,839.88

       (ii) In 2008/09, official hospitality expenses for the environment, heritage and arts elements of the department totalled $154,594.53

   (b) I refer the Honourable Senator to the response provided to Senate Question 1800 from Senator the Hon Eric Abetz for details of dates, locations, purpose and costs.

5. (a) (i) Official hospitality expenses for the Office of the Minister of the Environment, Heritage and the Arts for calendar year 2008 totalled $367.39.

       (ii) Expenses for 2008/09 total $151.57. The 2008/09 expense is related to an event in Paris which was held in 2007/08 but not invoiced until 2008/09.

   (b) I refer the Honourable Senator to the response provided to Senate Question 1800 from Senator the Hon Eric Abetz for details of dates, locations, purpose and costs.

6. During the 2008-09 financial year, the department spent:

   (a) and (b) $74,119.35 on the hire of plants, including the cost of maintenance of these plants

   (c) $11,009.63 on water and water coolers

   (d) $4,036.66 on television subscriptions

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
(7) The department has issued 188 credit cards to staff in the environment, heritage and the arts elements of the department.

(8) (a) Five credit cards have been reported lost

(b) (i) All credit cards reported lost have been cancelled

(ii) No credit cards reported lost remain active

(iii) Not applicable

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

(Question No. 1929)

Senator Barnett asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) With reference to ministerial staff and departmental liaison officers for each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, since November 2007: (a) how many positions exist; (b) how many staff are employed; (c) how many vacancies exist; (d) what are the levels of these positions; and (e) what is the total cost of staff employed in these respective offices on an annual basis.

(2) Can a breakdown be provided of how many laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) the department provides to the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary.

(3) Are any departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary; if so: (a) how many; and (b) to whom.

(4) (a) How much did the department spend on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(5) For the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary: (a) what was the total amount spent on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(6) For the 2008-09 financial year, how much has the department spent on: (a) the hire of plants, either real or artificial; (b) the maintenance of these plants; (c) water coolers; and (d) television subscriptions.

(7) How many government credit cards does the department currently have on issue.

(8) (a) How many credit cards have been reported lost; and (b) in relation to the credit cards that have been reported lost: (i) how many have been cancelled, (ii) how many remain active, and (iii) what is the potential credit liability from the lost cards that remain active.

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

(1) Ministerial staff — (a) 11; (b) 11; (c) one; (d) one Senior Adviser Chief of Staff (Cabinet), one Senior Adviser (Cabinet), one Senior Media Adviser, four Advisers, two Assistant Adviser, one Executive Assistant/Office Manager and one Secretary/Administrative Assistant. Note: While 11 positions have been identified within the minister’s office, one has two individuals employed against it, as the incumbent is presently on leave. This explains the vacancy identified in the response to part 1(c) of this question. Please also note that this information does not include electorate office staff.

Departmental Liaison Officers — (a) two; (b) two; (c) nil; (d) DAFF Band 3 Level 8 (equivalent to Executive Level 2); (e) $452 482.23

(2) 12 laptops, seven mobile phones and 13 blackberries/PDAs.

(3) There are no departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister. There are two officers on leave without pay from the department who are working in the minister’s office under the
Members of Parliament (MOPs) Act. This response does not include officers providing relief arrangements under the Ministers of State Entitlements guidelines.

(4) Refer to tables 1 and 2 (below).

(5) (a) (i) $7,377.74 (ii) $7,775.55; (b) refer to tables 3 and 4 (below).

(6) For the 2008-09 Financial Year DAFF’s expenditure on:

(a) and (b) plant hire and maintenance was $85,119.64 (excl. GST). (c) water coolers and spring water services was $6,307.90 (excl. GST). For a number of the department’s properties, water coolers and spring water services are not required, because they have inbuilt instant boiled/chilled water mixer taps. (d) television subscriptions was $15,780.83 (excl. GST).

(7) 959.

(8) (a) 30; (b)(i) 30, (ii) 0, (iii) N/A.

Table 1: Official hospitality for the department between 1 January 2008 and 31 December 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total cost ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30/01/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - New Zealand Technical Working Group on Animal Health</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1,093.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/02/2008</td>
<td>German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection Delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/02/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Private Forestry Development Committee workshop</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>1,555.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/02/2008</td>
<td>Meeting - National Coordination Committee for Salinity Information</td>
<td>Esperance</td>
<td>491.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/02/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Philippine delegation - Australian Rendering Operations</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>107.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/02/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Australian Animal Welfare Strategy - Work, Sport, Recreation and on Display Working Group</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>953.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/02/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Professor Ross Garnaut</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>100.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/02/2008</td>
<td>Meeting - Consultative Group on Biosecurity Cooperation between Australia and New Zealand</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>802.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/02/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - National Animal Welfare Consultative Committee</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>521.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/02/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - National Rural Advisory Council meeting</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>879.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/02/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Social and Economic National Coordination Committee</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>545.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/02/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Australian Animal Welfare Strategy education and training workshop</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>683.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/02/2008</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments - Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development delegation</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>1,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/02/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Korean National Veterinary and Quarantine Research Service delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/02/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Quarantine and Biosecurity Review Panel</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>391.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/02/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Primary Industries Ministeral Forum (ministers)</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>895.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>28/2/2008</td>
<td>Dinner – Primary Industries Ministeral Forum (heads of Agencies)</td>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>1,252.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/03/2008</td>
<td>Catering - Security Planning and Coordination</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>162.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total cost $(GST inc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/03/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - New Zealand Minister for Economic, Industry and Regional Development</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>800.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/03/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Ukrainian animal health delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>308.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/03/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - state and territory primary industries departments</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>100.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/03/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Project Management Group for the Contaminants in Fertilizer Project - prepare for workshop</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/03/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Saudi Arabian Deputy Minister for Animal Resource Affairs</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/03/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-14/03/2008</td>
<td>Meals – Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
<td>Canberra; Sydney</td>
<td>1,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/03/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Livestock Export Standards Advisory Committee Technical Working Group</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1,169.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/03/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - New Zealand Fisheries – Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>193.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/03/2008</td>
<td>Official dinner - Australian Animal Welfare Strategy Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>1,045.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/03/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Northern Territory meeting on northern illegal foreign fishing</td>
<td>Northern Territory; Canberra</td>
<td>328.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>31/03/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Canadian delegation - imports of Canadian timber</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>208.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>31/03/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Thailand Ministry of Agriculture</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>131.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/04/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - United States Environmental Protection Agency - Collaboration with Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1,355.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-26/04/2008</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments – Australia-China Agricultural Co-operation Agreement delegation</td>
<td>Canberra; Melbourne; Perth; Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>15/04/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - jurisdictional implementation workshop</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<tr>
<td>22/04/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - National Rural Advisory Council meeting</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>822.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>28/04/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>300.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>29/04/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Livestock Export Standards Advisory Committee Technical Working Group</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>807.00</td>
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<td>29/04/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Red Meat Industry representatives - Market Access</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<td>5/05/2008</td>
<td>Official dinner - Animals in the Wild Working Group meeting</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>945.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/05/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Fitzroy Basin Association</td>
<td>Allenstown</td>
<td>600.00</td>
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<td>22/05/2008</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments – Australia-China Agricultural Co-operation Agreement delegation</td>
<td>Canberra; Melbourne; Sydney</td>
<td>2,508.00</td>
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<td>27/05/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Korean delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Event</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Total cost ($)</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/05/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Australian Government Office International De Epizooties (World Organisation for Animal Health)</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>765.97</td>
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<td>31/05/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Northern Australia Quarantine Service - Indonesian delegation</td>
<td>Darwin</td>
<td>44.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/06/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Indian delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-23/06/2008</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments – Australia-China Agricultural Co-operation Agreement delegation</td>
<td>Canberra, Ballarat, Hobart Melbourne, Sydney</td>
<td>2 277.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/06/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - National Biosecurity Committee inaugural meeting</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>2 419.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>16/06/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Yemen delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>300.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>19/06/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development</td>
<td>Canberra, Canberra</td>
<td>170.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>23/06/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Pig Code Working Group</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>917.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>23/06/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Chilean Government delegation - Timber exports and imports</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>117.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/06/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Eritrean Minister for Agriculture</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>421.00</td>
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<td>27/06/2008</td>
<td>Tour National Zoo and Aquarium - Indonesian delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<tr>
<td>30/06/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Board of Wheat Exports Australia</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 199.99</td>
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<td>30/06/2008</td>
<td>Official dinner - Enterprise Action Plan workshop for rural financial counsellors</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>667.28</td>
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<tr>
<td>30/06/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Equine Influenza thank you event</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-31/06/08</td>
<td>Dinners - Australian Government Office International De Epizooties (World Organisation for Animal Health) delegates</td>
<td>Canberra, Moscow, Paris, Sydney, Canberra</td>
<td>2 715.95^2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-4/07/2008</td>
<td>Lunches - Russian delegation</td>
<td>Moscow</td>
<td>908.91</td>
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<td>5/07/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments – meeting with Indian delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<td>6-12/07/2008</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments - Thailand Department of Fisheries delegation</td>
<td>Canberra, Brisbane, Canberra, Sydney</td>
<td>3,867.00</td>
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<td>8/07/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association (United States) and One Harvest</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>495.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/07/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Australian Animal Welfare Strategy Work, Sport and Recreation and on Display Working Group</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>1 718.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/07/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Visit to Lamboo Indigenous Cattle Station</td>
<td>Halls Creek</td>
<td>96.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/07/2008</td>
<td>Meeting - Drought Social Panel members</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>604.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-23/07/2008</td>
<td>Official meals – Korean-Australian Technical Plant Quarantine discussions</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 846.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/07/2008</td>
<td>Quarantine and Biosecurity Roundtable - industry representatives</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>4 511.69^1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/07/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - World Trade Organisation meeting</td>
<td>Geneva</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/08/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - National Biosecurity Committee meeting</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>2 123.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/08/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Sanitary and Phytosanitary Awareness workshop</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1 037.01^2</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| Date          | Event                                                                 | Location     | Total cost
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| 6/08/2008    | Dinner - National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare Minister’s Advisory Committee | Canberra     | 656.50
| 6/08/2008    | Lunch – Director-General, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation | Canberra     | 1 300.00
| 17-20/08/2008 | Meals - Thailand delegation - Anthrax                                | Melbourne    | 782.97
| 18/08/2008   | Dinner - Sanitary and Phytosanitary Awareness workshop                | Thailand     | 362.03
| 21/08/2008   | Dinner - Agriculture and forestry meeting in Jakarta                  | Jakarta      | 435.15
| 21-22/08/2008| Refreshments and meals - Seminar ‘Adaptation and Mitigation in Agriculture and Natural Resources Case Study’ | Canberra     | 1 414.87
| 22/08/2008   | Meeting - Drought Social Panel members                                | Canberra     | 1 146.00
| 30/08/2008   | Meeting - Social and Economic National Coordination Committee         | Sydney       | 696.06
| 30/08/2008   | Dinner - Diagnostic workshop – seed-borne rice disease                | Philippines  | 496.60
| 1/09/2008    | Welcoming reception - 5th Stakeholder Forum – Codex 2008              | Melbourne    | 2 112.00
| 2/09/2008    | Lunch - ATSE Crawford Fund 2008 Annual Conference                    | Canberra     | 1 480.00
| 8/09/2008    | Dinner - National Rural Advisory Council meeting                      | Mildura      | 88.60
| 9/09/2008    | Dinner - National Rural Advisory Council meeting                      | Mildura      | 1 255.00
| 18/09/2008   | Dinner - Australian Animal Welfare Strategy National Consistency Project | Canberra     | 1 598.90
| 18/09/2008   | Meals and refreshments - Primary Industries Ministerial Forum        | Canberra     | 1 126.82
| 23/09/2008   | Lunch - Thailand delegation                                           | Canberra     | 123.60
| 25/09/2008   | Lunch - Macau delegation                                              | Canberra     | 83.91
| 27/09/2008   | Dinner - jurisdictional project managers meeting                      | Adelaide     | 1 237.45
| 28/09/2008,  | Meals and refreshments - South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation | Canberra | 12 188.00
| 03/10/2008,  | and 6-10/10/2008                                                      |             |            |
| 30/09/2008   | Refreshments - Salinity Baseline workshop - National Co-ordination Committee for Salinity | Canberra     | 2 320.24
| 2/10/2008    | Meals and refreshments – Australia-Japan Supply and Demand Dairy talks | Canberra     | 979.00
| 7/10/2008    | Meals and refreshments – Australian-Taiwanese Agricultural workshops  | Taiwan       | 1 500.00
| 9/10/2008    | Refreshments - 6th South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation | Canberra     | 132.00
| 10/10/2008   | Refreshments – Australia-China Agricultural Cooperation Agreement Delegation | Canberra     | 220.00
| 10/10/2008   | Refreshments - Primary Industries Steering Committee - Market Access Sub-Committee | Canberra | 158.00

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<th>Total cost $(GST inc.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14-21/10/2008</td>
<td>Meals - Chinese Delegation - Review of kangaroo harvesting and processing in Australian establishments</td>
<td>Brisbane, Adelaide</td>
<td>2,922.58</td>
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<td>14/10/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Indonesian Ministry for Marine Affairs</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<td>16/10/2008</td>
<td>Official dinner - Japanese delegation</td>
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<td>20/10/2008</td>
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<td>Canberra</td>
<td>409.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/10/2008</td>
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<td>Canberra</td>
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<td>Canberra</td>
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<td>Meeting – Australia’s Farming Future - Climate Change Research Program Expert Panel</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/10/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Executive Steering Committee for Australia’s Water Resources Information meeting</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>508.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/10/2008</td>
<td>Official dinner - Rural Financial Counselling Service Executive Officer and Rural Financial Counsellor case management workshop</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>557.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/11/2008</td>
<td>Catering - Science Awards</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>10,250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-15/11/2008</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments – Australia-China Agricultural Co-operation Agreement delegation</td>
<td>Canberra, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney</td>
<td>2,543.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/11/2008</td>
<td>Meeting - Abu-Dhabi delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>222.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/11/2008</td>
<td>Meeting – Australia-Papua New Guinea Bilateral Fisheries</td>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>3,124.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/11/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Egyptian delegation</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/11/2008</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments - Indonesian Ministry for Marine Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/11/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - DAFF Drought workshop - industry representatives</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>502.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/11/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Philippines Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems delegation</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>532.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/11/2008</td>
<td>Bottle of wine - Japanese Chief Veterinary Officer</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>25.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/11/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Horticulture Code committee</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1,183.50</td>
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<td>30/11/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Vegetation Condition Workshop</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>915.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/11/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Food Chains Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-12/12/2008</td>
<td>Seminar and catering – Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
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<td>3-4/12/2008</td>
<td>Lunches - Malaysian Minister of Agriculture - hosted by minister</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1,364.00</td>
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</table>
### Table 1: Official hospitality for the department between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total cost $(GST inc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-4/12/2008</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments – Malaysia-Australia Agricultural Cooperation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/12/2008</td>
<td>Lunch – Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/12/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - University of Sydney - Joint research discussions</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>59.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/12/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - irrigation industries workshop</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/12/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Japan Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>184.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/12/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Eritrean Minister for Agriculture</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>101.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/12/2008</td>
<td>Dinner to mark the closure of the Dairy Adjustment Authority</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
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<tr>
<td>31/12/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Animal Health Bilateral meeting</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 089.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>141 404.24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Amount includes non-hospitality expenses including, stationery and standard audio-visual equipment.
2. GST free international.

### Table 2: Official hospitality for the department between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total cost $(GST inc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-4/07/2008</td>
<td>Lunches - Russian delegation</td>
<td>Moscow</td>
<td>908.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/07/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments – meeting with Indian delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>120.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12/07/2008</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments - Thailand Department of Fisheries delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>3 867.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/07/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association (United States) and One Harvest</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/07/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Australian Animal Welfare Strategy Work, Sport and Recreation and on Display Working Group</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>1 718.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/07/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Visit to Lamboo Indigenous Cattle Station</td>
<td>Halls Creek</td>
<td>96.00</td>
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<td>19/07/2008</td>
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<td>Canberra</td>
<td>604.50</td>
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<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 846.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/07/2008</td>
<td>Quarantine and Biosecurity Roundtable - industry representatives</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>4 511.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/07/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - World Trade Organisation meeting</td>
<td>Geneva</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/08/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - National Biosecurity Committee meeting</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>2 123.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/08/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Sanitary and Phytosanitary Awareness workshop</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1 037.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/08/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare Minister’s Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>656.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/08/2008</td>
<td>Lunch – Director-General, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>17-20/08/2008</td>
<td>Meals - Thailand delegation - anthrax</td>
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<tr>
<td>21/08/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Agriculture and forestry meeting in Jakarta</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-22/08/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments and meals - Seminar 'adaptation and mitigation in agriculture and natural resources case study'</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 414.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/08/2008</td>
<td>Meeting - Drought Social Panel members</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 146.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>30/08/2008</td>
<td>Meeting - Social and Economic National Coordination Committee</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>696.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/08/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Diagnostic workshop – seed-borne rice disease</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
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<td>2/09/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - ATSE Crawford Fund 2008 Annual Conference</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<td>8/09/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - National Rural Advisory Council meeting</td>
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<td>Mildura</td>
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<td>18/09/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Australian Animal Welfare Strategy National Consistency Project</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<tr>
<td>18/09/2008</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments - Primary Industries Ministerial Forum</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 126.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>23/09/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Thailand delegation</td>
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<td>Lunch - Macau delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>83.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/09/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - jurisdictional project managers meeting</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>1 237.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/09/2008</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments - South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>12 188.00</td>
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<td>03/10/2008</td>
<td>and 6-10/10/2008 Refreshments - Salinity Baseline workshop - National Co-ordination Committee for Salinity</td>
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<td>2/10/2008</td>
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<td>9/10/2008</td>
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<td>10/10/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments – Australia-China Agricultural Cooperation Agreement delegation</td>
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<td>10/10/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Primary Industries Steering Committee - Market Access Sub-Committee</td>
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<td>14-21/10/2008</td>
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<td>Canberra</td>
<td>570.50</td>
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<td>Lunch - state agencies – 2007-08 Irrigation Survey in the Murray-Darling Basin</td>
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<tr>
<td>31/10/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Executive Steering Committee for Australia’s Water Resources Information meeting</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
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<td>Canberra</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-15/11/2008</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments - Australia-China Agricultural Co-operation Agreement delegation</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/11/2008</td>
<td>Meeting - Abu-Dhabi delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>222.00</td>
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<td>5/11/2008</td>
<td>Meeting - Australian Papua New Guinea Bilateral Fisheries</td>
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<td>6/11/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Egyptian delegation</td>
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<td>12/11/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - DAFF Drought workshop - industry representatives</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<tr>
<td>26/11/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Philippines Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems delegation</td>
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<td>Dinner - Horticulture Code committee</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<tr>
<td>30/11/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Vegetation Condition workshop</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>915.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/11/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - food chains seminar</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>314.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-12/12/2008</td>
<td>Seminar and catering - Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>3 600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4/12/2008</td>
<td>Lunches - Malaysian Minister of Agriculture - hosted by Minister</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 364.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4/12/2008</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments - Malaysia-Australia Agricultural Cooperation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>6 386.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/12/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>295.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/12/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - University of Sydney - Joint research discussions</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>59.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/12/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - irrigation industries workshop</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 703.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/12/2008</td>
<td>Lunch - Japan Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>184.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/12/2008</td>
<td>Refreshments - Eritrean Minister for Agriculture</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>101.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/12/2008</td>
<td>Dinner to mark the closure of the Dairy Adjustment Authority</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>420.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Total cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/12/2008</td>
<td>Dinner - Animal Health Bilateral meeting</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 089.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/01/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments - Community of Practice for Structured Decision Making Gov Dex Launch</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>267.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/01/2009</td>
<td>Dinner - National Rural Advisory Council meeting</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>328.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/01/2009</td>
<td>Dinner - Bilateral review of the bovine babesiosis eradication program conclusion</td>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>1 863.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/02/2009</td>
<td>Meeting - Australia’s Farming Future - Climate Change Research Program Expert Panel</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 122.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-21/02/2009</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments - Thailand Department of Fisheries Delegation</td>
<td>Canberra, Forster Sydney</td>
<td>2 084.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/02/2009</td>
<td>Dinner - surveillance program - interstate guests</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/02/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments - Japanese delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>198.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/02/2009</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments - Primary Industries Ministerial Forum</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 300.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/02/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments - climate change high level officials group</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>36.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-20/02/2009</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments - plant quadrilateral reception</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>2 080.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/02/2009</td>
<td>Dinner - Quadrilateral Discussion on food safety (QUADS) involving Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and United States</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>368.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/02/2009</td>
<td>Dinner - Inaugural meeting of the Rural Research and Development Council</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>863.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-27/02/2009</td>
<td>Meals - Russian Review - Audits of Australian meat establishments to support market access by visiting Russian delegation</td>
<td>Brisbane Adelaide Sydney</td>
<td>4 400.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/02/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments - Vietnam Ministry of Science and Technology</td>
<td>Canberra, Sydney</td>
<td>350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/02/2009</td>
<td>Lunch - Japanese Chief Veterinary Officer and delegates</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>281.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/03/2009</td>
<td>Lunch - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/03/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments - Trade and Agriculture Directorate - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5/03/2009</td>
<td>Meals - ABARE Regional State Economists meeting</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 592.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6/03/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments - Alternative Technology Trial</td>
<td>Melbourne, Sydney</td>
<td>277.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-20/03/2009</td>
<td>Official dinner and reception - 18th Session of the Food Safety Quadrilaterals</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>5 727.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/03/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments - New South Wales Plague Locust Commissioner retirement</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/04/2009</td>
<td>Dinner - Quadrilateral Discussion on Animals Safety (QUADS) Conference 2009</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>2 000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Official hospitality for minister’s office for calendar year 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total cost $(GST inc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/04/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments - Meeting with South Australia to assist with technical integration</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>58.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/04/2009</td>
<td>Dinner - National Rural Advisory Council meeting</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 039.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/04/2009</td>
<td>Dinner - Recognising Women Farmers Panel</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>347.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/04/2009</td>
<td>Lunch - Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>390.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/04/2009</td>
<td>Meals and refreshments - Primary Industries Steering Committee</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>2 042.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/04/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments - Library System User Group seminar</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>53.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/04/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments - National Co-ordination Committee for Salinity</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>915.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/05/2009</td>
<td>Dinner - Diagnostics of phytophagous mites workshop</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>474.15^2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11, 19/05/2009</td>
<td>Dinners - Rural Research and Development Council</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 131.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/05/2009</td>
<td>Dinner - United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/05/2009</td>
<td>Dinner - Australian Government Office Internationale De Epizooties (World Organisation for Animal Health)</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>800.05^2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/05/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments - Iraqi delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>213.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/05/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments - Charles Sturt University - Grains Research and Development Corporation - ABARE Productivity Initiative</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>17.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/05/2009</td>
<td>Catering - environmental stewardship meeting</td>
<td>NSW regional towns</td>
<td>1 170.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4/06/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments - Iraqi delegation</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>299.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/06/2009</td>
<td>Official dinner - Chinese delegation - quarantine technical meeting</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>1 681.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/06/2009</td>
<td>Dinner – Australia-China negotiations</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>706.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/06/2009</td>
<td>Refreshments – China - Senior Officials</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>115.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/06/2009</td>
<td>Dinner - New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Biosecurity and Australian Customs Service representatives</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>318.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/06/2009</td>
<td>Catering - environmental stewardship meeting</td>
<td>Murrumbateman</td>
<td>440.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>137 405.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^1 Amount includes non-hospitality expenses including, stationery and standard audio-visual equipment.

^2 GST free International.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Nature and purpose of function</th>
<th>Total cost $(GST inc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20/09/08</td>
<td>M1.26 Parliament House</td>
<td>Beverages for official hospitality functions</td>
<td>529.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/09/08</td>
<td>M1.26 Parliament House</td>
<td>Morning tea for the DAFF wheat team achievements</td>
<td>197.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/10/08</td>
<td>Phillip’s Heritage Restaurant</td>
<td>Emergency meeting with the Agriculture Finance Forum to discuss global credit crisis etc.</td>
<td>700.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/10/08</td>
<td>House of Reps Alcove, PH</td>
<td>Breakfast with media, stakeholders and MPs for report release on social impact of drought</td>
<td>1 890.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/12/08</td>
<td>M1.26, PH, Minister’s Office</td>
<td>Introduction of DAFF Exec and National Farmer’s Federation officers to members of PM country taskforce</td>
<td>366.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/12/08</td>
<td>M1.26, PH, Minister’s Office</td>
<td>Thanking DAFF Executive Management Team for 2008 portfolio achievements</td>
<td>1 153.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 377.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Official hospitality for minister’s office for financial year 2008-09
Tuesday, 27 October 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Nature and purpose of function</th>
<th>Total cost $(GST inc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18/06/09</td>
<td>MG63, Parliament House</td>
<td>Morning tea to thank Australian Quarantine Inspection Staff for their work on the 40% issue</td>
<td>423.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 7 775.55

**Resources and Energy, and Tourism: Staffing**

*Question Nos 1930 and 1931*

Senator Barnett asked the Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

1. With reference to ministerial staff and departmental liaison officers for each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, since November 2007: (a) how many positions exist; (b) how many staff are employed; (c) how many vacancies exist; (d) what are the levels of these positions; and (e) what is the total cost of staff employed in these respective offices on an annual basis.

2. Can a breakdown be provided of how many laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) the department provides to the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary.

3. Are any departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary; if so: (a) how many; and (b) to whom.

4. (a) How much did the department spend on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

5. For the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary: (a) what was the total amount spent on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

6. For the 2008-09 financial year, how much has the department spent on: (a) the hire of plants, either real or artificial; (b) the maintenance of these plants; (c) water coolers; and (d) television subscriptions.

7. How many government credit cards does the department currently have on issue.

8. (a) How many credit cards have been reported lost; and (b) in relation to the credit cards that have been reported lost: (i) how many have been cancelled, (ii) how many remain active, and (iii) what is the potential credit liability from the lost cards that remain active.

Senator Carr—the Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

1. (a) 9 Ministerial staff, 2 departmental liaison officers (b) 9 Ministerial staff, 2 departmental liaison officers (c) Nil (d) Senior Adviser Chief of Staff (Cabinet) x 1, Senior Media Adviser x 1, Adviser x 3, Assistant Adviser x 2, Executive Assistant/Office Manager x 1, Secretary/Administrative Assistant x 1 (e) The total annual cost of departmental liaison officers employed in the Office of the Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP is $253,151.30. Information relating to the costs of Ministerial staff can be found in the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Annual Report 2007-08 which was tabled 23 December 2008 and is available on the Department of Finance and Deregulation website at http://www.finance.gov.au.

2. Laptops: 9; mobile phones: 8; personal digital assistants: 4.

3. (a) 2 (b) The Office of the Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP.

4. Please refer to my response to QoN 1804 and 1805.

5. Please refer to my response to QoN 1804 and 1805.
(6) (a)&(b) $5,162.12 (GST exclusive). As the applicable fee for each plant includes charges for hire and maintenance, it is not possible to separately identify expenditure on these items. (c) Nil (d) $2,125.22 (GST exclusive).

(7) 292.

(8) (a) 6 (b)(i) 6 (ii) Nil (iii) Nil.

**Human Services**

**(Question No. 1932)**

**Senator Barnett** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Human Services, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) With reference to ministerial staff and departmental liaison officers for each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, since November 2007: (a) how many positions exist; (b) how many staff are employed; (c) how many vacancies exist; (d) what are the levels of these positions; and (e) what is the total cost of staff employed in these respective offices on an annual basis.

(2) Can a breakdown be provided of how many laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) the department provides to the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary.

(3) Are any departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary; if so: (a) how many; and (b) to whom.

(4) (a) How much did the department spend on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(5) For the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary: (a) what was the total amount spent on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(6) For the 2008-09 financial year, how much has the department spent on: (a) the hire of plants, either real or artificial; (b) the maintenance of these plants; (c) water coolers; and (d) television subscriptions.

(7) How many government credit cards does the department currently have on issue.

(8) (a) How many credit cards have been reported lost; and (b) in relation to the credit cards that have been reported lost: (i) how many have been cancelled, (ii) how many remain active, and (iii) what is the potential credit liability from the lost cards that remain active.

**Senator Ludwig**—The Minister for Human Services has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) It is considered that it is an unreasonable diversion of resources for the Portfolio to provide a historical profile since 2007.

As at 2 July 2009:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministerial Staff</th>
<th>Departmental Liaison Officer (DLO)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) 10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) 7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) 3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Ministerial Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(d)</th>
<th>Senior Adviser Chief of Staff (Cabinet) x 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Adviser 1 (Cabinet) x 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Media Adviser x 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adviser x 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Adviser x 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Executive Assistant/Office Manager x 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary/Administrative Assistant x 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| (e) | Information relating to the costs of Ministerial staff can be found in the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Annual Report 2007-08 which was tabled 23 December 2008 and is available on the Department of Finance and Deregulation website at http://www.finance.gov.au. |

| DHS Executive Level 2 | $96,802 – $116,208 + DLO Allowance $16,312 |
| DHS Executive Level 1 | $85,742 – $92,588 + DLO Allowance $16,312 |
| CLK Executive Level 1 | DHS Executive Level 2 Salary range $81,508 which is the current salary rate for a Centrelink Executive Level 1 officer + DLO Allowance of $16,957 per annum effective from September 2009. This allowance is paid by Centrelink under the current Centrelink Agreement. |

(2) There are two Laptops and four Blackberrys/PDAs currently issued to Minister Bowen’s office.

(3) No.

(4) and (5) Refer to the response provided to Senate Parliamentary Question on Notice 1806.

(6) In the 2008-09 financial year the Department of Human Services spent:

   (a) and (b) $124,364.08 on the hire and maintenance of plants;

   (c) Refer to the response provided to Senate Parliamentary Question on Notice 1979; and

   (d) $4,444.43 on television subscriptions for all Departmental sites.

(7) 387.

(8) For the 2008-09 financial year there were six credit cards reported lost, all of these cards were cancelled with no liability from the lost cards.

#### Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law

(Which No. 1933)

**Senator Barnett** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) With reference to ministerial staff and departmental liaison officers for each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, since November 2007: (a) how many positions exist; (b) how many staff are employed; (c) how many vacancies exist; (d) what are the levels of these positions; and (e) what is the total cost of staff employed in these respective offices on an annual basis.

(2) Can a breakdown be provided of how many laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) the department provides to the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary.

(3) Are any departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary; if so, (a) how many; and (b) to whom.
(4) (a) how much did the department spend on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calander year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year, and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i)date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(5) For the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary: (a) what was the total amount spent on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year, and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i)date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(6) For the 2008-09 financial year, how much has the department spent on: (a) the hire of plants, either real or artificial; (b) the maintenance of these plants; (c) water coolers; and (d) television subscriptions.

(7) How many government credit cards for the department currently have on issue.

(8) (a) How many credit cards have been reported lost; and (b) in relation to credit cards that have been reported lost: (i) how many have been cancelled, (ii) how many remain active, and (iii) what is the potential credit limit liability from the lost cards that remain active.

Senator Sherry—The Minister for Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) The Minister has:
   (a) 1 Departmental Liaison positions and 10 Ministerial staff positions
   (b) 1 Departmental Liaison staff and 7 Ministerial staff are employed
   (c) no Departmental Liaison position and 3 Ministerial staff vacancies exist
   (d) Level of Departmental Liaison position is an APS6, Levels of Ministerial positions are: Senior Adviser Chief of Staff (Cabinet) x 1, Senior Adviser 1 (Cabinet) x 1, Senior Media Adviser x 1, Adviser x 3, Assistant Adviser x 2, Executive Assistant/Office Manager x 1, Secretary/Administrative Assistant x 1
   (e) total Departmental Liaison staff costs are $125,400. Information relating to the costs of Ministerial staff can be found in the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Annual Report 2007-08 which was tabled 23 December 2008 and is available on the Department of Finance and Deregulation website at http://www.finance.gov.au.

(2) The Minister’s office has:
   3 Laptops
   4 Mobile Phones
   8 Personal Digital Assistants (PDA’s)

(3) There are:
   (a) 4 Treasury staff are currently employed under the Members of Parliament Act
   (b) There are no Treasury staff seconded to the Ministers office.

(4) Refer response to QoN 1807, 16th June 2009 asked by Senator Abetz.

(5) Refer response to QoN 1807, 16th June 2009 asked by Senator Abetz.

(6) The GST exclusive cost in 2008-09 is:
   (a) and (b) Plant hire and maintenance $54,972.98
   (c) Water coolers $3,856.61
   (d) Television Subscriptions $7,738.26

(7) 35

(8) (a) and (b) No credit cards have been reported lost.
Veterans’ Affairs  
(Question No. 1934)  

Senator Barnett asked the Minister representing the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) With reference to ministerial staff and departmental liaison officers for each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, since November 2007: (a) how many positions exist; (b) how many staff are employed; (c) how many vacancies exist; (d) what are the levels of these positions; and (e) what is the total cost of staff employed in these respective offices on an annual basis.

(2) Can a breakdown be provided of how many laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) the department provides to the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary.

(3) Are any departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary; if so: (a) how many; and (b) to whom.

(4) (a) How much did the department spend on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(5) For the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary: (a) what was the total amount spent on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year; and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(6) For the 2008-09 financial year, how much has the department spent on: (a) the hire of plants, either real or artificial; (b) the maintenance of these plants; (c) water coolers; and (d) television subscriptions.

(7) How many government credit cards does the department currently have on issue.

(8) (a) How many credit cards have been reported lost; and (b) in relation to the credit cards that have been reported lost: (i) how many have been cancelled, (ii) how many remain active, and (iii) what is the potential credit liability from the lost cards that remain active.

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

(1) (a) Six ministerial and one departmental liaison officer position currently exist.
    (b) Six ministerial and one departmental liaison officer are currently employed.
    (c) Nil.
    (d) Ministerial positions - Chief of Staff, Adviser (2), Assistant Adviser, Executive Assistant, Administrative Assistant and the Departmental Liaison Officer is an APS Executive Level 1.
    (e) For ministerial staff costs please refer to the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Annual Report 2007-08. The Departmental Liaison Officer cost is $102,715.

(2) The Department currently provides the Minister’s office with nine blackberries, three laptops and two portable printers.

(3) Nil.

(4) Refer to answer on this matter provided in Senate Question on Notice 1808.

(5) (a) (i) For the 2008 calendar year, the Minister’s Office spent $716.24 on hospitality.
    (a) (ii) For the 2008-09 financial year the Minister’s Office spent $1819.37 on hospitality.
    (b) (i) (ii) & (iii) Refer to answer on this matter provided in Senate Question on Notice 1808.

(6) (a) & (b) For the 2008-09 financial year the Department spent a total of $11,589.71 on plant hire and plant maintenance for all offices.
(c) For the 2008-09 financial year the Department spent $14,794.85 on water coolers. This cost includes the hire of the cooler, the water, including refills, for the cooler, delivery costs and associated fuel levies.

(d) For the 2008-09 financial year the Department spent $9,668.36 on television subscriptions.

(7) The Department currently has 326 credit cards on issue.

(8) (a) This information is not separately available, as until this financial year lost cards have been included in the register of cancelled cards without specific identification, as neither the Department or the bank required this information to be recorded. The register of cancelled cards does not only include lost cards, but cards that may have belonged to staff members who have left the department or staff members who may no longer require the need for a credit card. This financial year, there have been no credit cards reported lost.

(b) (i) All lost cards reported to the card administrator have been cancelled.

(b) (ii) None remain active.

(b) (iii) Nil.

Treasury

(Question No. 1941)

Senator Barnett asked the Assistant Treasurer, upon notice, on 2 July 2009:

(1) With reference to ministerial staff and departmental liaison officers for each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, since November 2007: (a) how many positions exist; (b) how many staff are employed; (c) how many vacancies exist; (d) what are the levels of these positions; and (e) what is the total cost of staff employed in these respective offices on an annual basis.

(2) Can a breakdown be provided of how many laptops, mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) the department provides to the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary.

(3) Are any departmental officers on secondment to the office of the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary; if so, (a) how many; and (b) to whom.

(4) (a) how much did the department spend on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year, and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(5) For the office of each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary: (a) what was the total amount spent on hospitality for the: (i) 2008 calendar year, and (ii) 2008-09 financial year, and (b) can details be provided of each hospitality event, including the: (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, and (iv) cost.

(6) For the 2008-09 financial year, how much has the department spent on: (a) the hire of plants, either real or artificial; (b) the maintenance of these plants; (c) water coolers; and (d) television subscriptions.

(7) How many government credit cards for the department currently have on issue.

(8) (a) How many credit cards have been reported lost; and (b) in relation to credit cards that have been reported lost: (i) how many have been cancelled, (ii) how many remain active, and (iii) what is the potential credit limit liability from the lost cards that remain active.

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

(1) The Assistant Treasurer has:

(a) 1 Departmental Liaison position and 6 Ministerial staff positions

(b) 1 Departmental Liaison staff and 6 Ministerial staff are employed

(c) no Departmental Liaison or Ministerial staff vacancies exist
(d) Level of the Departmental Liaison position is EL1. Levels of Ministerial positions are: Senior Adviser Chief of Staff (Non Cabinet) x 1, Media Adviser x 1, Adviser x 1, Assistant Adviser x 1, Executive Assistant/Office Manager x 1, Secretary/Administrative Assistant x 1
(e) Total Departmental Liaison staff costs are $142,700. Information relating to the costs of Ministerial staff can be found in the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Annual Report 2007-08 which was tabled 23 December 2008 and is available on the Department of Finance and Deregulation website at http://www.finance.gov.au.

(2) The Assistant Treasurer’s office has:
   9 Laptops
   3 Mobile Phones
   9 Personal Digital Assistants (PDA’s)

(3) No departmental officers have been seconded to the Office of the Assistant Treasurer.

(4) Refer response to QoN 1815, 16th June 2009 asked by Senator Abetz.

(5) Refer response to QoN 1815, 16th June 2009 asked by Senator Abetz.

(6) The GST exclusive cost in 2008-09 is:
   (a) and (b) Plant hire and maintenance, $54,972.98
   (c) Water coolers, $3,856.61
   (d) Television Subscriptions, $7,738.26

(7) The Office of the Assistant Treasurer has no credit cards.

(8) (a) and (b) Not applicable.

**Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Social Inclusion, Early Childhood Education, Childcare and Youth and Employment Participation: Water**

*Question Nos 1958 to 1960, 1990, 1993*

**Senator Abetz** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion, the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Childcare and Youth, and the Minister for Employment Participation, upon notice, on 21 July 2009:

For the department, each agency of the department and the offices of each Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, in the 2008-09 financial year, how much was spent on (a) bottled water; (b) bulk water; (c) cooler rental; (d) cooler hire; and (e) water delivery.

**Senator Arbib**—The Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion, the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Childcare and Youth, and the Minister for Employment Participation have provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

In regard to the five Ministerial offices, a total of $4494.80 was spent on bottled water, bulk water, cooler rental/hire and water delivery in the 2008-09 financial year.

In regard to the department and each agency of the department, the precise detail requested in the question is not readily available and would require an unreasonable diversion of resources to ascertain.

**Treasury: Water**

*(Question No. 1961)*

**Senator Abetz** asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, upon notice, on 21 July 2009:
For the department, each agency of the department and the offices of each Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, in the 2008-09 financial year, how much was spent on: (a) bottled water; (b) bulk water; (c) cooler rental; (d) cooler hire; and (e) water delivery.

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

**Australian Bureau of Statistics**
The Australian Bureau Of Statistics spent the following in the 2008-09 financial year, GST exclusive:

(a) $0.00  
(b) $1,110.00  
(c) $859.09  
(d) $0.00  
(e) $0.00

**Australian Competition and Consumer Commission**
We do not maintain records in the above categories however the majority of the expenditure is for water cooler bottles. The total value for the supply of all categories of water for the ACCC during 2008-09 was $3,089.

**Australian Office of Financial Management**
During 2008-09 the Australian Office of Financial Management spent $nil on the above mentioned items.

**Australian Prudential Regulation Authority**
(a) Nil  
(b) $686.55  
(c) $168  
(d) Nil  
(e) Nil

**Australian Securities and Investment Commission**
(a) $25.96  
(b) $3070.76  
(c) $528  
(d) Nil  
(e) $66

**Australian Taxation Office**
It is not a general ATO practice to supply bottled water (or rent coolers) across ATO sites. ATO buildings are fitted with kitchens on each level, providing tap water and refrigeration for storage. The ATO’s financial system can not extract specific expenditure at the requested level of detail. The information provided below has been collated and verified by each of our business units.

2008-09 ATO expenditure on water:
(a) bottled water – $1796  
(b) Nil  
(c) cooler rental - $165  
(d) Nil
(e) Nil

Corporations and Markets Advisory Committee
(a) Nil
(b) Nil
(c) $295.00
(d) Nil
(e) Nil

Inspector-General of Taxation
Nil.

National Competition Council
In the 2008-09 financial year the National Competition Council spent
(a) $400.45 on bottled water
(b) Nil expense on bulk water
(c) $198.00 (GST exclusive) on cooler rental
(d) Nil expense on cooler hire
Nil expense on water delivery.

Productivity Commission
Nil.

Royal Australian Mint
Nil.

The Treasury
(a) Nil
(b) Departmental expenditure – Nil; Ministerial expenditure - $444.99
(c) Departmental expenditure – $2,458.16, Ministerial expenditure – Nil
(d) Nil
(e) Nil

Defence: Water

(Section Nos 1963 and 1992)

Senator Abetz asked the Minister for Defence, upon notice, on 21 July 2009:
For the department, each agency of the department and the offices of each Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, in the 2008-09 financial year, how much was spent on: (a) bottled water; (b) bulk water; (c) cooler rental; (d) cooler hire; and (e) water delivery.

Senator Faulkner—The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:
(1) For all departmental expenses, please refer to my answer in Senate Question on Notice 1916/1945, part 6 (c). For expenditure for each of the Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries offices and agencies, please see below.
(a) Offices of the Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries - Nil.
   Defence Housing Australia (DHA) - $1221.45,
(b) Offices of the Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries - Nil.
   DHA - $2405.13
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

(c) and (e) Offices of the Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries and DHA - The table below provides expenditure details against each office/agency for cooler rental and water delivery. These costs are not invoiced separately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office/Agency</th>
<th>Expenditure FY 2008/09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>$363.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science</td>
<td>$165.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support</td>
<td>$661.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Minister for Defence</td>
<td>$496.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Minister for Defence Science and Personnel</td>
<td>$496.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Procurement</td>
<td>$330.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Housing Australia</td>
<td>$6,904.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) Offices of the Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries - Nil.

DHA - Nil.

Finance and Deregulation: Water
(Question No. 1968)

Senator Abetz asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, upon notice, on 21 July 2009:

For the department, each agency of the department and the offices of each Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, in the 2008-09 financial year, how much was spent on: (a) bottled water; (b) bulk water; (c) cooler rental; (d) cooler hire; and (e) water delivery.

Senator Conroy—The Minister for Finance and Deregulation has supplied the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

In the 2008-09 financial year the following amounts were spent on water and associated items by the Finance and Deregulation Portfolio:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINANCE PORTFOLIO</th>
<th>(a) Bottled Water</th>
<th>(b) Bulk Water</th>
<th>(c) Cooler Rental</th>
<th>(d) Cooler Hire</th>
<th>(e) Water Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Finance and Deregulation</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$836.80</td>
<td>$4,616.20</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$17.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Finance and Deregulation#</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$1,242.60</td>
<td>$142.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$27.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Minister of State#</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$686.70</td>
<td>$166.10</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$28.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Parliament Offices</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$4,933.73</td>
<td>$2,077.90</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$32.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Electoral Commission</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$3,076.93</td>
<td>$230.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$38.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comsuper</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$281.95</td>
<td>$146.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Fund Management Agency</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Reward Investment Alliance</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation for Finance Portfolio Ministerial Offices under home department support entitlements.

On 16 April 2004, the then Special Minister of State approved the provision of chilled water dispensers, upon request, in the electorate offices of Senators and Members. The Department of Finance and Deregulation has paid the amounts listed in the table below for Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries under this entitlement during the 2008-09 financial year:
**ELECTORATE OFFICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Bottled Water</th>
<th>(b) Bulk Water</th>
<th>(c) Cooler Rental</th>
<th>(d) Cooler Hire</th>
<th>(e) Water Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$130.88</td>
<td>$154.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Mark Butler MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Health</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$41.50</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senator the Hon Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$245.85</td>
<td>$187.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Justine Elliot MP, Minister for Ageing</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$352.50</td>
<td>$154.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senator the Hon John Faulkner, Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$32.70</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Julia Gillard MP, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations; Minister for Social Inclusion</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$87.20</td>
<td>$214.50</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Gary Gray AO MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Western and Northern Australia</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$258.20</td>
<td>$154.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Duncan Kerr SC MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$245.00</td>
<td>$286.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, Special Minister of State</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$117.65</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Richard Marles MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$10.50</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for Housing, Minister for the Status of Women</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$206.80</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senator the Hon Nick Sherry, Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$131.00</td>
<td>$264.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Bill Shorten MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children’s Services, Parliamentary Secretary for Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$213.70</td>
<td>$42.90</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Wayne Swan MP, Treasurer</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$52.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government: Water**

*Question No. 1969*

Senator Abetz asked the Minister representing the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, upon notice, on 21 July 2009:

For the department, each agency of the department and the offices of each Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, in the 2008-09 financial year, how much was spent on: (a) bottled water; (b) bulk water; (c) cooler rental; (d) cooler hire; and (e) water delivery.

Senator Conroy—The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Senator Abetz asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General and the Minister for Home Affairs, upon notice, on 21 July 2009:

For the department, each agency of the department and the offices of each Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, in the 2008-09 financial year, how much was spent on: (a) bottled water; (b) bulk water; (c) cooler rental; (d) cooler hire; and (e) water delivery.

Senator Wong—The Attorney-General and the Minister for Home Affairs have provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

Details of expenditure on bottled water, bulk water, cooler rental, cooler hire and water delivery for the Offices of the Attorney-General and Minister for Home Affairs and the Attorney-General’s Portfolio is provided in the following table. Agencies not included in the table have reported nil expenditure in these categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>(a) bottled water</th>
<th>(b) bulk water</th>
<th>(c) cooler rental</th>
<th>(d) cooler hire</th>
<th>(e) water delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Attorney-General</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$1,463.80</td>
<td>$347.44</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$40.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Minister for Home Affairs</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$913.80</td>
<td>$406.94</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$34.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General’s Department *</td>
<td>$3,110.77</td>
<td>$11,003.61</td>
<td>$830.00</td>
<td>$336.00</td>
<td>$92.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(includes $792.00 Norfolk Island Government Goods and Services Tax inclusive, charged at 9%)</td>
<td>(includes $294.00 Norfolk Island Government Goods and Services Tax inclusive, charged at 9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>(a) bottled water</td>
<td>(b) bulk water</td>
<td>(c) cooler rental</td>
<td>(d) cooler hire</td>
<td>(e) water delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$972.36</td>
<td>$233.00</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Crime Commission</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$974.00</td>
<td>$1,213.00</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Customs and Border Protection Service</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$39,101.98</td>
<td>$149,335.17</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Federal Police (including Australian Institute of Police Management)</td>
<td>$11,476.00</td>
<td>$37,991.00</td>
<td>$10,513.00</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Government Solicitor</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$1,615.00</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Security Intelligence Organisation</td>
<td>$450.00</td>
<td>$845.60</td>
<td>$3,126.00</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$1,476.00</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions</td>
<td>$671.36</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$140.00</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>Figure provided at (a) includes delivery fees nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Court of Australia</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$7,457.00</td>
<td>$3,684.00</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>(a) bottled water</td>
<td>(b) bulk water</td>
<td>(c) cooler rental</td>
<td>(d) cooler hire</td>
<td>(e) water delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Court of Australia (including Copyright Tribunal and Defence Force Disciplinary Tribunal)</td>
<td>The Federal Court’s general position is that bottled water and water coolers are not provided within the registries. However, there would be expenditure of this kind in relation to Native Title matters, particularly remote ‘on country’ hearings. The Court’s Charter of Accounts does not capture expenditure in these categories. Any amounts are not material and are likely to be less than $1500 for the 2008-09 financial year.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

#### Agency (a) bottled water (b) bulk water (c) cooler rental (d) cooler hire (e) water delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>(a) bottled water</th>
<th>(b) bulk water</th>
<th>(c) cooler rental</th>
<th>(d) cooler hire</th>
<th>(e) water delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Magistrates Court of Australia</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$385.00</td>
<td>$685.00</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Court of Australia</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insolvency and Trustee Service Australia</td>
<td>$343.00</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$280.80</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Capital Authority</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$1,313.73 (for use at the National Capital Exhibition at Regatta Point)</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$11.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Native Title Tribunal</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>$5,443.50</td>
<td>$8,601.00</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Territories Branches provide the public water utilities and infrastructure in the non-self-governing territories of Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Jervis Bay Territory. The Attorney-General’s Department’s expenditure does not include cost details for these services.

** Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) is a statutory authority and a government business enterprise. It operates on a fully commercial and competitive basis and does not receive any funding from budget or other parliamentary appropriations. From time to time, AGS purchases bottled water for activities associated with operating a law practice such as training seminars, client hospitality events and client meetings. AGS believes that the volume of bottled water it acquires is not significant but considers that calculating the total cost of the various purchases over 2008-09 would be an unreasonable diversion of AGS’s resources.

### Special Minister of State: Water

(Question No. 1975)

Senator Abetz asked the Special Minister of State, upon notice, on 21 July 2009:

For the department, each agency of the department and the offices of each Minister/Parliamentary Secretary, in the 2008-09 financial year, how much was spent on: (a) bottled water; (b) bulk water; (c) cooler rental; (d) cooler hire; and (e) water delivery.

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

Please refer to the answers provided by the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Deregulation Question No. 1968.