The Journals for the Senate are available at http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/journals

Proof and Official Hansards for the House of Representatives, the Senate and committee hearings are available at http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Hansard

For searching purposes use http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au

### SITTING DAYS—2013

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### RADIO BROADCASTS

Broadcasts of proceedings of the Parliament can be heard on ABC NewsRadio in the capital cities on:

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For information regarding frequencies in other locations please visit http://www.abc.net.au/newsradio/listen/frequencies.htm
FORTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—EIGHTH PERIOD

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

Senate Office holders
President—Senator Hon. John Joseph Hogg
Deputy President and Chair of Committees—Senator Stephen Shane Parry
Temporary Chairs of Committees—Cory Bernardi, Thomas Mark Bishop, Suzanne Kay Boyce, Douglas Niven Cameron, Patricia Margaret Crossin, Sean Edwards, David Julian Fawcett, Mark Lionel Furner, Scott Ludlam, Gavin Mark Marshall, Bridget McKenzie, Claire Mary Moore, Louise Clare Pratt and Ursula Mary Stephens
Leader of the Government in the Senate—Senator Hon. Stephen Michael Conroy
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate—Senator Hon. Penelope Ying Yen Wong
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate—Senator Hon. Eric Abetz
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate—Senator Hon. George Henry Brandis SC
Manager of Government Business in the Senate—Senator Hon. Jacinta Mary Ann Collins
Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate—Senator Mitchell Peter Fifield

Senate Party Leaders and Whips
Leader of the Australian Labor Party—Senator Hon. Stephen Michael Conroy
Deputy Leader of the Australian Labor Party—Senator Hon. Penelope Ying Yen Wong
Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—Senator Hon. Eric Abetz
Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—Senator Hon. George Henry Brandis SC
Leader of The Nationals—Senator Barnaby Thomas Gerard Joyce
Deputy Leader of The Nationals—Senator Fiona Nash
Leader of the Australian Greens—Senator Christine Anne Milne
Chief Government Whip—Senator Anne McEwen
Deputy Government Whips—Senators Carol Louise Brown and Helen Beatrice Polley
Chief Opposition Whip—Senator Helen Kroger
Deputy Opposition Whips—Senators David Christopher Bushby and Christopher John Back
The Nationals Whip—Senator John Reginald Williams
Australian Greens Whip—Senator Rachel Mary Siewert

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

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(1) Term expires at close of day next preceding the polling day for the general election of members of the House of Representatives.

(2) Chosen by the Parliament of New South Wales to fill a casual vacancy (vice H. Coonan, resigned 22.8.11), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

(3) Chosen by the Parliament of New South Wales to fill a casual vacancy (vice Hon. M. Arbib, resigned 5.3.12), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

(4) Chosen by the Parliament of Western Australia to fill a casual vacancy (vice J. Adams, died in office 31.3.12), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

(5) Chosen by the Parliament of Tasmania to fill a casual vacancy (vice Hon. B. Brown, resigned 15.6.12), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

(6) Chosen by the Parliament of Tasmania to fill a casual vacancy (vice Hon. N. Sherry, resigned 1.6.12), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

(7) Chosen by the Parliament of South Australia to fill a casual vacancy (vice M. J. Fisher, resigned 15.8.12), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**


**Heads of Parliamentary Departments**

Clerk of the Senate—R Laing
Clerk of the House of Representatives—B Wright
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—C Mills
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<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prime Minister</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Julia Gillard MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy</td>
<td>The Hon Dr Craig Emerson MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Social Inclusion</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Mark Butler MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Mental Health Reform</td>
<td>The Hon Mark Butler MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for the Public Service and Integrity</td>
<td>The Hon Gary Gray AO MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>The Hon Jason Clare MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>The Hon Warren Snowdon MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jan McLucas</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Wayne Swan MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Prime Minister)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Bill Shorten MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon David Bradbury MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon Bernie Ripoll MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Defence</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Stephen Smith MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of the House)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Veterans’ Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Science and Personnel</td>
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<td>Minister for Defence Materiel</td>
<td>The Hon Dr Mike Kelly AM MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon David Feeney</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Anthony Albanese MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon Julie Collins MP</td>
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<td>Senator the Hon Bob Carr</td>
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<td>The Hon Kelvin Thompson MP</td>
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<td>The Hon Tony Burke MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Industry and Innovation</td>
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Tuesday, 5 February 2013

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. John Hogg) took the chair at 12:30, read prayers and made an acknowledgement of country.

COMMITTEES

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

Community Affairs References Committee

Meeting

Senator McEWEN (South Australia—Government Whip in the Senate) (12:31): On behalf of the respective chairs, I seek leave to move a motion to enable the Community Affairs Legislation Committee and the Community Affairs References Committee to meet during the sitting of the Senate today.

Leave granted.

Senator McEWEN: I move:

That the Community Affairs Legislation Committee and the Community Affairs References Committee be authorised to hold private meetings otherwise than in accordance with standing order 33(1) during the sitting of the Senate today.

Question agreed to.

BILLS

Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Senator JOYCE (Queensland—Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (12:32): Welcome back, Mr Deputy President, and congratulations, Senator Conroy. There must have been no-one else in the ballot. What we have here before us with the Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012 is basically a process that the Labor government have used to placate the Greens and to get to a magical number of 3,200 gigs. You can see the authenticity of how much they actually want to achieve this because, in the $1.77 billion that this requires, they have only allocated $50 million over the forward estimates. Therefore, this is more rhetoric than a reality.

As rhetoric, it falls well into line with everything else that has been insufficient about the government's current process in dealing with the water issue—insufficient insofar as we do not have currently a state intergovernmental agreement. They are state assets. We do not know how the states are going to do this. The states have not signed off on anything to do with this. We do not actually have an environmental water plan.

If this is correct, we will have 450 gigs from this, we have got 2,750 from the Basin Plan—there is your magical figure of 3,200 gigs—and we have already received about 962 gigs from the Living Murray and other state based plans. So we have got 4,162 gigs that have been returned to the river, of which 3,200—if you believe this—are going to be managed by the environmental water holder. That is a rather sizeable dam. That is a lot of water. That would be one of the biggest dams in Australia if it were all held in that dam. But what are they going to do with it? How does it actually work? How do they get this water to their assets? Where do they store it? What are the rights of other people near those dams where they store water? What happens if it pushes out the water that is being stored there for irrigation?

In my area, in the north, it is kind of ridiculous, because what they are doing is buying water that would have otherwise gone down the river to the Culgoa floodplain.
and the Narran lakes. And after they have purchased it, the water will still go down the river to the Culgoa floodplain and the Narran lakes. They are busily buying water that, in some instances, was never going to be used in any case. But, anyway, it helped some people and got them out of some rather large loans with the bank. They have laughed all the way to the bank—and that is fair enough.

This account is part of a rhetorical process more than it is part of an actual process. How are they managing even the water that they have got at the moment? We know from their tests that they have been trying to get water to South Australia but they actually cannot do it because of restrictions. There are so many issues pertaining to this that make it awfully convoluted. It will just become part of this political debate. It is not worth compromising the plan for an addendum which really is of no real consequence, because there is very little money, if any, actually allocated to this over the forward estimates.

As part of this process, the coalition will be looking to move amendments to reinforce our position so that, if we get the honour of becoming the government, the Australian people will have a strong idea about what we intend to do. Our amendments will remove buyback. We do not believe in buyback. We believe that, if you want to get water back into the river, you should do it the clever way. You should be trying to do it through infrastructure, through on-farm works and measures, through using laterals where you can, through more efficient mechanisms of storage and deeper cells. These are the sorts of things that a clever country would do. Just buying back the water and sending towns and communities broke is not clever. We in the coalition, in the National Party and in the Liberal Party, actually rate people above frogs—based on the Maslow hierarchy of needs—and believe that we are actually in this parliament to try as best we can to represent the 2.1 million people who live in the basin and make sure we protect their economic base. We will also be moving an amendment so that it goes back to what it initially said. This initially said 'up to 450 gigalitres' but, of course, that changed. Do you know why it changed? It changed because the Australian Greens wanted it to change. This is part of this 'Captain Chaos' government, which is currently being dispensed by the Australian people—now being dispensed by people on their own side—because, if you try to serve two masters, you end up serving none. In trying to serve the Greens, the right wing of the Labor Party and the left wing of the Labor Party, it has once more managed to create a piece of policy which is merely rhetoric because it discusses something that we have not actually allocated the money for. It talks things way off into the never-never. It talks it in a form where we are currently $262 billion in gross debt, so wherever this money comes from it is only borrowed money. If the nation does not have the money, what are your prospects of getting your hands on the money if we are so far in debt?

The coalition will be moving an amendment—to make sure that we specifically talk about the current process, because this goes back to the plan—to cap buybacks so that they do not go beyond 1,500 gigalitres. I cannot stress that enough. If you are going to steal from a town, you do it by actually taking the water licence off them. Once you take the water licence off them then maybe the farmers would be happy—because they will collect the cheque, go to the coast and live happily ever after—but the tyre business in the town just goes broke. Maybe they go to the bank to borrow $800,000, $900,000, $1 million or $2 million to build a motel, but all of a sudden the economic base of their business, their rug, is
pulled out. These people do not get compensated.

This is why you have to be so careful: because any government that is going to an election talking about economic prudence—talking about having the capacity to get the economy going—is going to look awfully odd if one of its front-and-centre pieces is a policy to actually shut down economies. When you really think about it, the way it is going about this is that it is borrowing money from overseas. We are in debt by $262 billion, and 86 per cent of that money that we have borrowed comes in from overseas—from the good people of China and from the people in the Middle-East. All of these prudent people saving their money send it over to us because we cannot make our incomes meet our expenses and our debt gets bigger and bigger—we borrowed in excess of $2 billion last week—and ultimately we have to pay these people back. But when you think about it, when you really drill down to it, we are borrowing money from overseas not to create a productive asset that can pay things off—not to actually build a new factory or a new dam or to increase our capacity to meet our debts. We are borrowing money from overseas to shut the factories down and to shut the towns down. It is a double whammy. We are borrowing the money and we are reducing the size of the economic component that is supposed to pay it off. It is a very, very strange and peculiar thing. It is a job for Inspector Clouseau, something we must investigate more closely. It needs a rather large magnifying glass to work out why we are doing this.

But we have always said that it is for the environment. Of course people say: 'Well, it's your policy. It's the coalition's policy'. The difference is that we brought this policy about when we actually had money in the bank. That is the difference. Now we do not have money in the bank; we just have massive debts. We are very mindful of the fact that, yes, we must deal with the environmental issue where that was pertinent, but we must not deal with it in a way that destroys the economic fabric of the 2.1 million people living in the basin. We are very aware of and very alive to issues such as the 600 dairy farmers that turned up in Victoria the other day—we are very alive to that. We are very alive to what the pressures are on these people's lives. One is the overcentralisation of the retail market and the fact that they are being exploited by dollar-a-litre milk—we acknowledge that. Another thing is that we have this crazy policy where the government is now basically going into areas and buying out the water, becoming the biggest competitor in their own water market, shutting down their towns and putting extra pressure on them because of a fascination with frogs and moths. We will be part of this process, but we will not do it to the extent that it creates a mechanism for the destruction of the communities that we are supposed to represent and it becomes symbolic of a process that shows that you have no economic credibility whatsoever in that you were going to areas to shut economies down rather than build them up.

In showing a process of cautiously working with the government and in close discussions with our state colleagues, we will go down this path, but we will do it in such a way that we will be moving amendments to clearly show to the Australian people what our views are on this issue. There really needs to be a lot more work that goes into this whole plan. It is a plan that, in some areas, is completely incongruous to the outcome. There is no water. We are probably going to be ending up with about 150,000 to 180,000 megalitres per day going through St George. I can assure you that that water will
never, ever get to South Australia— not a chance. Some of it may get to the Menindee storage lakes. There was this view at the start of this debate that Australia was this interconnected garden hose where, if you just tip a bit of water in at Toowoomba and wait long enough, it arrives at the Lower Lakes. That is an absurdity. As I said at the start of this debate some years ago, it is a big old dry carpet. This plan does not properly reflect the hydrology of it. The latest tests that they have done in trying to move and shepherd water have emphasised quite clearly the impracticalities of trying to shepherd water, whether it is from Copeton Dam in northern New South Wales or, even more ridiculously, virtually from central Queensland down to South Australia. It is just impractical; it will not do it.

What really were the issues that we were trying to address with this? How did we get ourselves into a position where we are so far down the track? When are we actually going to see an environmental watering plan? When is this document going to turn up? Why is it that we have been in a position where the biggest irrigator with the biggest water asset in our nation will now be the government? Others may be irrigating things that actually produce money, whether it is cotton or rice or apricots or apples or onions or potatoes, but the government are going to be watering swamps and forests and moss. That is marvellous, but you do not get any sense of comfort when you think, therefore, that these people better be absolutely competent and on the game. What sense of competence do you get from a government when you find out that they bought a property, Toorale Station, near Bourke, and the Commonwealth taxpayer shelled out $23.75 million. The closest that this government ever got to that place was 30,000 feet on their way to Darwin. They never set foot on it.

The story goes that this place was going to auction and someone from the government rang up and said: 'We may have an interest in that place. What is your reserve?' The sellers said, 'We do not tell you the reserve before we sell a place.' I know that Senator Fifield, who used to work in the Treasurer’s office, will be fascinated by this. The government said, 'We are really interested.' They went back and had a meeting and said, 'The government has just rung up and wants to buy Toorale, wants us to tell them the reserve.' The bloke said, 'Tell them to go jump.' Anyway, the number they actually had in mind was $16 million but they said, 'If they ring back, just say 23.' Guess what! They rang back and said, 'It is 23.' They thought they would drive a really hard deal. So do you know what they said then? They said, 'But it has still got cattle on it.' They said, 'They have to go and that will cost more.' So it cost the Australian taxpayer $750,000 to remove the Commonwealth's stock off their own place and have them sold.

Senator Nash: It is ludicrous.

Senator Joyce: It is. These people are running the country. They say, 'Oh, this is a one-off.' They cannot possibly have bought the place without seeing it. Well, they did. At that stage the minister was Penny Wong. She only turns up once in your life and when she turns up you just have to make the most of her! Then the government came back into the market because after Toorale they went and bought Twynam's water from Johnny Kahlbetzer. I went to college with him. He is a clever man. They bought all his water licences, the whole $303 million. There were other people in tenders up and down, offering it cheaper. But this is the
government and this is why the government are so far in debt. This is why I have no confidence whatsoever that these people will be competent enough to complete on this plan.

We started this process in good faith, that there was an environmental issue there and we would try as best we could to address it. We put the money on the table when we had money in the bank. We knew full well from the word go that, if the coalition were not at the table, this rambling disorderly nonsense which is apparently standing in proxy for a government instead of talking to us would talk to the Greens. You will see one of these amendments coming up: rather than saying ‘up to’, they want a minimum of 450 giga from this. That is what we would have to contend with. They said at the start they wanted in excess of 7,000 giga to be taken out of communities and put back into the environment. That would absolutely decimate the Murray-Darling Basin. They were kicking and screaming, they were never happy.

It was force majeure for us because we knew full well, if we were not the participants to try and placate the excesses of this ludicrous scheme, who would be doing it—the Australian Greens, as orchestrated from inner suburban Adelaide. That would have not been doing the right thing by our people, by those 600 dairy farmers who were protesting the other day, by the people of Bourke, by the people of Parkes, by the people of Goondiwindi, by the people of St George, where I live. This river goes literally past my front door. I can throw a rock from my front yard into the river without much effort whatsoever. In fact, in a couple of days I will be able to almost kick it into the river.

To be honest, we are extremely reluctant participants in an incompetent government, but we do it because we know that the alternative is disaster. We will be moving amendments that clearly state our position should we come to government. Make no mistake about our position. There will be a cap at 1,500 giga on buyback. We will make sure that the operations of the environmental water holder do not disturb the market but, if there is the opportunity at times for water that is not going to be used, that people have the capacity to use that productively. These are the sorts of logical things that have to happen. With a sense of scepticism and erring, we cautiously move forward with this bill.

**Senator HANSON-YOUNG (South Australia)** (12:52): I rise to speak on the Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012 as well. This bill has had to be brought forward by the government because the plan that was ticked off by this chamber and by both the government and the coalition did not deliver enough water in order to save the Murray-Darling Basin and restore it to the health that it needs in order to allow communities and the environment to flourish.

Last November the government and the coalition passed the plan. It did not deliver that guaranteed water. In fact, it was a standout failing of the plan, because it started with recovering only 2,750 giga for the environment. When you take into account the adjustment mechanism that will be applied in 2016, that water recovery figure could be even lower than 2,000 giga, which is nowhere near the levels we need in order to save the Murray-Darling Basin and put it on a healthy path to a healthy future.

The government and the coalition passed the plan last year knowing full well that 2,750 giga would not return enough water to save the river. They knew full well that it would not be enough water to allow the communities that rely on it that certainty
that they need. They knew full well that 2,750 gigalitres, as outlined in the plan, would not be enough to secure the water that would be needed during the dry times and when drought comes back. Just as an interesting note, obviously Adelaide relies very heavily on the healthy water flows of the Murray-Darling Basin in coming down to the southern end of the system, and only last week it was recorded that Adelaide's water reservoirs are lower at this time of year than they have been in a decade. So despite all of the rainfall that we have had over the last three years, Adelaide's water security is at higher risk in February than it has been for the last 10 years, and we know that part of the big problem here is that this plan never included any impacts on climate change. We know that the plan does not set the management of the system up for a drying climate and for less water to be available overall in the system.

Knowing this, we had the Prime Minister and the water minister come down to Goolwa in my home state in South Australia in October last year and promise an extra 450 gigalitres. They did not put it in the plan even though we knew that it needed to be benchmarked, that we needed that extra water and it should have been the starting point for how the river would be managed—the amount of water to be returned back to the system. Rather than putting it in the plan, they decided they would leave it out and put in a separate piece of legislation, and that is what we are speaking to today. That extra 450 gigalitres is meant to be the top-up that is needed to reach a figure of 3,200 gigalitres, which is the absolute bare minimum that is needed if we are to save the system.

Australia's top scientists tell us we need 4,000 gigalitres, and yet even with this extra 450, as allocated in this bill, we will not even get to 4,000—we only get to 3,200. But the clincher in all this is that even in this bill, despite the promises from the Prime Minister and the big fanfare about giving extra water—that this was going to be the day that we save the river system—there is no guarantee in this current legislation as it is drafted before us today that that extra 450 gigalitres will even come. It is an aspiration. It is not a gold-clad guarantee. We know that governments like promising things that they then, further down the track, realise that they no longer wish to deliver, which is why we will be moving amendments to this legislation; to guarantee that 450 gigalitres is returned to the river and that we do not have to stick by that pushed-out time frame of 2024. Despite the fact that scientists are telling us we drastically have to manage our water system better, that we need more water allocated to the environment and that we have to give the river back its fair share, there are no guarantees that any of this amount will actually be returned to the river anywhere before 2024—far too late to really save the system.

It has been very disappointing to see how both the government and the coalition have worked together on delivering such a pathetic plan. It does not set the river up for a healthy future. This bill before us does not even have strong enough environmental protections. It allocates $1.8 billion from the Australian taxpayer to the most expensive and least effective water recovery methods, and it puts off finding that water until 2024, which allows for the very dangerous position of that $1.8 billion being frittered away before even reaching the figure of 450 gigalitres. We need to guarantee that that amount will be returned. We need to bring in the time frame so we are not asking communities, such as mine in my home state of South Australia, to wait for another 11 years before the river is given back the water it desperately needs. If we all agree—and the
water minister has said that he does, the Prime Minister has said that she does and the Premier of South Australia says that he does—that the absolute minimum amount of water for the river should be 3,200 gigalitres then that is what we should be delivering. If that is the minimum then let us deliver it. Why do we need these get-out clauses and weasel words in the legislation if it is not only to allow the government of the day off the hook if they decide they want to put the interests of big business ahead of the protection of our environment and the water security of our communities?

As I have said, we will be moving amendments. We are willing to work with the government to try to fix this mess. The government agrees that 3,200 gigalitres is what is needed. Let us lock it in, secure it and make sure that Tony Abbott and his coalition cannot fritter it away with their big business mates on day one after the next election. We need to lock this in as a floor.

Let us go to a couple of the specific amendments that we will move when we get to the committee stage in this debate. We know that South Australia suffered terribly during the millennium drought. Many of my South Australian Senate colleagues will probably participate in this debate. I see Minister Wong sitting on the front bench here. Minister Wong understands how vital it is to ensure that South Australia gets this extra water. If we do not get this extra water, if it is not guaranteed, then we will have just wasted five years negotiating the Murray-Darling Basin Plan only to have to revisit it in 10 years time.

We have to lock that figure in. In order to do that we have to insert the words 'at least'. We cannot say 'up to 450 gigalitres'; we need to say 'at least 450 gigalitres' because that is the only way we are going to be able to guarantee that the river gets the water that it actually needs. Our amendments will fix this. We will ensure that we get at least 450 gigalitres. With $1.8 billion of Australian taxpayers' money we can do that. In fact, we have already been doing that. We know that we have been buying significant amounts of water—since 2008 over 1,300 gigalitres have been already returned to the river—so securing at least 450 gigalitres with $1.8 billion will not be very difficult. It can be done. We just need the political will to do it.

We also need to make sure that we are spending this money as wisely as possible, which is why the Greens will be moving amendments in relation to auditing and accountability. $1.8 billion is a lot of money. If we were to buy back those water entitlements, we could be getting four or five times more water for that figure. The way this bill has been structured is to allow $1.8 billion to be spent in the most ineffective and most inefficient way. We need to make sure that there are proper balances and checks to ensure that taxpayers' money is not wasted.

The Greens do not want to see the special account become nothing more than an ATM for big business and foreign owned cotton growers. We do not want to see $1.8 billion of Australian taxpayers' money handed out as sweeteners to the big irrigators in Barnaby Joyce's electorate. We want to make sure that $1.8 billion is actually spent returning the water that the river needs. If we are serious about getting to that 3,200 gigalitre figure then there should be no argument about making sure that those guarantees are locked in.

As I have said many times in this place, we know that buying back water is four to five times more effective than spending the same dollar amount simply on infrastructure that cannot guarantee the volume of water to be returned to the river. When a government buys a water entitlement it knows how much
water will be returned. Despite repeated reviews proving this and audits that have shown that you recover less water at a more expensive rate by just spending that money on concrete and pipes rather than on real water, that is not what is currently in this bill, so we need to fix it. Our amendments still leave the government of the day all of the options for different methods of finding water, including on-farm infrastructure, while also reopening the door to buybacks. We know that if we are to return 450 gigalitres it cannot be guaranteed that it is going to be delivered through infrastructure. We need to be able to buy those water entitlements as well.

We are not sure what is going to happen in the future. Scientists are suggesting that the climate is drying and there will be less run-off throughout the system. We need to make sure that we can buy the water back that we need in the most cost-effective and most successful way to ensure that Australian taxpayers are not having their precious money frittered away. Our amendments to this legislation also put more rigorous limits on how saline South Australia's Lower Lakes and Coorong are able to become. We know that this is important because we need proper triggers in order to ensure that the government of the day does act on returning the water that is needed. We know that in the last drought the extremely salty water left native flora and fauna struggling to survive. In fact, a quick visit to the southern lagoon in South Australia's Coorong shows you that, despite more water being in the system over the last few years, the system was so crippled by a lack of water during the drought—massive over allocation throughout the whole system—that the environment just has not been able to recover. It is still struggling to survive. We know that very, very salty water has made our wetlands a breeding ground for tube worms which has obviously made a massive impact on the native flora and fauna, in particular the freshwater turtles that live in the Lower Lakes and along the shores of the Coorong.

We almost lost all of South Australia's local industries and dairy farms during the dry period. We went from 40 farms around the Lower Lakes to now four. It had a crippling impact on the local economy in South Australia. We cannot let this happen again. If this is about setting up a management system for the river for the future—for the river itself and for the environment—to care for the local communities who rely on that healthy system then we need to make sure that these things are locked into legislation. This is why we need salinity targets to be legislated—in law—so that there are no weasel words and ways out just because the government of the day decides that the environment is not that important after all.

I am guided in this place by my deep concern about the rights of South Australians and our state's passion for the river Murray. We rely on it. We drink its water. Our kids swim in the lakes, paddle in the Coorong and swim in the river. Our industries rely on it. Our local communities desperately need water security—healthy water security. In South Australia we lead the country with our water efficiency targets. We are the driest state in the driest continent on earth, and we have had to learn to use water in the most wise and efficient way. But, despite all of the work that South Australians have put in, we know that the Murray-Darling Basin is managed across the country. South Australia cannot fix this on our own which is why scientists have always argued for the minimum amount of water to be guaranteed by the federal parliament. Three thousand two hundred gigalitres is the absolute bare bones of what needs to be returned. We have
already heard that the minister agrees with that. We know that the Prime Minister agrees with that; so let us lock it in. Let us make sure that this is not a promise that will end up being broken.

I think the idea of the special accounts bill is a good one in order to try and ensure that that happens—that it is locked in. But only if the detail is actually correct. This is why we need those amendments because otherwise it is just a hollow promise and, as we know in this place time and time again, South Australians will continue to miss out once the levels of water in the river drop, once the hard, dry times come back. It is South Australians that will be hung out to dry. I will be moving those amendments when we get to committee stage, and I would also like to indicate that the Greens will not be supporting any of the Coalition's amendments which obviously only serve to undermine this entire process.

Senator WONG (South Australia—Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (13:11): I rise as a senator of South Australia to speak to this bill. For the purposes of making sure the chamber is clear, I am obviously not the minister closing the debate and I think Senator Birmingham would be quite grouchy if I did. Senator Farrell is obviously handling this debate for the government. I did think it was an important bill for me to speak on given the history of this area of policy and the importance of this issue to South Australians. While the health of the Murray River is important to the whole of Australia—and certainly to the eastern seaboard—it is in South Australia that the impact is most acute, and so I am very pleased that we are debating this bill—one more step towards water security for people from my home state.

As people in the chamber would know, in this last decade we saw the worst drought in the nation's history. The Labor government was elected during this drought crisis and it is probably useful at this point to recall some of the challenges that faced us at that time. It was not only the environment that was suffering; the future of our irrigation communities was also under threat. Consecutive years of low water allocations from 2006-7 onwards—for example, in South Australia's Riverland—risked thousands of hectares of perennial plantings. For rice growers in Deniliquin, the drought resulted in water allocations of zero for two years running. Across the basin water levels were reaching critical lows. From 2007 to 2009, the annual amount of water flowing into the river Murray system for each of those years was just one-fifth of the long-term average. This was the period for most of which I was water minister. Obviously I did not have much luck in getting it to rain.

Hyper-salinity was affecting aquatic and plant life and changing ecosystems. A lack of water was putting at risk environmental sites across the basin with wetlands being isolated from rivers because of low water levels, and the Murray mouth was closing up. Flows down the river Murray were so limited that silt was not been flushed out to sea, and Goolwa locals could walk across its mouth. Ferry crossings were closed in the Riverland as water levels dropped, and long heat waves were evaporating six to seven billion litres of water each day from the Lower Lakes. Compounding the impacts of the drought, and in spite of multiple warnings from experts over many years, too much water was being taken out of the basin without proper regard for the consequences. Since the 1950s basin governments had tripled the amount of water that they could take out of the system. Old infrastructure which was leaking vital water failed to be
replaced as new technologies came online. For too long we allowed the lack of water to stress native wildlife to the point of no repair and to damage valuable ecosystems. For too long the heartache of drought and the uncertainty of water supply placed considerable stress on the many communities which rely on the Murray-Darling. For too long the overallocation of water in the Murray-Darling Basin meant we failed to properly manage our precious water resources, and for far too long governments lacked the courage to secure the Murray's future. They were too timid to find the balance, a fine balance, between what our farmers required and what the environment needed. So over the years we have seen much talk. We have seen promises made and promises broken, and we have seen report after report, but we did not see action. That is why this Labor government made it a priority, where those that preceded us had failed, to action a sustainable path to manage our water and river systems, because, fundamentally, whether it is in this policy area or in terms of our fiscal policy, the onus is on a generation to leave things in good shape.

As a South Australian, and as I think all South Australians in this parliament know, I felt keenly the need for reform of the basin. We could see the effects drought and overallocation were having on the basin in ways many others could not—the strain on the Coorong and the Lower Lakes; concerns over Adelaide's ongoing water supply; the plight of Riverland farmers, who have become as efficient as possible, to make their diminishing water resources stretch further. It was a privilege to serve as water minister for 2½ years; a privilege to take up the fight for basin reform and to start the work to find a position of consensus with the states. It was by no means easy because management of the basin is never the sole responsibility of one government. Governments always need to work together to achieve an enduring solution, bringing together those on opposite ends of the political spectrum, and moving past the 'not in my backyard' approach, which for too long has dominated the politics and policy of the Murray-Darling Basin and consigned the last 100 years of inaction to the records of history.

The Labor government considered finding a solution to the Murray to be one of our most important environmental reforms, and we worked hard to secure agreement of the states to allow the Commonwealth to proceed with cross-border planning, and we got it for the first time in our nation's history. We succeeded in getting this agreement in early 2008, less than six months after coming into office. We created a single agency charged with the responsibility for planning the integrated management of water resources across the basin. The agreement also launched state-led projects, which are now assisting irrigators with the challenge of continuing their ongoing viability with a smaller pool of available water to modernise irrigation systems, develop new technologies or consider different approaches requiring less water. While carrying out these tough and often protracted negotiations with the states we also got on with the job of returning water to the rivers, to return a greater share of water to the basin rivers when it became available. It is never about the health of just one wetland or one particular ecosystem; it is about improving the overall health of the basin. By the eve of the federal election in 2010 federal Labor had purchased over 900 billion litres of water entitlements for the basin's rivers. We did this without resorting to compulsory acquisition because we considered such an action would diminish the property rights of farmers.
There has been criticism on both sides about the pace at which the government carried out water purchasing and the extent to which we did. What I would say is that, without this significant purchase of water entitlements, the implementation of the Basin Plan would have been much harder. If we had not purchased water in those years, the implementation of the plan, which the chamber is debating, would have been much harder. These purchases laid the foundation of lasting reform and demonstrated to communities that an agreement could be done. It would have been made harder had we not undertaken the task of bridging the gap—bridging the gap between the amount of water we take out of the basin and the amount of water the authority determined that the basin needed to survive.

Late last year my colleague and successor as water minister, Tony Burke, signed into law the final Murray-Darling Basin Plan in the presence of the Prime Minister. After 100 years we finally have an agreement to return a stipulated amount of additional water to the environment. I congratulate Minister Burke on this huge achievement. He has delivered what many thought was impossible—a plan for the Murray-Darling Basin. Members on this side of the chamber should be very proud of what has been achieved by this Labor government. We secured in law through the Basin Plan a base amount of 2,750 gigalitres of water for the environment. The government's view was that more should be done in order to ensure greater environmental outcomes. We wanted to maximise those outcomes by delivering additional water but not at the expense of social or economic outcomes.

The bill we are debating here today formalises the Labor government's commitment to deliver an additional 450 gigalitres to the basin. Along with this additional water the government will also fund projects which remove the existing constraints that stop high flows of water being delivered to environmental assets in an efficient way. Constraint removals include actions such as providing for flood easements, securing agreements with landholders or raising bridge heights. To put this plan into action funding of $1.77 billion has been committed from 2014-15. That funding will be contained within a separate account with money appropriated each year, because we believe the setting up of a special account is an important mechanism to ensure a long-term funding stream. It is a long-term funding stream that delivers long-term benefits and ensures that the future health of the basin could not be undermined by governments ransacking its funds to balance its budget. It is a plan that has been carefully designed to recognise the concern of Murray-Darling Basin communities.

I want to respond briefly to comments that Senator Hanson-Young made about water buybacks. I would make the point that this government has to balance not only the environmental outcome but also community outcomes. Whilst it is the case that you could spend the entirety of the money only on water buybacks, that would not give the desired outcome for communities and industries that rely on the rivers and which is in the national interest.

This bill is the final piece of our plan for restoring the basin. Along with the finalised Murray-Darling Basin Plan and the sustainable diversion limit adjustment legislation it sets out our plan to return the basin to health. It is unfortunate, on what should have been an issue worthy of cross-party support, that some of those in the parliament have not engaged to achieve agreement. Clearly those opposite remain divided. The member for Riverina stated: 'It will certainly not get my support. It needs to be discarded because it's poor policy.'
member for Murray, Dr Sharman Stone said: 'I'm going to stand up and say "no", and I'm going to try, having said "no", when we are in government to start again.'

I do acknowledge that Senator Birmingham with his South Australian colleagues sought to be a voice of reason, but I do make also note of their dubious efforts to claim credit for this reform in the South Australian media. I do remind the chamber that it was not the coalition who negotiated with the states, it was not the coalition who started buying back water and it was not the coalition who delivered a plan for management of the whole basin. In 11 years under Prime Minister Howard the Liberal Party had an opportunity for over a decade to reform their basin. It was only in their last year of office that they finally sought to act.

Then there are, of course, those who seem more interested in protesting than in delivering meaningful change, those who oppose reform on the basis that it does not go far enough. Governing is always about balancing the needs of competing interests, and that is not a concept just applicable to this debate. For the basin there are the competing needs of the environment, irrigation communities and critical human needs or the needs of a state at one end of the vast system to be balanced against the needs of another. To oppose this bill on the grounds that it does not do enough for the basin is to oppose both the greater returns of water to the environment and the security of the funding mechanism proposed. To oppose this bill is to deny farmers in the basin additional funding to improve their water efficiency.

For South Australia and its representatives here in the federal parliament, this is an opportunity to turn around the cumulative inaction of 100 years of decision making. I think South Australians would hope that their parliamentary representatives could vote with one voice in favour of this reform.

If the chamber would indulge me, I do want to make some comments about the work of many people over successive parliaments who have contributed to this reform like Tony Burke and his staff. I acknowledge the work of Mr Turnbull, the Member for Wentworth, for starting the process of change in 2007 with the first Water Act. For officials in the environment department—the name of which has changed on many occasions—some of whom are here in the chamber today, I thank you for having served the government of the day to deliver a reform that will be looked upon as one of the most significant environmental achievements of our nation. There are many people to acknowledge, but I particularly want to acknowledge the work of officials who served me well in my time as water minister: Robyn Kruk, James Horne, Mike Taylor, Rob Freeman, Mary Harwood, Tony Slatyer and Ian Robinson. To Mike Kelly: I thank him for his work as Parliamentary Secretary for Water to me in my first time as minister. I also thank my personal staff from the previous term of this government who, because of the work they put in place, helped shape the policy we see today and laid down important foundations for long-lasting reform. To Tim Fisher, Don Frater, John Olenich, Samka Thach and Ilsa Colson: your dedication is reflected in this final policy.

We cannot be fooled into thinking that Australia will not enter another period of drought in the near future, and when the next drought comes we need to be better equipped to handle the stress of less water. The best help we can give the environment is through the basin plan and important supporting legislation such as this bill. Successive governments and legislators failed the basin, its environment and its residents for over 100 years, and we are moving on from this
disappointing legacy. Water reform has never been an endeavour that can be achieved over the short term. It is multi-government, decadal reform. No-one ever expects—although sometimes the media does—an instantaneous flow of water or wetlands to suddenly spring into life as a result of any one government's actions, but action now will ensure we see results in the future. As parliamentarians we have the enormous privilege of leadership and a great responsibility, and in the future, parliamentarians will also be required to lead and to ensure this plan comes into fruition. The basin plan is the blueprint, but the execution of it, the reality of it, is in the hands of future parliamentarians and future governments, state or federal. I hope that they live up to the expectations not only of Australians but particularly of South Australians from my home state.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Ludlam): Thank you Senator Wong. The debate not being closed, I call Senator Birmingham.

Senator BIRMINGHAM (South Australia) (13:26): Thank you very much Mr Acting Deputy President. It is a pleasure to note that the debate is not being closed and that I do not need to go through the same processes we did at the end of last year in seeking some leave from the chamber to make a contribution as I had to on the basin plan disallowance motion. On that note, it is important to recall where it is that we finished last year, because there has been a lot of action in the water space over the period of months leading up to the end of last year, and of course that continues through to the debate of this bill before the chamber today. It is important to recall that last year both chambers passed amendments to the Water Act; amendments that allowed for the implementation of an adjustment mechanism; a mechanism that will allow greater flexibility in the operation of the sustainable diversion limits set by the basin plan; a mechanism and amendments that were supported by parties across the chamber, through both chambers at that time and that facilitated getting the type of agreement that was necessary between the states and cooperation to finalise the basin plan. I am pleased that the coalition was able to give support to the government and that the government was able to work with states of different political persuasions to construct an adjustment mechanism that achieved that cross-party support.

Most importantly and significantly, at the end of last year both chambers voted down a disallowance motion—voted to reject a motion to disallow the basin plan. The plan was the subject of much of Senator Wong's commentary as it provides the very firm underpinnings and the great basis upon which this bill builds. I gave a speech not dissimilar in some regards to Senator Wong's late last year. I am not going to revisit all of that territory in terms of what happened historically to get us to the point of having that basin plan or the importance that it has to our home state of South Australia, but it is important to note that it is the bedrock that underpins the bill that we are debating today. I do acknowledge the work of Senator Wong amongst many others in getting to that point and in her time as water minister. That is not to say that Senator Wong and I did not have some fierce disagreements in that time and that I do not continue to have policy disagreements with Senator Wong, Mr Burke or the government about the way aspects of water reform are handled. I do think that South Australia should acknowledge that, in the main, its parliamentary representatives, over a significant period of time, in both chambers have come to this place and fought for the interests of their state in getting water reform. But they have done it inside their
parties and inside this parliament, and they have had some significant victories as a small state—as the smallest of the mainland states—against some of the larger states to achieve significant reform in that time.

Minister Burke, in speaking on the disallowance motion late last year, acknowledged that the work could be traced back to the Keating government's adoption of some principles through COAG to try to address overallocation. He also rightly acknowledged the very, very important 2004 amendments of the National Water Initiative which finally sought to establish a functioning water market, and that of course then provided a capacity to start looking at how you may deal with issues of overallocation. Then there were the 2007 national reforms of the Howard government that led to the passage of the Water Act itself.

Senator Wong in her remarks, though generously acknowledging me and other South Australian Liberals—and I thank her for that—did equally claim that it was only in the last year of the Howard government that those reforms were passed. I acknowledge that it was only in the last year of the Howard government that the Water Act was passed, but it was with a great deal of work done in advance to set the basis for that. More particularly, I note, that of course it was not the Labor Party's policy at the time for such sweeping national intervention into the Murray-Darling Basin. It was only because John Howard took the brave step of saying that it was time for national management that the federal Labor Party then adopted that as their policy as well. Never before then had we heard federal Labor suggesting that it was going to be their policy. Only thereafter did it become their policy, and even then in the period of time between John Howard's Australia Day announcement in 2007 and the 2007 election it was the Victorian Labor state government that held up reform so very much.

I also note that Senator Wong tried to say that it was not the coalition that delivered the plan with regards to the fact that South Australian Liberal members rightly highlighted to the South Australian electorate the support given by the coalition to the development and establishment of the basin plan. It was the coalition and the Howard government that provided the legislation that made the plan a possibility. It was the coalition and the Howard government that took the brave step of standing up to the states and saying, 'Enough is enough of the state management of the system. We need to have national management.' Given the many failings we have seen of the reform agenda adopted by this government, if that act had not been passed under the Howard government I am far from convinced that it would ever have seen the light of day from those opposite. Again, to remind the chamber, until it was adopted by the Howard government it was never even mooted as a potential Labor Party policy. But I acknowledge that the government finally got a plan in place, and I will turn back to some of the issues around delays and concerns that I have in just a couple of moments perhaps.

I want to reflect very briefly on Senator Hanson-Young's contribution prior to Senator Wong. I again remind the chamber of what occurred late last year when across the parliament the only party that consistently opposed the adoption of the Basin Plan was the Australian Greens. In this chamber we saw the Greens vote against it, whilst Labor senators, Liberal senators, National Party senators and Senator Xenophon all supported the plan's adoption. Perhaps there were varying degrees of reservation, but all acknowledged that it was an important step forward and that we should not allow the perfect to be the enemy of the
good despite our various reservations. It was the Greens that moved a motion in this place to disallow the plan. It was the Greens that voted in the other place—with, yes, a couple of coalition members and Mr Katter—to oppose the Basin Plan. It was perhaps a very strange and eclectic collection of voices against it in the other place. The coalition stood firm to say, 'This is a reform we started, it is a reform we are proud of, and it is a reform we will stand by into the future.' We should not forget that it is the need to make those difficult decisions rather than making sanctimonious speeches sometimes that is important in achieving reform in this place.

Reflecting on the time since we debated that on the last sitting day of last year, I am concerned though that we have not seen further progress in the development and implementation of the Basin Plan and in particular the finalisation of the intergovernmental agreements required for its implementation between the Commonwealth and states. I am concerned that in some ways there seems to be a deafening silence coming from the government at this point in terms of where we are with the finalisation of the Basin Plan's implementation and agreements that need to be struck with the different state governments.

I do hope that in the closing parts of this debate we will hear from Senator Farrell and that he will be able to tell the chamber just why there seems to be this delay. Or, if I am mistaken, perhaps he will tell us that there is no delay and give us a firm timeline for when we can expect finalisation of the remaining elements around the implementation of this plan. We did see at the time of the release of Basin Plan's Environmental Water Recovery Strategy for the Murray-Darling Basin, a draft of consultation, and I understand that that will form at least part of those discussions with the states as to how the Basin Plan is to be implemented. My concerns about the delays we are seeing are perhaps driven as much by the track record of the government when it comes to delays in this space as by the two months that have elapsed since we saw the disallowance motions rejected in this place. I recall that at the very outset of the life of this government, with the Water Act freshly minted in 2007, it took then Minister Wong 18 months just to appoint the chair and members of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority—a terrible delay right at the outset. I recall that the original timeline was to have the Murray-Darling Basin Plan finalised in 2011 and that we were to have seen a draft of the actual plan before the 2010 federal election. Instead, we did not see a draft of the actual plan before the 2010 federal election, and even after the election all we ended up getting was a guide to the draft, an outline of it, which proved to be one of the very tragic steps in the development of the Basin Plan. We know that it was more than a year after the original deadline was set that we finally saw the finalisation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. So, once again, delays are proving to be a consistent theme through this important reform under this government, which drives my concern today about the silence from the government since we saw the rejection of the disallowance motions to the Basin Plan and the adoption of the Basin Plan late last year.

On the infrastructure projects side we have the iconic project of fixing the Menindee Lakes, so often talked about as having the potential to allegedly save up to 200 gigalitres of water—a very significant potential reform. In Labor's policy document at the 2007 election it was listed as the top priority amongst their infrastructure projects. Here we are in 2013 and not a single sod of soil has been turned and, as far as I am
aware, agreement is something that is still being worked upon. I know there are difficulties with the state government in getting that off the ground. Of course, initial delays did not exactly help in that regard and, perhaps, if agreements had been struck earlier we may have seen action by now. Whether it is that project, the 2008 promise of the Sunraysia modernisation project or the chronic underspending in the budget when it comes to water infrastructure, the government has a track record of just not delivering. It is those delays and those failures to deliver that feed my concern about where the current process may or may not be up to. I do hope that we will see the government drive this hard to ensure that they get the necessary agreements in place rather than allow things to set in and drift, as appears to have happened on far too many previous occasions.

The topic of infrastructure projects allows me to turn to some of the detail of the Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012 and how it will operate. I think it is fair to say that this is an unusual bill. It is unusual for the chamber and this parliament to appropriate funds so far in advance, and this bill appropriates annual allocations all the way through to 2024. At face value, that is an act that I would have a concern with; however, understanding the interrelationship between this legislation and the Basin Plan I can understand why this step has been taken. The Basin Plan essentially sets out that 2,750 gigalitres of water must be recovered to meet the new targets for sustainable diversion limits. That water simply must be recovered. If governments of either persuasion are to honour the promises that we have all made not to have compulsory acquisitions or the like, we simply have to find the budget to undertake the actions to get to that 2,750 level.

We then have the decision that, despite some changes to the wording of the legislation in the other place, we are going to try to get another 450 gigalitres on top of that to get to a 3,200-gigalitre reduction. To ensure that the government of the day actually does try and actually does have the capacity to get through this process and get to the end of that 450 gigalitres if possible, the money is being set down. Had the 450 gigalitres been included as part of the Basin Plan, and had there actually been a 3,200-gigalitre reduction in the Basin Plan, then, quite clearly, appropriating this money in advance would not have been necessary. But because it is being done as an addendum, as an additional target to try to achieve, I can see that there is some case to budget those funds.

I am not 100 per cent convinced whether the funds in question will prove to be enough, but I note the assurances of the government that it believes the sums do stack up to get a potential 450-gigalitre target. I particularly note, though, that there is a real inconsistency in what Minister Burke argues when it comes to how the 2,750 gigalitres is achieved versus how this 450 gigalitres is achieved. When it comes to the 2,750 gigalitres, the government rejects the cap on buybacks because it says that, basically, you need to maintain the threat of buybacks so as to get the state governments to deliver the water infrastructure projects and ensure that they occur. Yet, when it comes to the 450 gigalitres and this bill before us, it prevents the use of buybacks and says that it must be via infrastructure projects, with some allowances to recover all of the water saved under those infrastructure projects through buybacks. But it requires infrastructure projects in the first place with no threat of buybacks existing as an incentive.

So there is a serious inconsistency in the argument made when Minister Burke or
others say they oppose the request of the New South Wales government or the policy proposition of the coalition to cap buybacks and say, 'We will definitely deliver on infrastructure policies and projects'. They seem to argue that cannot possibly be done. And yet when it comes to this legislation, it is very clear that they believe it can be done. So if it can be done for the 450—if you can say that you can get all 450 without recourse to buybacks, that it can be done through infrastructure projects—then very clearly you should be able to do likewise as outlined in the targets of this water recovery strategy. Those targets should be enshrined.

As Senator Wong rightly said today, the reason to reject buybacks across the board—I wish she had done a little more of this as minister—is because you have to balance the environment with the communities. That is why this is so important.

This bill earns the support of the coalition because it balances the environment with the communities. In the end, it makes clear—the government has made clear—that infrastructure comes first to deliver the water savings for the environment; that you try to achieve the win-win outcomes that get water for the environment without decimating the economic fabric or productive capacity of the communities along the way. That is the reason we are supporting this bill. I welcome it as the next step in this process and, of course, welcome here the government perhaps responding to some of the questions I posed.

**Senator RUSTON** (South Australia) (13:46): I rise too to speak on the Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012. As a South Australian, and as an irrigator, I understand intimately the importance of a healthy river system, with sufficient water flowing into South Australia to ensure our future. One can only hope that if the South Australian environment is healthy then all the environments of the states upstream will be in a similar condition.

We supported the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, when we eventually got it. We supported the adjustment mechanism to allow the moving up and down of the amount of water that will be available, should it be proven that it is insufficient or too much. We will support this bill. But the attitude that you 'just add water' really does need to be looked at a little bit more carefully. In my opinion, it is not about the amount of water or the numbers; it is about where you get the water from and how you use that water once you have it.

We need to be smarter about delivering the best possible outcomes by taking the least amount of water out of productive use, and by having the least amount of impact on the lives and the assets of the people who rely on the river—the people who produce our food and the people who, like everybody else in this state, have a right to be able to earn a living without having something taken away from them unnecessarily. It is not just by innovating and the like for irrigation practices; it is also about being innovative about a broad range of things that we do to ensure that we deliver the best possible outcome for the least amount of negative impact on our communities.

The water delivered by the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, and the additional water that is proposed to be delivered by this bill, does give us a huge opportunity to do much good. We must not waste that opportunity or the water that we are getting. Like so many things, the devil is always in the detail. The ability of the additional water that is identified in this bill to be used effectively will require very, very careful management by those who are entrusted both at a federal level.
level and in the respective states on how they use that water, and what they do with it.

One small example—well, not a small example for the people who were involved—that was highlighted during a Senate hearing into the impacts of the plan was actually raised by the Murray River Action Group. They gave evidence that the impacts of flows of 40,000 megalitres per day in the Kiewa River, upstream from Albury and from releases from the Hume Dam, will have absolutely devastating impacts on their area. We need to remember that these guys are not irrigators, so do not place the blame on irrigators and say, 'Well, you know, the irrigators have taken the water'. These people are actually dryland farmers; they just happen to be in an area where they have had reasonable levels of rainfall so they end up being quite wet dryland farmers. They go on to say in their submission:

Pastures underwater in Spring for long periods of time will result in pastures being totally wiped out for 7-8 months at a time …

They refer to the fact that with flows of 40,000 megalitres a day, many bridges and approaches within the district will actually deny access both to their land and their stock.

Obviously, there is an increased risk of exacerbated flood damage. If you are actually doing controlled releases of water at a time that you get high rainfall, then all of a sudden you have turned what was apparently going to be a controlled flood into something that could be entirely devastating to the region. It is not just the things I have said above about loss of access and loss of crop but also loss of livestock.

Another thing: we are talking about looking after the environment. There are huge red gum forests up there, and red gum forests that spend their lives with wet feet, which potentially could happen, actually will die, so we will have a negative environmental impact. That was just one example from a community that is along the Murray-Darling river system.

I suppose one thing that we really do need to note in all this is the issue of compensation. It is not the government that pays compensation; it is actually the taxpayers of Australia who pay that compensation. So we need to be very, very careful that we cover ourselves off and that we do not actually cause a worse set of problems by trying to solve one problem.

That is just one example. Further downstream, the removal of constraints does have the potential to have a major impact. Like a chain, the river is only as strong as its weakest link. By removing these constraints we have a very serious potential that we could cause other problems. I would really like the department to answer, 'Does anybody really know what the impacts of an 80,000 megalitre-a-day flow at the South Australian border is going to mean for the upstream states?'

You have to remember that this water is being released from dams at the top end of the system. It is not just being caused by run-off from rain along the entire river system, so the water is not gathering as it comes down; it is actually one lump that is being let go. Another example is: how are the suggested quantities of water that are coming down from these upstream reservoirs going to get past such natural impediments as the Barmah Choke? All of these issues need to be addressed before we try and stuff all this water down our river corridor. The taxpayers of Australia have stumped up an awful lot of money for this reform package, and they will stump up a whole heap more before it is finished. But already we are starting to see that some of our state governments are seeing it as a way of reducing their
commitment to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. We need to deal with this issue now.

One of the issues that has resulted from this reduction of funding coming out of the states is very close to the heart of many people in South Australia—that is, the Native Fish Strategy. Minister Burke last year announced that the Native Fish Strategy would not be funded from the middle of this year. This has occurred, according to his department, because the state governments have reduced their funding. In particular, he said that New South Wales had reduced its funding, which had normally triggered the dollar-for-dollar funding that would normally go into this strategy; hence, if the New South Wales government and the South Australian governments were not going to put the funding into this strategy then the federal department was not going to either. Given that native fish populations are a true indicator of the health of a river system, surely, with all of this money that the taxpayers of Australia have put up to try and achieve a healthy river system, there is the capacity in the project mix that we have put forward to allow this small amount of money—we are talking a couple of million dollars a year—to continue.

Such a program provides critical support across the whole of the basin—it is not just a state activity—and it delivers a huge amount of positive outcomes for the basin: the restoration of the riverine connectivity, advances in integrated pest management, the delivery of demonstration reaches across the basin, the initiation of knowledge generation projects, the harmonisation of fisheries management and related natural resource regimes, and community education and engagement. Native fish populations and fish communities basin wide remain severely depleted, and to stop this program now just does not make any sense to me. Demonstrably healthy river native fish populations are a key signal to the basin's human communities and the Australian people that the river is healthy and that the management of the river is being effective. So, once again, it is a very easy and effective way for us to check whether the projects being put forward and the delivery of this Basin Plan and its associated instruments are actually working. Achieving a healthy, working Murray-Darling Basin Plan requires a broader focus than just water management. Without the support of these complementary management actions we will be wasting the opportunity to maximise the outcomes of the water that this very bill seeks to deliver.

Another way that we can achieve the best outcomes is through encouragement of innovation. In the electorate in which I live, we have an example where the community has positively embraced the action to look after the river. The Loxton Waikerie council is a small council in the Riverland of South Australia and on their own, off their own bat, they took up the initiative of constructing a 25-megalitre dam in the town of Loxton to capture the town's stormwater. The council hopes that this dam will not just reduce the town's reliance on the Murray for its water but take it completely off the system. A similar project has been planned for Waikerie, the other major town within this council area. This $9.5 million project has significant benefits for the local community. It certainly takes off the draw on the river. It increases the knowledge bank within the community. It increases the capacity of that community to manage flood mitigation during times of high volume, and it also gives them the opportunity to manage their own land management plans in a much more effective and innovative way.

There are myriad projects that we could be looking at that would enable the water that is being recovered here and returned to
the river environment to be used and maximised. In South Australia we were lucky enough to get $265 million from the federal government towards a project which has been referred to as the Water Industry Alliance. I would like to acknowledge that eventually, after many, many years of the South Australian community demanding recognition for the fact that they have been the most responsible water users in the basin forever—

Honourable senators interjecting—

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Ludlam): Order, Senators! Senator Ruston still has a few minutes left on the clock. Could we keep the chatter to a minimum.

Senator RUSTON: With recognition of the irrigation water efficiency and things like the compliance on the water cap in South Australia, we have been really quite delighted to see that after seven years we have been acknowledged for it. In the acknowledgement of this and the allocation of the $265 million, we have seen the capacity for us to spend money that otherwise would have been allocated to either specific water-saving infrastructure upgrades or water buybacks and put it to better use on projects that will increase the efficiency of agricultural productivity within the region. We are looking forward to seeing the outcome of the process of defining what those projects are through the Water Industry Alliance. The fact that this 450 gigalitres of additional water will not be secured by buyback is a huge relief for the people of South Australia. The plan and this bill are supported because they can do good, and we must make sure that they do do good, by implementing the plan in such a way that the beneficial outcomes are maximised for all stakeholders: the environment, the economy and the river communities that rely on it so heavily.

Debate interrupted.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Senator CONROY (Victoria—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity) (14:00): I table for the information of the Senate a revised ministry list reflecting the changes to the ministry announced by the Prime Minister on 2 February 2013. I seek leave to have the document incorporated in Hansard. I also advise the Senate that I have been elected Leader of the Government in the Senate and my colleague Senator Wong has been elected Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Leave granted.

The list read as follows—

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<td>Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy</td>
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<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy</td>
<td>The Hon Dr Craig Emerson MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Social Inclusion</td>
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<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Mental Health Reform</td>
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<td>Minister for the Public Service and Integrity</td>
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<td>Cabinet Secretary</td>
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<td>Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government</td>
<td>The Hon Simon Crean MP</td>
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Each box represents a portfolio. Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type. As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. However, there is a Department of Veterans’ Affairs in the Defence portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a minister in all cases.

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (14:00): I seek leave to make a short statement.

Leave granted.

Senator ABETZ: I thank the Senate. On behalf of the coalition, I thank Senator Evans for his service as Leader of the Government in the Senate. I assume that there will be another occasion where we can thank him more formally and in greater detail. From the attitude that he has displayed, I have every confidence that that bench up there will not become the home of Statler and Waldorf. On behalf of the coalition I also congratulate Senator Conroy and Senator Wong on their elections.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Economy

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (14:01): My question is to the Leader of the Government in the Senate, Senator Conroy. I refer the leader to the Prime Minister's very first press conference as Prime Minister, at which she said:

And today I can assure every Australian that their Budget will be back in surplus in 2013.

I also refer to the Prime Minister's speech last week at the National Press Club, in which she reported that Australian families were saving a lot more and spending a lot less than they were before the global financial crisis hit 4½ years ago. Why is it that Australian families have been able to tighten their belts so that they live within their means but the government has not?

Senator CONROY (Victoria—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity) (14:02): That question just demonstrates the total economic illiteracy of those opposite. For three years those opposite have said, 'We'll tighten the belt further; we'll have a bigger surplus than you.' 'We'll have a bigger surplus than you,' has been the refrain. Yet
within 24 hours Mr Hockey and Mr Abbott had entirely different positions. In the 'Real Solutions' plan there was no commitment whatsoever. Mr Abbott does an announcement—a mini faux launch—and there was nothing about it. Yet Mr Hockey, within 24 hours, contradicts Mr Abbott about the surplus saying, 'And we'll be in surplus,' and Mr Abbott, dragged to reality by Mr Hockey, decides he has nowhere to go.

What we have in this country at the moment—as you can see if you look at the front page of the *Age*—is a state government in Victoria that has brought the state of Victoria to a standstill. What do the statistics out of the state of Victoria say? More than 12,000 construction jobs have been lost and more are at risk. The reduction in jobs in Victoria's construction sector is twice that of the national average. We have a state Liberal government, that those opposite fully support, that has ground the state of Victoria to a standstill. (Time expired)

**Senator ABETZ** (Tasmania—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (14:04): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Is it economic illiteracy to say that getting the budget back to surplus is necessary to relieve cost-of-living pressures on Australian families? That is what the Prime Minister said some two years ago. Does the leader still agree with this statement and, if so, what does he say to Australian families for continuing to deliver budget outcomes that actually increase their cost-of-living pressures?

**Senator CONROY** (Victoria—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity) (14:06): Those opposite airbrushed the global financial crisis out of their knowledge—it did not happen. The global financial crisis and the Labor government saving 200,000 jobs and steering us through the global financial crisis was just a six-week—
The PRESIDENT: There is no point of order.

Senator CONROY: Those opposite describe the global financial crisis as something that happened for six weeks in the Northern Hemisphere and did not have any impact. Do not worry about Europe. Do not worry about the US. Do not worry about China. Do not worry about Japan. All of these international effects have knocked the revenue streams of the Taxation Office seriously. In December, when those statistics were received, the Gillard government was honest and up-front. The Treasurer stood up and explained exactly why. (Time expired)

Education Funding

Senator POLLEY (Tasmania—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (14:07): My question is to the Leader of the Government in the Senate, Senator Conroy. Can the minister advise the Senate how the government is supporting families with school-aged children?

Senator CONROY (Victoria—Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity) (14:08): Could I thank the senator for her question and her ongoing interest in the government's support for families. For many Australian families the beginning of the school year can be a difficult time due to the extra costs that come with uniforms, books and transport. That is why the Gillard government introduced the schoolkids bonus. The year's first instalment of the schoolkids bonus has just been paid to 1.2 million families around the country. That is real help for Australian families in the form of $205 for each primary school child and $410 for each high school child in the bank. Families have another payment locked in before term 3 starts later this year. This is not an aspiration; this is not a stunt; this is not which families will get what from those opposite—it is real help in the bank today.

Just last week the Leader of the Opposition confirmed again that he will cut the schoolkids bonus. That is right: he will cut the schoolkids bonus. That means that families with two kids would be $15,000 worse off over the time of their schooling. The coalition are claiming that they care about costs of living pressures when they want to rip $15,000 out of the bank accounts of 1.2 million families. This just demonstrates that they are without vision, without knowledge and without understanding of the pressures on Australian families.

Senator POLLEY (Tasmania—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (14:10): Mr President, I have a supplementary. Can the minister advise what else the government is doing to support families?

Senator CONROY (Victoria—Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity) (14:10): I am proud of the Gillard government's record of support for families. I am proud that we have delivered Australia's first national Paid Parental Leave scheme, benefiting more than 250,000 parents so far. I am proud that we have increased the childcare rebate from 30 to 50 per cent of out-of-pocket costs and that we have delivered income tax cuts to workers earning up to $80,000.

But, ultimately, families need more to secure a brighter future for their kids. That is why Labor is building infrastructure like the National Broadband Network; that is why we are building a world-class education system through a National Plan for School Improvement; and that is why we are
building a National Disability Insurance Scheme. *(Time expired)*

**Senator POLLEY** (Tasmania—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) *(14:11)*: Mr President, I have a second supplementary. Is the minister aware of any alternative approaches to supporting families?

**Senator CONROY** (Victoria—Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity) *(14:11)*: The Leader of the Opposition waves around a brochure full of slogans claiming that he supports Australian families, but it is clear that you cannot trust Tony Abbott. He says he wants lower taxes—

**The PRESIDENT:** Senator Conroy, you need to refer to people in the other place by their correct title.

**Senator CONROY:** My apologies, Mr President. You cannot trust Mr Tony Abbott. He says he wants lower taxes, but his real plan is to slap a new tax on Australian businesses to pay for his unfair $4.5 billion a year paid parental leave policy. He has a real plan to scrap the government's tax cuts for low- and middle-income families and he has a real plan to scrap the schoolkids bonus. He also, despite all of that, has a real plan to scrap the NBN. He wants to leave Australia with the broadband equivalent of a one-lane Sydney Harbour Bridge. *(Time expired)*

**Budget**

**Senator BRANDIS** (Queensland—Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) *(14:12)*: Mr President, before I ask my question to Senator Conroy, representing the Prime Minister, can I join with Senator Abetz in congratulating him on his election as Leader of the Government in the Senate and—I am sure on behalf of all senators—in expressing the profound hope that between now and 14 September Ms Gillard and Mr Swan do not find themselves overseas at the same time!

I remind the minister that on more than 650 occasions in the last three years members of the government have promised that it would deliver a budget surplus in 2012-13. Just like the Prime Minister's promise not to introduce a carbon tax 'under the government I lead', why did the Prime Minister break this promise that the budget 'would be back in the black and back in surplus in 2012-13'?

**Senator CONROY** (Victoria—Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity) *(14:13)*: Could I thank you for that. I am sure all Senators do join you in that particular thought—possibly the whole country!

This is a serious question, because those opposite demonstrate their economic illiteracy every single day. They cannot find a place on their front bench for the one person in this chamber who actually knows something about economics, and that is Senator Sinodinos.

*Honourable senators interjecting—*

**Senator CONROY:** Oh, please! Where are you? I cannot even find you anymore, Senator Sinodinos! Where are you hiding? Oh, you are hiding on the front bench! That is a very backbench front bench! We have got one member of those opposite who actually knows something about the economy, just one person who understands.

**Senator Heffernan:** Mr President, on a point of order: if we could turn off the computer we might see if Senator Conroy's mind goes blank.
The PRESIDENT: That is not a point of order, Senator Heffernan.

Senator CONROY: Thank you, Mr President. To be fair, Senator Heffernan does live in the Dark Ages. He proudly boasts he has never sent an email in his life.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Just address the question, Senator Conroy.

Senator CONROY: It is probably still true. Senator Heffernan is nodding. It is still true.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Senator Conroy, come to the question.

Senator CONROY: Mr President, I digress, I apologise. Those opposite have a $70 billion black hole on their own admission in their budget accounting. No doubt they have again hired a Western Australian firm to confirm the audit of their books. This is a firm that was ultimately fined by its own professional agency for the report that it put out. Those opposite may have hired a catering company again to do their mathematics about what the cost of something may be—a catering company that is a discredited company that does an alleged audit. Those opposite demonstrate every single day. They will not give a serious frontbench position to Senator Sinodinos, they will not give him a ministry even if in the future they win government. They will not even make him a minister then. Senator Sinodinos, what have you done wrong?

(Time expired)

Senator BRANDIS (Queensland—Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (14:16): Mr President, I have a supplementary question. I remind the minister of the Prime Minister's statement that, 'You can't run this country if you can't manage its budget.' Given the commitment to returning the budget to surplus in 2012-13 has been the government's own benchmark for its own economic performance for the past three years, doesn't this latest broken promise show that this government by its own test is no longer fit to govern?

Senator CONROY (Victoria—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity) (14:17): Those opposite have a $70 billion black hole that they have not explained yet. They had an $11 billion election budget hole. You would have thought they could manage to avoid increasing that, but they actually have managed to do that on their own admission. When you get into a circumstance where the international economy is slowing and not generating the export income for this country, the economic circumstances are that the revenue streams to our companies have significantly reduced and the numbers come in, the Treasurer stands up and is totally upfront and honest with the Australian public, and those opposite demand the resignation of the government. (Time expired)

Senator BRANDIS (Queensland—Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (14:18): Mr President, I have a second supplementary question. Minister, if the government can break, in its own words, a 'rolled gold, ironclad, non-negotiable promise' that was 'absolutely fundamental', how can the Australian people believe anything this Prime Minister and this government say?

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Order on both sides!

Senator BRANDIS: If the government's own words were 'rolled gold, ironclad, non-negotiable promise' that was 'absolutely fundamental', come hell or high water, how can the Australian people believe anything this Prime Minister and this government say?

Senator CONROY (Victoria—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity) (14:19):
Mr Tony Abbott when he was interviewed not that long ago by Kerry O'Brien said, 'Never believe anything I say unless it is written down.' You have to write it down. He did actually write down that he would not cut Medicare. I remember watching the interview. I remember that then after the election he was asked, 'Did you consider resigning because clearly you have broken a promise, Mr Abbott?' What did he say? 'I did think about it but in the end—

Senator Brandis: Mr President, on a point of order, as you know this question was directed only to the question of the government's broken promise to deliver a budget surplus and each of the words that I have quoted to the minister—as he knows—were words used by members of the government to characterise their own promise to deliver a budget surplus. With respect, an answer to this question on anything other than the broken budget surplus commitment is not directly relevant to the question.

Senator Wong: Mr President, on the point of order, if Senator Brandis is going to ask a highly political question, it is to be anticipated—and we are very democratic on this side, with team work—he might get a political answer. He also made the mistake of using the same words Mr Abbott used in relation to the Medicare promise which was subsequently broken.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is no point of order. I am listening closely to the answer of Senator Conroy at this stage. Senator Conroy still has 33 seconds remaining.

Senator CONROY: Thank you, Mr President. Let us be clear. This economy is one of the strongest economies, if not the strongest, in the OECD. It has—

Senator Brandis: Peter Costello has dumped you. It is time for you to give him up.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Ignore interjections. Interjections are disorderly on both sides.

Senator CONROY: My apologies, Mr President. I should ignore Senator Brandis's bleatings on behalf of Mr Costello. But let us be clear: unemployment would be at 5.2 per cent if it was not for the 17,000 jobs being lost in Queensland because of the Newman government. Unemployment has gone up because the Victorian government has stalled the Victorian economy. (Time expired)

Clean Energy Finance Corporation

Senator MILNE (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (14:21): My question is to the Minister representing the Treasurer, Minister Wong. It relates to the coalition's policy to abolish the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, which is a $10 billion Greens initiative secured in the clean energy package. Will the minister confirm, as the Greens have done today in writing to the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, that the government will not support any moves in the federal parliament now or in the future to abolish this critically important institution for the rollout of renewable energy, for jobs growth, innovation and national economic competitiveness?

Senator WONG (South Australia—Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (14:22): I thank the Senator for the first question to me for 2013. In relation to the CEFC the only reporting I have seen on that is in the context of a few more stunts from the opposition to try to distract from anything of weight and anything that is of policy relevance to the Australian people. Yet, what we have seen from this opposition is more stunts and an assertion by the shadow Attorney-General—an incorrect
assertion which I note he is crab walking away from—about caretaker conventions and what that means, and Mr Hunt trying to generate a bit of press by writing letters and demanding that people in a statutory body do something or not do something. Everybody in Australia knows all of this is designed to distract attention from the fact that those opposite simply have no plans for the future of the nation.

In relation to the proposal to which the Senator refers, the Senator would be aware that is not the only cut that the coalition have proposed. As the Leader of the Government in the Senate has reminded us, the coalition also want to take money from families with children at school by abolishing the Schoolkids Bonus, and they want to take money from low-income Australians. These are the priorities of the Leader of the Opposition, who pretends to everybody that he is the worker's champion. Meanwhile, his secret plan really is to take the knife to the social services of working Australians, and one of the few things he is prepared to front up on is that he is going to ensure that the tax breaks that we are giving, as a government, to working Australians are ripped back, taken back, and—this is the policy we might have come to shortly—his plan to increase the taxation for low-income earners' superannuation. *(Time expired)*

**Senator MILNE** (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (14:24): I thank the Minister, but I ask her again in a supplementary question: will she confirm that the government will not support any move in the federal parliament to abolish this critically important institution, and does the government concede that the renewable energy target is not sufficient on its own to promote private sector investment in technologies already established elsewhere, like solar thermal plants? Can she confirm that without the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, Australia will be denied concentrated solar power and lose competitiveness in the green economic race?

**Senator WONG** (South Australia—Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (14:25): Some aspects of the question are probably better addressed to the Minister representing the Minister for Climate Change, certainly in relation to the Renewable Energy Target. I will seek to deal with what I can in terms of the Treasury portfolio, which is the Clean Energy Finance Corporation. I am a little bemused by the request for the government to reassert existing policy, which is that we supported the passage of the CEFC through the parliament. We have appointed people to its board. It is government policy. I acknowledge it arose out of the negotiation in the context of Clean Energy Future package. It remains government policy. There is no change in government policy in that regard, so I am not sure whether the Senator is seeking anything further than that. I make this point: what we do see in this debate is a focus by the opposition on process stories that they are seeking to generate—*(Time expired)*

**Senator MILNE** (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (14:26): Mr President, I ask a second supplementary question. I ask the Minister: what is the impact on business certainty and investor confidence, particularly for those businesses transitioning to a low-carbon economy, of the coalition's policy to dismantle emissions trading and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation?

**Senator WONG** (South Australia—Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (14:26): On this issue, Senator Milne has, in fact, touched on one of the worst aspects of the opposition's position, which is their complete disregard for business confidence.
and for the certainty which underpins investment confidence—complete disregard for investment certainty in the area of energy and in the area of climate policy. What we do know from businesses is that they want certainty. People have long-term investment time frames, and what we have from those opposite is a deliberate campaign to undermine that investment certainty. The issue here is those opposite would much rather play politics than see the nation succeed. They would always rather play politics than see business confidence high. They would always rather be aggressively negative than see good results on the economic front. *(Time expired)*

**Economy**

Senator JOYCE (Queensland—Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (14:27): My question is to the Minister the Finance and Deregulation and Minister representing the Treasurer, Senator Wong. I refer the Minister to the fact that the Reserve Bank of Australia data has the government currently borrowing $27.8 billion in the first six months of this financial year, and we are now in excess of $262 billion in gross debt. Given that this is a larger amount than what the government borrowed in the first six months of the 2009-10 financial year, why is the government borrowing more money now than during the height of the global financial crisis?

Senator WONG (South Australia—Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (14:28): Senator Joyce really does the opposition no credit when it comes to their economic credibility, and given the looks on the faces of the coalition front bench, I think people would agree with me on that side, because when Senator Joyce stands up a couple of those over there who might have some inkling about these issues just drop their heads. This is the man who seeks high office as a minister, should the coalition win government.

The PRESIDENT: Senator Wong, come to the answer.

Senator WONG: In relation to the government's debt position, I make two points: the first is that net debt, as a percentage of GDP was 10 per cent in 2011-12. That is around one-tenth the level of the major advanced economies. Under this government we see this nation with a AAA credit rating with a stable outlook from all three international credit-rating agencies. But Senator Joyce wants to come in here and say that he knows more than everyone else in the markets and everyone else in the rating agencies.

Senator Joyce: Mr President, I rise on a point of order on relevance. Why has the government borrowed more money during the last six months than at the height of the global financial crisis?

Senator Conroy interjecting—

Senator Joyce: Would the Leader of the Government in the Senate stop interjecting—otherwise can we put the other bloke back?

The PRESIDENT: There is no point of order. The minister is answering the question. The minister has 47 seconds remaining.

Senator WONG: Senator Sinodinos is leaving the chamber. He cannot wait for your third question, Senator—or even your second question. Gross debt as a percentage of GDP is 18.4 per cent in 2011-12 and 2012-13. I take from that question an acknowledgement, which is an unusual one from the opposition, that there was in fact a global financial crisis. The opposition opposed the government's stimulus package, opposed the action that saved 200,000 jobs. One thing we know from that decision and from so many others is that it is the people
on this side of the chamber who care about Australian jobs; it is the Labor Party who care about jobs, not those opposite. *(Time expired)*

**Senator Joyce** (Queensland—Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (14:31): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. There was not an answer there, because they are not capable of one. I refer to the minister’s media release in May 2011 in which she claimed that the government has delivered the fastest fiscal consolidation in modern budget history. Now that the government is breaking its promise to deliver a budget surplus in 2012-13 and continues to borrow at a record pace, will the minister now concede that this claim that she made is false?

**Senator Wong** (South Australia—Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (14:32): Mr President, pardon me—the benefit of having a daughter in child care is you get every cold there is. It is the case that this government has made clear the challenges as a result of receiving much less revenue than was anticipated.

**Senator Joyce** interjecting—

**Senator Wong**: The $70 billion is where you start in terms of how much you have to cut to return the budget to surplus. Those are not my words—they are Mr Robb’s words; they are Mr Hockey’s words. We know where you will start. You will start with low-income Australians—3.6 million Australians who get a tax cut under this government on their superannuation will be in the firing line. These are Tory values in action: ‘Let’s go after working people’s superannuation.’

**Senator Joyce** interjecting—

**Senator Joyce**: Mr President, the Leader of the Government in the Senate should realise that he is now a leader and should act like one. I have a point of order on relevance. It is about the claim that the minister herself made that this is the fastest fiscal consolidation in modern budget history. She made that claim. Does she stand by it or not?

**Senator Jacinta Collins**: Mr President, on the point of order: again the opposition is monopolising time in question time with these spurious points of order. All that Senator Joyce has done is reread his question. He has not presented any rational argument for why Senator Wong has not been relevant to that question. I suggest she continue with her answer.

**The President**: There is no point of order. The minister is to continue. Minister, you have four seconds.

**Senator Wong**: I will be very clear with the senator: this government— *(Time expired)*

**Senator Joyce** (Queensland—Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (14:34): Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. I remind the minister that the government borrowed $16 billion in the first half of 2009-10 and delivered a $54 billion deficit, $27 billion in the first half of 2010-11 and delivered a $47 billion deficit, and $32 billion in the first half of 2011-12 and delivered a $43 billion deficit. Is the finance minister able to tell us or even fathom a guess at what the deficit will be this year?

**Senator Wong** (South Australia—Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (14:35): I remind the senator of a number of facts which those opposite dislike. This economy is 13 per cent larger than when the government was elected.

**Senator Brandis interjecting**—

**Senator Joyce**: If you look at the United Kingdom—and I know Senator Brandis always looks to mother England for
his inspiration—their economy is smaller. We are 13 per cent larger and their economy is smaller than prior to the global financial crisis. We are, as I said, one of only eight economies in the world with a AAA credit rating with a stable outlook from all three major rating agencies.

The stimulus package that this government implemented saved 200,000 Australian jobs—200,000 families were not put on the unemployment queues, as those opposite would have. There is one party in the chamber that cares about jobs and it is the Australian Labor Party. It is most certainly not those opposite. (Time expired)

Queensland Floods

Senator MOORE (Queensland) (14:36): My question is also on behalf of Senator Furner and is to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Minister Assisting on Queensland Floods Recovery, Senator Ludwig. Can the minister please update the Senate on the flood situation in Queensland and outline what assistance the federal government is providing?

Senator LUDWIG (Queensland—Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Minister Assisting on Queensland Floods Recovery) (14:36): I thank Senator Moore and Senator Furner for their continued interest in this matter. Over the summer, we passed the two-year anniversary of the floods and cyclones that ravaged Queensland in 2010 and 2011. Unfortunately, in Queensland this summer, we again faced natural disasters caused by heavy rainfall from ex-tropical Oswald. In particular, as a consequence, communities were shattered and lives torn apart. During this crisis period, the government activated immediate assistance to protect lives and communities. We activated the Australian government disaster response plan to deploy support and physical assets into the affected areas. Emergency Management Australia officers integrated into state crisis and response centres to link the Commonwealth and state management efforts.

At present, 358 ADF personnel are still deployed across the region, including 222 in Bundaberg specifically. They are performing critical work in supporting the clean-up, reopening key transport routes and providing specialised support—including today beginning work to reopen the Don Tallon Bridge, a part of the key critical infrastructure links between north and south Bundaberg—and working to support families, communities, primary producers and small businesses. The Commonwealth is also providing financial support to those who are worst hit. Already we have rolled out significant Commonwealth funding to clean up and rebuild communities, provide emergency payments to families, support farmers and small businesses with clean-up and recovery grants and support for those employees whose place of work has been damaged. Also available are the Australian government disaster recovery payments which provide, for those eligible, $1,000 for adults and $400 for children to assist—(Time expired)

Senator MOORE (Queensland) (14:38): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Can the minister outline the previous experience of the government in rebuilding Queensland?

Senator LUDWIG (Queensland—Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Minister Assisting on Queensland Floods Recovery) (14:38): The Gillard government has a track record of standing shoulder to shoulder with Queensland to repair, recover and rebuild after natural disasters. After the 2010-11 floods and cyclones, we put in place the right measures to meet the needs of the
community. In times of crisis, and then through the long, hard road of recovery right across Queensland, what Queenslanders need is the right assistance delivered efficiently and effectively for the recovery. That is what this government has done through that whole period, and it continues to support Queensland post those disasters.

In 2011, we saw ways to cut red tape and get on with the sensible solutions to rebuild the shattered infrastructure and also work with Queensland to fix roads and bridges. The Gillard government worked together with the Queensland government to deliver measures such as the Queensland local council package for water and sewerage and repairing damage to Brisbane ferry terminals—(Time expired)

Senator MOORE (Queensland) (14:39): Mr President, I ask a second supplementary question. Given the experience of the government in rebuilding that we have known, can the minister now advise what lessons can be applied to this current series of disasters?

Senator LUDWIG (Queensland—Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Minister Assisting on Queensland Floods Recovery) (14:40): Coming out of the 2010-11 floods and the ongoing rebuilding effort, the Commonwealth and Queensland governments are preparing to manage this disaster through the immediate recovery and rebuild periods. The model of that recovery is still in place and ready to roll out in Queensland again. The government will be able to finalise measures for targeted assistance, streamlined processes and fast track support by striking a renewed national partnership agreement. I am happy to advise the Senate that I was contacted by the Queensland Treasurer earlier today, and that work is now underway. The new NPA, along with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, should deliver on the rebuilding of Queensland. The Commonwealth inspectorate will oversee value for money for the Australian taxpayers. This government is ready to act on that basis because we see the value it delivers for Queensland. (Time expired)

Mining

Senator CORMANN (Western Australia) (14:41): My question is to the minister representing the Treasurer, Senator Wong. With your indulgence, Mr President, before asking the question, may I join in congratulating Senator Wong on her elevation to the position of deputy leader of the government in the Senate. It is a great personal achievement indeed. Given the Gillard government predicted that its minerals resource rent tax would raise $4 billion this financial year when the Prime Minister and the Treasurer first signed the MRRT heads of agreement, followed by a prediction in the most recent budget that it would raise $3 billion this financial year which in turn was followed by a prediction in the most recent Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook that the MRRT would raise just $2 billion this financial year, can the minister confirm how much the MRRT has actually raised this financial year so far?

Senator WONG (South Australia—Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (14:42): I thank Senator Cormann for his kind words—the first part, that is. In relation to the MRRT, it is the case that the government has been upfront about the reduction in revenue from that revenue head, and we were upfront about that at the MYEFO and at the budget. In fact, I think
Senator Cormann asked me quite a number of questions about that. Being from Western Australia as he is, he would know the extent to which the spot price has moved over the last 12 months. He would know the very rapid reduction in the spot price that we saw last year. He should also know that, as a profit-based tax, the MRRT—like the PRRT—is relevant to profitability rather than to volume, which is one of the benefits of this design of the tax.

As the senator knows—and I know this because he has talked quite a lot about this and he certainly has tweeted a lot about it—the financial statements we released in December for the first quarter of the 2012-13 financial year showed $501 million collected in resource rent tax. Whilst total resource rent tax revenue is published every month—if you just stop interjecting then I could finish the answer. I am answering the question, but if you want to interject we can just wait. While a total resource rent tax revenue amount is published every month, the advice from the tax office is that it cannot provide specific information about the first instalment revenue of the MRRT without breaching privacy provisions. As the opposition would know—(Time expired)

Senator Cormann asked me quite a number of questions about that. Being from Western Australia as he is, he would know the extent to which the spot price has moved over the last 12 months. He would know the very rapid reduction in the spot price that we saw last year. He should also know that, as a profit-based tax, the MRRT—like the PRRT—is relevant to profitability rather than to volume, which is one of the benefits of this design of the tax.

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Senator CORMANN (Western Australia) (14:44): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Does the Gillard government really expect people to accept that it can come up with a new tax, make predictions budget after budget about how much the MRRT specifically is expected to raise, spend all the money it thinks the MRRT specifically will raise and, more and then not tell anyone whether the MRRT specifically has or has not raised what the government predicted?

Senator WONG (South Australia—Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (14:44): This government will not do what is urged by the opposition, which is to break the law. We will comply with the law. As the senator would be aware, the administration of tax law is independent of the government. I would, however, make this point in terms of transparency because that is a relevant point and I know it is something Senator Milne has raised. The government has asked Treasury—Opposition senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Order! If you want to debate it, debate it at the end.

Senator WONG: I am responding to the issue of transparency because I understand the concerns of senators. The government has asked Treasury to examine ways to improve transparency so that we can monitor whether large businesses are paying a fair share. Senators may wish to refer to the media release issued by the Assistant Treasurer yesterday on that topic. As I have said previously and as the Treasurer has said, the administration of tax law is independent of government. (Time expired)

Senator CORMANN (Western Australia) (14:46): I have a further supplementary question, Mr President. Will the government provide a revised estimate specifically for MRRT revenue in the next budget as it has in past budgets? If it can provide revised revenue estimates, why can it not provide updates on actual revenue collections also specifically for the MRRT?

Senator WONG (South Australia—Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (14:46): I will repeat this very slowly so that those opposite can understand.

Senator Cormann: There is a difference between estimates and revenue.

Senator WONG: You asked also about revenue. Your question was first about estimates but then you came back to your
specific point and I will respond to that. The ATO has advised that it cannot provide specific information about the MRRT’s first instalment revenue without breaching privacy provisions. I know that is difficult for the senator to understand but that is the advice from the ATO.

Senator Cormann: Mr President, I raise a point of order on the requirement to be directly relevant. The minister clearly did not understand the question. She clearly did not understand the difference between revenue estimates as have been published in budget after budget and actual revenue collections. The question was whether the government would do what they have done in previous budgets and in previous midyear economic and fiscal outlooks, and that is publish information about mining tax revenue estimates.

The PRESIDENT: There is no point of order. I cannot tell the minister how to answer the question. I believe the minister is addressing the question and the minister still has 32 seconds remaining.

Senator Wong: Senator Cormann, I invite you to read your Hansard on that question. I was answering the second part of the question. In relation to the first part, the government will update its estimates in the usual way at the next budget.

Newstart Allowance

Senator Siewert (Western Australia—Australian Greens Whip) (14:48): My question is to the Minister for Human Services, Minister Carr. The minister is aware of the distress caused by the incorrect letter telling single parents that their pensioner concession cards had been cancelled. Is the minister aware of the concerns that some pay arrangements have not been transitioned, direct payments are being dishonoured, utility bills not paid, people are having to wait for Centrelink appointments and demands are growing from people seeking help from not-for-profit organisations because of financial hardship? Is the government monitoring the situation and what have they found? How many people have had to in effect default on their Centrelink arrangements, and what steps is your department taking to resolve these issues in a timely fashion?

Senator Kim Carr (Victoria—Minister for Human Services) (14:49): I thank Senator Siewert for her question. I indicate that she is correct that a letter containing incorrect information was sent to 74,000 people moving from parenting payments to the Newstart allowance. This was a result of human error compounded by a computer-generated letter system. This error in the letter occurred because the advice provided to these people was inserted into an existing template letter which contained the advice to destroy their concession cards. I have also indicated publicly that the department has apologised to those parents for whom this confusion occurred. I have also indicated that this information was completely in contrast to the information that was actually provided directly to the parents concerned in the interviews that were conducted prior to this letter being sent out and that there has been subsequently a further letter sent to all parents indicating the correct information. Parents were personally contacted to help in their move to the Newstart allowance and about 93 per cent of parents moving to the Newstart allowance by 1 January maintained their entitlements and their concessions.

I am advised that about 190 parents contacted the department about concession cards and that parents who remain concerned about their eligibility for a concession card or have destroyed or misplaced their existing card have been advised to contact the department directly or go to their nearest Centrelink office. I understand that that is the
process that has been followed. I have also undertaken to ensure that a proper, thorough review occurs and to take immediate action to prevent this error occurring again. The department is taking increased efforts to scrutinise—(Time expired)

Senator SIEWERT (Western Australia—Australian Greens Whip) (14:51): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Perhaps when the minister is answering this question he can answer the actual question I asked last time, which is what they are doing about all those other issues that I raised. The minister has referred on numerous occasions to the government's supplements as a way of offsetting the cost for families who are transferred onto the lower payment of Newstart. Is the minister aware that families are being advised to use their Schoolkids Bonus to cover their immediate bills and housing costs, which in effect means they are not spending them on school?

Senator KIM CARR (Victoria—Minister for Human Services) (14:51): I am not aware that the department is providing that advice but what I can be clear about is that this is a bonus which the opposition wishes to remove. This is a bonus which will assist parents at this time of increasing costs, as we know, at the beginning of the school year. This is a payment which will assist parents of families with school-age children. It is why we make the payment—to assist parents meet the additional costs that come about at this time of the year.

Senator Siewert: Mr President, I rise on a point of order. I did not ask about what the school bonus was for. I asked the minister to answer my first question, but is he also aware that that advice is being provided to single parents?

The PRESIDENT: I believe the minister is answering the question at this stage. There is no point of order.

Senator KIM CARR: I thank Senator Siewert for her question. I have indicated I was not aware of that advice being provided. I will take steps to establish the accuracy of that matter. I can indicate that not all people who were affected by this policy change were transferred to Newstart allowance. Some people were transferred to carer's payments. Some people have been transferred to disability support pensions. Nine people were in fact transferred to the aged pension. (Time expired)

Senator SIEWERT (Western Australia—Australian Greens Whip) (14:53): Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. In a previous answer to a question that I asked, the minister said that he was not aware that the department was referring people to not-for-profit organisations for help. In fact, that claim was reiterated again this morning at a rally outside parliament. I ask the minister: is this policy of transferring single parents onto Newstart and dropping them into poverty in fact a complete policy failure?

Senator KIM CARR (Victoria—Minister for Human Services) (14:53): The government has made it very clear that we wish to encourage closer links with community services organisations, which of course we know regularly help people who are vulnerable in terms of their access to services. The department contacts parenting payment single recipients to explain their rights to ensure that people are prepared for the changes ahead of those changes being made and to ensure that they have access to streamlined applications for other payments. If people are in financial difficulty, depending on their circumstances, they will also be referred to financial information services officers, information about Centrepay and other financial literacy services that are available through the Department of Human Services. This will
also include the provision of support through social workers and are assessed for their eligibility for the hardship advance crisis payments. The policy intent—(Time expired)

Economy

Senator SINODINOS (New South Wales) (14:55): My question is to the Minister representing the Treasurer, Senator Wong. Congratulations on your appointment as Deputy Leader in the Senate. I refer the minister to legislation that passed the US Congress last week in which the US government debt ceiling was suspended until 18 May 2013. Given that the Treasurer stated on budget night last year: The surplus years are here.

... … …

Surpluses that provide a buffer against global uncertainty and continue to give the Reserve Bank room to cut interest rates …

Can the minister explain why, given the government's own logic, the government will not take active steps to meet the surplus commitment, given the ongoing uncertainty in the global economy?

Senator WONG (South Australia—Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (14:55): I thank Senator Sinodinos for his words and also for his question which, unlike one of the ones earlier, I can actually understand. The senator refers to the US Congress decisions. It is true that that is one of the issues on the global economy's horizon which has caused uncertainty and volatility. As the senator would know, as the US last year headed towards the so-called fiscal cliff, that certainly created some concern and uncertainty in global markets. Obviously, there are still a lot of matters on the fiscal front that the US needs to resolve in terms of their medium-term fiscal settings, and the debt cap issue is not yet resolved. The senator is right to ask the question which has at its heart: what is the right thing for the Australian economy to ensure its resilience at a time of global uncertainty? The government took a decision in December, faced with very substantial revenue downgrades, that it would not be in the interests of jobs and growth for us to continue to cut spending to offset revenue downgrades. We have done so. We have done that in the past. If you look at our last budgets and the mid-year review you will see that the government has not only offset all new expenditure from policy decision since mid-2009; we have also taken savings to deal with revenue reductions. Those reductions in revenue are across all—particularly all profit based—revenue heads. The government took the decision it did because we do have, front and centre, Australian jobs and growth in the economy in our minds, and the resilience of the economy, we believe, required the government to take the approach that the Treasurer announced, which is that we would not continue to cut expenditure to reflect revenue downgrades because that would affect jobs. (Time expired)

Senator SINODINOS (New South Wales) (14:57): Mr President, I ask my first supplementary question. Given that the Australian government budget is due to be delivered just days before the US debt ceiling deadline on 14 May 2013, what contingency steps will the government take to ensure that the government's budget numbers presented to the parliament are not materially irrelevant if the US Congress is unable to resolve its structural budget issues?

Senator WONG (South Australia—Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (14:58): Mr President, that is one—a very important one—amongst a number of uncertainties in the global outlook with which the government has to contend. It is the case that we have seen a lot of movement in the global economy and a lot of
uncertainty. We have seen as a result of this and also the global financial crisis an impact particularly on government revenues; and, as the senator would know, growth in the nominal economy has been substantially less than its long-term average despite real GDP holding up, and that reflects in government revenues. So the economic question is: what in those circumstances is best for Australians and what is best for Australian jobs? I would make the point that under this government, as a result of the fiscal policy settings the government as put in place, the Reserve Bank has had the room to move and that interest rates are lower than they were under the Howard government. As a result, families with mortgages are certainly better off. (Time expired)

Senator SINODINOS (New South Wales) (14:59): Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. In the event of an economic shock resulting from the US or elsewhere, can the minister confirm whether the government would implement a discretionary fiscal stimulus package involving new spending ahead of the federal election on 14 September?

Senator WONG (South Australia—Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (14:59): I do not think that it is very good for anybody to be talking in hypotheticals about what might occur in the global economy and in the domestic economy—and I do not put Senator Sinodinos necessarily into this category; he is certainly not at the extreme end. I note that the opposition are very happy to talk down the Australian economy even though that is not a good thing for jobs and for confidence. The question for the government is always: how do you ensure and build the resilience of the economy in circumstances which are volatile? We took decisions during the global financial crisis which were absolutely motivated by and centred upon the objective of ensuring that we supported jobs and growth. I note that the opposition opposed that stimulus and the decision that the government made in December, and the decisions that the government will make in this upcoming budget will be guided by the same Labor values and the imperatives of ensuring jobs and growth.

Education Funding

Senator MARSHALL (Victoria) (15:00): My question is to the Minister representing the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, Senator Kim Carr. With more than 800,000 students going back to Victorian schools last week, what is the government doing to ensure a decent start for all?

Senator KIM CARR (Victoria—Minister for Human Services) (15:01): I thank Senator Marshall for his question and his continuing interest in the education of Victorian students. Education of course is the first priority of a Labor government because it is critical to the future of this nation. We believe that schools are the gateways to a richer and a fairer society, a society whereby one's income or one's postcode should not determine one's future, unlike those opposite who promote the idea that education does not matter.

I read their recent utterances, their directions, their so-called values for policy priorities—and what do we find? At priority No. 17 we find education—No. 17, that is their priority! They have the view of those who hide in the deep, dark recesses of ignorance. That is what they wish to peddle. We see today that there is a senator here who has yet to turn on the computer and who thinks that this is a path to a modern world. We saw today that there is a senator here who has yet to turn on the computer and who thinks that this is a path to a modern world. We see nothing in their statement about the $2.8 billion cuts that they propose to make to education. We know that their namesakes in Victoria under Mr Baillieu are cutting half a
billion dollars from the Victorian education budget.

**Senator Heffernan:** Mr President, I rise on a point of order. I have not turned a computer on. Eddie Obeid wishes he had never turned a computer on.

**The President:** Order! That is not a point of order. Senator Kim Carr, continue. You have got 24 seconds remaining.

**Senator KIM CARR:** That is a confession—he has not turned on a computer! That is what I like—modernity in the Liberal Party! The people of this country know the value of education and that is why this government is committed to genuine funding reform. Our record is absolutely clear. We have doubled the investment in education and we have modernised every school facility. *(Time expired)*

**Senator MARSHALL** (Victoria) (15:03): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. I thank the minister for that answer. Is the government concerned by the disproportionate impacts of Premier Baillieu's cuts on schools in disadvantaged communities, as reported in the *Age* this weekend?

**Senator KIM CARR** (Victoria—Minister for Human Services) (15:05): Well may we question the commitment of Tories around this country to education. We know that Victorians are doing this very much today. The average Victorian school is starting this year with a $10,000 cut as a result of a reduction in education funding. Mr Baillieu has taken away $300 from the School Start Bonus. He has cut free schoolbook distribution programs. He has cut literacy tutors. He has even cut the Free Fruit Friday program. Students will notice all of these things and, given that, you have got to ask the question: can we reach agreement with state governments that behave like that? We have faith that they will see the light, that they will come round and understand. That is why we say that if you want to actually join with us in a new partnership agreements—

**Senator Conroy:** Mr President, I ask that further questions be placed on the *Notice Paper*.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE:**

**ADDITIONAL ANSWERS**

**New South Wales: Grazing Trial**

**Senator CONROY** (Victoria—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital
Tuesday, 5 February 2013

Economy and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity (15:06): Mr Deputy President, on 29 November 2012 during question time, Senator McKenzie asked me a question as Minister representing the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. I seek leave to incorporate the answer.

Leave granted.

The answer read as follows—

MINISTER FOR SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT, WATER, POPULATION AND COMMUNITIES

(Senate Question without Notice)

On 29 November 2012 during question time, Senator McKenzie asked me a question as Minister representing the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities:

The ACT Labor government continues to use grazing as a fuel reduction measure, recent media reports indicate. Indeed, in the last fire season, the Fire management Unit stated: 'Grazing is a crucial component of the ACT's hazard reduction program'. As we head into summer do your support the ACT Labor government’s continued use of strategic grazing to keep the territory safe from fire?"

The Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities has provided the following answer to the honourable Senator's question:

On 22 October 2011, a regulation came into effect which removed any doubt that grazing of domestic stock within the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves has a significant impact on the values of that place.

This reinforces the Australian government's commitment to ensuring appropriate protection is in place for the unique environment of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves.

The ACT Government's 2011/12 Bushfire Operations Plan outlines the hazard reduction strategies to be employed throughout ACT parks and reserves. While the ACT proposes to use grazing as a hazard reduction strategy across more than 7,000 hectares of the ACT, it will not be used in the two parks or reserves which are part of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves. These are the Namadgi National Park (the ACT’s only national park) and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

I note that the only fuel reduction activities planned in these parks/reserves are burning and slashing. I am advised that grazing is not used for hazard reduction in any areas of particular conservation and recreational value within the ACT.

Indigenous Employment

Senator WONG (South Australia—Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister for Finance and Deregulation) (15:07): On 29 November 2012, Senator Payne asked me a question in my capacity representing the Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development. I seek leave to incorporate into Hansard some further information.

Leave granted.

The answer read as follows—

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has advised that the Booroongen Djugan Aboriginal Corporation is a member of both the IEP Employment and Economic Development and Business Support panels. Currently the organisation has two IEP contracts valued at approximately $517,000. These contracts are to place Indigenous people who have a disability into jobs across various industries in the New South Wales Mid North Coast region and train indigenous people (targeting school leavers) in the aged care industry at Booroongen Djugans's aged care facilities. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has advised the Minister that there is no outstanding IEP application from Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has advised that the Replay Group currently receives funding under the IEP for two contracts valued at $2,295,000. A
variation to one of its current contracts was approved in late 2012 to allow the placement of an extra 37 indigenous participants. The contract variation represents a total contract value increase of $185,000.

The Government remains committed to the IEP and will fund over $650 million to the program over the next four years to 2015-16. Growing interest in the IEP from employers and providers, coupled with the expansion of the number of IEP panel members, has seen a significant increase in demand. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations consider applications against existing selection criteria, and is progressively working through existing applications on a priority basis.

The Government is committed to a comprehensive approach to closing the employment gap, involving boosting education and training, creating better transition pathways for school leavers and strengthening employment services for Indigenous Australians.

Carbon Pricing

Senator LUDWIG (Queensland—Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Minister Assisting on Queensland Floods Recovery) (15:07): In respect of Senator McKenzie's question to me on 20 September 2012, I seek leave to incorporate additional information into Hansard on behalf of the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government.

Leave granted.

The answer read as follows—

In respect of Senator McKenzie's question on 20 September 2012 I seek leave to incorporate additional information into Hansard on behalf of the into The Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government.

The Government is supporting jobs and assisting businesses to transition to a clean energy economy. Regional Australia will benefit from the $8.6 billion Jobs and Competitiveness Package, the $1.257 billion Coal Sector Jobs Package, the $300 million Steel Transformation Plan and $1.2 billion to support industry investment under the Clean Technology Programs.

The Government will monitor the potential impacts of the carbon price on regions where impacts are acute and structural adjustment assistance may be required. Under the $200 million Clean Energy Future—Regional Structural Adjustment Assistance (RSAA) the Government will provide, if required, structural adjustment assistance to support workers, regions and communities that remain strongly affected by carbon pricing after other forms of assistance have been provided (this will be determined on a case-by-case basis as needed).

The Government will provide $6.2 million over seven years from 2012-13 to the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport to monitor the effects of carbon pricing on regions. The cost of this measure will be met by reallocating funding from the $200 million Clean Energy Future—Regional Structural Adjustment Assistance (RSAA) program.

The monitoring framework for the RSAA program will provide the capacity to investigate and verify claims about the impacts of carbon pricing and when considered necessary to design appropriate responses where responses are not already available under the Clean Energy Future program.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE:

TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS

Economy

Budget

Senator SCULLION (Northern Territory—Deputy Leader of The Nationals) (15:07): I move:

That the Senate take note of the answers given by the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (Senator Conroy) and the Minister for Finance and Deregulation (Senator Wong) to questions without notice asked by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate (Senator Abetz), Senator Brandis, the Leader of The Nationals in the Senate (Senator Joyce) and Senator Sinodinos today relating to the Budget.
Today marks the first day of parliament since Julia Gillard sent Wayne Swan to dump the government's—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Scullion, refer to the Prime Minister by her correct title, please.

Senator SCULLION: Today marks the first day of parliament since the Prime Minister sent Wayne Swan to dump the government's 'come hell or high water', 'failure is not an option' guarantee to return the budget to surplus in 2013.

Senator Wong: You are sensitive about Tony Abbott. Show the same courtesy.

Senator SCULLION: I was not sensitive about anyone, Senator.

Senator Wong: You are; you are very sensitive.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Senator Scullion and Senator Wong, you need to refer to members of the other place by their correct titles.

Senator SCULLION: I will correct that and refer to Wayne Swan as the Treasurer, Mr Deputy President. So we have had this litany of garrulous assertions from both the Prime Minister and the Treasurer. I understand that the government as a whole—and Senator Wong has obviously made her contribution. I understand that on some 142 occasions she promised that a surplus would be delivered in 2012-13. We have heard today that, across government, 650 promises, the same promise, were made. Absolutely certain that this would be delivered, the entire government has come behind this promise.

The Prime Minister has promised this on 165 occasions since becoming the Prime Minister on 24 June. 'Failure is not an option' was the catchcry. It is probably a little like 'You won't have a carbon tax under a government I lead'. Something that is said with the sort of gravitas that the Australian people should believe. She followed up by guaranteeing that. 'Guarantee' is a word that people associate with something that is not going to be wishy-washy. This was a core and fundamental promise. The Treasurer then went on to promise it on another 366 occasions. On 366 occasions the Treasurer stood up and said that he would deliver it 'come hell or high water'—again using the sort of vernacular that is woven around something that is absolutely core and something that Australians can trust. It is the sort of wording they can put their trust in.

The Prime Minister said, 'You can't run this country if you can't manage its budget.' That makes sense. If you cannot manage a budget you cannot run the country, and we would agree with the Prime Minister on that. I am sure a lot of other Australians thought that was very sensible. The Prime Minister then went on to say: 'We've saved jobs, we've stayed out of recession and—prophetically—we are back in surplus.' 'We are back in surplus!' Not something that has actually been forecast but we are actually back in surplus. Many Australians would have thought: 'Well, I haven't been following politics but that's a relief. That is a relief.' I do know that the Prime Minister does bang on a bit about the cost of living, interest rates and all those things that an unbalanced budget can provide, so I am probably feeling a bit relieved.'

That was to the McKell Institute on 4 July, and we all know now that that was complete rubbish. Why? Quite sensibly it is because it will help with relieving cost-of-living pressures. This is the rationale. Wayne Swan said, 'Coming back to surplus is about making sure we help those people sitting around the kitchen table figuring out how to make ends meet.' In that regard, he said: We'll be back in the black by 2012-13, on time, as promised. The alternative - meandering back to
surplus — would compound the pressures in our economy and push up the cost of living for pensioners and working people.

He went on to say, 'It's important we bring the budget back to the black in 2013 because we don't want to exacerbate price pressures in the economy during the period.' Those are matters that were continued by the Prime Minister, who said it was important for families and that 'It's the best thing we can do for families under cost-of-living pressures not add to inflation pressures and ensure that in this budget we won't.'

Of course people were quite relieved about this. In my view, this is clearly an acknowledgement that their decision to abandon the policy of delivering a surplus will lead to additional inflationary pressures, will lead to additional increases in the cost of living and the pain for every single Australian. Everybody understands that the pain in the wallet at the moment is the toughest pain. If the Australian people could not trust the Prime Minister on the carbon tax and the surplus guarantee, how can they now be asked to believe her when she says, 'We care about any element of the cost-of-living pressures on families,' or in fact believe any promise she now makes on the eve of this new election?

Senator GALLACHER (South Australia) (15:13): I rise to participate in this debate to take note of answers to questions without notice today. The situation we are in is, I suppose, very open and clear. We have an opposition that is pursuing a budget surplus and we have a government that is pursuing a budget surplus and we have a government that is pursuing a budget surplus, with an underlying net debt position at the moment of 10 per cent of GDP — that is, one-tenth the level of most other advanced economies. So, in a nutshell: do not worry about the economy, do not worry about the people who work in it and do not worry about the people in it who need to be educated or looked after. Get a surplus. On the other hand, we have a responsible position, taking into consideration all of the global factors. If we were just to look at one simple global factor which has come to light today: the seasonally adjusted trade deficit of $427 million in December 2012 is an 85 per cent improvement on the revised $2.8 billion November deficit. The volatility that exists outside our control is what impacts on the budget.

I am sure those opposite know this fully well. They know it better than the average punter out there who votes. But they see no tactical or political advantage in telling the truth or putting the real case up. They want to confect a situation where they malign the reputation of the Treasurer, malign the reputation of the Prime Minister and advance their ruthless, short-term political aims.

Basically, they lost the last election and never got over it; two of their mates came to the right side of the table and from that day forward everything has been about destruction. Nothing has been positive. Last night we saw swinging voters say, 'We know the position on deficit; we know the position on surplus. Can you cost a policy and tell us about it?' And the answer was, 'No, we're not going to. We will do something before September 14, but we are not going to tell the average voter anything at all about what our policies cost, or what we would be doing.'

All I can say as a very new senator is that I have seen the results of some of the spending. I have travelled the length and breadth of the electorate of Grey. I have seen and heard from the small business operators who kept apprentices on. They have built trade training centres, they have built Building the Education Revolution libraries and science facilities. And that stimulus funding has kept people in rural
communities, and a lot of Liberal-held seats, in the game—in the economy.

Let us look at some of the simple things that the Labor government is doing with parental leave. Parental leave is great for the time that you enjoy to have your child at home and either partner looks after it. But what is it really about? It is about people participating in the economy. It is about participation rates; it is about women participating at a greater level than they have been. It is about them enjoying paid employment, contributing to the economy and growing the size of the pie.

As with the NDIS: the Productivity Commission highlights the fact that we can get a genuine economic benefit out of putting these very notable and worthwhile reforms into our economy. And there is a cost, but the cost will be paid over the long term.

I think, really, that the situation we are in is that Labor governments do not walk away from the economy, their constituents or the population in pursuit of a symbol of a surplus. We want a surplus, and we will deliver a surplus. The reality is that we do not ditch people, we do not gut the economy and we do not stagnate the economy. We prime the economy because it is in the best interests of all Australians to be able to contribute, to earn, to work, to have a useful life, to pay their taxes and to provide for their children.

I think that is the ultimate difference between the debate on this side and the debate from the other side, which is purely short-term electoral advantage. The vomit principle is alive and well on the other side. If they continue to repeat their untruths and their statements, they believe the electorate will suddenly wake up and say, 'I've heard that 1,400 times—it must be true'.

Senator Gallacher for putting those matters on the table and explaining what he feels the benefits are of Labor's administration. But as questions in question time today very amply demonstrated, the problem with making promises like paid maternity leave, NDISs and so forth is that, worthy though they might be, you have to deliver them sustainably. And to deliver those sorts of promises sustainably to the Australian people, you have to have balanced budgets. That is at the very nub of these sorts of processes, because without balanced budgets you end up having to borrow money.

The coalition has made very clear that we stand for the kind of fiscal management which brings Australia back to sustainable, continuous budget surpluses of the kind that Australians saw almost without interruption throughout the days of the Howard government. That is the kind of process which brings Australians the real benefits that Senator Gallacher has spoken about.

This government inherited a very strong fiscal position. Effectively, it inherited $45 billion of assets tucked away. It inherited no net debt and it inherited a budget in surplus. Of course, it has turned that around in just a few short years into massive deficits and into enormous amounts of debt—$107 billion worth of debt today, climbing upwards at the rate of about $100 million a day. One hundred million dollars a day! A billion dollars every 10 days that this government is in office.

The problem for the government is, of course, that today it faces a struggle toward the light to reach its surplus. It was supposed to be delivered this financial year; it was promised faithfully that it would be delivered. In fact, it was promised on more than one occasion that it had actually been delivered. I received in my letterbox a note from Senator Lundy, Community News—I
gather along with everybody else in the ACT—in which she said:

The 2012 Federal Budget has not only returned to surplus as promised—it has ensured that families and small business will share in the benefits of the resources boom. Well, the budget has not been returned to surplus. Presumably, she is referring there to the mining tax delivering benefits of the resources boom to families and small business. Of course, we know that the mining tax has delivered nothing to the Australian people today. Not one penny! She went on to say at the bottom of the page:

How do we compare on jobs and the economy?

Under Labor:

Our Budget has been returned to surplus in 2012/13.

We find a few weeks or months after that page was delivered into everybody’s letterbox in the ACT that in fact it has not been returned to surplus. The budget is very much still in the red, and it looks like being in the red for quite some time to come.

I think that Senator Gallacher and others on that side of the chamber who extol the virtues of the government’s budget process need to understand that getting to a surplus this year, or next year or whenever it is going to be, if they ever do it—and I have my doubts—is just the beginning of their problems. Because, once they get to a surplus, they have then got to start to use whatever that surplus is to pay for the mountain of promises which the government have already made to the Australian people and for which there is no plausible means of delivering.

You have promised an NDIS, at a cost of $10½ billion a year, once fully operational. You are then paying another $3.7 billion in new money over five years for aged care. You have promised low-paid workers another $1 billion. You have promised to buy a number of key assets in defence—$36 billion for submarines and $16 billion for Joint Strike Fighters. You have not promised but you have had to find the money to pay for your mistakes in border protection. You are now paying $2.1 billion to reopen the Nauru and Manus Island refugee processing centres. You are increasing the refugee intake, costing the Australian taxpayer $1.4 billion over the forward estimates. There are also the Gonski recommendations, costing $6½ billion a year once fully operational. Today, you cannot even reach a budget surplus five years after weathering a fiscal crisis—five years ago the GFC happened. You still cannot get to a simple budget surplus, a wafer-thin budget surplus of $1.1 billion. How are you going to pay for those promises? This does not add up. Labor is off the rails with this and all Australians can see that. (Time expired)

Senator THORP (Tasmania) (15:23): It confuses and bewilders me on certain levels why it is that the opposition focuses so much on one single issue when it comes to describing what is the Australian economy, an economy that the Prime Minister rightly referred to as ‘one of the seven economic wonders of the world’. Our strong fiscal management has meant that we are the envy of treasurers the globe over. It was the Australian Labor government that bullet-proofed the Australian economy and kept it out of recession during the worst economic downturn in three quarters of a century, which those opposite seem incapable of grasping.

Since December 2007, when Labor came to power, the Japanese economy has shrunk around 1½ per cent. The euro area economy has shrunk almost two per cent, the US economy has grown by merely 1.25 per cent,
yet the Australian economy has grown around 13 per cent over the same time. That meant that we were able to protect jobs and can still protect jobs, as we did during the global financial crisis. In fact, around 840,000 jobs have been created since we were first elected. In contrast to that, the completely irresponsible Newman Liberal-National government in Queensland has been shedding jobs at an average of 65 jobs per day. Mr Abbott himself, the Leader of the Opposition, has referred to the outstanding job being done by Campbell Newman and his band of what I would only describe as economic illiterates. If this is the template by which the opposition leader intends to govern the country, should he ever have the privilege of taking the position of Prime Minister, we should all be very nervous.

As far as interest rates are concerned, it is this government's strict fiscal discipline that puts downward pressure on interest rates. Interest rates are now at three per cent, compared to 6.75 per cent when those opposite left office. Compared to when the Liberals were last in government, a family with a mortgage of $300,000 is now saving around $5,000 a year on a mortgage.

We are actually giving working families a tax cut—from July last year—so that they get more money in their fortnightly pay cheques. Currently, we are experiencing a record investment of more than $36 billion in projects around the country. With this obsession about a surplus, those opposite are failing to recognise that Labor has done a remarkable job of steering the country through the financial crisis. We are one of the strongest economies in the world, we have low unemployment, contained inflation, solid growth, record levels of investment and low debt. Tony Abbott has no plan for the country, just destructive negativity—

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Senator Thorp, 'Mr Abbott,' please.

**Senator THORP:** Mr Deputy President, I beg your pardon: Mr Abbott. 'Misterabbit' just runs off the tongue. He comes from a strong tradition of irresponsible economic management. The International Monetary Fund itself—

**Senator Fifield interjecting—**

**Senator Thorp:** Those opposite may find this interesting. The International Monetary Fund itself has run a fine tooth comb through the financial records of 55 countries over 200 years. It has identified only two periods of wasteful spending in Australia in recent years, both in the period of the Howard Liberal government.

In contrast, Nobel Laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz has said: 'The federal Labor government saved the country from the worst of the global financial crisis and only Labor has the proven credentials to maintain economic strength in the face of adversity.'

Although our economy remains resilient, we also know that the impact on taxes caused by global volatility and uncertainty, lower commodity prices and the high dollar means that tax revenue is way down. But this government is responsible and does not believe that cutting harder or filling a hole in tax revenue that jeopardises jobs is the way to go. We believe in a very strong future. As a Tasmanian, my main concern is what would happen should the economic policies of those opposite ever be applied to my dear state of Tasmania, taking over $600 billion per year out of our coffers.

**Senator Ryan** (Victoria) (15:28): Senator Thorp, who spoke before me, commenced her address by expressing some degree of confusion as to why the opposition focuses on this issue. I will tell you why the opposition focuses on this issue: because every dollar borrowed is a dollar of future
taxation. Every dollar borrowed is pushing off the cost of what you wish to do today to future generations. And what this government is doing, with the much-lauded Schoolkids Bonus it was talking about in question time today, is actually borrowing from the very kids whose parents are receiving it, just like it did with the stimulus to build overpriced school halls that crowded out the schoolyard—

Senator Wong: That you guys turned up to the openings of!

Senator Ryan: I went to one: the school my mother teaches at. I plead guilty that I actually went to one. Just as this government did with the disastrous stimulus program of 2009 where money was borrowed from the kids in schools, in the very halls, to build those halls at a cost higher than any other school halls had ever—

Senator Wong interjecting—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, Senator Wong! Resume your seat, Senator Ryan.

Senator Wong interjecting—

Senator Carol Brown interjecting—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, Senator Wong and Senator Brown! Senator Ryan, you have the call and please do not acknowledge interjections. Direct your remarks to the chair.

Senator Ryan: For the information of Senator Wong, I actually did explain to the principal and deputy principal of the school that I voted against it—I did; at the very opening. It happened to be the school I went to and my mother teaches at. So, if you want to begrudge me that, Senator Wong, do not question my honesty.

Why this betrayal of a surplus promise is so important is that it continues the pattern of excuses provided by this government as they seek to justify what has been an unprecedented increase in spending—one of the fastest run-ups in spending by a Commonwealth government since the Whitlam era. The government like to talk about the burden of taxation but they do not want to talk about the burden of taxation plus what they are borrowing. We now have hundreds of billions of borrowings, to which Australia is now exposed. We are a capital-importing country, and to have a capital-importing country add government debt to the burden of private sector debt exposes this country to risk.

What we have seen is excuse after excuse. We saw the global financial crisis. The write-down initially in revenues in that year, I believe, was marginally greater than the surplus the government were actually bequeathed by the previous government. We have seen the government complain about the very resources investment that Senator Thorp talked about earlier. Last year we had the government complaining that it was this very investment that was depressing tax revenues and making it harder for the government to balance the books.

But the truth is this: revenues for this government today are more than $70 billion higher this year than in the year they came to office—$70 billion more this year than when they came to office. What that tells the people is that the government have a spending problem—a huge spending problem. The government are unable to restrain themselves, not just in spending increasing tax revenues; they are unable to restrain themselves from borrowing to pork-barrel and borrowing to send out money to favoured groups at the expense of future taxpayers in this country.

This surplus was the litmus test this government set themselves. This surplus was bragged about during the stimulus debates of early 2009. I remember two budgets ago the
headline in one of our newspapers was 'Back in the black'. Whenever anyone on this side questioned whether or not they would bring forward a surplus, they were pilloried. They were accused of being economically irresponsible and, ironically, not having faith in the Treasury. But we now know that the government were bluffing all along, because all we hear is excuse after excuse as to why they have been unable to control their spending.

We are going to hear more, I imagine, in the lead-up to the next budget about savings or 'saves'—to use the jargon the government try to use to sound like they have some control over the budget. But we know that more than two-thirds of the savings this government brought in here have actually been tax hikes on the Australian people. And now we are seeing a big target placed over the future of every Australian who wants some independence in retirement. We are now seeing a big target, a big bullseye, to actually say, 'We are coming after your money—money you have saved; money the government have in fact prohibited you from accessing through the compulsory superannuation scheme; money the government have done deals in the past with unions whereby you might not receive a pay rise but you get a super payment.' Now the government are going to say to those on an income of $50,000 a year—which is what a million dollars would buy a 65-year-old—'We are going to go after that pile of money that is yours merely to feed our incredible spending problem.' The government have shown that they cannot be trusted, and this surplus is the greatest betrayal of all.

Question agreed to.

Newstart Allowance

Senator SIEWERT (Western Australia—Australian Greens Whip) (15:34): I move:

That the Senate take note of the answer given by the Minister for Human Services (Senator Kim Carr) to a question without notice asked by Senator Siewert today relating to single parent income assistance.

At the start I note that the minister did not answer the fundamental question that I was asking, which was: is the minister aware of the impacts that this policy change is having on single parents and their families? I would suggest by his lack of an answer that he is not aware of or is ignoring those impacts.

My office has been receiving a steady stream of visits, phone calls and emails from single parents—mainly single mothers, because as we know, over 85 per cent of the single parents who are affected by these changes are in fact single mothers—talking to us initially about the fact that they were told they were not going to get the pensioner concession card. If you read the letters, they were pretty devastating letters—and I can tell you that I had a lot of pretty devastated mothers ringing and talking to my office about the fact that they were not going to have the pensioner concession card. Some of them, as the Minister for Human Services said, had been told that it would continue but then they got a letter saying that it is in fact not going to continue.

Although the minister did tell the chamber what happened and about the mistake that was made, the issue still remains that those who have actually been taken off any form of income support do not have access to the pensioner concession card, when Centrelink’s own website says that when people transition from payments they get to keep the pensioner concession card for a transition period. That is apparently not occurring. We are still chasing that up.

The other really significant issues are, for example, that the Centrepay arrangements did not get changed when people were moved onto Newstart. So there are defaults.
happening on payments—not to mention the fact that people of course do not have the same amount of money and cannot in fact pay those bills. Utility payments are not being made. People are being forced to wait a significant period of time while they get an appointment with Centrelink and, in the meantime, their payments have been cut or have been changed because of their moving onto Newstart and they do not know what is going on. There is a growing demand for not-for-profit organisations and emergency relief organisations, because single parents just do not know where to turn when they cannot afford to pay their bills or cannot afford to feed their families.

I asked the minister about whether families are being told to use their school bonus to pay their rent and their utility bills instead of in fact paying the bills that we all know that we get in January when the children go back to school. These children are not going to be able to go back to school with books, uniforms and those sorts of things, because their parent needs to use that money to pay for their most immediate food bills, rent bills and power bills. I have had people tell me that they are having to move out of their homes—their current house—because they cannot afford the rent anymore. Of course, the government says, 'The reason we're doing this is to encourage people into work.' We know that that group of single parents, out of all those receiving income support, is the cohort of people that are seeking work the most.

This morning there was a rally outside this place of single parents who are bringing their message and are currently meeting with members of parliament around this place. The message is there—they were bringing their messages to this place. There are rallies all around Australia today with single parents saying, 'Enough is enough.' At that rally I heard people's accounts of conscientiously looking for work. I had one mother who went for an interview: she was applying for an interview to assist at a hair salon, which involved cleaning mirrors, cleaning up, sweeping the floor and making tea and coffee. She was told that they had got someone with more experience. They knew she was a single parent. I have heard other accounts where people have tried over and over again to get work, but we all know that it is very hard to maintain, in particular, permanent or full-time work when you are also caring for your family.

This is our future generation we are talking about. We already have one in six children in Australia living in poverty. This move by the government has condemned another generation of children to be living in poverty, because you cannot survive on Newstart. It is not a life, to be bringing people up on Newstart, and this government should be ashamed that they have dropped 87,000 single parents and their families into poverty.

Question agreed to.

NOTICES

Presentation

Senator Lundy to move:

That the following bill be introduced: A Bill for an Act to amend the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Act 2006, and for related purposes.

Senator Birmingham to move:

That the time for the presentation of the report of the Environment and Communications References Committee on the protection of Australia's threatened species and ecological communities be extended to 15 May 2013.

Senator Bishop to move:

That the Economics Legislation Committee be authorised to hold a private meeting otherwise than in accordance with standing order 33(1) during the sitting of the Senate on Thursday, 7 February 2013, from 3.30 pm.
Senator Bishop to move:

That the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit:
(a) be authorised to meet on Wednesday, 13 March 2013, as follows:
   (i) to hold a private meeting otherwise than in accordance with standing order 33(1) during the sitting of the Senate from 11 am, and
   (ii) to hold public meetings during the sitting of the Senate from 11.15 am; and
(b) be authorised to meet on Wednesday, 20 March 2013, as follows:
   (i) to hold a private meeting otherwise than in accordance with standing order 33(1) during the sitting of the Senate from 11 am, followed by private briefings, and
   (ii) to hold a public meeting during the sitting of the Senate from 11.45 am.

Senator Boyce to move:

That the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services be authorised to hold a private meeting otherwise than in accordance with standing order 33(1) during the sitting of the Senate, from 10 am to 11 am, as follows:
(a) Thursday, 7 February 2013; and
(b) Thursday, 14 March 2013.

Senator Boyce to 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 Thursday, 7 February 2013, from 10 am to 1 pm, to take evidence for the committee's inquiry into family business in Australia.

Senator Crossin to move:

That the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee be authorised to hold a public meeting during the sitting of the Senate on Thursday, 7 February 2013, from 4 pm, to take evidence for the committee's inquiry into the provisions of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Organised Crime and Other Measures) Bill 2012.

Senator Crossin to move:

That the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples be authorised to hold a private meeting otherwise than in accordance with standing order 33(1) during the sitting of the Senate on Thursday, 7 February 2013, from 9.30 am.

Senator Nash to move:

That the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement be authorised to hold private meetings otherwise than in accordance with standing order 33(1) during the sittings of the Senate, from 5.30 pm, as follows:
(a) Wednesday, 6 February 2013; and
(b) Wednesday, 13 March 2013.

Senator Moore and Senator Siewert to move:

That the Community Affairs Legislation Committee and the Community Affairs References Committee be authorised to hold private meetings otherwise than in accordance with standing order 33(1) during the sittings of the Senate, from 12.35 pm, as follows:
(a) Tuesday, 26 February 2013; and
(b) Tuesday, 12 March 2013.

Senator Ryan to move:

That the time for the presentation of the report of the Finance and Public Administration References Committee on the implementation of the 1999 recommendations of the Joint Expert Technical Advisory Committee on Antibiotic Resistance be extended to 10 May 2013.

Senator Cormann to move:

That the Senate orders the Commissioner of Taxation to provide to the Economics References Committee, by no later than noon on 7 February
2013, details of the revenue collected from the Minerals Resource Rent Tax by the Australian Taxation Office since 1 July 2012.

**Senator Cormann** to move:
That there be laid on the table by the Minister representing the Treasurer, by no later than noon on 7 February 2013, a copy of any advice concerning the release of data about revenue collected from the Minerals Resource Rent Tax, including, but not limited to, advice from the Australian Taxation Office, the Department of the Treasury and the Australian Government Solicitor.

**Senator Cormann** to move:
That the Senate—
(a) notes that the Government has not released the Board of Taxation's review of the tax arrangements applying to Collective Investment Vehicles, which the Board provided to the Assistant Treasurer in December 2011; and
(b) orders that the full report be laid on the table by 5 pm on Monday, 25 February 2013.

**Senator Abetz** to move:
That the Senate—
(a) notes:
(i) the disruption to stock market trading caused by a media release which falsely purported to announce the withdrawal of a $1.2 billion loan facility to Whitehaven Coal by the ANZ Bank,
(ii) the impersonation of an ANZ Bank officer designed to further this hoax,
(iii) the tendency of such deceptions to undermine confidence in Australia's stock market,
(iv) various endorsements of these deceptions, and
(v) that such endorsements are inconsistent with concepts of economic responsibility, participatory democracy, efforts to enforce standards of media reporting and the rule of law; and
(b) rejects attempts to justify these deceptions with the notion of virtuous malfeasance.

**Senators Cormann and Williams** to move:
That the Senate calls on the Government to instruct Treasury to:
(a) expedite the completion of the Final Budget Outcome for 2012-13 as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year; and
(b) make the Final Budget Outcome for 2012-13 available for the Treasurer to release by 31 August 2013.

**Senator Wright** to move:
That the Senate—
(a) recognises:
(i) research from early 2012 by the Australia Institute which revealed that approximately 500 000 Australians are missing out on essential legal services,
(ii) the 2012 Australian Council of Social Service Community Sector Survey that highlighted how community legal centres are struggling to meet demand, waiting lists are increasing and approximately 14 per cent of people who sought assistance in 2010-11 were turned away, and
(iii) recent research by the New South Wales Law and Justice Foundation which estimated that each year over 8 million people will experience a legal problem; and
(b) calls on the Government to respond to the current crisis in the legal assistance sector, and promote improved access to justice, by addressing:
(i) the high cost of legal services,
(ii) increasing demand for legal assistance,
(iii) changes to legal aid eligibility, and
(iv) the impact of recent court fee increases on individuals and small businesses.

**Senator Di Natale** to move:
That the Senate calls on Senator Bernardi, the Chair of the Standing Committee of Senators' Interests, to provide a personal explanation to the Senate about his failure to disclose a conflict of interest arising from his membership of the American Legislative Exchange Council, a far right, pro tobacco, anti-gun control group that
was involved in the High Court challenge against plain packaging legislation.

**Senator Siewert** to move:

(a) acknowledges:

(i) the physical, emotional and financial stress and anxiety that single parent families who were affected by the parenting payment cuts have experienced over the past six weeks,

(ii) that those impacts are likely to be ongoing and long-lasting, and

(iii) that the timing of the implementation has put additional pressure on families, service providers and government agencies such as Centrelink; and

(b) calls on the Government to take action to address the fact that more than one in six children in Australia already live in poverty and that the policy to shift more single parents to Newstart will result in further poverty.

**Senator Milne** to move:

That the Senate—

(a) recognises the worsening conflict in Syria that has resulted in two million displaced citizens and a further 743,000 Syrians who are seeking refuge outside of their home country, including 2,148 Syrians who fled into Jordan over a 24 hour period yesterday;

(b) acknowledges the scope of the humanitarian response by the Jordanian, Lebanese and Turkish authorities and the harsh conditions in many refugee camps, particularly during winter;

(c) notes the $10 million in additional aid provided by the Australian Government, announced in the week beginning 27 January 2013, to the international humanitarian effort in support of Syrian refugees; and

(d) urges the Government to continue to do everything within its means to assist the international humanitarian effort and its push for a ceasefire to secure a plural, democratic Syria.

**Senator Milne** to move:

That the Senate supports the boundary extension for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area as proposed to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Committee for consideration in 2013.

**Senator Siewert** to move:

That the following bill be introduced: A Bill for an Act to amend the *Social Security Act 1991*, and for related purposes. *Social Security Legislation Amendment (Caring for People on Newstart) Bill 2013.*

**Senator Milne** to move:

That the Senate—

(a) notes that it is in the public interest to release the total amount of revenue raised from the Minerals Resource Rent Tax in order to provide confidence as to how the tax is playing out and the precise ways the revenue is collected; and

(b) orders the Commissioner of Taxation to provide to the Economics References Committee, by no later than 15 February 2013, details of the revenue collected from the Minerals Resource Rent Tax by the Australian Taxation Office from 1 July to 31 December 2012, and that the disclosure pertains to companies and does not breach the confidentiality of natural persons.

**Senator Collins** to move:

That the following temporary orders of the Senate continue to operate as temporary orders until 30 June 2013:

(a) modified rules for question time;

(b) consideration of private senators' bills; and

(c) routine of business (non-controversial government business).

**BUSINESS**

**Consideration of Legislation**

**Senator JACINTA COLLINS**

(Victoria—Manager of Government Business in the Senate and Parliamentary Secretary for School Education and Workplace Relations) (15:39): by leave—I move:

That the following orders of the day may be taken together for their remaining stages on Thursday, 7 February 2013:
(a) general business order of the day no. 105 (Parliamentary Service Amendment Bill 2012 [2013]); and
(b) government business order of the day no. 3 (Public Service Amendment Bill 2012).

Question agreed to.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: I move:

That the following orders of the day be considered on Thursday, 7 February 2013 under the temporary order relating to the consideration of private senators’ bills:

(a) general business order of the day no. 105 (Parliamentary Service Amendment Bill 2012 [2013]) and government business order of the day no. 3 (Public Service Amendment Bill 2012); and
(b) general business order of the day no. 95 (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Making Marine Parks Accountable) Bill 2012).

Question agreed to.

Leave of Absence

Senator KROGER (Victoria—Chief Opposition Whip in the Senate) (15:40): by leave—I move:

That leave of absence be granted to the following senators for personal reasons:

(a) Senator Boswell from 5 February to 7 February 2013; and
(b) Senator Williams for 5 February 2013.

Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES

Public Accounts and Audit Committee

Meeting

Senator McEWEN (South Australia—Government Whip in the Senate) (15:41): by leave—At the request of Senator Bishop, I move:

That the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit be authorised to meet on Wednesday, 6 February 2013, as follows:

(a) to hold a private meeting otherwise than in accordance with standing order 33(1) during the sitting of the Senate from 11 am, followed by a private briefing; and
(b) to hold a public meeting during the sitting of the Senate from 11.45 am.

Question agreed to.

Gambling Reform Committee

Meeting

Senator XENOPHON (South Australia) (15:42): by leave—On behalf of the Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform, I move:

That the Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform be authorised to hold a private meeting otherwise than in accordance with standing order 33(1) during the sitting of the Senate today, from 4 pm.

Question agreed to.

NOTICES

Postponement

The following items of business were postponed:


MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Gillard Government

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (15:43):

The President has received the following letter from Senator Fifield:

Pursuant to standing order 75, I propose that the following matter of public importance be submitted to the Senate for discussion:

The chronic dysfunction and maladministration of the Gillard Government.

Is the proposal supported?

More than the number of senators required by the standing orders having risen in their places—
Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (15:43): There is no doubt that this government is the most chronically dysfunctional in our nation's history. This Labor regime will go down as the government that finally made the Whitlam Labor government look good. The current debacle is the Whitlam experiment on steroids. This is a government whose strategy is twofold: first, buy themselves back into power whilst attacking Mr Abbott. Labor are mortgaging the long-term future of Australians in a desperate bid to buy their short-term personal future. What has happened to date is bad enough; just wait until Labor start on the superannuation of ordinary Australians, raiding the personal future of individual Australians for Labor's short-term benefit. Superannuation will simply be yet another broken promise.

From the carbon tax to same sex marriage to the surplus, we have a government that will say one thing before an election and then do exactly the opposite afterwards. We have a Prime Minister that was the chief defence counsel for Mr Craig Thomson for year after year and who praised him and said that she hoped he would be the member for Dobell for many years to come.

Indeed, we were told by her spin doctor Mr McTernan and others that she gave her best ever, most powerful speech to the parliament recently. It was not about her vision for the country, it was not about a policy issue about which she felt strongly. No, it was to defend none other than Mr Peter Slipper in a pathetic attempt to attack Mr Abbott, a speech that we now know was actually written by a man, yet she claims she will call misogyny whenever she sees it.

This is a government that has seen a record increase in the cost of living for our fellow Australians. On a personal basis, the Prime Minister calls for loyalty to her and her government. One assumes she means the same loyalty she extended to Mr Rudd and Senator Trish Crossin. In relation to Senator Crossin, she says, 'It was the captain's call.' Well, so was Mr Slipper. That was also a captain's call. Each time the Prime Minister makes a captain's call or makes a decision, the Australian people say her judgement needs to be questioned and they question her judgement.

In relation to Senator Crossin, let us not pretend that this was about a long-term concern by the Prime Minister to get an Aboriginal into the parliament. She had that opportunity with Mr Warren Mundine from New South Wales, where there was a vacancy available, and she deliberately sidelined Mr Mundine to get Mr Bob Carr out of naphthalene and parachute him into the Senate. We, on this side, have already had a distinguished senator, Neville Bonner, and the great local member in Ken Wyatt in the House of Representatives. Gillard thought she had to play catch-up. But what she did yet again in her clumsy way was to say, 'I am going to overcome an injustice by creating another injustice.' Indeed, if Senator Crossin was an employee of Ms Gillard, she would be off to Fair Work Australia for unfair dismissal and the damages would be flowing.

This is typical of this government. The Prime Minister will say one thing and demand a certain standard of the employers of this country and then do exactly the opposite in relation to the people she is in charge of. Labor are so good at saying to us, 'Do as we say, but then not as we do.' The government's failures are legion and I am sure others contributing to this debate will be able to point to other examples.

I want to say to the Australian people that there is good news in all this because there is a better way. The coalition does have a plan.
to deliver a stable and prosperous economy and a safe and secure Australia. On the current figures we would have the budget in surplus. Why? Because we are fiscally responsible. We know that you cannot borrow your way out of debt and we agree with Ms Gillard who, in one of her lucid moments, acknowledged the fact and the self-evident truth that getting back to surplus is 'necessary to relieve cost-of-living pressures on families'.

We agree that is why we say the budget should be in surplus, not because of some economic theory but because it reduces the cost of living for Australian families. Ms Gillard said that failure to bring the budget back into surplus was not an option. We agree, but of course now we know that failure for this government is in fact an option. We would also abolish the carbon tax. That would see a decrease in the cost-of-living pressures for families, keeping in mind that their electricity bills have increased by 15.2 per cent since the introduction of the carbon tax.

The Labor Party go on about job security. Well, if they had any concern for the manufacturing sector, they would see the positive nature of abolishing the carbon tax. Every single Australian made car has a reverse tariff of $400 per unit on it, courtesy of the carbon tax. So every motor vehicle imported from South Korea and Japan has a $400 head start on price competitiveness compared to Australian made cars—and Labor claim that they are somehow concerned about jobs.

In all of this, there is not a squeak from the union bosses who get hundreds of dollars from each of the manufacturing workers of this country each year as union fees. Where are these union officials? Why are they not standing up for Australian manufacturing jobs and saying that the carbon tax should be abolished? I will tell you why: because they are more concerned about their Labor Party preselection for the future rather than looking after the interests of Australian workers. It is not only in the manufacturing sector. The dairy industry is another industry where family farms are being hit with an impost with this carbon tax of about $10,000 per annum.

Our positive plan also includes implementing a properly funded, paid parental leave scheme because we believe that such a scheme is a genuine workplace entitlement and not a social security benefit. We will cut green and red tape and save small business about $1 billion per annum, which will see them being able to reduce their prices and, as a result, reduce the cost of living for Australians. We will secure our borders, saving Australians billions of dollars and, might I add, delivering justice to those waiting patiently in refugee camps around the world.

We have an affordable infrastructure program to improve the roads for our nation. We are, in fact, internally stable. There is no doubt that Mr Abbott will be leading us to the next election. We have a clear plan. We have solid, stable leadership. We have a vision for this country, knowing that Australia can do so much better than she is doing now. The thing that is holding Australia back is not the Australian people, it is not the environment and it is not the economy: it is the government of this country that has so failed the Australian people. We, as a coalition, look forward to making 14 September 2013 the real Clean Up Australia Day.

Senator THISTLETHWAITE (New South Wales) (15:53): The motion that we debate this afternoon is another waste of time—another exercise in futility by those opposite. I often wonder what Australians
who watch Senate proceedings on television at home, or indeed those in the public gallery, think of motions such as this one that we debate this afternoon. Often you can see it on the faces of those present in the gallery when they are watching the proceedings. You can see that they are thinking that these proceedings are childish, a waste of time, and in some respects, egocentric. Every year when parliament begins we come in here hopeful that the standards of contribution from the opposition will improve; that they will realise the main game in this place is policy and policy development and who has the better plan for our nation; the contest of ideas; a better future for our country. But no, I read the MPI this morning and I see again another exercise in futility—what is, in essence, another high school debating topic that the parliament is going to waste the next hour on.

A couple weeks ago I had the great pleasure, or fortunate opportunity, to tour Coonabarabran with the Prime Minister in the wake of the devastating bushfires that ravaged that area. I toured the area with the mayor, Peter Shinton, and the member for Parkes, Mark Coulton. We met some great Australians: people like Bob Fenwick, a Rural Fire Service captain who, when his own house was burning down, was not present because he was up the road saving one of his neighbours' houses. I saw and met some of the families that are struggling to cope with the fact that they have lost it all—lost their home and their belongings, lost their stock, lost a lot of memories. They wanted support from government. They wanted support to help them get through and they got it. The Prime Minister was there, I was there, Mark Coulton was there. All levels of government were represented. Kevin Humphries was there, and Centrelink officers were there to meet with people every day to reassure them that they would have the support of government. We announced a national disaster recovery payment, immediately available for those families that needed help. We announced that donations to the mayor's appeal would be tax-deductible.

When Queensland was ravaged by floods once again over the last couple of weeks, they wanted support from government and they got it. When a couple years ago many people were left without insurance from the floods in Queensland they wanted action from the government and they got it when Bill Shorten banged the heads of the insurance companies together, sat them down and made them work out a definition of 'flood' to ensure that those people could enjoy insurance for what is unfortunately becoming an annual event in the north of Australia.

If those Australians could see what goes on in this parliament at times, some of the puerile issues that we debate, I think they would be horrified and, most importantly, unfortunately, I think they would feel let down. I am not opposed to having an argument, not at all. I am not opposed to having a debate. That is the great beauty of this place, but it should be about ideas. It should be about who has the better policy. Let us at least make those disagreements about who has a better future for our nation. The main game is policy and when you look at and analyse the policies of this government we have done a good job. We have made progress for Australia.

When we came to government our economy was the 15th largest in the world. Because of this government's economic management it is now the 12th largest economy in the world. We have gone past South Korea, we have gone past Mexico and we have gone past Spain. The Australian dollar is the fourth most traded currency in the world. Why? Because we have a stable
democracy and we have a strong economy; people see value in trading the Australian dollar and they see it, most importantly, as safe. We have managed our economy in a manner that is fair.

The most important security you could provide a family is a job, and since we have come to government we have created 700,000 new jobs in this economy. In a time when most economies, particularly those of Europe and the United States, have lost jobs and have gone backwards, this has not happened in Australia. We have maintained our position as a strong economy and provided a means to support families through having a job. But we have not only been giving people jobs, we have made those jobs fairer because we introduced the Fair Work Act to ensure that people could not be forced onto individual contracts and have their conditions ripped away from them.

We have supported families in all that we have done through the taxation system to make it fairer through the process of introducing a carbon price. It has been about supporting families to ensure that as our economy progresses those on low to middle incomes have the opportunity to better themselves and provide a better education for their kids and a better healthcare system in their local community, and that is what we have fought for. We have provided tax cuts. Most recently we have provided about $300 a year in tax cuts for those who are on less than $80,000 a year. We have increased the tax-free threshold from $6,000 to $18,000, providing a massive tax break for those on low incomes. We have introduced a school kids bonus because we understand that parents struggle to meet the costs of sending kids to school each year. We have helped them with that.

We have rebuilt every single school in this country. We spent $16 billion in the best way you can spend government money—on education, on a better future and on a more productive economy through the Building the Education Revolution. We put new computers in nearly every school in this country. We have built trade training centres to ensure that kids who are not academically minded have the opportunity to begin a trade whilst they are at school.

Climate change is the most significant challenge of our time. This government has introduced a policy that has seen emissions in our economy reduce, ensuring that we provide a better future for our children. Importantly, we have done this in the most efficient and least costly way for our economy. Guess what? It is working in the manner in which the government modelled it—the cost is less than one per cent on the consumer price index and families have got support to make that transition to a clean energy future.

Our economy faces a major challenge with the ageing of our population. Over the next couple of decades there will be a dramatic reduction in the number of people who are working in our economy to support our retirees. We are planning for that. We have reformed our superannuation system, pushing compulsory superannuation contributions from nine per cent to 12 per cent over the next eight years, to ensure that people retire with an adequate savings bank so that there is less of an impost on our social security system, our healthcare system and our aged-care system.

For those on low incomes we have effectively wiped out tax on superannuation through the low-income superannuation contribution. Anyone who earns less than $37,000 in our economy pays no tax on their superannuation—none at all. That provides an incentive for those people to go to work rather than to go out of work and go on
welfare. What is the coalition's approach to that policy? Last week at the National Press Club when Tony Abbott was asked by a journalist, 'Would an Abbott-led government scrap the low-income superannuation contribution?' his words were, 'Yes, that stands.' They will get rid of the low-income superannuation contribution, imposing a tax increase on 3.5 million workers in this country. The lowest paid, those earning less than $37,000, will pay more tax under a Liberal Abbott government. Unfortunately, most of those are women who work part time. As if they are not doing it tough enough, they will be kicked in the guts by an Abbott-led government. Just last night we saw Christopher Pyne on Q&A—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Thistlethwaite, I let it go a moment ago, but address members of the other house by their correct titles please.

Senator THISTLETHWAITE: I saw Mr Christopher Pyne, a member of the House of Representatives, contradict Tony Abbott in saying that they now will not get rid of that policy. Senator Brandis can perhaps tell us if Tony Abbott is right or if Christopher Pyne is right.

Senator BRANDIS (Queensland—Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (16:03): I follow that rather sad and essentially valedictory contribution by Senator Matt Thistlethwaite, one of the proteges of the New South Wales Right of the Labor Party, to which I will return. Throughout the length and breadth of Australia today people have a sense that the government is in crisis, that it is in terminal decline, that it is utterly divided and that the wheels are falling off. This happens to all governments with the passage of time and today it is happening to the government of Julia Gillard. So deep are the divisions within this government that this morning's newspapers carried reports leaked from the Labor Party caucus meeting yesterday that the Prime Minister warned her own troops that their greatest enemy was the enemy within. The greatest enemy of the Labor government is the people within the Labor government, so divided have the government become against themselves. It is a government which has lost its way, which lacks integrity, which entirely lacks a vision for Australia and, indeed, which lacks the elementary competency to govern.

Last Wednesday Ms Gillard inflicted upon the Australian people the very last thing they wanted or needed—that is, a 227-day-long election campaign. This catastrophic error of political judgement was variously described by members of her own Labor caucus—and they were quoted without attribution in the weekend newspapers—as 'pathetic', 'suicidal' and 'bizarre'. Since that day the government has lurched from crisis to crisis. Within 24 hours the de facto Labor member for Dobell, Mr Craig Thomson, had been arrested and charged with 149 counts of fraud. This is the man upon whom the Gillard government relies for its existence. When Ms Gillard was asked at that Press Club address by a journalist: 'Will there be days for governing and days for campaigning?' she said: 'Yes, there will be. Some days will be days for governing and some days will be days for campaigning.' I think Ms Gillard needs to add a third category. There will be days set aside for governing, there will be days set aside for campaigning and there will be days set aside—a lot of days set aside—for court appearances. Because in the coming weeks and months, these are the various Labor party politicians, supporters and affiliates who face serious allegations of fraud now before the courts.

I have mentioned Mr Craig Thomson's 149 counts of fraud. These are on top of the Fair Work Australia proceedings to seek
restitution from the hundreds of thousands of dollars that Fair Work Australia found, after inquiry, he had thieved from low-paid workers of the Health Services Union, presently stayed pending the criminal charges. As yet, we have yet to see the outcome of Strike Force Carnarvon; the New South Wales police investigation into other allegations of bribery and secret commissions against Mr Craig Thomson, the member for Dobell, upon whose vote the Gillard government depends. Meanwhile, in the coming week there are the fraud charges against the other man upon whose vote the Gillard government depends, Mr Peter Slipper. Meanwhile, there are the fraud charges against Mr Michael Williamson. Mr Michael Williamson was the federal president of the Australian Labor Party who gave the green light to the installation of Ms Gillard as Prime Minister in a midnight political coup on 23 June 2010, when an elected prime minister—the Hon. Kevin Rudd—was removed by the faceless men. Mr Williamson is not so faceless these days; we see his face in the line-up. On top of all that, there is the ongoing scandals touching the Prime Minister herself concerning the AWU slush fund—not my words, but hers. Who could possibly imagine that a government so corrupted, so mired in sleaze and criminality could possibly conduct the affairs of the nation?

Just when one thought that it could not get any worse for Ms Gillard, on Friday night, again in the dark of night—this government has a propensity to do things in the dark of night—two senior ministers, our colleague Senator Evans and my opposite number—the minister whom I shadow—the Attorney-General, Ms Roxon, resigned suddenly. I can take at face value Senator Evans's explanation of his retirement. He has served in the Senate for 20 years and has led the pack of zombies—Senator Doug Cameron's words, not mine—who sit behind him for eight years. I can believe that Senator Chris Evans might have had enough. I do not believe that of Ms Roxon. As Lady Bracknell may have said: to lose one senior minister is a misfortune, but to lose two seems like carelessness. Well, in fact, worse than carelessness—catastrophe. The Australian public knows that the wheels are falling off this government and so do its members when not only Senator Evans but Ms Roxon and Mr Robert McClelland—her predecessor as Attorney-General—decide there is no point in contesting the next election.

At least they got to go under their own steam. Unlike our colleague, Senator Trish Crossin, who was politically butchered by one of the most brutal acts of political butchery any of us have ever seen, dismissed from her position by prime ministerial fiat because—on the Prime Minister's own admission—the Australian Labor Party had failed to preselect one Indigenous person to sit in the Australian parliament. Some 42 years after my late friend, the great Neville Bonner, first sat in this chamber as a representative of the Queensland Liberal Party, the Australian Labor Party had to butcher one of their own to force the preselection of an Indigenous Australian.

I would not like these dramatic political events—the events suggestive of chaos and terminal decline that we have witnessed in the last few days—to be allowed to obscure or let pass unnoticed an even more significant contribution: the speech on Saturday of the current federal Vice President of the Australian Labor Party, Mr Tony Sheldon, to the Young Labor conference. This is the Labor Party's federal vice president, not a Liberal politician. He said the Labor Party was in a 'catastrophic' situation. Tony Sheldon said:
Our crisis is more than just a crisis of trust brought on by the corrupt behaviour of property scammers and lobbyists. It's a crisis of belief brought on by lack of moral and political purpose. He said 'there must be no understating the gravity of the crisis here' in New South Wales, 'no blame shifting and no dodging of responsibility to set things right'. And, significantly, although placing the primary blame on the New South Wales branch of the Australian Labor Party, Mr Tony Sheldon said this is a crisis that affects every state and every faction of the Australian Labor Party.

When your own immediate past federal president stands in the dock of the court facing serious allegations of criminal fraud, and your current federal vice president says your government is—his word, not mine—a catastrophe which represents a party which lacks a moral or political purpose, then that seems to me a description of a government and a political movement in terminal decline. So worried are they about themselves—this endless conversation about the eternal, broiling miasma that is the modern Australian Labor Party—no wonder they cannot deliver on a single promise. No wonder they cannot, in particular, get the budget back into surplus.

Senator FAULKNER (New South Wales) (16:13): Well, another year, another waste of parliamentary time. Yet another matter of public importance from the opposition, yet more relentless bellyaching negativity. It may be a new parliamentary year, but of course there is nothing new from the opposition. Today we have heard from Senator Brandis that the opposition is concerned about the retirement of long-serving ministers from federal parliament. He says that this is a sign of political dysfunction. Both Senator Evans and Ms Roxon have served in senior cabinet portfolios for over five years. Let us get real: they both had long parliamentary careers. Neither will cause a by-election by resigning from parliament, neither of them will stick the taxpayers for the cost of a by-election at the conclusion of their parliamentary career. This is rather a different course of action to that taken by senior members of the Liberal and National parties in recent years. Mr McGauran, from the National Party, resigned and caused a by-election. Mr Downer resigned and caused a by-election. Mr Vaile, the leader of the National Party, resigned and caused a by-election. Dr Brendan Nelson, a very recent leader of the Liberal Party, resigned and caused a by-election. And Mr Peter Costello, who is of course Senator Brandis's political hero, resigned and caused a by-election. So it is true that people do resign and move on in politics. It is the way of things. But I consider that it is appropriate for a minister to announce their intentions prior to an election. I did it myself before the last election because I consider it to be the right thing to do. But I do not recall Mr McGauran, Mr Downer, Mr Vaile, Dr Nelson or former Treasurer Costello doing that.

In the case of my colleague Senator Evans, he has led his party in this chamber for eight years. Few have served so long in leadership positions and I think few can match the contribution that he has made. When anyone in the Liberal Party can do so, I will be the first to say that they are in a position to pass judgement. Until then, I suggest the opposition take a more dignified approach and simply congratulate Senator Evans for his long and meritorious service.

There has been a lot of talk, and we have just heard it, about the Prime Minister's announcement of the timing of the 2013 federal election. She has announced that the writs will be issued on Monday, 12 August, with the election being held on Saturday, 14 September. I am a longstanding supporter of fixed-term elections. I am pleased that weeks
of political debate in this country this year will not be focused on mindless speculation about when the election will be called and held. Hopefully this will mean that there will be more focus on the merits of the candidates and parties who contest the election. We should not forget that New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory all have fixed election dates. So the situation really is not going to be any different in relation to this year's federal election. I personally happen to think this is a good development.

In this matter of public importance the opposition again accuse the government of chronic dysfunction and maladministration. They make that claim lacking insight into their own obvious shortcomings. They make this claim without any capacity for self-reflection, without any acknowledgement that the opposition is a policy-free zone, without any admission of their own deficiencies, their own manifest weaknesses. Who could forget the leaked internal coalition documents that showed that the Liberals would have to make $70 billion in cuts to the budget over four years to pay for their promises? Who could forget Mr Abbott, Mr Hockey and Mr Robb tying themselves in knots trying to explain that disaster away? And we are still waiting for their explanation; I suspect it will not be forthcoming. We know that $70 billion in cuts would be the equivalent of stopping family tax benefit payments for three years or cutting the age pension for two years. In the absence of any policies, all we really know about Mr Abbott and his colleagues on the other side of the chamber is that they would threaten jobs and saddle Australians with the impact of a massive budget black hole. We know that they would continue to keep their heads in the sand in relation to the disastrous impacts of climate change.

Senator Joyce interjecting—

Senator FAULKNER: I know you laugh at that, Senator Joyce, but you are well known as a climate change denier. You are entitled to that view. You are entitled to stand up against all the science and maintain your position. Good luck to you—you will need it. We know that the coalition will ignore the Gonski recommendations and strip away millions from education, and destroy the NBN, leaving businesses and households without the benefit of a 21st century communications network. Mr Abbott and the opposition's belligerent and merciless negativity will never be a substitute for the policies needed to secure Australia's future. Senator Brandis can fulminate as much as he likes, but we all know that in September this year Australians will make a choice. Regardless of the carping of Senator Brandis and the opposition, I can assure you that the government will continue to argue its strong case—

Opposition senators interjecting—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Senator FAULKNER: —for building a strong Australian economy in the Asian century and preparing us for a carbon-free future. (Time expired)

Senator JOYCE (Queensland—Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (16:23): I hope building a strong Australia is nothing like the Building the Education Revolution. You go through this, and where do you start? I have just been jotting a few notes down and I thought, 'Chaos is what we need to talk about', so this should be interesting. In the historical section we have: ceiling insulation—that is where they set fire to 194 houses and, tragically, four people died; school halls were another disaster; and Grocery Watch, this voyeuristic belief that somehow staring at something changes the price. That was not good enough, so we went...
to Fuel Watch. Then we had the green loans. Then we had the East Timor solution. Then there was the Malaysian solution. Then there was your mate Rudd, the member for Griffith, who was removed at midnight by the faceless men, and we got the free character assessment from his colleagues: from Conroy, who has now been promoted to leader for his character assessment; from Swan, who is the Treasurer; from Crean—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Joyce, refer to those members by their correct names and titles.

Senator JOYCE: —the Treasurer, Mr Swan—I suppose you can call him a treasurer. Still on their historical form you have the carbon tax promise: 'There will be no carbon tax under a government I lead'—and then there was. We had the crazy association of this Labor-Green-Independent alliance, Green-Labor Party alliance, glee club or whatever you like to call it. Then we had the surplus promise that turned into the deficit promise. We had the live cattle debacle where we got our biggest neighbour and decided to try and make them our biggest enemy overnight. If you were not on the microform, we have the purchase of Toorale Station for $23.75 million—I have mentioned it before—without even setting a foot on the place. They observed the place from 30,000 feet as they flew to Darwin. Then we have, of course, Mr Thomson, who was going to be the member for Dobell for a long, long time. Then we had their appointment of Peter Slipper. We had the AWU slush fund. If you go right back to the start, I can remember Mr Rudd leaking the conversation that he had with the President of the United States to the front page of the paper. It just goes on. It is no wonder that it is manic. It is no wonder that it is out of control.

Then you think, 'Well that is all in the past; they have had an epiphany; they fell off their donkey on the road to Damascus, and everything is better now.' This is the only crowd who can stuff things up at work without actually being there. Before they have even come back, I turn on the television and, so help me, they have taken some person who is not even a member of the Labor party and made them the senator for the Northern Territory. Where does that come from? How do you dream these things up? We could not possibly do that to you; you're too good! We should have stayed away for weeks! You would be out of government if you had stayed away for another couple of weeks. You would have finished yourselves off. Where else are we going to have a captain's pick? I bet you they are worried in the ACT—we might get a captain's pick down here. Who are you going to pick as your senator down here? Who would know? What else is the captain's pick? It sounds almost unsanitary what she is picking!

Then we have senior ministers just resigning—they are dying like flies. Of course we get this every time: 'Don't worry. It's all under control.' The Attorney-General of the Commonwealth of Australia goes 'pop' and disappears. The 3IC—the third in charge—of the running of our nation goes 'pop' and disappears. They are just gone, and they have all got these gracious reasons of why they have got to go. I can never work out why the Attorney-General became the Attorney-General, because apparently a year ago she knew she was not going to be the Attorney-General. She must have just wanted a temporary posting in that role, because that is what the Commonwealth needs: a temporary person to run the legal system and jurisprudence of this nation! That's so logical! As soon as the Prime Minister knew about it, she should have said,
'Yes, you're going to be so important for 12 months you must stay in that role.' No, that is a completely believable situation! I am completely on board with that. Of course now we have got Mr Thomson—149 charges. I think he is over there. He is still in the building. It just goes on. All it needs is the Monty Python theme song.

On a more serious note, we have the debt that I have been talking about over and over again. The gross debt is now in excess of $262 billion, and I admit that I started banging on about this when it was $80 billion, so I have a bit of a concern about this. Since we have been here, I have seen this crowd go through the $75 billion overdraft limit, the $200 billion temporary overdraft limit, the quarter-trillion dollar limit, and now we have a $300 billion limit. Last week you borrowed $2.2 billion just for the week. It just rolls off the tongue. I will tell you that there are 2,155 companies on the Australian Stock Exchange and 2,064 of them have a capitalisation less than what you borrowed last week. Ninety-six per cent of them have a capitalisation less than what you borrowed last week. And you think that is sane? If you were buying houses in regional Australia you would buy between 6,000 and 7,000 houses with what you borrowed just last week—and that is supposed to be sane. When there was a change of government, the net financial worth—which is your financial assets less liabilities—was about $18 billion in the red. Our net worth position, which is total assets less liabilities, was actually in credit by $70 million.

But I can tell you where we are now. In the budget papers—the general government sector net financial worth—the net financial worth of our financial assets less our liabilities is now $¼ trillion out the back door. That is our position. These are your own figures. It is going to be worse than that, because that was on the basis that this year there would be a surplus. But of course this year is going to be a deficit so it just gets worse and worse and worse.

In the meantime, whilst all this is happening, we have this scenario. I can assure you that when people hear our Prime Minister speak now, they just turn off the television. They cannot stand it. When they see our Treasurer they almost cry; they cannot believe that this person is in a role of responsibility. It is out of control. Then you hear that apparently they cannot deal with the fact that 600 farmers are being done over by an overcentralised retail market with $1 for milk. The government cannot deal with that—that is all too complicated—but they can change the temperature of the globe! With a carbon tax they can change the temperature of the globe!

Senator Faulkner says that I deny climate change. I do not deny climate change at all. I just deny that they have the capacity to change it back. I was watching the weather intently over the Christmas break and since the carbon tax it seems to be around about where we left it last time. I thought that it was all going to be better now that the carbon tax is in. I thought that we had climate nirvana, but it is about where we left it. I want my money back. What happened to the weather? It was supposed to be fixed up by now after the carbon tax!

Dairy farmers are being ripped off. Small businesses are so much under the pump. The high street is so much under the pump. They are doing it tough. As for the infrastructure, where is inland rail? What happened to it? They put $30 million towards it. They put more towards advertising than they do towards looking after regional Australia's crucial infrastructure. This is the result of what we have got.

I once had a boss who, when he looked at a set of books, would always say to me, 'If
you did not laugh, you would cry,' and that is how we feel about our nation at the moment. It is pathetic. It is so out of control that if you did not laugh, you would cry. And grinning over it all is the Cheshire cat, Kevin the cat. We can see what is going to happen. We can see it a mile away. The press are around him—they are leaking; it is all coming back. They have just come to the epiphany that they are about to lose their job, and all of a sudden we can see turmoil and craziness about to break out into its next stage. When I see a big smiley face on the member for Griffith, I know that he is not going anywhere but back into an office that is between here and the other chamber on the other side on the blue carpet.

Senator URQUHART (Tasmania) (16:33): I rise to speak on today's matter of public importance submitted by the opposition on the record of the Gillard Labor government. I am particularly proud of this record and particularly proud of Labor's plan for Australia's future. We have just heard a lengthy diatribe from those opposite, seeking to talk down this record as though working to secure the jobs of hardworking Australian families through the greatest economic challenge since the Great Depression is a bad thing. This government has stayed focused on securing the jobs of working Australians throughout our term, and what better marker of ongoing success than the creation of more than 800,000 jobs during the worst of economic times around the globe. When nations around the world were putting their hands in the air, this Labor government got on with the job of governing, of assisting the community to build vital roads and classrooms and assisting business to create jobs. Everyone in this place knows the fantastic job done throughout the global financial crisis by the Labor government. Labor's fast, targeted action to stimulate the economy has seen our economy now 10 per cent larger than before the GFC, while many other advanced economies are still smaller than they were before the global crisis.

I would like to list five economic statistics that show that as things stand Australia's economy is tracking along quite nicely. They are: (1) annual GDP growth is 3.1 per cent, around the long-term target of three per cent; (2) the annual inflation rate is 2.2 per cent, nicely within the Reserve Bank's target range; (3) the unemployment rate is 5.4 per cent and, while never low enough, it is well below the average of the Howard government; (4) the annual wage-price index is at 3.7 per cent, just 1.5 per cent higher than the inflation rate, giving working Australians more opportunities each year, and; (5) the standard variable mortgage rate is 6.45 per cent, which is making home ownership affordable for many Australians. These five statistics highlight that the Australian economy is tracking very well.

And just for the fun of it, I would like to add a sixth, a sixth that definitely would not be possible without the interventionist approach the Labor government took in 2008 and 2009 to stimulate the Australian economy. The sixth is that starting with the Hawke-Keating Labor government, Australia has achieved 21 years of consecutive economic growth. During these 21 years, with roughly half under a Labor government and half under a Liberal government, sustained reforms began with the Hawke and Keating governments, continued through to the Rudd and Gillard governments—like the reforms and quick action we took in 2008 and 2009 to stimulate the economy—and continue to set Australia up as a great place to work, to do business and to raise a family. I would like to turn my focus to the great achievements of the Rudd and Gillard Labor governments for the electorate of Braddon, in north-west Tasmania, where I live. We have had achievements across health,
education, roads, rail and ports, tourism, industry development and innovation. North-west Tasmania always does better with a Labor government. Federal Labor has delivered two GP superclinics for north-west Tasmania, one in Burnie and one in Devonport. It was interesting to read in our local paper, the *Advocate*, earlier this week when Senator Colbeck was caught knee-deep in the mud. Senator Colbeck was caught trying to sling mud at the proprietors of the Devonport superclinic for not accepting new patients when a quick call to the clinic would have alleviated his concern. In fact there are three new doctors now taking new patients at the clinic. Together with the Burnie clinic, the strain is being taken off the emergency departments at the North West Regional Hospital and the Mersey Community Hospital. People who do not need the high level of care of an emergency department are being seen within the community—a Labor reform that is saving the community money and keeping people from the stress of going to hospital.

**Senator Brandis:** Mr Acting Deputy President, I raise a point of order that is directed to relevance. I know that there is a lot of latitude given in these MPI debates and that the topic is broad, but the topic in fact is about the incompetence and dysfunction of the Gillard government. I am a little at a loss to see how an attack on Senator Richard Colbeck in relation to the Mersey hospital is relevant at all to the topic of the MPI.

**The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Getting to the topic is not sufficient; you need to be on the topic.

**Senator URQUHART:** I was on the topic, with respect, and I will continue. While keeping people out of hospital is the goal, Labor has significantly refurbished the only Commonwealth owned hospital, the Mersey Community Hospital in Latrobe. Labor committed in 2007 to following through with the Commonwealth takeover of the hospital and, since then, has ensured that it is a valuable community asset. With over $200 million in investment, a significant boost on previous agreements for the hospital, there have been major refurbishments and the purchase of new equipment. Where the Coalition has seen and used this hospital as a political plaything, Labor has got on with the job of delivering a funding boost and ensuring that the people of north-west Tasmania get access to the quality health care they deserve. Importantly, the hospital is being run by the Tasmanian government as part of the north-west Tasmanian health system. With two quality hospitals within 40 minutes' drive, the Tasmanian hospital system is able to provide specialist care and services in either one facility or the other. This maximises the services available to north-west Tasmanians.

Labor has not stopped with just a refurbishment to suit existing conditions and existing staff. Ever with an eye to the future, we have invested over $1 million in a centre of excellence in clinical education at the Mersey hospital. This centre of excellence is ensuring that existing staff at the hospital are continuing their professional development, and it allows for the training of doctors and nurses and for allied health professionals to access quality training in their discipline.

Along the coast, in Burnie, Labor is on track to deliver a regional cancer clinic to
provide treatment and support to north-west and west coast residents suffering from cancer. This $16½ million investment is the result of tremendous lobbying by the member for Braddon, Mr Sid Sidebottom, and the community at large, which unfortunately has the second-highest incidence of cancer in the country. When it opens, most north-west Tasmanians will not have to travel that distance away from their support networks, while those in the remote parts of the region will have less distance to travel.

Turning to education, no-one can drive across north-west Tasmania without noticing the 65 schools that were enhanced through the Building the Education Revolution. From the over $6 million invested in new classrooms at the amalgamated Romaine Park Primary School, in Upper Burnie, to the new $2 million science centres at Ulverstone High School and Yolla District High School that are giving students hands-on experience at botany, biology and applied science, these are real investments in the learning environment of students and in facilities for teachers. They are not overpriced school halls that the opposition so often shout about in this place. It is interesting that, when they are in here or when we catch them on a news interview, those opposite are more than happy to talk down these investments in school infrastructure which they know provided a much-needed boost to the schools both in Braddon and right across the country.

My advice to those opposite in this election year is simple: do not talk about them. Just pretend they do not exist, because we are really proud of them on this side of the chamber and we know millions of Australian children and their parents are proud of them too. Take the multipurpose halls and libraries that were built across the north-west coast, including at Spreyton Primary School. These halls are now the pride of a community like Spreyton, and they can be used after hours by other groups and on weekends to run events. A new library provides a warm and welcoming environment for students to become excited by reading, setting them up for a lifetime of learning.

Across the north-west, Labor's Nation Building Program has boosted the economic infrastructure that gets the fantastic goods our region produces to market and the social infrastructure of sporting halls and facilities and nature reserves. The new swimming pool at Devonport will enable year-round swimming lessons and recreation in an undercover pool for the people of the north-west. The shared pathways built from Ulverstone to Turners Beach and from Burnie through to Somerset are a now vital piece of community infrastructure connecting outer suburbs, with little or no public transport, to the larger centres. To see the hundreds of children and their families using these paths after school and on the weekends is evidence that they are worth every cent—families that no doubt receive the Schoolkids Bonus, a twice yearly payment designed specifically to help with cost-of-living pressures associated with raising a family and getting kids back to school. Most of these same families that use this pathway and benefit from the Schoolkids Bonus are benefitting now from the low-income superannuation co-contribution and cuts to taxes delivered by Labor. These are measures that this Labor government has implemented to make it easier for families to make ends meet, but those opposite would take them all away. They would take away the tax cuts, take away the boost to retirement savings and take away the cash assistance to help with the costs of raising kids.

Today the issue raised is about dysfunction, and we are here to talk about
dysfunction. It is well and truly on display with the priorities of those opposite.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Bernardi): Order! The time the debate has expired.

DOCUMENTS

Tabling

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Bernardi) (16:44): I present documents listed on today's Order of Business at item 10 which were presented to the President, Deputy President and Temporary Chairman of Committees after the Senate adjourned on 29 November 2012.

The list read as follows—

Committee documents

1. Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights—7th report of 2012—Examination of legislation in accordance with the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011: Bills introduced 29 October to 1 November 2012 and legislative instruments registered with the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments 17 October to 16 November 2012—Corrigendum (received 5 December 2012)

2. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee—Report, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee—Migration Amendment (Health Care for Asylum Seekers) Bill 2012 (received 7 December 2012)


4. Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples—Report, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and submissions received by the committee—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Bill 2012 (received 30 January 2013)

5. Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills—Alert digest: National Disability Insurance Scheme Bill 2012 (received 1 February 2013)

Government response to parliamentary committee report

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade—Report—Australia's trade and investment relations with Asia, the Pacific and Latin America (received 20 December 2012)

Government documents

1. Australian Skills Quality Authority—Report for 2011-12 (received 30 November 2012)

2. Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC)—Report for 2011-12 (received 30 November 2012)

3. Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)—Communications Report for 2011-12 (received 6 December 2012)


5. Independent review of the National Health Performance Authority (NHPA) (received 12 December 2012)

6. Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)—Report for 2011-12 (received 12 December 2012)


9. National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)—NHMRC Licensing Committee—Report on the operation of the Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002 for the period 1 March to 31 August 2012 (received 17 December 2012)


15. Gene Technology Regulator—Quarterly report for the period 1 July to 30 September 2012 (received 14 January 2013)

16. National Health and Medical Research Council—Strategic plan 2013 to 2015 (received 18 January 2013)

17. Sugar Research and Development Corporation—Report for 2011-12 (received 21 January 2013)


19. Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority—Report for 2009-10 (received 29 January 2013)

20. Tax expenditures statement 2012 (received 31 January 2013)

Reports of the Auditor-General

1. Report no. 12 of 2012-13—Performance audit—Administration of Commonwealth responsibilities under the national Partnership Agreement on Preventative Health: Australian National Preventative Health Agency; Department of Health and Ageing (received 5 December 2012)


5. Report no. 16 of 2012-13—Financial statement audit—Audits of the financial statements of Australian Government entities for the period ended 30 June 2012 (received 20 December 2012)


8. Report no. 19 of 2012-13—Performance audit—Administration of new income management in the Northern Territory: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Department of Human Services (received 31 January 2013)

Letters of advice relating to Senate orders

1. Letters of advice relating to lists of departmental and agency appointments and vacancies:
   - Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio [2] (received 1 February 2013)
   - Defence portfolio (received 1 February 2013)
   - Health and Ageing portfolio (received 1 February 2013)
   - Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (received 1 February 2013)
   - Attorney-General’s portfolio (received 1 February 2013)

2. Letters of advice relating to lists of departmental and agency grants:
   - Australian National Preventive Health Agency (received 31 January 2013)
   - Defence portfolio (received 1 February 2013)
   - Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio [2] (received 1 February 2013)
   - Cancer Australia (received 1 February 2013)
   - Attorney-General’s portfolio (received 1 February 2013)
   - Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (received 1 February 2013)
The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Bernardi) (16:44): In accordance with the usual practice and with the concurrence of the Senate the government response will be incorporated in Hansard.

The response read as follows—

Government response to the recommendations in the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's inquiry into Australia’s trade and investment relations with Asia, the Pacific and Latin America

APEC

Recommendation 1

Work towards the admission of India to membership of APEC as soon as possible.

Australia supports India's membership of APEC and will consider the manner in which we might support India in gaining membership.

The Government notes that while the moratorium on new APEC members expired in 2010, APEC economies have not yet agreed to re-open the issue. A number of economies have expressed interest in joining APEC. The admission of any new member would require consensus amongst all APEC economies.

Recommendation 2

That Australia continues to strongly support the work in APEC on the identification and elimination of choke points in regional supply chains and the development of modern and efficient communications networks.

Australia has taken a lead role in this work in APEC through the development of APEC's supply-chain connectivity work program. At its November 2010 Summit, APEC Leaders endorsed eight Supply-chain Action Plans to improve logistics in the APEC region. APEC Leaders also set a 10 per cent improvement target for the performance of regional supply-chains by 2015, taking into account each economy's circumstances. A mid-term assessment of progress toward this goal is due in 2013.

Australia worked closely with other APEC economies, particularly Singapore, Japan and the United States, to identify chokepoints to the smooth flow of goods, services and business travellers throughout the region.

The Supply-chain Action Plans aim to:

• make logistics regulations more transparent;
• address inadequate logistics infrastructure;
• provide capacity-building for logistics sub-providers;
• improve goods clearance at the border;
• reduce burdensome customs procedures;
• build capacity in multi-modal transport networks;
• address variations in cross-border communications standards; and
• improve regional cross-border customs transit arrangements.

Australia is leading work on the Action Plans dealing with inadequate logistics infrastructure and variations in cross-border communications standards. Australia is working on three projects relating to logistics: a review of best practice in logistics associations in APEC economies; development of standards for safe use of heavy road vehicles; and a proposal to address deficiencies in information infrastructure linking major seaports. In pursuing work under these Action Plans, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade works closely with the Department of Infrastructure and Transport and the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, and other government agencies.

As lead economy for the Action Plans on cross-border communications standards, Australia has coordinated work programs to improve means for maintaining the resilience of submarine telecommunications cables and, through cyber security initiatives, promoted a trusted and safe online environment.

Recommendation 3

That Australia continues to set an example to other APEC member economies by: (i) maintaining its momentum towards trade liberalisation; and (ii) encouraging the APEC membership to push strongly for a positive and forward-looking outcome in the Doha Round,
The Government is working actively to ensure that Australia remains a model economy in APEC by continuing its trade liberalisation program.

In 2011 the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Trade Policy Review concluded that Australia has one of the most open economies in the world, and a trade policy framework characterised by an unusually high degree of transparency. Unilateral reductions in tariffs have reduced the average applied “most favoured nation” tariff rate to 3.1 per cent, from 3.8 per cent in 2006; further unilateral reductions will continue through to 2015.

Australia remains strongly committed to trade liberalisation — negotiation of improved access for Australian exporters to overseas markets to generate prosperity — as well as ongoing domestic reform. The Government’s domestic reform agenda (skills enhancement, better infrastructure, taxation reform, a seamless national economy and innovation) will help ensure that Australian exporters are internationally competitive and can take advantage of the opportunities offered by trade liberalisation.

Australia has a strong record in encouraging the APEC membership to push strongly for a positive and forward-looking outcome in multilateral trade liberalisation negotiations. At the Vladivostok APEC Summit in September 2012, APEC Leaders called for fresh thinking to explore new and credible approaches to the WTO Doha Round negotiations. Australian efforts helped secure this approach, which included the possibility of advancing parts of the Doha agenda, such as trade facilitation, based on consensus. APEC Leaders also reaffirmed their pledge against protectionism, through a standstill on trade barriers through to 2015.

Trade Facilitation

Recommendation 4

That the Australian Government commit itself to a concerted effort to lift Australia into the top 20 countries in the World Bank’s list of economies having the easiest trade access.

The Government agrees with the Committee’s recommendation that it is important to do more to improve and enhance Australia’s trade access through trade facilitation measures.

Promoting trade facilitation through a commitment to a regulatory environment that minimises barriers to business is a priority for the Government.

The Government is delivering an effective border protection regime for the Australian community by regulating and facilitating legitimate trade. The strategies undertaken to achieve this goal include:

- minimising the regulatory burden at the border so that goods are delivered in the most efficient and cost-effective way;
- co-designing Australian trade, industry and border protection policies with strategic partners in a way that minimises the impact on legitimate trade;
- intelligence-led risk-based interventions at the border to detect and prevent the import or export of prohibited items;
- the effective delivery of industry assistance through advance rulings on classification, valuation and origin and tariff concession arrangements;
- encouraging Australia’s trading partners to minimise regulatory burden at the border through capacity building activities and bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations; and
- implementing and managing Australia’s international commitments under free trade agreements, the International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, and WTO agreements.

In APEC, Australia is a strong supporter of work to improve trade facilitation. APEC economies were able to achieve reductions in trade transaction costs (by five per cent between 2002 and 2006 and a further five per cent by 2010) through a range of initiatives targeting movement of goods, alignment of standards, business mobility and electronic commerce. The World Bank estimates that APEC-driven improvements in customs procedures, regulatory cooperation, logistics and infrastructure delivered

Australia continues to lead work on trade facilitation in APEC economies including through supporting the Services Trade Access Requirements (STAR) Database and APEC's supply chain connectivity agenda. The STAR database is a business-friendly, on-line tool to help services providers from all APEC economies take advantage of new export opportunities by increasing their awareness of the regulatory requirements to trade and invest.

In the WTO, Australia is pushing strongly for an agreement on trade facilitation. Potentially 44 per cent of the benefits of the Doha Round are estimated to emanate from a trade facilitation agreement. The trade facilitation negotiations would lead to more modern, efficient customs clearance procedures and better cooperation between the customs authorities of WTO Members. This would markedly reduce the time it takes for goods to be processed and cleared, resulting in real reductions in the costs of trading.

Recommendation 5

That Australia work towards the complete introduction of paperless trading as soon as possible and that it encourage and, where necessary, assist its trading partners to achieve the same outcome.

The Australian Government commenced work in 2005 to examine the feasibility of introducing an agreed international trade data standard supported by information technology systems, including a single window that would enable linking of trade data across government and industry to facilitate data re-use and pre-population.

Work continued through the International Trade Cluster of the Standard Business Reporting (SBR) initiative, led by Treasury in 2007. A Business Case concluded that the Integrated Cargo System (ICS), implemented in 2005 and operated by Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, already provided a single window for the bulk of international trade-related reporting to Australian Government for import and export cargo.

At the border the ICS facilitates paperless clearance for 99.5 per cent of imports and 99.7 per cent of exports transactions. For a small proportion of transactions, border agencies request the presentation and sighting of trade documents to complete risk assessment. In some instances, exporters and importers may present trade documents electronically to border agencies. Ongoing work on paperless interaction includes advanced testing of the feasibility to electronically submit declarations in the postal environment and for household personal effects, which are currently paper based transactions. The aim is that electronic solutions would constitute 100 per cent of postal declarations and around 68 per cent of personal effects consignments.

Other initiatives are currently being investigated across Government to improve the range of electronically accessible trade documents, including permits, which would then further facilitate electronic clearance.

Drawing on the experience and lessons learned in developing and implementing the ICS as the Australian national single window paperless trading capability, Australian Government agencies are active participants in bilateral discussions and international forums. Such opportunities both leverage and assist Australia's efforts for success in paperless trading and facilitate timely dissemination and adoption of "best practice outcomes" by Australia and its trading partners.

Recommendation 6

That Australia should strongly encourage the complete acceptance of the APEC Business Travel Card by the remaining members of APEC; and also explore the possibility of establishing a similar arrangement with other trading partners, e.g. non APEC economies in Latin America, the EU and India.

The Government agrees that Australia should be encouraging the acceptance of the APEC Business Travel Card by the remaining members of APEC.

Through the APEC Business Mobility Group, Australia and other APEC economies have strongly encouraged the small number of APEC economies that have yet to finalise arrangements
to transition to full membership of the APEC Business Travel Card scheme.

The Government continues to explore facilitative visa arrangements with Australia’s trading partners in APEC and other regions, including with India, and with countries in Latin America and in the European Union.

**Recommendation 7**

_That Australia should take a leading role in working towards the improvement of supply-chain processes in APEC and in encouraging other trading partners to undertake a similar program._

Australia is playing a leading role in improving supply chain processes in APEC.

The Department of Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) is undertaking an AusAID funded project to enable Indonesia, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Vietnam to develop their own industry-based logistics associations in partnership between industry and government. Australia, Singapore and Thailand are providing expert advice to the project. The project seeks to enhance information flows and coordination among government agencies on policies affecting the logistics sector. It will develop a National Logistics Association (NLA) generic template and deliver a compendium of NLA best practices and benefits.

This project has been a catalyst for PNG to establish its first National Logistics Association (PNG-LA). The Australian Logistics Council is assisting PNG develop sound governance and reporting arrangements. The PNG-LA will act as a single voice for PNG’s supply chain industry needs in interacting with relevant PNG authorities on key logistics issues.

In addition, DIT has played a leading role in developing a methodology for measuring progress towards the goal agreed by APEC leaders of achieving 10 per cent improvement of supply-chain performance in terms of reduction of time, cost and uncertainty by 2015.

**Recommendation 8**

_That, in view of the benefits arising from the Export Market Development Grants Scheme, it should continue indefinitely and be fully funded to provide certainty for exporters seeking to widen their overseas market focus._

The Government has extended the Export Market Development Grants (EMDG) Scheme to the 2015-16 grant year and is committed to working with industry to maximise the benefit of the EMDG Scheme within the total funding that is available.

In the Mid-year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2012-13, the Government announced it would retarget the Export Market Development Grants program towards emerging and frontier markets, with a focus on Asian markets. This measure complements the recent review of Austrade, which recommended that Austrade’s export promotion work be undertaken in the world’s emerging and frontier markets as this is where Australian businesses can benefit most from government support.

**Latin America**

**Recommendation 9**

_The Sub-Committee considers that the introduction of electronic visa applications would be an excellent, and inexpensive, way to assist in improving trade and investment relations with the countries of Latin America. It would have valuable spin-off benefits for the tourism industry and would also facilitate business travel to Australia._

The Government agrees, and believes that the introduction of electronic visa applications would be an inexpensive way to assist in improving trade and investment relations with the countries of Latin America.

For foreign nationals intending to visit Australia for business or other reasons, including for citizens from countries in Latin America, the Government, through the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, has increased the number of visa categories accessible through electronic lodgement in recent years. In particular, the Government has extended electronic lodgement to client groups who have demonstrated compliance with visa conditions.

On 15 February 2012 Argentine and Brazilian nationals became eligible to apply online for a Tourist visa (Subclass 676), known as “e676”. 

**CHAMBER**
Chilean nationals became eligible to access the e676 service on 20 September 2011.

In 2013-14, the Government intends to progressively roll out online visitor visa applications to citizens of all countries.

**Recommendation 10**

The Sub-Committee recommends that the Government review the processing of applications by skilled migrants and, where appropriate, seek ways to fast track the recognition of their skills.

The Government continues to review procedures to achieve the most responsive processing times possible to enable employers to meet their skilled employment needs. In May 2011 the Government committed A$10 million over four years to fund a new processing centre with the aim of reducing the median processing time of Temporary Business (Long Stay) visas (Subclass 457) to 10 days for "decision-ready" applications.

Australia has a transparent and accountable system for processing applications for recognition of the skills of migrants to Australia. There is a national system of legally authorised organisations for nominated skilled occupations that process applications by individuals for recognition of qualifications for skills gained overseas. These assessing bodies are legally independent, professional organisations, and in general terms the Government has no statutory role in their assessment processes. DIAC continues to work with the various third parties involved in assessing aspects of visa applications (including skills assessments) to ensure that these processes are as transparent and responsive as possible.

**Recommendation 11**

The Sub-Committee also recommends that urgent attention be given to achieving mutual recognition of university qualifications. To this end, Australia has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) on mutual recognition of qualifications with Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Peru.

Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Lisbon Recognition Convention and as such has in place policies and procedures for transparent, timely and defensible recognition of foreign qualifications, including those from Latin America.

In 2011 there were 31,450 student enrolments from Latin American countries. Of these, 12.4 per cent were in the higher education sector, 31 per cent were in the vocational, education and training (VET) sector and 53.7 per cent were in the English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) sector. By country of origin, the top four student enrolments were from Brazil (15,266 enrolments or 48.4 per cent), Colombia (8,923 or 28.3 per cent), Peru (1,985 or 6.3 per cent) and Chile (1,974 or 6.3 per cent).

In 2011 there were 2,042 students from countries in Latin America enrolled in post graduate degrees at Australian universities. This represented an increase of 2.5 per cent on the 2010 post graduate enrolments from Latin America.

Australia established the Australian Education International-National Office for Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) as its National Information Centre after signing the UNESCO Lisbon Recognition Convention in 2002. The National Information Centre promotes international student and labour market mobility through qualifications recognition, including qualifications gained by individuals from accredited educational and training institutions in Latin America. The National Information Centre is an easily accessible information resource that responds to inquiries about recognition overseas of Australian degrees and provides advice on authorised processes in Australia that assess qualifications gained by individuals in institutions in other countries.

In Australia, admission to professional practice may require registration at the national or state level.
and territory level, or membership of the relevant professional body. Recognition of professional qualifications for the purposes of admission to practice, including qualifications gained overseas, is carried out by professional bodies which assess individuals and their qualifications against the relevant professional standards. Admission to professional occupations in Australia requires a specialised academic higher education qualification at degree level and, in some cases, relevant experience. In Australia, national, state and territory authorities regulate a number of professional occupations, relying on professional standards developed in conjunction with the relevant professional bodies. Professional bodies responsible for recognition processes often accredit higher education programs in the relevant disciplines and maintain close relationships with higher education institutions.

Australian professional bodies can and do establish their own mutual recognition agreements with their overseas counterparts.

AEI-NOOSR has a supportive relationship with higher education institutions and professional bodies. The National Information Centre provides broad information support services about the comparability of overseas qualifications in Australia, including through Country Education Profiles (CEP) Online, an easily accessible information resource designed as a general recognition guideline. CEP Online describes the education systems of overseas countries and provides assessment guidelines on the comparability of many overseas qualifications to Australian qualifications on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). In Australia, foreign qualifications are compared to qualifications on the AQF (www.aqf.edu.au).

The CEP guidelines provide information on qualifications in 13 countries in Latin America. For countries that are not included in CEP Online, AEI-NOOSR provides information on the recognition of overseas qualifications to institutions and individuals.

**Recommendation 12**

Allied to the previous recommendation, the Subcommittee recommends the adoption of a “working holiday” scheme for visitors from Latin America. At present, visitors from 27 countries can access such arrangements, but of the Latin American countries only Chile is included in that list.

The Government agrees that adding more Latin American countries to the “working holiday” scheme would be of benefit to Australia. The Government concluded a review of the Working Holiday Maker program in 2010. Based on the review’s conclusions, the Government initiated a work program of negotiations with several countries for new reciprocal Work and Holiday (Subclass 462) visa arrangements. The Government may add other countries to the negotiations schedule in the future, subject to wider bilateral considerations and Australian economic and labour market conditions.

Foreign Governments may register interest in Australia’s reciprocal Work and Holiday (Subclass 462) visa arrangements through contact with the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship, or through contact with an Australian embassy, high commission or consulate overseas.

Australia and Argentina implemented new reciprocal Work and Holiday (Subclass 462) arrangements in February 2012. Australia and Mexico commenced negotiations in late 2010 for a capped Work and Holiday visa arrangement. Australia responded to Mexico’s queries on proposed legislative limitations, and negotiations on a draft text are progressing well. Australia is currently in the final stages of negotiations with Uruguay on a Work and Holiday Memorandum of Understanding. The new arrangements are expected to commence early 2013.

**Recommendation 13**

All of the Latin American Ambassadors indicated how much they appreciated visits by Ministers, particularly at the head of business delegations, and by Parliamentary representatives. The Subcommittee recommends that increased priority be assigned to visits such as these to the countries of Latin America — in line with the Government’s declared intention to engage more closely with Latin America and the Caribbean.
The Government sees value in increased visits to Latin America by Ministers and Parliamentary representatives.

In June 2012 Prime Minister Julia Gillard visited Mexico and Brazil. Prime Minister Gillard and Brazil’s President Dilma Rousseff announced that the Australia-Brazil relationship would be elevated to the level of a strategic partnership.

In December 2011 Australia's then Minister for Foreign Affairs (Kevin Rudd) visited Mexico and El Salvador. He also visited Mexico in September 2011, and again in February 2012 for the G20 informal Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

In April 2012 Australia’s Minister for Trade and Competitiveness, Dr Craig Emerson, visited Brazil, Chile and Colombia, with business delegations, for bilateral discussions, and attended the G20 Trade Ministers’ Meeting in Mexico.

Parliamentary Secretary Richard Marles visited Uruguay in December 2011 and Venezuela and the Caribbean in January-February 2012, and the Caribbean again in May and September 2012.

In January 2012 the Prime Minister's Special Envoy (for Latin America and the Caribbean) visited Mexico, Nicaragua and Guatemala. In May 2012 the Special Envoy visited the Dominican Republic, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

At the Parliamentary level, Senate President Senator the Hon John Hogg has played a strong role supporting Australia-Latin America relations. He hosts two functions annually for the Latin American Ambassadors and parliamentary colleagues. In 2009, he visited Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Mexico. In 2011, he visited Peru.

The Government will continue to identify opportunities for Australian Ministerial and Parliamentary visits to countries in Latin America.

**Recommendation 14**

*That COAG make improved cooperation between the Commonwealth and the States, and between the States themselves, a high priority — to achieve higher levels of efficiency in the transport and logistics supply chains, provision of infrastructure, and trade facilitation.*

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) seeks to improve cooperation between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories to respond to the challenges facing Australia. One of the strategic themes agreed by COAG in early 2011 to focus its agenda is a national economy that is driven by our competitive advantages. Under this theme, COAG is pursuing a number of microeconomic reforms; regulatory and competition reforms; infrastructure investment; and the use of new digital technologies to drive productivity.

In September 2011 COAG established the Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure (SCOTT). Members of SCOTT are Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for transport and infrastructure issues, and a representative, at Councillor level, of the Australian Local Government Association. The Council pursues and monitors issues of national significance which require sustained, collaborative effort in the areas of transport, logistics and infrastructure. An example of this is the recent completion of the National Land Freight Strategy.

**The Pacific**

**Recommendation 15**

*The Sub-Committee expressed its satisfaction that AusAID has given some emphasis to gender issues in negotiations with the Pacific Islands Forum countries. It proposes that these issues should continue to be advanced by DFAT and AusAID as a priority.*

The Government continues to advance gender issues and gender equality in Forum Island countries. In September 2011, Prime Minister Julia Gillard appointed Australia's first Global Ambassador for Women and Girls. The Ambassador works to support Australia’s objective to empower women and girls around the world.

Australia has offered assistance to Forum Island countries for country specific research on the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus. While Australia does not determine the scope of these reports, gender is one issue that Forum Island countries may
address. Gender awareness is also integrated into Australian funded trade training for Pacific Island trade officials.

In addition, the Prime Minister announced a new $320 million, 10 year commitment to expand Australia's support to empower women and promote gender equality across the Pacific. Announced at the 2012 Pacific Islands Forum, this initiative aims to increase:

- the number of women in leadership and decision making roles at national and local levels by training and mentoring current female MPs and candidates;
- economic opportunities for women through improving access to financial services and produce markets; and
- safety for women through improved services, violence prevention and access to justice.

This work will be supported by efforts to:

- change social attitudes about roles and status;
- increase advocacy for women's equality; and
- improve health and education outcomes for women and girls.

This builds on support Australia currently provides for gender equality in the Pacific. It includes efforts to improve access to finance, reduce barriers to women's participation in business, leadership training and efforts to eliminate violence against women.

Senator CAROL BROWN (Tasmania—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (16:44): I seek leave to move a motion to provide for consideration of the committee reports and the government response just tabled.

Leave granted.

Senator CAROL BROWN: I move:

That consideration of the committee reports and the government response to a committee report be listed on the Notice Paper as separate orders of the day.

Question agreed to.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Bernardi): On behalf of the President, I table the following documents:

Supplement to the 13th edition of Odgers' Australian Senate Practice

Business of the Senate: 1 January to 31 December 2012

Questions on Notice summary: 28 September 2010 to 31 December 2012

Ordered that the Business of the Senate for 2012 be printed.

Responses to Senate Resolutions

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (16:45): I present responses to Senate resolutions:

Premier of South Australia (Mr Wetherill) and the New South Wales Minister for Industrial Relations (Mr Baird)—Domestic violence (agreed to 19 September 2012)—a motion to take note of the response was agreed to

Minister for Community Services (Ms Collins)—Anti-Poverty Week (agreed to 10 October 2012)—debate in progress on a motion to take note of the response

Premier of Western Australia (Mr Barnett) and the New South Wales Minister for Mental Health (Mr Humphries)—World Mental Health Day (agreed to 10 October 2012)

Tasmanian Attorney-General and the Minister for Justice (Mr Wightman), the Premier of South
DELEGATION REPORTS

Official Visit to Canada and the United States

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Bernardi) (16:46): I present the report on the official visit by the President of the Senate to Canada and the United States of America which took place from 12 July to 25 July 2012.

AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS

Consideration

Report No. 20 of 2012-13

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Bernardi) (16:46): In accordance with the provisions of the Auditor-General Act 1997 I present the following report of the Auditor-General. Report No. 20 of 2012-13—Performance audit—administration of the domestic fishing compliance program: Australian Fisheries Management Authority.

DOCUMENTS

Domestic Violence

Senator RHIANNON (New South Wales) (16:46): I seek leave to move a motion in relation to the response by the Premier of South Australia and the New South Wales Minister for Industrial Relations to the motion on domestic violence. Leave granted.

Senator RHIANNON: I move:

That the Senate take note of the response.

I welcome the commitments made by the New South Wales industrial relations minister and the South Australia premier in response to the Senate motion on women, employment and domestic violence. Any progress in improving work conditions and entitlements for women experiencing domestic violence and their rights at work are obviously welcome.

While great work has been done to achieve the situation whereby currently one million Australian workers are covered by some type of domestic violence clause or policy in the enterprise bargaining agreement or award, progress has been piecemeal—agreement by agreement. State governments have also been working to introduce provisions, including New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

As a result of the bargaining, some workers have access to dedicated, additional and paid family and domestic leave. Domestic violence clauses can also provide such things as protections against adverse action and access to flexible work arrangements. But what is sorely needed is national action to support these women, and that was the essence of our motion. Even of these one million workers covered by domestic violence provisions, only a portion are protected by all seven ideal principles of a domestic and family violence clause as set out and endorsed by the ACTU.

The Australian Law Reform Commission has recommended that the federal government consider including paid domestic violence leave and other provisions as a right in the National Employment Standards. Again, this is backed by the ACTU. We also need antidiscrimination
protection to help address the stigma and fear of disclosure at work.

This is the time, before the next election, for real action on this issue by the Labor government to support the between 15 and 17 per cent of women who are affected by domestic violence. Allowing women to remain at work is essential to reduce the effects of this violence.

To finish: I would like to share a real-life story set out in a recent article in the Human Rights Defender by the Safe at Home, Safe at Work project.

Sylvia worked as a community support worker. She was experiencing domestic violence from her husband who also came into her workplace. She was often late for work and the violence was impacting on her performance generally. Sylvia was eventually terminated for performance issues (lateness). Sylvia then left the relationship. She obtained a domestic violence protection order against her husband which covered her in her workplace.

Sylvia applied to work at another organisation. She did very well at the interview and was sure they would offer her work which they did. The new employer then rang the former employer for a reference. He told them that she’d had heaps of personal and family problems, that there’d been issues with attendance and that the abusive husband had been coming on to her workplace.

This paints a clear picture of white national action is urgently needed.

Question agreed to.

Anti-Poverty Week

Senator SIEWERT (Western Australia—Australian Greens Whip) (16:50): I seek leave to take note of the response by the Minister for Community Services, Minister Collins, to the motion passed by the Senate last year on Anti-Poverty Week.

Leave granted.
poverty. The government's policy, which was of course supported by the coalition, mooted to drop single parents onto Newstart. Of course, that figure would have increased on 1 January. Sixty-two per cent of all people living in poverty are in receipt of income support payments—again, highlighting the inadequate level of income support payments in this country.

We know that many people do not transition away from these payments and that they live in poverty for extended periods. The report of the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations References Committee inquiry into Newstart last year found that Newstart payments were inadequate and that Newstart payments and a lot of income support payments were supposedly designed for short-term support, not long-term support. We know that 62 per cent of people who are trying to exist on Newstart have been on that payment for over 12 months. We also know that many of those people are over the age of 45 and have trouble finding a job due to age discrimination. Many are single parents—and now there are even more single parents because of the government's policy change, which has dropped them onto Newstart—and those single parents have caring responsibilities. They are often stuck in insecure, temporary work and have to cycle in and out of work because their workplaces cannot meet flexible requirements because parents, of course, by very definition, are looking after the children.

Anglicare also released a report during Anti-Poverty Week. The report, which I helped launch, is entitled When there isn't enough to eat. The lived impact of poverty was based on the lived experiences of families who are accessing the emergency support services that Anglicare provide. There were also some really good interviews with support workers, telling accounts from families. This report found that 45,000 Australian families could not afford food all the time. One-third of the people participating in this survey indicated that they experienced severe food insecurity almost every week. One in 10 households surveyed reported that children did not eat for an entire day on a regular basis. Families reported that they may not send their kids to school if they do not have food for lunches and that they cannot have friends over after school because there is nothing to offer for snacks. Hunger has a range of very negative impacts on children, including embarrassment and anger, and hunger makes it difficult to concentrate. It also sets in place poor eating habits and nutritional outcomes for children, sometimes for the rest of their lives. Many children who are food-insecure struggle to learn and they act out or have other behavioural problems.

We are setting up these children to fail. By failing to provide even a basic income to these families—there is not enough to keep them in stable housing, put food on the table and cover the basic transport and utilities costs—we are ensuring that they in fact continue to struggle and continue to live in poverty and will find it very difficult to escape that poverty.

With that background I would like to then go to what the minister says the government have been doing about vulnerable families. They say that 'doing better for vulnerable families has been a driving force behind the Australian government's significant family policy reforms in the last four years'. I am sorry, but that is just a complete joke when they have just forced 87,000 single parents and their children into poverty. They have just condemned those families to poverty. So much for doing better for vulnerable families! Those are the very single parents and their families who are trying to survive on single parent payments, let alone being...
forced to survive on Newstart, and are the very definition of a vulnerable family. So much for this caring government, so much for a caring approach to vulnerable families.

In this letter the minister says that, from January 2013, a new Schoolkids Bonus will deliver assistance to around 1.3 million families. The government talk about it being used to buy books, uniforms and school excursions, stationery and other costs such as sports registration. Apparently, it is being suggested to single parent families, struggling to survive on Newstart, that they use the Schoolkids Bonus to pay their rent, their utility bills and their shopping—not to help their kids at school. 'Oh no, no; we've taken between $60 and $100—and I heard this morning $140—a week off these vulnerable families, but it's okay, you've got the Schoolkids Bonus.' It is one of the excuses the government uses for: 'It's okay, these families are getting supplements for all sorts of things.' Recommendations are being made that they use the Schoolkids Bonus. The minister has taken on board to check whether it is in fact the department that is telling them that, the same minister, who, when I asked last year whether it was true that the agencies of Centrelink were telling people when they rang that they could contact emergency relief organisations and not-for-profit organisations, said that that was not happening. Now we hear that in fact people are being advised, because those are the organisations that help these people. They are relying on charities to pick up what this government should be doing. The government took $700 million away from vulnerable families for their supposed surplus, which has now been abandoned—$700 million because they would not stand up to the mining companies and big business and the most wealthy in this country. They would rather attack vulnerable families, whom the minister says have been a driving force behind the Australian government's significant reforms to family policy. Does that mean they do not think single parent families are families? Don't they qualify as vulnerable families? Those families and their children have been abandoned by this government. They have to struggle to try to get an interview with Centrelink and then they have to wait because Centrelink are so overwhelmed with demand.

One of the joyful parts of being a parent is celebrating your kids' birthdays and you make a big deal of them. When a single parent's child turns eight, it is not 'Happy birthday'; they have to cop a cut of between $60 and $140 a week. That is what happens for single parents on their eight-year-old's birthday. That is not dealing with poverty in this country. We need to do better and we certainly need a nationally coordinated plan, and the government needs to reverse its approach to condemning single parent families to living in poverty.

Question agreed to.

World Mental Health Day

Senator WRIGHT (South Australia) (17:01): I seek leave to move a motion in relation to responses by the governments of Western Australia and New South Wales to the motion passed by the Senate on World Mental Health Day.

Leave granted.

Senator WRIGHT: I move:

That the Senate take note of the responses.

This motion relates to documents received from the governments of Western Australia and New South Wales in response to the Senate motion on World Mental Health Day, 10 October, last year. The motion, co-sponsored by me as mental health spokesperson for the Australian Greens and by Senator Moore, noted this important date...
and highlighted the fact that one in five Australians will experience a mental illness in any given year. The motion highlighted the responsibility we all share, both governments and the community, to provide services and support and to reduce the stigma for those who experience mental ill health. With this in mind, I welcome the responses received from the governments of Western Australia and New South Wales acknowledging this shared responsibility.

Mental illness now accounts for 13 per cent of the burden of disease in Australia but this is still not reflected in the amount as a nation that we spend. Despite a growing awareness in the Australian community that most of us will be touched by mental illness or mental ill health during our lifetimes, whether it be ourselves or our loved ones or colleagues or friends, mental health remains significantly underfunded in our health system. As a nation we still only spend about seven per cent of the total health budget—about half of the proportion that should be invested commensurate with the burden of disease in treating and supporting those who experience mental ill health and in promoting strong mental health and wellbeing.

Mental disorders constitute the leading cause of disability burden in Australia, accounting for an estimated 24 per cent of the total years lost due to disability. The effects of poor mental health, mental disorders and mental illness are devastating personally for those experience that ill health and in terms of productivity and social wellbeing. As identified in the extensive 2011 study of 1,825 Australians, People living with psychotic illness, people experiencing psychotic illnesses like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder have significant difficulty in looking after themselves. They experience high rates of loneliness and isolation, and die on average 25 years younger than other Australians due to high rates of suicide, self-harm, obesity and smoking, and chronic physical diseases, which are undertreated, like diabetes, asthma and cardiovascular disease. According to the Inspire Foundation's report, Counting the cost: the impact of young men's mental health on the Australian community, mental illness in young men aged between 12 and 25 costs the Australian economy $3.27 billion per annum, or $387,000 per hour across a year, in lost productivity. Australia loses over nine million working days per annum to young men with mental illness. Young men with mental illness have much lower rates of educational attainment compared to their peers, further limiting their skills development and reducing their long-term earning potential by $559 million a year. Yet, as a community, we pay one way or another because the federal government bears 31 per cent of this cost via direct health costs, disability welfare payments, unemployment benefits and the direct costs of imprisonment.

Rural mental health is also an area in which there is significant underinvestment. Over the last year, I have been travelling throughout rural Australia meeting and talking and listening to people and organisations across the states who have experience of mental ill health and the services that are available to them. The prevalence of mental ill health in rural, regional and remote Australia is similar to that in urban areas, but the consequences are often much worse because of fewer services, difficulty in accessing those services and the greater visibility and stigma that is associated with seeking help in small communities. In many places, I heard about significant community initiatives that need support where there has been need and a response to need, helping to keep people participating and thriving in small
communities, but I have also heard too often about crisis driven systems of care where people have to be extensively unwell and at risk of serious self-harm or deterioration before they are able to access any services at all.

Recently, we have seen the start of long-overdue reforms to our health system to address mental illness more effectively and to promote robust mental health and wellbeing. We have made a start, but there is so much more to do. The Senate’s World Mental Health Day motion recognised the roles to be played by both the national government and the states in developing programs to improve the lot of people who experience mental illness on a daily basis.

As a community, we must be willing to spend what is needed to provide timely and effective treatment as early as possible—services like housing, employment and education, which support functioning and participation for people who are experiencing mental ill health; assistance to carers and families; reduction in stigma and discrimination against people who experience ill health through absolutely no fault or choice of their own; the promotion of good mental health and wellbeing; and the nurturing of the organisations and structures across the community that contribute to resilient communities and greater national wellbeing in mental health.

Question agreed to.

**BILLS**

**Superannuation Legislation Amendment (Service Providers and Other Governance Measures) Bill 2012**

**Report of Legislation Committee**

Senator CORMANN (Western Australia) (17:08): On behalf of Senator Boyce, the deputy chair, I present the report of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services on the Superannuation Legislation Amendment (Service Providers and Other Governance Measures) Bill 2012, together with the Hansard record of proceedings and documents presented to the committee.

Ordered that the report be printed.

**Senator CORMANN:** by leave—I move:

That the Senate take note of the report.

This is the fourth tranche of the so-called MySuper package of bills. This package of bills seeks to create a legislated and regulated default superannuation product and prescribe in legislation the features that any default superannuation product has to comply with in order to be eligible for registration as a default super product named MySuper. The first observation is that this has been a very disjointed process. Instead of being able to consider this initiative as a whole—an initiative that we have, incidentally, supported in principle—the government has been coming forward with one bit of legislation after another, which has been very disruptive to the industry and very disruptive to people in superannuation. Having said that, this is meant to be the last MySuper bill and is meant to bring to a conclusion the legislating of the government’s MySuper default superannuation initiative. So we on the coalition side are more concerned about what is not in the legislation than what is actually on the table in front of the Senate right now.

One of the big omissions from this legislation is the provision to ensure that superannuation boards across Australia have appropriate provision for independent directors. You would be aware that, as part of the corporate governance arrangements in superannuation, industry funds currently operate under what is called the equal
representation model. We have heard much about the union dominated nature of that approach and some of the concerns that flow from that. Do not take our word on this—do not take our word about the need for concern about union dominated super funds. This is a concern that came from no less than Mr Jeremy Cooper, who, on behalf of the current Labor government, chaired a review into superannuation. If I can put this into context, we on the coalition side think that we need to continue to work towards achieving the most efficient, most transparent and most competitive superannuation system possible with appropriately high corporate governance standards. Only when we have the most efficient, the most transparent and the most competitive superannuation system, with appropriately high corporate governance standards where conflicts of interest are properly managed and there is appropriate corporate governance in terms of the independence of directors on these boards and so on, will we be able to ensure that the retirement savings of people across Australia are properly looked after and maximised.

I will quote some of the findings of the Cooper review, which Minister Shorten and the Labor government have steadfastly ignored because they are more focused on the vested interests of the union movement than on the public interest when it comes to corporate governance arrangements in superannuation. Mr Cooper, of the Cooper review, made these findings in relation to the current corporate governance arrangements and described the reasons as to why the current system is no longer contemporary or appropriate. He said:

The superannuation system has moved substantially away from single-employer defined benefit funds that were dominant in 1993—which is when these arrangements first came into play. He went on to say:

The introduction of fund choice, together with the prevalence of defined contribution funds today, materially changes (and in many cases severs) the close relationship that previously existed between the employer and the super fund.

The … representatives on many trustee boards are … are nominated by third party organisations, such as … trade unions. Current employment and industrial relations practices mean that these organisations do not necessarily represent all employers or all employees. Thus, the democracy that the equal representation policy appears to embed in the governance of superannuation funds is not always present in reality. The equal representation model also could result in a perception that individual trustee-directors are required to answer to the organisation that appointed them in respect of trustee decisions or that they are dictated to by that organisation.

That is, of course, exactly what is happening and that is exactly what we are concerned about on the coalition side. He continued:

The large number of employers, employer organisations and employee organisations related to a fund can sometimes result in trustee boards being far larger than makes sense for efficient governance of that fund.

Equal representation leaves significant groups 'unrepresented.' Key among these are members who are pensioners … and members who have joined the fund because they exercised fund choice. These groups of members, already sizeable in some funds, can be expected to grow in the future.

This is the point: superannuation now is big business. We need to make sure that the corporate governance arrangements and standards reflect the changed nature of superannuation. Just because the union movement wants to desperately hold on to this legacy power and influence—this legacy hold that they have had over people's superannuation—is not a good enough reason for the parliament to protect those sorts of arrangements of the past. It is time to move forward; it is time to ensure that the corporate governance arrangements for
superannuation are more contemporary and that they reflect the 21st century circumstances and context. We will be moving amendments when this legislation comes before the Senate to give effect to the Cooper review recommendation that there should be appropriate provision for independent directors on superannuation boards.

Furthermore, this legislation does not address a significant inadequacy that was previously raised by stakeholders right across the board in a bipartisan fashion, dare I say it. Retail funds, industry funds, self-managed super fund representatives—everybody who has talked to us about this legislation—say that it is unfair that at present it super fund trustees are not allowed to cap the fees that are being charged to Australians that find themselves in MySuper funds, these default super funds.

The proposition is this: under the legislation as it currently stands and as it has been put forward by Minister Shorten, if you have $1,000 in an account you might end up paying $30 in fees on a percentage basis of 0.3 per cent, say. If you have $10,000 in that account, you will end up paying the same percentage; if you have $1,000,000 in that account you pay the same percentage. You might end up paying $3,000 where somebody else pays $300 or $30 when the increased value that you receive from the service that is provided is not equivalent to that increased level of fee. Up to a point, it might be appropriate to have an increased fee with increased account balances. But there should be an opportunity for super fund trustees to cap that at an appropriate level. At the point when the fee in dollar terms becomes so high that it no longer reflects the cost of providing the service the super fund trustee should be able to act in the best interests of members who find themselves in default superannuation—and these are members who have not made active choices. The super fund trustee should be able to cut those fees. We will be moving amendments to that effect.

Let me make the general point that this government has had overall a very bad track record when it comes to superannuation. They have imposed more than $8 billion in additional taxes on people saving for their retirement over the last four years. And that is so far. The Labor Party will get all excited by that, because they think that they have something. They think that they can attack us because we have said for a very long time that we would not be proceeding with their low-income superannuation tax offset, which they linked to the mining tax. But it is not funded. It is a measure that, if this government were re-elected at the next election, they would scrap because they would have to. They would scrap it because it is not funded; they would scrap it because the mining tax has not raised any meaningful revenue.

Senator Thistlethwaite will jump up and down and say, 'No, we won’t; no, we won’t'—just like they said that we will not have a carbon tax under the government led by Julia Gillard and like they said in 2008 that they would not change superannuation, proceeding to reduce the government superannuation co-contribution scheme from $1,500 down to $500, targeting low-income earners. And like they said in 2010 that they would never, ever tax superannuation payments for people over 60. Now they are looking at doing exactly that. You cannot ever trust what Labor says before the election. They will tell everyone that they are targeting the rich and the wealthy but after the election they will target the middle class and low-income earners, as they always do.

(Time expired)
Senator THISTLETHWAITE (New South Wales) (17:19): I rise to make a short contribution on the report of the Joint Committee on Corporations on Financial Services regarding its inquiry into the Superannuation Legislation Amendment (Service Providers and Other Governance Measures) Bill. This bill is the fourth tranche of the government's MySuper reforms. It deals with governance elements in the stronger super reform package. Australia's superannuation system was a very complex beast, and the architecture reflected the wealth of changes that have been made since 1992, often reflecting the different ideological views of the major parties regarding retirement incomes policy in this country. As it changed it became more and more complex, and as it became more and more complex fund managers and product writers found new ways to make money, often at the expense of innocent and ignorant members—the so-called beneficiaries of the superannuation system, the members.

As the system became more and more complex they became more confused, more ignorant and, unfortunately, more disengaged regarding superannuation. We got to situations where it was not uncommon to see a young worker with four or five different superannuation accounts, with two or three of those accounts inactive, receiving no contributions but paying fund managers, commissions, paying for products and paying fees for money that was essentially an asset for them but was doing them no good over the longer term.

When this government came to office we pledged to make the superannuation system fairer. We recognised that the system had gotten out of control and needed to be simplified, and that is what we have done through the Stronger Super reforms, in particular the introduction of the MySuper products. We have made it such that the system is now operating in the interests of members. Rather than operating in the interest of fund managers and product writers, it is now very much balanced in the interests of members. And, as Senator Cormann outlined, this came about as a result of the government's Cooper review, the most comprehensive study into the health and wellbeing of our superannuation system since its inception in 1992. A major part of that is the MySuper reforms, which at their heart ensure that there is a simple, easy-to-understand, easily comparable product available for all superannuation fund members in this country. This is the final tranche in that set of reforms.

The government has approached this in the tradition of making superannuation fairer and simpler. Overwhelmingly the Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services is supportive of this bill and its passage, and that is reflected in the committee's report. The bill strengthens the governance and integrity of the superannuation system. For example, many superannuation fund rules to date allow trustees to appoint or use a particular service provider on behalf of members, most notably in respect of insurance products. Their rules will say that you must use a particular insurance product that is often related to or has some relationship with that particular fund, even though in many respects it was not in the best interests of the members. There were particular rules that ensured that occurred. Now this is outlawed. No longer will trustees be obliged and mandated to use particular service providers when it comes to deciding which products to offer its members—and on behalf of members. This is consistent with the government's approach to reform in this area, of ensuring that the superannuation system operates in the best interests of members.
The reforms also provide for APRA to issue infringement notices for certain breaches of the Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act. They require persons to seek leave of the court before bringing actions against an individual director for a breach of their duties. The reforms extend legal defences available for trustees and directors to proceedings involving breaches of MySuper obligations. They also require trustees to provide reasons for decisions made in relation to a complaint and they increase the time limit for members to lodge complaints with the Superannuation Complaints Tribunal.

Throughout the process of these reforms the government has been conscious to consult widely with players in the industry. I was pleased to hear in the hearings that related to the inquiry into this particular bill that many of, or in fact most of, the players in the industry were satisfied with the government's level of consultation. I would like to draw the Senate's attention to a quote from a representative of the Australian Institute of Superannuation Trustees when he appeared before the committee. He said:

AIST acknowledge the preparedness of government and Treasury to consult with the industry about all of the Stronger Super changes and in particular the matters that are contained within this bill. That is reflected in the changes between the consultation draft and this bill, and it is also reflected in the overwhelmingly positive comments that we and others have made about the legislation in our submissions.

That is the view of industry—those who work in the superannuation game in this country—about the government's approach to these important reforms. They have been met with overwhelming positive responses and vindication of this government's approach to making superannuation simpler and fairer and in the interests of members.

Senator Cormann raises his bugbear once again—the thorn in the saddle for the opposition—that unions have positions on superannuation fund boards; that workers are represented in managing their funds in this country. They have never got over the fact that since 1992, when the compulsory superannuation system was established in this country, workers have a hand in managing such large pools of investment funds in this country. Not only do they have a hand in managing such large pools of investment funds but they do a great job. Consistently since 1992, union and employer managed super funds, commonly known as industry funds, have produced lower fees and better results for members when it comes to comparing the performance of those funds with more expensive company based funds and other corporate funds. The opposition have never got over that fact. Every time they speak about superannuation they bring up that old chestnut that they cannot get over: the fact that workers have a say in the management of superannuation funds in this country and that they have done a good job.

The approach to superannuation and the difference between the parties is highlighted by one of the policies that Senator Cormann raised in his concluding remarks, and that is the Low-Income Superannuation Contribution scheme. When we came to government we ensured that the concessions available in superannuation were targeted well and truly at the lower end of incomes in this country, that low- to middle-income workers would receive the appropriate incentives to ensure that they saved for their retirement, and that reflects the fact that we have an ageing population and we need to plan for adequate retirement savings in this country. We instituted the Low-Income Superannuation Contribution, ensuring that anyone who earns less than $37,000 in this country effectively pays no tax on their
superannuation, as an incentive to ensure that they remain in the workforce rather than drop out onto welfare, and provides for adequate retirement savings as their working years move on. But what is the approach of the opposition to this important policy? They will get rid of it if they are elected. That was confirmed by Tony Abbott, the Leader of the Opposition, in his National Press Club speech last week in response to a question by a journalist. He said that they will get rid of the low-income superannuation contribution—a tax increase for 3.5 million workers in this country, the lowest paid workers in this country. They are predominantly women who are working part-time. That exemplifies the differences between a Labor government and a coalition government when it comes to retirement incomes.

Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES

Public Accounts and Audit Committee Report

Senator POLLEY (Tasmania—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (17:29): On behalf of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, I present the 435th report on the review of Auditor-General's reports.

Ordered that the report be printed.

DOCUMENTS Tabling

The Clerk: Documents are tabled pursuant to statute. Details will be recorded in the Journals of the Senate and on the Dynamic Red. Documents are also tabled in accordance with continuing orders of the Senate relating to departmental and agency files, contracts, appointments, vacancies and grants.

Details of the documents also appear at the end of today's Hansard.

BILLS

Migration Amendment (Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals and Other Measures) Bill 2012

First Reading

Bill received from the House of Representatives.

Senator FEENEY (Victoria—Parliamentary Secretary for Defence) (17:30): 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 FEENEY (Victoria—Parliamentary Secretary for Defence) (17:30): I table a revised explanatory memorandum relating to the bill and 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—

This bill amends the Migration Act 1958 in accordance with the report of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers, which recommended that arrival anywhere in Australia by irregular maritime means should provide individuals with the same status. That is, arrival anywhere in Australia in these circumstances should make the person liable to regional processing arrangements.

At the forefront of the Panel's reasoning in making this recommendation was the need to reduce any incentive for people to take even greater risks with their lives by seeking to reach the Australian mainland to avoid being subject to regional processing arrangements.

Under the existing excision framework, unauthorised arrivals in excised offshore places
are prevented from making valid applications for visas in Australia and are liable to be taken to a designated country for regional processing. Unauthorised arrivals who arrive at the Australian mainland are not currently subject to these provisions.

As the Panel emphasised—and the Government has reiterated—the recommendations in the report are an integrated set of proposals. To be effective in discouraging asylum seekers from risking their lives, the incentives and disincentives the Panel recommended must be pursued in a comprehensive manner. The legislative amendments proposed in this bill are part of this integrated approach.

Under the amendments proposed, all non-citizens who arrive in Australia by irregular maritime means—to be known as "unauthorised maritime arrivals"—will be subject to the regional processing framework inserted by the Regional Processing Act in August 2012, unless they are specifically excluded.

Certain persons not intended to be subject to regional processing arrangements will be excluded from these arrangements. These excluded classes of persons include certain New Zealand citizens and permanent residents of Norfolk Island who do not need visas to travel to Australia.

The bill also provides the power to prescribe further classes of excluded persons in the Migration Regulations in the future should it become clear that further classes need to be excluded from regional processing arrangements.

Excluded persons will not be subject to regional processing. Nor will they be subject to a statutory bar on applying for a visa.

In addition, the important safety valve provided under section 198AE of the act remains. This provides the Minister with a personal, non-compellable power to determine that an unauthorised maritime arrival should not be taken to a designated regional processing country if the Minister thinks it is in the public interest to exempt them. This section will continue to provide flexibility to exempt individuals or classes from regional processing. Unlike excluded classes, exempt individuals or classes will still be subject to a statutory bar on applying for a visa unless the Minister also decides to lift this bar.

Sound border management requires such flexibility, in recognition of the range of complex circumstances that can apply to a person's arrival in Australia by sea without a visa. For example, a person who has been rescued at sea, and who has inadvertently engaged these provisions by arriving in Australia without a visa, could be such a case. The person may have had no intention to come to Australia, and their circumstances may warrant a more flexible approach.

The bill also amends the definition of a 'transitory person' in the act to provide flexibility to transfer persons back from a regional processing country to Australia for a temporary purpose. This amendment will allow the Government to bring people assessed to be refugees—but who have not yet met the 'no advantage' principle—back to Australia for a temporary purpose such as medical treatment, and then return them to a designated regional processing country pending provision of a durable outcome.

The application of the 'no advantage' principle is to ensure that no benefit is gained through circumventing regular migration pathways. This, combined with an increased refugee intake from offshore, is designed to remove the attractiveness of attempting an expensive and dangerous irregular boat journey to Australia.

The bill also repeals section 198C of the act. The current effect of this section is that transitory persons may request the Refugee Review Tribunal to assess whether they are a refugee if they are bought to Australia under section 198B of the act and remain here for a continuous period of six months. This provision encourages transitory persons to attempt to extend their stay in Australia in order to gain access to the Refugee Review Tribunal and the courts and therefore should be amended.

This bill also makes amendments to section 189 of the act to provide for discretionary immigration detention of Papua New Guinea (PNG) citizens who are unlawful non-citizens and are in a protected area of the Torres Strait.
Prior to the commencement of the Regional Processing Act in August 2012, the immigration detention of all unlawful non-citizens in an excised offshore place was discretionary. However, the Regional Processing Act amended section 189 of the act to change the immigration detention of these persons to mandatory. The exception is allowed inhabitants of the Protected Zone in the Torres Strait who are unlawful non-citizens. The act recognises the special status of PNG citizens who are 'allowed inhabitants of the Protected Zone' under the Torres Strait Treaty by including provision to permit their visa free travel within a protected area in certain circumstances. However, there are other PNG citizens who are not 'allowed inhabitants' of the Protected Zone, and are not provided for under the Treaty.

Due to the complex relationships, long standing cultural connections and way of life of the communities in and adjacent to a protected area, the bill extends discretionary immigration detention provided for in section 189 of the act to persons in a protected area who are citizens of PNG and are unlawful non-citizens. This provision will only apply to PNG citizens while they are in a protected area of the Torres Strait.

The bill also includes a clarifying amendment to section 198AE of the act to provide an express power for the Minister to vary or revoke a determination that a person is not subject to regional processing, if it is in the public interest to do so. The Government's view is that this power is already implied but, for avoidance of legal doubt, it is preferable to make this power explicit.

The bill provides for consequential amendments arising from the amendments relating to unauthorised maritime arrivals and transitory persons.

Finally, the bill also includes an amendment moved by the Honourable Member for Lyne, Rob Oakeshott, and supported by the Government in the House, that will require the Minister, as soon as practicable after 30 June in each year, to provide each House of Parliament with a report on the activities conducted that year as part of the Bali Process. The report must update each House on the progress made in regards to combatting people smuggling, human trafficking and related transnational crime, focusing particularly on the Regional Cooperation Framework agreed in Bali in March 2011.

This bill marks an important further step in giving full effect to the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers. It removes the incentive for asylum seekers to take greater risks with their lives to reach the Australian mainland.

I commend the bill to the chamber.

Debate adjourned.

**COMMITTEES**

**Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Committee**

**Membership**

Message received from the House of Representatives notifying the Senate of the appointment of Mr Wyatt to the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

**BILLS**

- **Superannuation Laws Amendment (Capital Gains Tax Relief and Other Efficiency Measures) Bill 2012**
- **Fair Entitlements Guarantee Bill 2012**
- **Higher Education Support Amendment (Streamlining and Other Measures) Bill 2012**
- **Superannuation Auditor Registration Imposition Bill 2012**
- **Superannuation Legislation Amendment (MySuper Core Provisions) Bill 2012**
- **Appropriation (Implementation of the Report of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers) Bill (No. 1) 2012-2013**
- **Appropriation (Implementation of the Report of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers) Bill (No. 2) 2012-2013**
Federal Circuit Court of Australia Legislation Amendment Bill 2012
Illegal Logging Prohibition Bill 2012
Crimes Legislation Amendment (Serious Drugs, Identity Crime and Other Measures) Bill 2012
Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Bill 2012
Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (Consequential and Transitional) Bill 2012
Wheat Export Marketing Amendment Bill 2012
Superannuation Legislation Amendment (Further MySuper and Transparency Measures) Bill 2012
Customs Amendment (Malaysia-Australia Free Trade Agreement Implementation and Other Measures) Bill 2012
Customs Tariff Amendment (Malaysia-Australia Free Trade Agreement Implementation) Bill 2012
Fair Work Amendment Bill 2012
Fair Work Amendment (Transfer of Business) Bill 2012
Treasury Legislation Amendment (Unclaimed Money and Other Measures) Bill 2012
Freedom of Information Amendment (Parliamentary Budget Office) Bill 2012
Corporations Legislation Amendment (Derivative Transactions) Bill 2012
Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Amendment Bill 2012
Personal Liability for Corporate Fault Reform Bill 2012
Superannuation Legislation Amendment (New Zealand Arrangement) Bill 2012
National Health Security Amendment Bill 2012
Dental Benefits Amendment Bill 2012
Tax Laws Amendment (2012 Measures No. 5) Bill 2012
Tax Laws Amendment (Clean Building Managed Investment Trust) Bill 2012
Access to Justice (Federal Jurisdiction) Amendment Bill 2012
Courts Legislation Amendment (Judicial Complaints) Bill 2012
Judicial Misbehaviour and Incapacity (Parliamentary Commissions) Bill 2012
National Gambling Reform (Related Matters) Bill (No. 1) 2012
National Gambling Reform (Related Matters) Bill (No. 2) 2012
Aviation Legislation Amendment (Liability and Insurance) Bill 2012
Migration Legislation Amendment (Student Visas) Bill 2012
National Gambling Reform Bill 2012
Law Enforcement Integrity Legislation Amendment Bill 2012
Customs Tariff (Anti-Dumping) Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2012
Customs Amendment (Anti-dumping Improvements) Bill (No. 3) 2012
Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Bill 2012
Ordered that the report be printed.

**Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012**

**Second Reading**

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

**Senator NASH** (New South Wales—Deputy Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (17:32): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012. In doing so, I note that it has been a very long five and a bit years since 2007, when this all started with the Water Act, and I have been very much involved all the way through. Indeed, at the time I had some responsibility for water and spent a week with the member for Flinders travelling from Toowoomba down to Adelaide—right down the length of the Murray-Darling Basin. I have to say it was a very educational experience in more ways than one. While I live out in the central west and understand regional communities, and am indeed a groundwater irrigator, it certainly opens your eyes to go from one end of the Murray-Darling Basin to the other in one trip. It certainly shows that there is not one area that can lay claim to being the most important part of the Murray-Darling Basin. In no way, shape or form can that happen.

What we have seen over the last five years from this government when it comes to water is an absolute shambles. I have to commend the shadow minister for water, Senator Joyce, and also Senator Birmingham for the continued work they have done in trying to make sure that we get the right outcomes for those regional communities across the Murray-Darling Basin. But it has been an absolute shambles from this Labor government. Indeed, my good colleague Senator Birmingham pointed out earlier that...
it took the minister at the time, Senator Wong, 18 months to appoint the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. We should have had a glimmer then that the whole process was going to be an absolute dog’s breakfast. It is a shame that that trend of mismanagement has continued right throughout these five years.

As Mark Twain once said, 'Whiskey is for drinking; water is for fighting over.' There is no doubt that there have been various views on the way forward for water, but one thing is for certain: there is in no way, shape or form ever going to be a day when the Nationals back away from a fight. We will not stop fighting, as we have done consistently for these regional communities, to make sure that they get the best outcome that they possibly can when it comes to water.

What we have seen with the legislation for the 2,750 gigalitres of water to come out of those communities is that it is not perfect. I am not happy; I do not think it is great. But it is certainly better than what we would have had if, as Senator Joyce said earlier, we had backed away, pulled ourselves out of the debate and let the Greens shape the way the Murray-Darling Basin water plan was going to go. Let me tell you, Madam Deputy President Stephens—I suspect you know anyway, having such great regard for regional communities as you do—that would have been an absolute disaster. There is no way that the Greens were ever going to take a triple-bottom-line approach and get a balance between the social, economic and environmental factors that all have to be considered equally when it comes to water in the Murray-Darling Basin and how the removal of water impacts on those communities. There was no way the Nationals were going to stand here and let that happen.

While I know a lot of people out there think that, perhaps, the outcome we have seen for the Murray-Darling Basin plan is not the one they would have liked to have seen, I can assure those people that if the Greens had got their hands on the driving levers for this we would have had an absolute basket case out there in the regions. I say that as a senator from regional New South Wales. I have lived in the central west for over 20 years and I understand the impact on these towns of permanently removing this water.

I remember several years ago when the minister at the time, Senator Wong, had responsibility—she would say: 'Farmers just have to get used to doing more with less. They have to deal with drought all the time.' What the government's intention has been all the way along—which the minister at the time, Senator Wong, never realised—that they were proposing a permanent drought for these communities through government policy. That is what they never got their heads around: farmers are incredibly resilient. People who live in regional communities are incredibly resilient. They can deal with drought. They are extraordinary people. But you tell them they have to have a permanent drought, that you are going to permanently remove water from their communities, and that is a different kettle of fish entirely.

There are so many aspects of this that the government has never understood. I give Minister Tony Burke some credit for turning up in these places and putting himself in front of all these people. There were quite a number of testy meetings. But it still did not ever translate properly for him. He still never really understood what the impact of what the government has been trying to do was going to be on the regional communities. He never really got it.
When we look at the Murray-Darling Basin—what an extraordinary land mass in terms of production, what it does and the people it feeds. The Murray-Darling Basin contributes something like $15 billion to the economy. Within the Murray-Darling Basin itself is around 39 or 40 per cent of agricultural production. It feeds 2.1 million people. What people do not realise is that this legislation in front of us today—this potential extra 450 gigalitres—could potentially feed 600,000 people. If you take that water out of the system for food production and apply that to environmental purposes, where is that food production going to come from? It becomes like a chessboard, not only across Australia but also across the globe. This is a much bigger picture issue that has not had nearly as much attention.

I put the issue of food security and how we are going to feed the growing global population. The global food task is going to exponentially increase. We are looking at a world population of around nine billion people by 2050. It is the bigger picture that we also have to consider, and I do not think this Labor government has considered it properly at all. When we are taking this water out, removing it from food production, where is that food-productive capacity going to be? Where is it going to come from? While acquiring the funding to do what the government wants to do under this legislation may not be directly related to this particular piece of legislation, it is a serious question for this nation and one that we have to talk about, one that we have to debate.

Future food security is absolutely vital. What we are up against at the moment is the fact that when we export around 70 per cent of what we produce, there is not the imperative to discuss it now. I venture that it should be. We should be discussing it now, because while we are not in a situation at the moment where food security is an issue, we may well be in the future. We need to make some decisions now about how our agricultural productive capacity is going to look in the future, not only for our domestic needs but to fulfil our responsibility to feed the growing population and to contribute to the global food task that is going to increase exponentially. While we have a lot of hot-headed debates across this chamber around current legislation in front of us, there are some really big-picture issues that we need to consider. We need to consider how we want Australia as an agricultural nation to look in 20, 30 and 40 years. That vision is sadly lacking from this government. While we have agreed in principle to this piece of legislation, we as the coalition are not happy with the legislation as it currently stands and we will be moving some amendments to it.

The bill requires an additional 450 gigalitres. Interestingly the government initially said 'up to 450 gigalitres' but now we see in the legislation before us a straight 450 gigalitres. That is again the Greens snuggling in under the armpit of their Labor coalition partners, trying to prod and push them in a direction that the Labor government know they should not be going in. Maybe it is time that the Labor government realised that the Australian Greens are a barnacle on their government, because some of the things that the Australian Greens have been able to make the Labor government do I am sure the Labor government know are not in the national interest.

We will be moving an amendment to ensure that in this legislation the bill refers to up to 450 gigalitres. It must come from infrastructure efficiency and investment. The government have indicated that this will not be coming from buybacks in the bigger picture. We know that there is some capacity under this legislation for the on-farm
We think it is vitally important that the legislation include the cap on the 1,500 gigs of water buyback. What that means—and this is very important—is that, because the Environmental Water Holder has already purchased a significant proportion of that 1,500 gigalitres, there is only around 270 gigalitres of water left that can be bought back through the buyback process. So I say to people out there that, when they hear the cap at 1,500, under the coalition—and this is what you will get if the coalition is in government—no more than about an extra 270 gigs can be purchased through buyback. That is our absolute commitment in government. The coalition in government will make sure that the people of regional communities have that—and there is no way, shape or form that we will go back on that.

The shambolic process that we have seen from this government to this point, over the last five or so years, has been nothing short of breathtaking. They just do not understand. They have no idea. Senator Joyce commented earlier about the purchase of Toorale for—I think Senator Joyce said—about $23 million. He also mentioned the purchase of Twynam for $303 million. That $303 million did not belong to the government; that is Australian taxpayers' money—that is, $303 million of hardworking Australian mums' and dads' money went to that purchase. There is no bucket of money under the flagpole in the middle of Parliament House; that money was the money of the Australian people. And what did the government do with it? On 28 May 2009 there was a release and the government were crowing about purchasing the 250 gigs of water for $303 million—equivalent to one-half of all the water used in Sydney each year. That is a story for another day. Perhaps if we actually looked at run-off in some of our capital cities and the waste of water from our city people, they might be...
able to contribute to saving water in this nation as well.

But what is particularly interesting is that this water was actually bought over four different catchments—Murrumbidgee, Lachlan, Macquarie and Gwydir rivers—and, guess what? The government was offered it as a job lot. The government had absolutely no ability to assess the water and the licences that were on offer across all of those catchments and decide which ones would actually be appropriate. Twynam—and good luck to them; they are very smart people involved in that organisation—offered it up as a job lot and the government had no choice but to spend $303 million worth of taxpayers' money on the 250 giga-litres of water without actually determining whether any of it would be any good. I wonder if at the time the minister had a look at the Lachlan, because, guess what? It only runs into the Murray about once every hundred years. That is going to be a lot of use, isn't it?

But, no, they could not excise that one; they had to take the absolute lot. My understanding is that they paid about $2,800 a giga-litre for this water. Prior to that particular purchase, my understanding was that the average was about $1,900. Where were they plucking these figures from?

But it gets better. At the end of last year—and I am taking this from the Jemalong Irrigation report—the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder:

... announced that it may sell the water onto the temporary water market this year in the Lachlan Valley. As all environmental targets have been met on the Lachlan this year without the use of these entitlements, they are surplus to their requirements.

So the government spent $303 million acquiring water from Twynam—part of which they have now clearly overpurchased, quite possibly distorting the market at the time when they made all these purchases under this $303 million agreement, given that now I think it is around $1,400 a giga-litre for high security—and then we see the Environmental Water Holder going: 'Oh, gosh, we've got a bit too much; actually, we've probably got a lot too much. So we'll just pop it back into the temporary water market in the Lachlan.' And what is that going to do? It will quite possibly distort the market for the temporary trading in the Lachlan as well.

This is how stupid the government are—I am sorry but I cannot think of a more technical term—and shows just one example of how they have not thought things through. They never thought these things through. Everything was just a kneejerk reaction along the way. While there may have been good intent from some quarters, they got it so wrong in so many ways, because they simply did not understand what they were doing.

Through many of our committee processes, when we asked the Environmental Water Holder, 'Where is the benefit of the environmental water? Where is the water going? What is it watering? How much is going there? How are they determining what is the appropriate environmental purpose for any of the releases of that water?' we got virtually nothing. The level of understanding along the way has just been pathetic. And we have seen that again recently. Part of this whole process will obviously be the infrastructure efficiencies, and so much of that is to do with removing the physical constraints in the system. It cannot actually happen. What the government are trying to do will not work if some of those physical constraints are not addressed. And yet the department seems to have absolutely no idea how this is going to work. There is just so little evidence of how they have come up with the costings of actually removing the
constraints. The whole thing is an absolute dog's breakfast.

I can only say that, having been involved in this process in one way, shape or form since the beginning, the priority of the Nationals has always been, and will always be, making sure that we get the best possible outcomes for those people living in regional communities. That is our job. That is what we do. That is why we are here. That is why we have fought so hard—and I have to again commend my Senate leader, Senator Joyce, for the work he has done trying to get the right outcomes for these communities. We have worked hard and we have done our best. It is not perfect; it is in no way, shape or form perfect. But I can guarantee to all people in regional communities and right across the nation that the Nationals have not stopped fighting to make sure that we get the best possible outcome we can, because this is about a sustainable future for regional communities and a sustainable future for all of those families, people and businesses who live in those communities into the future.

**Senator McKenzie** (Victoria) (17:52): I rise after the Nationals' deputy leader in the Senate, Senator Nash, who has given an excellent contribution on this particular piece of legislation, the Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012. Our Constitution puts water squarely in the domain of the states, and without the basin states signing up for these amendments to the Water Act there would be little point in proceeding.

The Murray River is said to be the only river in the world that has its own flag; in fact, it has two. The Upper and Lower Murray flags have been flown since 1853 to represent the Murray River as it flows through Victoria and down into South Australia, with four stripes to represent the four rivers in the system. Murray River communities are proud people with a long history of contribution to our nation and strong industries. So too, the Nationals have a strong tradition of standing up for those communities and the industries within them. In my home state, $1.8 billion of irrigated agricultural produce is grown in the Murray River districts. Forty-two per cent of the value of all of the Murray-Darling Basin's agricultural production actually comes from Victoria, so we have a big stake in what actually happens around concerns with the Murray-Darling Basin.

On water, the environmental credentials of the coalition are clear: the Nationals' leader and Deputy Prime Minister, John Anderson, started water reform in the modern political era through the introduction of the National Water Initiative in 2003—113 years after Federation—and here we are. It is a complex and difficult issue that we have been struggling with as a nation for a long time. But the Nationals and the coalition have continued to work to get the balance right and, as a member of the Senate's Environment and Communications Committee, who conducted an inquiry into this bill in late 2012—and it was an extremely brief inquiry on such an important issue, especially the component concerning this particular bill—I would like to thank those key stakeholders who scrambled to participate in providing essential commentary around this particular bill before us today: industry and community members, who have been forensic in the detail of the impact of any Murray-Darling Basin Plan from the first draft and who know the detail even if the government does not.

The approach outlined in this bill facilitates a potential of 450 gigalitres of water to be hopefully returned to the environment by measures excluding water buybacks, which have been so detrimental to our rural communities—a fact that has been
reiterated continually by producers and by communities throughout the Murray-Darling Basin Plan debate over many years. However, the bill before us today does not make it legally binding for the government to recover water in a way that does not adversely impact irrigation communities—even though the EM implies that it should—and I guess our request is that we make our intent clear.

Since the Water Act was passed in 2007, most of Labor's activities have been lazily centred on the buyback of irrigation water. Mark McKenzie from the Murray Valley Winegrowers association gave us evidence through the inquiry into this particular bill around the impact and the amount of water that has been taken out of irrigation communities. Merbein pumped district in Sunraysia is 42 per cent de-watered, and 36 per cent of Red Cliffs pumped district is de-watered. Not all of this de-watering can be attributed to buyback, but a fair majority can. Fourteen years of drought and the entry of urban populations into the water market—such as Adelaide, Bendigo and Ballarat—have had an impact. In this part of the world, the high price of temporary water, drought and low commodity prices have all contributed to the creation of willing sellers for Labor's devastating buyback program.

If we look elsewhere in Victoria, the impacts have been even worse. The Pyramid Hill district lost over 50 per cent of its original high-security entitlement in less than a decade. Goulburn-Murray Water, in its submission to the previous version of the Basin Plan, predicted its original 1,600 gigalitres of high-security water would fall to less than 800 under a path of unrelenting buybacks that Labor was on.

The government is well aware—and has itself acknowledged—that water buybacks are not the solution. A healthy river with healthy river communities is not created through the expenditure of vast sums of government money on purchasing water from struggling farmers and ripping it out of local communities. Numerous submitters to the inquiry, such as the NFF and the Murray Valley Winegrowers, expressed concern that this bill—particularly in proposed section 86AD(2)(b)—still appears to allow for further buybacks, in contrast to the minister's assurance. This is a concern that the Nationals share.

The socio-economic issues go to the heart of my concerns with the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and the particular piece of legislation before us today. During the recent inquiry we heard a lot about socio-economic issues that concern the communities of the Murray-Darling Basin. The National Irrigators Council said:

...there is nothing in the Bill which specifically guarantees the 'upward movement'—of an amount of water to be removed from communities—will not cause social and economic downsides …

The Victorian Farmers Federation further said:

...government is of the belief that simply providing money towards socio-economic issues which arise will solve them. This is simply not the case.

I would argue that throwing money at a problem once you have created it is the wrong way to govern. Let's plan appropriately so as not to cause detrimental effects when we are legislating in the first place. The coalition has foreshadowed amendments that will enshrine a no-detriment test for socioeconomic impacts of water removal from rural communities.

In the last several years, I have seen the Commonwealth active in the water market firsthand. I have seen the evidence of what less water means for rural communities and I
do not need contentious macro-socioeconomic modelling to incorrectly remove water from our communities and to not understand that it does not have a detrimental effect. The reality is that, as I visit Shepparton, I see empty shops. When I read the newspaper, I read how water-based industry factories are closing, and the Heinz Girgarre tomato plant and Leitchville cheese are but a few. These involve real people with families and people that are part of communities, who go to schools, who are volunteer firemen and women, who are artists and netballers—all of whom add social capital to the country. These people exist because their jobs are linked directly or indirectly to the use of water to produce primary product. Victoria has contributed the greatest share of high-security water to the buyback. There is also greater exposure to public and private flood than in any other state.

Lastly, the non-strategic buyback of water has produced deep waterholes in our irrigation districts, such as the Swiss cheese effect, and we heard that continually from the first iteration of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. I was at the public consultation in Swan Hill when Craig Knowles, Chair of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, acknowledged that of water buybacks when he said:

"I agree with the statement made that 'If we take 30% of your water out of this community it will have damaging, severe devastating effects.' I agree with that and I want to put that on the record right now."

So Craig Knowles recognises it, feels our pain, understands, and then proceeds the legislation before us today to not make it quite clear that that is not going to be part of the final solution.

The very next day northern Victoria’s communities read in the paper, after he made those statements, that the MDBA had again entered the water market in the southern basin. The anger at the news that the MDBA was in the water market again was palpable amongst our irrigation communities. Trust is the issue here. A lack of understanding and compassion is also of concern, but trust is the issue. With some parts of the basin having lost near or over 30 per cent of their water already, isn’t it time that we say enough to mitigate those damaging, severe, devastating effects as described by Craig Knowles?

The government have the opportunity to reflect that understanding today in legislation, to put that into words. Once again they have failed to heed regional Australia’s concern, bowing to the Greens, as evidenced by deleting ‘up to’ from the bill, making that a minimum rather than a maximum, getting rid of that flexibility. There is a lack of detail within this debate not only of the impact of removing the water but also of how much water is being purchased and from where. We do not know that local detail and yet we are very happy to prescribe an amount of money and we are very happy to prescribe a minimum volume required for the environment. Again, it goes to trust.

In October 2012 the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder was asked to identify how much water was purchased from individual irrigation districts rather than just from catchments, which may contain many irrigation districts. They responded, stating that they could not provide the information because they did not know. They said:

"The Government does not know in which community it has purchased $2 billion of water buybacks."

I will repeat that: this government does not know from what communities it has purchased the water and, more specifically, this government cannot tell us how much water has been purchased from towns like
Shepparton, Victoria's fruit bowl, or Tatura, the centre of Victoria's and the nation's milk-exporting industry.

How can they assess the impact if they do not know how much water they have purchased? How can we believe the government have strategically purchased water if they do not know where they have purchased it from, leaving irrigation districts like a piece of Swiss cheese struggling for viability? That is why we have been so adamant in wanting to ensure that buybacks are not part of the permanent solution in addressing the concerns of the environment and the Murray-Darling Basin's sustainability going forward. The government has done an atrocious job at implementing water buybacks. I hate to think that there is anybody here who can be under any illusions about the devastating effects of the government's buybacks program after hearing the evidence from the inquiry and over time and from the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee, chaired by Senator Heffernan.

I note the unusual step taken in this bill to appropriate funds so far in advance—however, given the government's track record in this regard, I probably should not be surprised. I am particularly concerned with what appears to be a lack of work done to justify the amounts being appropriated and their adequacy to meet the stated objectives of this bill. I am glad Senator Hanson-Young is in the chamber because I am particularly interested in her faux outrage in her contribution to this bill before us today. She is very concerned that Australian taxpayers are not having their precious money frittered away—if only the Greens were as dedicated to austerity right across their portfolios and in negotiations with their coalition partners, Labor. However, I am concerned that that is probably less about Senator Hanson-Young's concern about the precious money of taxpayers being frittered away and more about suburban Adelaide votes.

The bill is promoted as seeking to generate an additional 450 gigalitres of water with minimal socioeconomic impact by heavily investing in on-farm efficiency grants. The reality is somewhat different, however. The cynical amongst us would say this was an on-the-fly constructed pot of $1.77 billion worth of gold designed to appease a recalcitrant South Australian Labor premier. What did the South Australian Premier do after he received this? He removed half of South Australia's share of the funding contributions for river operations, maintenance and natural resource programs in the basin.

Again, there is no prescription in the bill before us for a specified amount of money to be spent on system constraint relaxation. What needs to be changed? How much? What will be the effect of this amount of water going through the system? I am concerned about the costs associated with addressing the constraints within the system that would require the removal under a 3,200-gigalitre scenario which is favoured by the Greens. I am sure we will be hearing all about it later as those amendments come forward. I hope Senator Hanson-Young's newly found austerity will share my concerns in terms of getting the detail around how that money was constructed.

I want to know how a figure of $200 million for constraint removal was identified, and the ramifications. Is this funding pool sufficient to remove all constraints necessary? What compensation may be forthcoming to those potentially affected by constraint removal? This is a particular concern for those in the upper catchment in Victoria and was expressed very clearly by Jan Beer and Ken Pattison in their contribution to the Senate inquiry into the
bill. Similarly, Mr Anderson from the Victorian Farmers Federation said during the inquiry:

If you go to the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and look at their Lower Goulburn floodplain risk assessment, it is a nonsense to say that you can put 40,000 megalitres a day past McCoys Bridge without causing serious flooding of not only public property but also private property.

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority's environmental flow hydraulics study says that if you had that much water at McCoys Bridge you would flood, and it has been quoted by so many people—the Minister for Water in Victoria, Mr Walsh, and Dr Stone in the other place—you would flood 100 buildings, 250 kilometres of road, 8,000 hectares of dryland agriculture and 1,000 hectares of irrigated agriculture. That is what would happen in real life to real people.

During the inquiry, the National Farmers' Federation and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority also acknowledged the difficulties in addressing this particular problem. There still exists ambiguity around the legal liability for those said flooding events and the effect that they could have on public-private environmental assets, the caravan parks, the river red gums and the national assets.

In Victoria, $30 million was spent on the Basin Plan's consultation roadshow. Incredibly, there was no public meeting in the upper catchment towns where these issues could occur. The Eildon, Hume and Dartmouth dams are also located amongst these communities. The people most at risk from increasing river flows have been forgotten by this Labor government. This issue is why the shadow minister for water and Nationals Leader in the Senate, Barnaby Joyce, has foreshadowed amendments to the bill in order to make clear that the additional water will be sought through investment in infrastructure upgrades and ensuring any buybacks do not cause detriment to regional communities. This means we have explicitly written into the bill assurances that buybacks will not ultimately be the main feature of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan's implementation in Victoria or elsewhere. Our amendments to the bill will go some way towards basin communities in restoring and enhancing trust with the process, politicians and bureaucracies. As Mark McKenzie from the Murray Valley Winegrowers' association said:

We are being asked to take a lot of this on trust. Although we believe that, ultimately, we are getting there, I have to say that my community members are a bit light on for trust at the moment.

I am pretty sure it is not just this particular issue that regional communities are light on trust with in this particular government. I will not go into discussing that more at this point.

Trust in the basin communities has been lost through Labor's heavy-handed treatment of basin communities and there is still a lot of anxiety and uncertainty out there, as Senator Nash referred to. These are people with businesses and families and you cannot plan ahead for the future. Farming is not a short-term prospect—it is a long-term project. It is generations investing and growing the productivity of their land.

**Senator Heffernan:** It is a great place to raise a family but a bugger of a place to make a quid.

**Senator McKENZIE:** There we go. Great contribution, Senator Heffernan, it is a great place to raise a family and difficult to make a quid, and in making sure that regional communities can still make a quid they will be making more of it as long as they have water within them.
The Nationals and the coalition seek to ensure that our amendment legislates our commitments and the very real concerns that we hear on a daily basis and that the minister and Craig Knowles, if they had been serious, would admit they heard every day in every consultation that they went to. They stood up in front of those communities, they went to the public consultations, they went to the private little chitchats and they absorbed the pain; they heard the detail. The amount of man- and woman-hours that have gone into trying to get this right, trying to get the balance right between the environment and the healthy river system and viable and productive regional communities is enormous. I look forward to the research project that quantifies it. That is why our amendments will go towards making a bad situation a little better, because they need to plan for the future, to grow the food and their families in a healthy environment. The coalition is interested in not only protecting our food bowl but also in starting to build trust which has been consumed by political process in the development of the Basin Plan.

I urge the Senate, and especially the Greens, to take a similar approach. I hope the debate and final vote will reflect the statements and expressions of concern, the hours of meetings and consultations that have gone into this legislation and the plan around it, that our action will stop devastating, market-distorting water buybacks that not only waste taxpayers' money but also devastate the productive capacity of regional communities. It is not perfect, and I recognise that, but we are 113 years down the track and we have to have a sustainable environment, but more importantly what we on this side of the chamber recognise is that we also have to have sustainable communities.

I hope that our debate will ensure investment in our regions with infrastructure projects that will ensure a vibrant and vigorous future for our regional communities and the environment.

**Senator XENOPHON** (South Australia) (18:12): I endorse those final remarks from Senator McKenzie. I think we all want that—we all want to have vibrant regional communities. We want the Murray-Darling Basin to continue to be the major food bowl of this nation and we do not want in any way to detract from that, but we also need a healthy river system, and I think we all agree that we need to have that healthy river system to get the balance between the two. I also agree with Senator McKenzie that the South Australian government did the wrong thing when in December last year they announced that they were slashing the funding to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority from $26.4 million to $12.1 million. I think that was the wrong move. It sent the wrong signals. It was a wrong move and, unambiguously, the South Australian government made a mistake in relation to that.

I want to make it clear that I cautiously welcome the government's proposal outlined in the Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012. It is a vital measure in addition to the Basin Plan from the point of view of South Australia. From the point of view of the health of the basin it will lead to a better outcome. I acknowledge that the government has made meaningful amendments in the House of Representatives to ensure that the bill is true to its policy intent, because previously it was simply an aspirational goal. The Dean of the Adelaide University Law School, Professor John Williams, whom I have enormous regard for, for his intellect and for his analysis, wrote an opinion piece in the Adelaide *Advertiser* on 12 November
2012, where he basically said that the bill in its previous form, as it was then when he was commenting on it, was largely aspirational—it did not carry much weight, and did not have any real teeth to it. I do share the concerns of my colleagues from the opposition on this side of the chamber who want to make sure that the $1.775 billion over 10 years is spent wisely. I think we all want that. I welcome the amendments relating to the independent reviews of the fund, but I am concerned that when it comes to the implementation of this bill we will see more of what has happened before and I am concerned that South Australia, at the tail end of the river system, will be particularly vulnerable. There have been significant concerns raised about misallocation or even misappropriation of funds from previous infrastructure programs. In particular, the Commonwealth Auditor-General's audit of the $650 million Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program in New South Wales was scathing in its assessment of how the fund was managed. The Australian National Audit Office report reads that, whilst the department has implemented the program and allocated available funding:

… weaknesses in program governance and in the management of a number of implementation issues had an adverse impact on the overall effectiveness of the program's administration. In this regard, shortcomings were evident in DSEWPaC's design of the program, the assessment of applications and the development of measures to inform an assessment of whether the program is achieving its objectives.

If the intention of this bill is to deliver an additional 450 gigalitres to the environment then we need to make sure that that is what it does. To that end I will be introducing amendments to ensure that priority goes to projects where the greatest amount of returned water can be guaranteed in the shortest amount of time. I will also be introducing amendments to allow funding to be allocated to projects relating to research and development of water-saving technologies. I acknowledge the work of Senator Bill Heffernan as Chair of the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee. We need to be smarter in how we farm. We need to be innovative. We need to use the best technology and spend money on research and development so we can get those best outcomes.

My amendment is based on concerns raised with me by irrigators in the Riverland who have missed out on earlier rounds of government grants because they were already too water efficient to qualify. These early adopters have spent the last 40-plus years spending their own money to become as water efficient as they can because they had no other choice. Living at the end of the river makes you appreciate the need for water-saving measures. As they say, necessity is the mother of invention. Many of these irrigators as well as those in other areas are incredibly experienced in working with the smallest amount of water possible. They are always looking for ways to improve their efficiency even further because they know from bitter experience that the Murray is not a bottomless well.

These people who have done the right thing and now keep trying to improve deserve to be recognised. For instance, Dave Reilly and his wife, Anita, are just two individuals in the Riverland in South Australia who deserve this recognition. Dave and Anita are on Gurra Downs, a property near Loxton in the Riverland. They grow dates. It is a groundbreaking development for South Australia. Unlike the usual citrus crops in the area, once the palms are established they require very little water to stay alive and can cope with much higher levels of salinity and, in fact, once they are established they are pretty well drought proof. In years where
there is enough water you can harvest the
fruit and in years where there is not you
might not get fruit but your trees will survive
and your investment is protected.

Dave and Anita are also working on
developing stock specifically for Australian
conditions. They have won multiple awards,
including the Khalifa International Date
Palm Award for best new development
project at the Fourth International Date Palm
Conference held in Abu Dhabi in 2010. Last
year Dave was awarded a Nuffield farming
scholarship, which will allow him to
continue studying date palms and how to
build a viable industry here in the Southern
Hemisphere.

Gurra Downs has also been held up as an
example of best practice by state and
Commonwealth governments, but the Reillys
could not get $1 million from the federal
government's Private Irrigation Infrastructure
Program for SA to relocate their water pump
despite the fact that by July 2011 only $14.4
million of the $5.8 billion scheme had been
allocated to South Australia. Apparently
their project did not fit the criteria. There is
incredible irony that Dave has been
showered with awards overseas but has
difficulty getting the support he needs back
home. No wonder farmers want to give up
and walk off the land. I am pleased to say
that the Reillys are doing well. I hope we
will have a thriving date palm industry as a
result of their innovation and courage in
pursuing this project. Gurra Downs
represents the best combination of ingenuity,
scientific knowledge and rock hard
determination. The work that people such as
the Reillys are doing and the technologies
and techniques that they are developing will
end up benefiting the basin as a whole if they
can get the support to keep going.

I note it is unlikely that the government
and the opposition will be supporting these
amendments, but even if they cannot do so in
relation to this bill I ask them both to
acknowledge that we need to put more
funding towards early adopters who are
creating the next wave of developments for
the basin. Those who have done the right
thing for many years deserve to be
recognised and rewarded. It is abundantly
clear that we need new ways of doing things.

Further north in New South Wales we are
seeing more public policy failure as the issue
of evaporation in the Menindee Lakes still
remains unresolved. I went there a number of
years ago. The local action group there has
been talking about this for over a decade.
Successive governments have been trying to
tackle the whole issue of the massive
evaporation from the Menindee Lakes. I
acknowledge that the people of Broken Hill
absolutely deserve a guaranteed reliable
water supply, but there are other alternative
projects, such as aquifers. There are the
issues of water sports for those who are in
the Menindee Lakes area—I get that—but
there are issues of significant evaporation
and some engineering works can make a
significant difference in that respect.

Senator Heffernan: When they are 85
per cent full the lakes evaporate more water
than every pump up the river uses.

Senator XENOPHON: There we go. I
accept what Senator Heffernan said—that
when the lakes are 85 per cent full they
evaporate more water than all the pumps up
the river use. I do not doubt Senator
Heffernan’s expertise in relation to that. That
is something we need to tackle. There has
been an enormous level of policy lethargy, a
lack of momentum and inertia in relation to
this. The government, the ALP, promised
this would be a priority program for the 2007
election. I am not blaming the government as
such because there have been a whole lot of
roadblocks in relation to this at a state government level.

We must explore these options and invest in innovative new technologies to make sure that we maximise returns to the basin. At the hearing chaired by Senator Heffernan into the Murray-Darling Basin in Mildura on 3 April 2012 we heard I think Mark McKenzie talk about projects that with a little bit of money could save enormous amounts of water. We need to be smart about how we save water and the way that we engage communities. We cannot just cut water allocations without consequence. We need to make sure that we can still grow crops and that the food bowl of the nation can be environmentally and economically sound. But we need to have investment in research and development, because unless we do it just will not happen. I acknowledge that the government have now removed the words 'up to' in relation to their bill, but I think it should be strengthened so that it is at least 450 gigalitres. I know that some of my colleagues will disagree with me on that, but if it is meant to do what is meant to be then it should be clear in its wording. Ultimately, this legislation is only one part of the massive reforms we need to rescue the basin.

I support this legislation—cautiously support it—but I am worried that come the next drought, the state that will be hit the hardest will be the state of South Australia, because we are at the tail end of the river system. I want to finish off with the words of Professor John Williams, who says that:

Future proofing the South Australian agreement against intransigence, backsliding and an evaporation of political will is now a matter of urgency.

He finishes off by saying that:

The certainty promised to the river Murray and the people of South Australia must be reflected in the language of the bill now before the federal parliament.

I agree with Professor Williams entirely and that is what we should be aiming to do.

Senator HEFFERNAN (New South Wales) (18:23): I would like to recognise in the chamber the hardworking Mary Harwood who has had to put up with me for years. How are you, Mary? I apologise to all the hardworking government officials who have had to put up with the lack of science in water planning and the overindulgence of politics. This bill is part of a political fix which is convenient to most politicians in this parliament to get them past the next election. I am going to be seriously off the page in my contribution.

As Craig Knowles said during the hearings to which Senator Xenophon referred, 'Bill, this is the best political deal we could get'—nothing to do with the best scientific deal that we should have. Just to remind the chamber—and I am sure that my committee, Senator Nash and my good buddy on my left are sick of hearing about it—but if the science is 40 per cent right by 2050, this is all a waste of time. The Murray-Darling Basin is 6.2 per cent of Australia’s run-off—23,400 gigalitres—and 38 per cent of that run-off comes from two per cent of the landscape in the Snowy Mountains of north-east Victoria. If the science is 40 per cent right—and the science is telling us that in the southern Murray-Darling Basin there could be a two degree increase in temperature over the next 50 years, which could result in a 15 per cent decline in rainfall and we are already planning for that at Junee, and I am sure they are over at Young, Senator Nash—that will result in up to a 35 per cent decline in run-off, and that also means that we could be down to eight or nine days snow a year. That science could be 100 per cent right or 100 per cent wrong, but if it is 40 per cent right then there will be zero allocations to general purpose water in the southern Murray-Darling Basin in most
years. Putting that in figures, that is a prediction of a loss of run-off of between 3,500 and 11,000 gigalitres, so we do have a bit of a problem.

I absolutely agree with the proposition that we have got to become more efficient with our water use. I have just discussed with some people, including Mary, that this bill is really to encourage people to become more efficient. Australia’s most efficient irrigation is in Carnarvon. In 2006-07, the year I was chairman of the Northern Development Taskforce—which sadly has been gotten rid of—Carnarvon produced $69 million of income with 8,500 megalitres water. In the same year, the Ord produced the same income—plus a couple of million dollars—with 40 times that amount of water. So, they were 40 times less efficient than the science, which is Israeli-Spanish technology and I will not burden the gallery or chamber with the detail. The water in the Ord—and we will get to that eventually because it is a disgrace that there are no incentives, there is no market for water and there is no encouragement to be more efficient—is 40 times less efficient than Carnarvon, and Carnarvon is 20 times more efficient than the average across the Murray-Darling Basin, even though there are pockets—and some of those in South Australia—which are just as efficient. If you had used the 8½ thousand megalitres that year that produced $69 million worth of income in Carnarvon from things like lunch pack bananas, tomatoes, table grapes and capsicums—all counter-cyclical seasonally—in the Murray-Darling Basin to produce cotton, instead of getting $69 million you would have got yourself about $3 million. Here we are saying we are going to give money for more efficiency.

The buybacks so far in the Murray-Darling Basin have been haphazard at best, politically convenient at worst. I would instance the sale of the Toorale water which was an afterthought by the New South Wales government to try and fund the sale of the proposition that they were going to buy a national park and sell off the water. In that sale there were area licences, because the river was not on the page and they should have been cancelled, not acquired. Anyhow, they bought water in the Darling River system which has provided no real outcomes because, as soon as they bought those licences—allegedly to put more water back into the low-end of the system—they woke up more equivalent sleeper licences up the river than they bought down the river. Tandou water, which was supplementary water—supplementary water should never have been allowed to be tradable—was off allocation water originally. The Victorian government started the rot by allowing it to be come a tradable instrument and, sure enough, in their desperation to fix the water buyback book, the various politicians—dumb and wooden headed—agreed to buyback Tandou supplementary water licences of 236 gigalitres, which was 11 gigalitres net where the Darling meets the Murray. As chief executive of Tandou said at the time, 'We've won the lottery, Bill.' He is a South African, a good bloke. We have sold the water and we will buy it back on the spot market because the supplementary water is only available when there is too much water in the system anyhow.¹

I will not go through the Cubbie thing. I understand now that there is a proposition that has not hit the headlines yet for the new owners of Cubbie to sell some of the water. I am unaware whether it is going to be out of their 50-odd gig extraction licence or whether they are going to try and con people by trying to sell some of the extraction licence, which I think should not be tradable because it is specific to the overland flow in that particular region and how you transfer it and shepherd it through would cost more
money than buying the water back. So that is what you call cooking the book politically. But that does not get away from the fact that we should encourage our farmers to be more efficient with their water use. I suppose it is fair to say that someone with this bill behind them could give a guarantee to Australia's taxpayers that they would not, shall I say, camouflage the buybacks.

I realise that this bill does not refer to the earlier money but I cannot let this go by without mentioning the serious fraud that is about to be perpetrated on Australia's taxpayers by the Nimmie-Caira buyback, which is something like 380 gigs, 380,000 megs gross, 160,000 or 170,000 net, from a flood plain on which there has never been an environmental plan, exactly the same as the largest flood plain in the Murray-Darling Basin, the lower Culgoa, Condamine-Balonne. I wish these guys well if they get away with it because it would be better than winning Lotto. I suspect they are going to get away with it because all the politicians involved, some of whom have got no idea what they are doing, can see the opportunity to cook the buyback book for New South Wales where they can buy back water without affecting production other than in this region. This water is allegedly supplementary flow mixed with floodwater at times and the outer reaches of the Nimmie-Caira only get it in an occasional year, but they are going to get two and a quarter times the value of the water by agreement, an agreement that was set before the water licences were issued. The reason it is two and a quarter times the value is because they have also got to buy the land and they have got to buy the windmills and fences in the water buyback. That is what I call camouflaging what you are doing. I hope we do better than that. I can only say that I think it is a fraud and I wish them all well. The local shires are up in arms about it.

When the river floods it is supplementary water allegedly. Sure, the Maude Weir et cetera are involved because the river system will not handle it between Maude and Balranald. When you get four inches of rain in the Goulburn River or somewhere, in Victoria originally that became a supplementary flow off allocation. You got a phone call to say, 'Go for your life'. That has now become licensed water. Under what we are proposing now, if you get four inches of rain above Gundagai somewhere there will be supplementary flow and eventually that gets down the system. If you get another four inches the next night it becomes a flood flow. Try and distinguish the floodwater from supplementary water when it gets to the Maude Weir—you are better than me if you can. Anyhow, when the river does flood I can guarantee you one thing: the water you have bought back to save the environment somewhere else in the system is going to go down the Nimmie-Caira flood plain. When Robert Hill was the minister and tried to buy back the wetlands of the lower Lachlan, he quickly discovered, as I warned him he would, that it would cost more to remediate the land than the land was worth. If you take the water off the Nimmie-Caira flood plain somehow artificially, what you will end up with is a poverty bush desert. If you are going to shepherd the water through there somehow, it will cost a bloody fortune and what you will be left with, because there is no environmental planning around this decision, is a lignum flood plain that is a desert.

But because everyone wants to get past the next election they impose these propositions on the hardworking people in the department to give them a reason that makes sense for them publicly to do it. Given that we never really think about what the future holds and whether we should have a plan to make sure that, whatever the actuarial
assumption in the science is, at 10 per cent we have got a plan, at 20 per cent we have got a plan and at 50 per cent and 100 per cent we have got a plan, I rather suspect that we do not have that sort of a plan. This is living day to day decision-making. If you go back to 1920 you will see there was a serious argument in the South Australian parliament about the Lower Lakes. Before we tried to regulate the system and think we are smarter than Mother Nature, the Murray system used to go dry; the Murray-Darling used to stop and the lakes would fill up with sea water. And there would be a hell of a bust and they would get flushed out. But somehow we think we are smarter than Mother Nature and we think that we can outdo her, but I do not think we can. I think that this, sadly, is an attempt to outdo Mother Nature. All the river systems in the Murray-Darling are completely overallocated. Don't ask me what brain-dead person decided to make supplementary water tradable, which started the rot, and the compensation behind undoing the rot no government could afford. We have even got the problem now in the likes of the Goulburn River where you have got mercury levels coming out of the tailings of the mines five or six times the safety level for mercury presence in water, but no-one is doing anything about that either, I do not think.

I am afraid that I am in no-man's-land on this. I am concerned that Mother Nature, who is the referee, is more powerful than any political party or parliament. Rather than accept that fact, politicians are trying to find a political solution. I do not blame them because the people in the various towns—whether it is down in Griffith, Coleambally or somewhere else—deserve a fair go.

As I said before, farming is a great place to raise a family, but it is a bugger of a place to make a quid because it is a journey into the unknown. It is the highest risk business. You do not know whether it is going to rain or not et cetera, but we have come a long way, and there has been a lot of hard work put in. When Coleambally was first pegged out, they were trying to grow rice on sand country—at least we have gotten rid of the sand country. There has been a lot of good work going on at Coleambally for efficiency. But the thing that we forget is that the more efficient we make the water—this is about efficiency in irrigation; this alleged money is an encouragement for farmers to be more efficient like Carnarvon, and I applaud that—the more pressure you put on the aquifer, because part of the inefficiency is recharging the aquifer. As we are probably aware, every pump between Wagga and Narrandera that is a pivot pump in ground water is actually pumping river water. The town water supply for Junee, West Wyalong and Temora is 86 per cent river water, but we do not consider it river water; we say it is bore water. So it is politically convenient not to recognise that.

The more efficient we become above ground with overland water, the more pressure you put on the aquifer. We have not completed the science in the connectivity between the aquifers and the rivers, yet in the earlier plan we took a certain amount of water and allocated extra ground water, not knowing the connection. No one has been able to explain to me the connection—which there is—between the Namoi aquifer and the Great Artesian Basin. We do not really even understand the recharge of the Great Artesian Basin. I am not too sure where this bill is going to end up, but I have to say that it is time that politicians of all persuasions thought about where Australia is going to be in 50 years time and not at the next election or the one after.

As my poor, long-suffering colleagues in the rural committee in the Senate have heard many times, we have an outlook in which,
after we drive all of the efficiency, we can say to the next generation of farmers, 'Well, you'd better find something else to do.' Why haven't we had the courage to do what we did after World War II: set up the thinking of a soldiers' settlement, as it were, in northern Australia? Why didn't we find it necessary—it was gutless—to allow hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of infrastructure at the Ord, which has 80,000 hectares of capacity if you get rid of the bloody lead mine and 10,000 gigs in the dam and give it away to someone else? Joe? Why didn't we say to the next generation of farmers, 'We'll put in some money and we'll send you up there'? The Western Australian government has gotten rid of the GM ban. GM crops in Western Australia until the dying days of the last government and the beginning of this government was the same as growing marijuana: it was illegal. So why didn't we say, instead of, 'You've all got to jump off the gap in the south,' 'Here's a great opportunity to fit somewhere else'? Sixty-five per cent of Australia's runoff is in three catchments in the north; what we are talking about here is 6.2 per cent of Australia's runoff, which is estimated at a minimum to decline by 3,500 megs by 2050. This is stopgap stuff, and it is about time we had some politicians with vision. People say in the north: 'It's too hot, Bill; it's too far away from the market. The best place to be on a hot bloody day is in the tractor—the air-conditioning in the tractor is better than the house.' Too far away? That is because you are facing in the wrong direction. Two thirds of the world's population is closer to Darwin—in Asia—than Sydney. The prediction is that by 2050 50 per cent of the world's population will be poor for water, a billion people unable to feed themselves, two-thirds of the world's population living in Asia, Asia losing 30 per cent of its agricultural productive capacity, the food task doubling, 1.6 billion people on the planet possibly displaced. Why don't we get off our backsides and develop what Mother Nature has given us instead of fighting over what she is taking away? It is time we woke up, time we had a bit of courage. If we can do it after World War bloody One and Two, why can't we do it now? What's wrong with this mob? You are locking up Cape York Peninsula, for God's sake.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Boyce): Senator Heffernan, please be temperate in your remarks.

Senator HEFFERNAN: Yeah, righto. Fourteen thousand people live off the coast in Cape York Peninsula. Bangladesh is half the size of Cape York Peninsula and it has 160 million people who will be displaced by 2050. Thank you very much. (Time expired)

Senator MADIGAN (Victoria) (18:43): Thank you Madam Acting Deputy President. I rise today to speak about the Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012. Over the Christmas-New Year's period, knowing the bill was coming up, I actually happened to go and visit people in the Murray Darling Basin affected by this bill. In stead of reading a report, I actually went out and spoke to some of these people and visited places like Rochester, Echuca, Mathoura, Deniliquin, Thrya, Finley, Jerilderie, Stanhope, Tongala and Benjeroop. There are a hell of a lot of people out there who feel anxiety and apprehension. They acknowledge that there has been an overallocation of water, but they say that the greater concern that they believe we should be addressing is, amongst other things, Cubbie Station and the enormous amount of water that went with that and the foreign ownership of our land and our water resources. Also, people have mentioned to me the effect of managed investment schemes in past years and the effect that had
on the sell-off of water resources connected with managed investment scheme tree farms, for example, and then seeing those farms fall into foreign hands. These are some of the things that we should be looking at if we are talking about water. Some of the people had pubs up in these areas, or tyre businesses, fuel businesses or engineering works, or they were diesel mechanics. People in these communities wonder what is going on when we have the Victorian government buying up land, for instance, around Benjeroop and Tongala in Victoria. They are buying the land and then taking the water and returning the water. Then we have got the federal government doing it and we have got other state governments involved in this process. What is the overall plan and the overall coordination, and is it going to deliver the benefits for the environment that we are told it will?

Ultimately, when farmers and communities in the Murray-Darling Basin, our river communities, and in rural and urban communities around Australia make decisions, there are consequences for those decisions, and they fear that decisions are being made for them, their families, their livelihoods and their communities by people who, they feel, have conducted a so-called consultation process but with a preconceived outcome and that they are just pawns in this process. People have read that the water to these towns and communities is assured under the plan, but when we remove water from our farmers we remove a great part of their income.

Let us say, for example, that we have got two tyre services in a town and our farmers’ income is reduced and we have got fewer farmers on the land. As a result, there is less need for tyre services. The critical mass to keep these businesses going and be able to offer the people in these towns competitive prices is diminished because there is not enough cake there for both of them to eat. This is the problem facing these communities. The overwhelming feeling of these people is that they are not being listened to, they are not being considered. I have serious reservations about this bill, as do these communities and, as such, I will be voting against it. Thank you.

Senator IAN MACDONALD (Queensland) (18:47): I wanted to use the opportunity of the discussion which has been taking place on this bill to highlight more broadly some of the things we have not done and some of the things that we should be doing in relation to our rivers and streams and our water storage in Australia. The significance of this particular bill has been well argued by my colleagues, particularly those on this side of the chamber. I think that the Senate has been well served by discussion and the points put forward by my colleagues on the Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill which, as has been indicated, establishes a special account to acquire additional environmental water for the Murray-Darling.

What this bill shows is that there is a need for a bill like this. In the past, governments and those who have been responsible for managing our water supply within Australia have not been good at what they have done. Perhaps even over centuries—certainly over many decades—they have overallocated water and made decisions which have led to the types of difficulties we have seen in the Murray-Darling Basin now for some 20 or 30 years. It has been a problem in the Murray-Darling that governments of all persuasions have tried to address and there is not any simple answer. My colleagues talking in this debate have pointed out some real problems with the bill and the management by the current government.
The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Boyce) (18:50): Order! The time allotted for this debate has expired. Senator Macdonald, you will be in continuation when the bill is next debated.

DOCUMENTS

Consideration

The following government documents tabled earlier today were considered:


Department of Finance and Deregulation—Consolidated financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2012. Motion to take note of document moved by Senator Macdonald. Debate adjourned till Thursday at general business, Senator Macdonald in continuation.


Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)—Equity and diversity—Report for the period 1 September 2011 to 31 August 2012. Motion to take note of document moved by Senator Macdonald. Debate adjourned till Thursday at general business, Senator Macdonald in continuation.

Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)—Report for 2011-12. Motion to take note of document moved by Senator Nash. Debate
adjourned till Thursday at general business, Senator Nash in continuation.


ADOPTION

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT
(Senator Boyce) (18:53): Order! I propose the question:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

Tasmanian Bushfires

Senator THORP (Tasmania) (18:53): I would like to take this opportunity to reflect upon the tragic bushfires that engulfed my home state of Tasmania in recent weeks. It was a summer where we were once again reminded of the brutal strength of Mother Nature and of the amazing power of banding together to support each other in the face of disaster. From the start of the new year, it seemed something was brewing. Fires were already burning in some parts of the state, and we heard forecasts of temperatures in the high 30s. But no-one will forget 4 January, when the mercury shot past these predictions, swelling to an all-time high of 41.8 degrees in Hobart. At that time it looked bad, but we did not know how just how bad it would be and what it would mean for our state. With over 3.1 million hectares of native forest, our great natural abundance was soon to become a perilous risk and many thousands of people, communities and businesses would be under threat.

The situation deteriorated rapidly and, at the peak, almost 40 fires engulfed Tasmania. Very few parts of the state were unaffected. Fires were burning in the north-east on the edge of the Ben Lomond National Park; in the north-west, at Montumana; on the east coast, at Bicheno; and in central Tasmania, at Lake Repulse. The worst of the infernos ravaged the south-eastern Tasman and Forestier peninsulas, where communities were forced to flee as fires raged from the north, cutting road access and threatening hundreds of properties. These were terrifying times. The intensity was unbelievable. Many had to abandon plans to stay and defend their homes against the might of the flames, often escaping with only minutes to spare. One of the most poignant images for me is that of Tammy Holmes from Dunalley, who fled her home with her five grandchildren, all under 11 years of age. With road blockages and violent fires preventing escape, Tammy and the children had no choice but to shelter in the bay under the local jetty near Dunalley while husband Tim went to find help. With only 20 or 30 centimetres of breathable air above the water, the family had to submerge themselves up to their necks just to survive. They stayed for hours amidst raging fires until Tim returned with a dinghy to ferry them to safety.

This blaze ultimately razed 30 per cent of the properties in Dunalley. The police station, the school and the local bakery, all vital cornerstones of the community, were gone. By the time the fire had subsided, 203 properties were lost, 30 businesses were damaged or destroyed and more than 95,000 hectares were burnt out.
But all the numbers in the world cannot describe the true weight of the devastation borne by local communities. As a seventh generation Tasmanian, these are places that have helped make me who I am, and the people I have shared the best and worst of life with. I cannot begin to describe to you the feeling of anxiety and helplessness. For over 10 years, I had the privilege of serving as the Legislative Council Member for Rumney, which includes the affected communities of Boomer Bay, Connelly's Marsh, Copping, Dunalley, Eaglehawk Neck, Forcett, Murdunna, Primrose Sands, Sommers Bay, Susans Bay and Tarananna. On the night of 4 January, after having settled close family friends to bed after their evacuation from Dodge's Ferry, I stood on my front deck and quite literally felt I was watching all my beloved Rumney burn. Many of the older residents were painfully reminded of the catastrophic Tasmanian fires of 1967, when more than 2,500 square kilometres were burnt out in southern Tasmania. Tragically, 62 people died, 900 were injured and 7,000 were rendered homeless.

If there is something that we can be grateful for, it is that this year's fires were not marked by this terrible loss of life. In saying this, I do not want to in any way diminish the tragic loss of Victorian firefighter, Peter Ronald Cramer, who lost his life while undertaking back-burning in Tasmania. I would like to express my deepest sympathy for the family and friends of Mr Cramer and to recognise the excellent work of the fireys across the country who came to our aid.

In quieter moments since the emergency, I have also had time to reflect on the differences between this year's devastation and the 2009 Victorian bushfires, where 173 people, sadly, died. It is fair to say that Tasmania took on board the lessons of these fires and went to great lengths to limit the possibility of a tragedy of this scale happening again. I am pleased that the Tasmanian state government, of which I was a part at the time, recognised the importance of the recommendations that came out of the royal commission into the bushfires and took heed. We acted quickly to implement these recommendations, with a very clear focus on preventing future deaths. Of course, the best plans could never have prevented the cruel heatwave that bore down on us, but it did mean that we managed to limit the loss of our most important asset—people. While the fires brought into sharp focus the fragility of our existence and the brutal force of Mother Nature, the days that followed also highlighted the strength of our local communities.

It has often been noted that there is something special about Australians in the face of disaster. It is almost as if 'helping a mate' is ingrained into our national DNA. However, nowhere is this truer than in Tassie, with its vast number of small, close-knit regional communities. My admiration and thanks go to the Phil Soleys of our community. Phil and dozens like him put aside personal loss and worked for days without sleep to help others.

I would also like to recognise the hard work of community organisations that worked tirelessly to help Tasmanians get through this difficult time. Organisations like the Australian Red Cross provided registration services and support to more than 3,000, who were forced to flee when the fires hit, and their work continues today.

At the same time, local, state and federal governments were also working around the clock to ensure that people got the help and information they needed, no matter where they were. There was a massive sea rescue operation launched for thousands of
evacuees who sought safety on beaches, in boats and at Port Arthur. More than 2,000 people were ferried to safety, and another 2,000 took refuge at the community centre at Nubeena. It was almost Tasmania’s Dunkirk.

The Australian government's most important role was to support local and state governments and to provide direct payments to affected individuals and businesses affected by the fires. So far, bushfire affected Tasmanians have received $6.7 million in federal disaster recovery payments of $1,000 cash for adults and $400 for children. We should also remember that under our longstanding natural disaster arrangements with the states, the federal government meets 75 per cent of the costs after major disasters. These are all important safety nets that have given Tasmanians short-term assistance and faith that their communities will be supported as they travel the long road to recovery.

So what about the future? As the news stories subside, it is easy to forget that the tragic effects of this disaster have not receded for thousands of Tasmanians. Farmers have lost stock, crops have been devastated, people have lost homes and businesses have been brought to their knees. The fires may be over, but the recovery has only just begun. It will be a long road for these communities to get back to where they were only a few short weeks ago.

I urge my fellow members to get behind efforts to help Tasmanians get back on their feet. You can contribute by donating to the Australian Red Cross bushfire appeal at their website. Already, $5 million has been raised in this manner. But the damage bill is much higher, so I urge you dig deep in the knowledge that every single cent from the fund will go to where it is needed most.

I also want to make it clear that despite these setbacks, Tasmania is well and truly open for business. Look out for our world-class agricultural products; the fruit, the vegetables, the seafood and the wine on your own shop shelves. Or if you are in the market for an unforgettable getaway, make Tasmania the first place on your list to visit. All the roads are open and our tourism operators cannot wait to welcome you.

Migrants and Small Business

Senator EDWARDS (South Australia) (19:03): Tonight I rise to talk about the role of new migrants and how they have played a part in the small family business sector in my home state of South Australia. I want to talk about some of the important waves of migration to South Australia and how migrants from those diverse backgrounds have contributed to creating an innovative, flexible and dynamic small business sector in my home state.

Since the early 1800s migrants have been arriving in South Australia, searching for a better life, new opportunities and escaping persecution and hardship in their home countries. The state has seen a great number of waves of migration over the past two centuries, bringing people and their traditions, their culture and knowledge from across the globe. Many of the migrants that have arrived established family businesses and community links which have contributed to the diversity and dynamism of our state economy.

Today, there are some 138,000 small businesses in South Australia; which represents 96 per cent of all private sector establishments in my home state. In a small state like South Australia, which does not have the headquarters of international firms like those seen in New South Wales, or a West Australian booming resources sector, small family businesses are critical to generate economic activity. We have all
heard them described as the 'engine room' of the economy.

So what is the link here? I believe that families provide the most effective environment for individuals to achieve their full potential. New migrants quite often, initially at least, only have their immediate family for support. So it is only natural that when an individual starts up a small business their family ends up intertwined in the management and operation of that small business. This interdependence is one of the reasons why the small family business is so successful, and why in South Australia we have many examples of small business that have gone on to become international success stories. Indeed, the new leader of the state Liberal Party has a strong and rich heritage in a small family business which grew into a large family business.

But first I want to take you back to early European settlement of South Australia. The arrival of Captain Hahn and several ships of German Lutherans fleeing religious persecution in Prussia in 1838 signalled the first wave of German migrants to South Australia. They settled in Klemzig before moving further out to the Barossa Valley and Hahndorf, where many quickly established market gardens or worked as tradesmen and artisans. The Barossa Valley is now home to a number of world-renowned wineries, not least the iconic Penfolds.

Migration from China picked up towards the end of the 1800s with many new migrants establishing themselves as greengrocers, launderers, importers, carpenters and restaurant owners. The Sym Choon family are a successful example of the industrious nature of the Chinese that arrived in South Australia. After arriving in 1890 they were initially market gardeners in the Unley area, but moved into the city in 1906 and settled in the east end of Rundle Street. Gladys Sym Choon established a China gift store, in 1923, which remains today and which now bears her name, stocking high-end designer clothes and accessories.

After the abolition of the White Australia policy in 1972 a new wave of Chinese migration transpired, with many setting up businesses around the Adelaide Central Market, establishing what is now known as Chinatown.

Following the end of the Second World War a large number of Greeks and Italians, escaping economic hardship and the ravages of war, had arrived in South Australia. Many opened continental delis and other businesses which would have existed in their homeland.

A standout from the Greek community is Con Polites, who built the Polites property empire, which has visibly left its mark on Adelaide with many buildings still bearing the Polites name and which is ably run by his son George.

In recent decades the source of South Australia's migration has shifted from Europe to include an increasingly diverse number of countries. For example, larger numbers of Vietnamese and Cambodian migrants have arrived in the last couple of decades. All of them have cultivated market gardens and intensive horticulture in the Virginia region, a region well known to me because it is associated with the seat of Wakefield, of which I have a strong knowledge.

Tonight I want to talk about an exceptional example of a new migrant who, through hard work, ingenuity and a strong family network built a business that went from a small single shop to a major business that now exports to 35 countries around the world. It is a fantastic example of how immigrants make their new country better.
I take you back to the post-war period when several hundred thousand new migrants arrived from central and southern Europe, leaving behind the ravages of war, economic hardship and limited opportunity. Vili Militsis fled communist Hungary with his family and, after a year in a Red Cross refugee camp in Austria and a long wait in England, arrived in Australia on 6 January 1958. He came to this country as a refugee. His parents wanted to come to Australia to offer their children a better future, with hope and opportunity. Through perseverance and very hard work Vili grasped those opportunities. His story is symbolic of many families which immigrated to Australia to seek a better life and which have prospered. Vili attended his local school, St Joseph's Primary, where he learnt English, shone at maths and indulged in his love of soccer.

When he turned 14 he got a job to help support his family. And, after finishing an apprenticeship at a continental bakery, he qualified at the age of 18. With just $50 start-up capital and with proceeds from selling his car for the first week's stock, he started up his own high-quality continental cake bakery. He employed his fiancee, Rosemary, and his mother part time and leased some equipment. His business began on 6 January 1968, exactly a decade after arriving in South Australia.

At the heart of Vili's empire is family, critical to the evolution and success of his business. It was only at his sister's asking that he began to bake pies, pasties and sausage rolls. His sister ran a snack bar, which sold many of Vili's products and she wanted to sell these savoury baked goods made by her brother. Vili, using his knowledge of flaky pastry—that well-known flaky pastry—changed the traditional Aussie pie and pasty to make it acceptable to people from all backgrounds.

It was not until 1990 that Vili's expanded from the original homemade bakery to the modern export facility he uses today. His product innovation has delivered success through strong pie exports across the globe. Over and above his successful business, Vili has a strong commitment to education and philanthropic causes. He has acted as a mentor in a pilot Classroom Connections program that has prepared students for workplace cultures and provided them with an understanding of employer expectations. In addition, school groups regularly tour his manufacturing facilities, which are so popular that there is a six-to-nine month wait. And of course it would be a wait for a pie factory!

Vili's story, his commitment to his small business, devotion to family and dedication to the South Australian community makes him a shining example of the many thousands of migrants who have established businesses in South Australia and shows just how immigration makes our country better.

These migrants did not take the opportunities that were offered here for granted. They worked hard to ensure that their dreams came to fruition and that their businesses prospered. These are the qualities which have made South Australia and Australia a great nation of free enterprise.

**James Price Point**

Senator SIEWERT (Western Australia—Australian Greens Whip) (19:12): I rise tonight to speak again on an issue that I have raised in this chamber on many occasions and that is the beautiful, culturally and environmentally sensitive area of James Price Point in the Kimberley. When I spoke last time on this issue I spoke about the flawed decision-making process of the development proposal, the gas hub for James Price Point. When I spoke in August on this issue I asked Minister Burke to look into and
take note of the flawed scientific processes around the strategic assessment that was at that stage being carried out and to take steps to ensure that the federal government processes around environmental approvals were significantly better than those of the state government. But, let us face it, they would not have to be much better to be significantly better than the extremely flawed state process.

At that time the federal government indicated that they would not make any decisions until the state process was concluded. The process has now concluded. It reached the inevitable outcome that all of us who live in Western Australia knew would occur—that is, the state government would of course kowtow to Woodside, with a 'development at all cost' approach to the Kimberley. They have given it the tick.

As I said, it was hardly a surprise to any of us. The outcome is, of course, absolutely woeful—if you care about Aboriginal cultural heritage; if you care about our archaeological history, which is of course the magnificent dinosaur footprints that are there; and if you care about the extremely important environment of that area and the community values of Broome, which many people in Broome are extremely concerned about will be threatened by this development. Since I last spoke on the development procedures at James Price Point—which was late last year—there have been more developments that highlight yet again how important it is that the federal government pay very close attention to this development and make sure that they use all their powers under the heritage act and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act to ensure a rigorous process and stop this area being destroyed.

The new issues that I wish to draw to the attention of the Senate that have come up since I last addressed this issue in the last sitting of parliament are the sacred burial sites that the state government has now granted access to for drilling purposes; the state government planning employee who has stepped down from their position so that they can bid for the contract to set up the workers camp; and the compulsory acquisition process. First I would like to talk about the sacred burial sites.

The Western Australia government—to no-one's surprise—has yet again allowed the Woodside company to disturb Aboriginal heritage sites. The state government granted Woodside's section 18 application under the state's Aboriginal Heritage Act for permission to conduct work in sand dunes at Walmadany, which is right on the coast and is a particularly important area at James Price Point. This is considered by local elders as a sacred site. Woodside said all along that they would work closely with traditional owners to identify and carefully manage Aboriginal culture and heritage at the site—but, of course, they are not in terms of respecting the cultural values of this site.

On four occasions similar applications for this area, most recently in 2008, have been turned down because of the immense cultural values that are at risk in this area. I have been shown the sites that were appropriate to be shown to me. I have in fact been in this area numerous times and have a deep appreciation for the cultural values of this area. I would suggest to people that, if they want to know about this area, they should visit the area and be shown the important sites and the connectedness to these particular sites.

Under intense pressure and, of course, because of the Premier of Western Australia's 'development at any cost' approach to the Kimberley, the Department of State Development, the Aboriginal
Cultural Material Committee and the Minister for Indigenous Affairs have all ended up agreeing to this particular proposal going ahead. What is deeply concerning here is the fact that there is also a national Australian Aboriginal Protection Act, and I must ask what involvement the federal government has had in looking at this issue. As I understand, the local community has written to the minister under section 9 of the act, and I suspect that, similar to a number of other applications which I have spoken on in the past, including Yindjibarndi, there has been little action. Again, this is why we need to be looking at amendments and the need to improve the federal Aboriginal Protection Act.

This is another example of Aboriginal people's culture and heritage being disturbed in my home state of Western Australia. Late last year I spoke about the disturbance of the Yindjibarndi sites in the Pilbara. As a result of these decisions, the community are continuing to take action and following up this issue, particularly with the United Nations. KRED Enterprises, a charitable trust set up by the Kimberley Land Council and representing three native title groups in the area—one of which I am known to have had a disagreement with on some of their support for the development in this area—are extremely concerned about this issue. It is reported that last week they requested a UN visit to ensure the rights of native title holders are protected under resource development agreements.

On Wednesday, the Goolarabooloo people said they had sent an urgent appeal to the United Nation's Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, talking about their rights under 15 articles of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and their concern that these rights are being violated by the state government and resource companies. The Goolarabooloo people are staunchly opposed—as I have articulated in this place—to the Browse project and say that it disrespects their law, culture and song cycle, which identify with and are a key part of these heritage sites. Mr Phillip Roe, a Goolarabooloo elder who is much respected up there, said:

We are supposed to have the right for free and prior informed consent; instead we get the compulsory acquisition of our land.

We're supposed to have the right to protect our law, culture and sites, but when we ask for our sites to be protected, the state government approves their destruction.

When we try to stop this destruction, we're given move on notices from the police and told we'll be arrested.

This of course is adding to local tensions in the area. The community are, quite naturally, deeply upset about the latest round of drilling which will go ahead irrespective of whether or not the project is approved. In other words, while Woodside still have not made a decision on whether they are going to invest to go ahead with this development, this drilling will occur and it will have a detrimental impact on these important heritage sites. This will be another area of concern for the local protestors, and I know that they are extremely concerned about this development going ahead.

Once again I ask: where is Minister Burke's intervention on this issue? Where is he stepping in to have a look at the value of these sites and under section 9 of the act buying time in order for him to have a look at these issues? The approach that this government seems to be taking is: 'We'll wait until all the evidence is there about the value of this place before we make a decision.' The point here is that these areas will be destroyed by the time a decision is made. This is not effective heritage protection. These sites are extremely important. Hopefully the proponents of this
development will see sense and move the development elsewhere—either onto a floating platform or further south. These sites will be destroyed for no good reason. The federal government needs to step up to the plate and needs to be protecting this extremely important area.

**Bushfires**

Senator BACK (Western Australia—Deputy Opposition Whip in the Senate) (19:22): Earlier this evening in adjournment, a speech was made by Senator Thorp regarding personal aspects of the bushfires in Tasmania. I wish to broaden the perspective more to a national concept and remind the chamber of a motion that I moved with Senator Humphries before we rose in November—and that was to recognise the 10th anniversary of the Canberra fires and, of course, to warn the community of the inevitability of what would happen during a normal summer bushfire season. I stand here this evening to reflect on that very fact.

I make the point that, of all the natural disasters, the only natural disaster over which we have some possibility of control is wildfires. We cannot prevent bushfires, but we can manage and limit the damage caused by bushfires. That is the comment that I wish to make this evening. We are not seeing the effects of global warming; what we are seeing, unfortunately, around Australia, and particularly in eastern Australia this year, is the long-term effects of ignorance and of the failure by governments—federal and, particularly, state and territory—to actually implement what are well-established and proven land management practices—and, of course, the refusal to accept some 40,000 years of experience of mosaic burning of the Australia bush as was practiced by the Aboriginal communities prior to European settlement.

I have made the comment before in this place that those of us involved in the bushfire and emergency services world regrettably refer to the dead cycle: that is a cycle of disaster, followed by inquiry and expenditure, followed inevitably by apathy and following the apathy, again, is disaster. We are doing little or nothing to break the cycle, and the only difference geographically around Australia between the first D and the last D is the local climates in the area—in the case of Tasmania, fortunately for them, many, many years. In my own state of Western Australia, where we have long, hot, dry summers every year, we have a pattern of bushfires far more frequently—but, interestingly, not wildfires. Southern Australia experiences, as I said, a Mediterranean-style climate of long, hot, dry summers in a eucalypt-dominated forest. That is how it is. It is not global warming; it is not something unusual to this year; it is part of a normal pattern.

What is interesting, of course, is that the early European settlers who came to this country did not understand fire. They did not understand fire as a friend; they saw it as a foe. Indeed, the early British foresters' policies in regard to the management of the eucalypt forests was such that they also focused on the fact that you could not use fire for safe burning purposes. Regrettably, in our own state of Western Australia, the best illustration of the failure of that policy was the 1961 devastating wildfires that completely destroyed several towns in and around Dwellingup in the Jarrah Forest of WA.

What people must understand is this: Australia's eucalypt forests accumulate dry matter at a higher rate than it decomposes. This, of course, is what burns. Speaking of our own Jarrah Forest, over which I have the most experience having been Chief Executive of the Bushfires Board of Western
Australia, our forests accumulate about one tonne per hectare per year of fuel on the forest floor. So you need just simple mathematics to understand that in a seven- to 10-year period, you will have seven to 10 tonnes of fuel on the forest floor. Our foresters, over time, would regard somewhere between five and eight tonnes per hectare as the safe upper limit to put firefighters into an area to try and arrest fires. If I can reflect on the Black Saturday fires in Victoria in 2009—a comment I actually made in my maiden speech here some weeks afterwards—there were fuel levels of 50 to 80 tonnes per hectare on the forest floor, and we know what the inevitable outcome was.

We speak of the fire triangle. The triangle requires oxygen, it requires a fuel and it requires a source of ignition. We cannot do much about oxygen when it comes to controlling fire and neither, unfortunately, can we do an awful lot about the sources of ignition. Many of the fires up and down the east coast this year have been caused by lightning and, all too regrettably and all too frequently, fires have been caused by arsonists. This is something that is the subject for another discussion.

What we can do something about is fuel levels: the level of fuel that burns—and that is the point I want to make. We have only two options in the Mediterranean-style summer, dry-dominated forests of Australia. We can either have uncontrolled, high-summer, high-wind, low-humidity fires as we have seen in New South Wales and, to a lesser extent but equally, in Victoria and Tasmania, or we can have the other: that is, cool season, low-intensity, higher humidity, controlled burns. There are other means, of course, for getting rid of fuel on the forest floor and in bush areas—grazing works, slashing works—but only to a very small extent.

The focus that I wish to address is that of low-season fuel reduction burning. I make the observation that green groups and others who are opposed to fuel reduction strategies need to reflect on two things: the perverse impact of their position and the influence that they have had on government policies over the last few years. It is that that led me to make the observation about ignorance and failure to implement in my opening remarks. These current firestorms in eastern Australia have destroyed millions and millions of tonnes of eucalypt forest, along with fauna and flora, of course, which have been devastated in the path of these fires, not to mention the devastating impact on families who have lost lives, who have lost livelihoods and who have lost memories. Imagine the outcry if the logging industry were to attempt to take that same tonnage of eucalypt timber out of the forests. There would be a hue and cry, and perhaps there should be.

The second point that I wish to make is that of the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere that is caused by these wildfires. It was estimated in the 2009 Black Saturday fires that a resultant of some 160 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent was released into the atmosphere. It is likely that the fires that we have experienced since the beginning of this year in fact will contribute over a third of all of our greenhouse gas emissions in this current year.

If people do not believe the comments I am making, I give two examples. The first in the savannah type areas is that of the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement scheme in the Northern Territory, which I am sure my colleague Senator Scullion would be entirely familiar with. This is a scheme that started in 2005. It is funded almost fully by ConocoPhillips, who contribute $1 million a year. The Aboriginal communities of West
Arnhem Land are able to record a saving of some 100,000 tonnes—even now up to 130,000 tonnes—of CO₂ equivalent annually, or some 35 per cent abatement. That is independently measured by CSIRO and others. So we have the strategies and they go back to the Aboriginal communities.

My second example in forested areas is that of management of the south-west Australian forests, because they are an international benchmark for the control of fuel level. The objective in Western Australia is to burn around eight per cent of jarrah forests annually. Unfortunately, we are only achieving five per cent. The eight per cent is because, based on a 12-year cycle, all areas will burn and those forest floor levels of fuel will be reduced. If I look to the eastern states, I know the average is less than two per cent of the areas burnt. In some areas, including the Blue Mountains, it is even less than that.

In 2010 we had a Senate inquiry and report to this chamber in which we made, I think, 15 recommendations towards limiting the sorts of events we have seen this summer. I only hope and wish that the chamber is able to have an influence with states and with territories to be able to limit, so we do not see the inevitability of wildfires next year and into the future.

Briggs, Professor Freda

*Senator XENOPHON (South Australia)* (19:32): I rise tonight to pay tribute to a well-respected South Australian who has been a longstanding and passionate advocate for those who do not have a voice: children. Freda Briggs is well known in South Australia as professor emeritus in child development and as a researcher and lecturer in sociology, child protection and family studies at the University of South Australia. She previously held the role of Dean of the Institute of Early Childhood Development and Family Studies. A fearless and honest advocate, Professor Briggs is also the go-to expert to provide commentary and insight on issues on child protection. Ask any journalist and Professor Briggs's number will be in their address book.

Her expertise in the area of child protection is not only revered in South Australia. Professor Briggs was named as the 2000 Senior Australian of the Year, the second person ever to receive the honour, for her work in child protection. She became an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2005 and was the inaugural recipient of the Australian Humanitarian Award for outstanding pioneering work for children. Internationally, she has worked in New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Fiji and the United States, to name but a few countries. Professor Briggs is a national treasure and the work that she has done on child protection is invaluable in South Australia, nationally and internationally.

Born in England during the Great Depression, she left school at just 14 years of age, eventually accepting a role with the London Metropolitan Police. She became a specialist in child protection while working for the Met. In an interview with the ABC's Ian Henschke some years ago, Professor Briggs spoke of how she became involved in the issue of child protection while a police officer. She said:

...I was often taking children into the care of the state, into children's homes, and realised that given their home backgrounds, they didn't stand a chance. And I was one of the soft-hearted policewomen who befriended children and sent them birthday presents, and wrote to them and took them on outings.

From there Professor Briggs moved into social work, finding herself dealing with many of the same clients she dealt with as a police officer. Professor Briggs continued:
… in those days, social workers had to work the hours that suited their clients, which were usually evenings and weekends, and by that time I had a family, so I went into teaching. And of course, with that very strange background, I was placed in a really tough school, and realised as a teacher that I could spot abused children, neglected children that other teachers couldn't spot.

Professor Briggs moved to Australia in 1975 and began working as a director of early childhood studies at the State College of Victoria. In 1994, she was appointed professor of childhood development of the University of South Australia, a position she still holds as an emeritus professor.

Professor Briggs has an enviable academic history. I am conscious that I only have 10 minutes or so and that will not permit me to get through it all. Needless to say, it is a very impressive CV. It is worth noting that much of the work done by Professor Briggs has been voluntary. I have been fortunate enough to work with Professor Briggs on child protection issues over the years. As an educator, academic and author, she has worked tirelessly towards providing a safer world for children, taking on a subject that many of us would prefer not to think about.

Professor Briggs will be the first to admit that as a nation we have some way to go. We know there are serious systemic problems with the way we manage child abuse monitoring and allegations in this country. Some of them stem from a debilitating lack of resources and community support. I believe that the upcoming establishment of the long overdue Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse will shed light on a number of the issues that we face in terms of institutional responses to abuse, something that Professor Briggs has a great deal of knowledge on, something that she has campaigned and educated us on for many years. With this in mind, it is critical that the government consults with experts such as Professor Briggs throughout the course of the royal commission.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend Professor Briggs for her tireless work to protect our children and to pay tribute to this living treasure. It is also worth noting that last October Professor Briggs was the author of a book on child protection, on identifying child abuse. I could not go to book launch because I was overseas, but it has been an honour and privilege to work with Freda on child protection issues over the years. Her text on child abuse is a very important work and I note that South Australians as eminent as the Hon. Robyn Layton, a former justice of the Supreme Court of South Australia, praised that book and its contribution in terms of identifying victims of child abuse. We know that there are serious systemic problems in identifying child abuse in this country and that is why Professor Briggs's contribution, after working in the field of child protection tirelessly year after year, decade after decade, has culminated with her book on identifying child abuse and dealing with it in a systemic way. That is why we ought to acknowledge Professor Briggs and her work. She is an iconic South Australian and I hope to be able to make a contribution later this year as the royal commission progresses to reflect on her work. It is also worth reflecting on the support that Professor Briggs has received over the years from the Today Tonight program in South Australia and, in particular, Graham Archer, the producer.

A number of years ago Mr Archer was responsible for producing a series of programs on the abuse of children in state care, and I should disclose that my former senior media adviser, Rohan Wenn, who was a journalist at Today Tonight, was a reporter of a number of those groundbreaking stories at the time. The South Australian
government, it would be fair to say, if it did not take those reports seriously, was sceptical about those reports. But as a result of those reports and the work of Mr Archer and Mr Wenn at *Today Tonight*, together with the work of Professor Briggs, the Mullighan Commission of Inquiry into abuse was established, and that inquiry was a valuable exercise that disclosed many more cases of abuse than *Today Tonight* thought there were. So, if anything, *Today Tonight* underestimated the level of abuse out there even though it was criticised at the time for being alarmist. In fact, they were not. They were quite understated in their concerns and, again, Professor Briggs played an important role in providing advice in being able to sift through those allegations.

The consequences of the Mullighan inquiry into abuse of children in state care were quite profound. I believe it has led to a shake-up, and it was also an important healing process. Ted Mullighan was a former justice of the Supreme Court of South Australia. He was a wonderful South Australian and a wonderful human being who, sadly, passed away not so long ago. The work he did was invaluable, but the trigger for that inquiry, the trigger for that healing, the trigger for some closure for some of those victims and some of those victims finally obtaining justice, was as a result of the work of Professor Briggs and others in the media where the media played a key role. There are many South Australians who will be forever grateful to Graham Archer and his team for the work that they did.

Again, that could not have happened without the work of Professor Freda Briggs, and for that, I thank her. I thank her for her service, for her contribution and also for the fact that she has written a significant text on the protection of children that is not only relevant in South Australia but also relevant Australia-wide and internationally, and has a particular resonance in the context of the federal royal commission into abuse.

**Indigenous Employment**

Senator MARK BISHOP (Western Australia) (19:41): Many years ago, sometime in the mid to late nineties, I received a briefing from Rio in Melbourne. In attendance, from memory, were both Mr Emerson and Mr Ferguson, currently cabinet ministers in the government. The briefing was about Rio's then strategy, plans and perspectives over the forthcoming quarter century in remote Australia where they had a major presence in mining and the like.

One of the central points of the briefing was that their research showed comprehensive difficulties in recruiting and retaining labour at nearly all levels in parts of Australia north of the 26th parallel. Their concerns applied equally to unskilled labour, semi-skilled labour, tradespeople and technical staff—in fact, at all points as you go up the value chain. In that context they were considering plans for a heavy emphasis on Indigenous employment, particularly in their mine sites right across northern Australia. This meant work in schools, attraction of graduating high school students, more attention to cultural paradigms, skilling of Indigenous boys and girls and the attraction of Indigenous people generally into the mining industry at all levels. They were clearly of the view that there would be insufficient European labour offering itself for ongoing heavy, hard, difficult and tough work in the mining industry.

Over time, they and other major mining companies have moved to implement a lot of those plans. As a consequence, one of the ancillary benefits of the more recent mining boom has been the welcoming of large numbers of Indigenous people into well-paid employment in parts of Western Australia. A
most welcome development, clearly, and one that will be a major contribution to the breaking of chains of the affliction of generational welfare dependency.

With that background in mind, I was recently briefed on the work of the NUDJ Plumbing Services in the north-west of my home state. This company has nine full-time plumbers and provides contract services. What makes it so special is that all the plumbers are Indigenous and all have completed their apprenticeship.

The story of this company is startling in its simplicity. At the outset the objective was to provide plumbing services to Indigenous communities; not just household maintenance but also sanitation and water management—the types of services we expect in our regional towns and our cities but which often are not readily available in remote communities. So where do we start when a shortage of tradespeople is almost universal?

There are many willing to have a go in the Pilbara and the Kimberley but they are drawn to the large resource projects not only because of the high wages but also because you fly in, do your job and then fly out. So finding a solution to the chronic shortage of tradespeople obviously means you have to put in place a training program for the people who live in those regions. Therein lies the problem. How do you motivate and mentor young people who have to travel long distances to participate in vocational education? How do you maintain the links to community that will lead them home? And when they get their trade ticket who is going to give them a job?

Back in 2004 the plumbing union's answer to the first question was the establishment of an Indigenous apprenticeship program. It was developed in partnership with the Jarlmadangah Burru Aboriginal Corporation, the Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation and the Victorian branch of the plumbers union. Over time this partnership has evolved to encompass a number of initiatives. The first being the development of a sponsorship program that supports and mentors trainees throughout their apprenticeship. This is a very necessary feature as the training is conducted in Victoria. However, training so far from home is a vital component in the success of the program. In order to be considered for sponsorship, apprentices are asked to commit to an intensive training regime. They must travel to the other side of the country and live in an environment far removed from their homelands. Most will have no extended family or friends for support.

Despite these hurdles the program has worked and has been overwhelmingly successful. To date around 20 young Indigenous men and women have participated in or completed the program. The first intake have graduated and are fully qualified plumbers. They headed home and into the job market eager to put their new skills to work. Now they hit the final hurdle. Many young people will tell you that getting their first job is the hardest. Everyone wants experience, but where do you get it if no-one will give you a go? I think we all recognise that it is much harder when you are young, Aboriginal and live in a remote region. Having a policy of positive discrimination which actively seeks suitably qualified local people is a very useful start. I applaud those companies which have offered a commitment to Indigenous employment targets. Nevertheless, targets are just that and success can only be measured in jobs. This is where NUDJ stands out. It is a not-for-profit plumbing company servicing remote communities. Its employees are Indigenous and they all live locally.
The model is working and NUDJ now has contracts as diverse as for the Beagle Bay community housing upgrade, with B&J steel for the plumbing maintenance and fit-outs of new transportables for remote communities, with Reed Constructions at Broome Airport, with Pindan Constructions at the Kununurra Airport redevelopment, with Kimberley TAFE and with the Department of Housing for maintenance. It is early days but you would have to say it is an impressive start.

The Aboriginal corporations and the Victorian branch of the plumbers union have worked diligently, methodically and with well-articulated goals. At each stumbling block they have remained committed and innovative and worked hard to build community partnerships. They have developed a model which shows a clear way forward in tackling disadvantage in remote communities. They have provided opportunities for young people to learn new skills and to benefit from the dignity that is inherent in ongoing work, to say nothing of the improvements to their communities, which will have an enduring impact on their families, friends and homes.

As I have said, NUDJ Plumbing Services is a simple solution to a set of complex problems. The company operates only in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of Western Australia. That is not to make light of any of its achievements. It has taken years of commitment and dedication by a great many people. Replicating the model in other remote communities is now the goal for the corporation as it seeks to grow, expand and spread. To do that they need: firstly, funding for mentoring; secondly, training facility dedicated to Indigenous training; and, thirdly, more stringent procurement processes to ensure that Indigenous companies and local community involvement is guaranteed and assured going forward because that is really the heart of the success of the corporation and the program. I submit that these are goals worthy of our support.

Catherine House

Senator BERNARDI (South Australia) (19:50): I rise tonight to speak about the wonderful work of a long-serving South Australian service provider: Catherine House. I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate them because Catherine House celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. It was established in 1988 as a Sisters of Mercy project and since then has been providing much needed support and accommodation to women who are impacted by homelessness.

Providing accommodation is a major part of the work of Catherine House. Across their 15 accommodation sites each night they look after 47 women. Through the emergency supported accommodation, women in need receive care for up to one month. The program features around-the-clock staffing as well as access to services like Centrelink, nurses and legal advice. Each year Catherine House helps over 500 women through this program.

The outreach program provides assistance to women once they have left emergency accommodation, linking them to other support services. A focus is placed on helping women get the targeted support they need to avoid becoming homeless again via, for example, mental health treatments, a reduced dependence on drugs or improved education and skills. There are also independent living units and townhouses that offer support under the Moving On Program, where women can stay for longer periods of time, and there is permanent supported accommodation that provides individual rooms, meals, housekeeping and support services for up to 12 women. Catherine House also runs specialist mental health programs with different levels of support.
depending on client needs. Catherine House states:

We seek to offer a woman the opportunity to transform her life, through the various supports and programs that we provide, particularly through offering access to education and employment opportunities.

The education and employment program gives disadvantaged women a chance to develop new skills so they can work towards a better future. Catherine House runs an education employment centre which plays a key role in this.

The staff and volunteers at Catherine House are very passionate about providing women with the necessary steps to make it on their own because self-sufficiency is a powerful tool against homelessness. Between July and November last year, 17 women found a job due to their own hard work, assisted by the amazing efforts of people involved with Catherine House, which is an excellent result in these tough economic times. There are also a number of women who, through Catherine House, have moved on to university, accredited study or work experience.

In summary, Catherine House do not just deal with the immediate impacts of homelessness, they have a long-term objective as well, and it is being achieved very successfully. They also undertake research projects and contribute to the wider discussion about how to combat homelessness in Australia. Those at Catherine House understand the importance of informed debate. It fosters innovation, it improves communication between service providers and it lays the groundwork for a more in-depth understanding of homelessness.

One example of their great work is featured in their Christmas newsletter. It tells the story of one woman who came to Catherine House after a life of alcohol abuse, domestic violence and mental illness. Over several months, she learnt how to cope with stress and have confidence in herself. She took part in education courses and developed a range of job-readiness skills. She is now living in her own accommodation, has completed various certificates and is well on her way to her goal of becoming a community services worker. It just goes to show how support, care and determination really can change lives.

None of this would be possible without the people behind Catherine House. There is a staff of more than 50 and there are many, many more volunteers that offer their time to help others. Every person is integral to the successful operations of Catherine House. It serves as a great inspiration to all of us. In this fast paced world it is easy to look inward and to worry only about ourselves. Yet the workers, the volunteers and the donors who are behind organisations like Catherine House demonstrate that we all still have the ability to offer our time, or our money, or our products, or our goods or services and to make an effort to help.

As I said at the start of this brief contribution, this year Catherine House will be celebrating their 25th anniversary. They will be hosting a number of special events to celebrate their 25 years of service to South Australian women. Staff and volunteers and donors alike will have the opportunity to look back at what they have achieved, and celebrate the positive difference they have made in the lives of so many. I am very proud to personally be a supporter of Catherine House, as are many other South Australians right across my home state and I encourage others to do so. I wish Catherine House all the best for their anniversary year. I hope it will encourage them to continue their amazing work, for which we should all be grateful well into the future.
Hospitals

Senator DI NATALE (Victoria) (19:55): I want to talk tonight about an issue that is plaguing the state of Victoria, and other states around the nation: the closure of hospital beds and emergency departments right around the country. I recently attended a campaign meeting around the closure of the urgent care centre from 10 pm to 7 am in a place called Colac, in south-west Victoria. This is the only place where people of the region can see a doctor after hours. It is a place that is staffed by skilled GPs, urgent care nurses and so on.

The reason that Colac Area Health took the decision to close their urgent care centre overnight was that they were dealt a severe blow—a $255,000 cut to their budget. It was a cut that came without warning, and halfway through the financial year. The decision by Colac Area Health to close the urgent care centre overnight resulted in a community campaign that saw ordinary people mobilise. We saw people engage with social media—Facebook pages sprung up—and we saw what was unprecedented in the town when 1,000 people attended a public meeting to voice their concerns about the closure of the urgent care centre overnight. This place also happens to be the electorate that I live in, and it happens to be in an electorate where my family would attend that hospital in the case of an emergency.

At this public meeting people were given the opportunity to hear from their local MPs. It is an area that is slightly unusual because we have representation at a federal level by the Labor Party, and at a state level by the coalition. What we heard during that meeting was a very deep sense of frustration at the finger-pointing and the blame game that was being played out by their local members of parliament. Rather than the blame, the accusations, the avalanche of figures that were thrown around in order to justify the reduction in funding, what the people of Colac wanted to hear was that someone was going to take responsibility for fixing the problem. People come along to a meeting like this because they want to know what happens at two in the morning when their young, asthmatic child suffers from a severe asthma attack. They want to know what happens when somebody who might be a factory worker overnight is involved in a serious industrial accident. They want to know whether the chest pain they are experiencing is just indigestion, or is in fact a sign of an early heart attack.

We were fortunate that meeting has resulted in at least a temporary stay of execution. The Barwon Medicare Local—they are doing some terrific work in the Barwon region—came up with an interim funding arrangement where they would provide a bit of a circuit-breaker and fund the emergency care department until a longer-term and more sustainable solution could be found. But the future of Colac's urgent care department is by no means certain, and it is an issue that is being replicated right around the country. We have seen Bulahdelah community in New South Wales facing similar cuts to their emergency and overnight services.

I have had constituents emailing me asking whether there is something that we can do—people who are on waiting lists for surgery for debilitating back injuries, problems causing huge emotional, physical and in fact financial stress. I have been approached by nurses at the Peter James Centre in Burwood where a number of beds have been shut. This is a centre that provides important rehabilitation services, so stroke victims who need that critical care are no longer being given that care. In my home state of Victoria I have seen reports that Austin Health, for example, needs to find $4
million worth of savings when it originally budgeted a $2 million surplus. These savings need to be found by the end of June. An Austin Health spokesperson was reported as saying there would be 800 fewer surgical operations in order to make savings. In Barwon Health we have seen the closure of 24 beds at Geelong Hospital. Fifty hospital beds have closed in Eastern Health and the pathology service at Angliss Hospital. There is potentially a similar situation occurring at the Angliss Hospital mirroring what is happening in Colac with the potential closure overnight of that hospital's emergency department. The Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre announced the closure of 16 beds on 22 February. Royal Melbourne Hospital's chief executive has said that they had initially planned to close an operating theatre and 45 beds from the end of this week under regular holiday closures. They were originally planning to open in January and are now closed until February, and the hospital is considering the closure of a 25-bed ward until the end of June, effectively cutting 700 operations. At the Royal Children's Hospital and northern hospitals we are now seeing a planned expansion of operating theatre sessions on hold, potentially causing longer waits. There are similar situations in places like Townsville: 220 jobs axed at Townsville Hospital.

We get down to a situation where we have politicians blaming each other for the issue. We heard that at the emergency department closure at Colac Hospital at the public meeting there. We are seeing our federal health minister and state health ministers continuing to blame each other for the problem. The federal government argues that state governments have ripped out money from the system. It is true in Victoria and Queensland that those governments have in fact underfunded our public hospital system; there is no question about that. But the federal government also in my view needs to answer some questions. There are concerns over the use of ABS data and the use of health inflation to justify these cuts.

When people hear politicians arguing, what they hear is that no-one is prepared to take responsibility and fix the problem. What these cuts mean is that somebody who is waiting six hours in an emergency department might have to wait a few more hours, that somebody who has been on a waiting list to have hip surgery might have to wait several months more. Yet politicians refuse to take responsibility. That is why tomorrow I am going to be introducing into this place a proposal to have a Senate inquiry to look at the issue, to take advice, to take evidence from all of the various parties, from stakeholders within the system, and try and give some semblance of sense to this dispute, to try and make it clear about where responsibility lies, to make it clear that there has to be some give and take and exactly where that line should be drawn.

But at the end of the day I take a rather old-fashioned view about this. If governments do not exist to educate our kids, to provide decent healthcare for our community and to look after the environment, what the hell are we doing here? People rightly expect that we will look after the most vulnerable people in the community, people who may be on a waiting list and possibly cannot afford private health insurance, cannot get their injury or illness seen to more quickly. They rightly expect that the public hospital system will look after them.

Ultimately we have got choices to make. We can continue down this path where we underfund the public health service, where it is a question of everyone for themselves, where we go down this dog-eat-dog line that both parties are taking us down, or we can...
take a different path and choose some very different priorities. We can fund our public hospital systems in a way that means that we are a much more caring, compassionate and decent society. In the end that is the job of government: to ensure that we provide universal health care for those who need it.

Fires and Floods

Senator THISTLETHWAITE (New South Wales) (20:06):

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.

Never before have those wonderful words of Dorothea Mackellar been more prescient in this nation during the bushfire and flood season. Her words perfectly sum up the beauty and the terror of our wonderful nation. As Australians we are blessed with a warm and temperate climate, but we are also afflicted, usually each summer, by extreme weather events. This summer again has been one hell of a season. We have seen bushfires and floods ravage our countryside and inundate our towns, yet we have seen the great spirit of our people tested but not broken.

Coonabarabran in the north-west of New South Wales, in the electorate of Parkes, is one such town that recently faced the ferocity of the seasonal fires. On 17 January I visited Coonabarabran with the Prime Minister and saw what opened my eyes to the evil that so many face in our great Australian foe. During that visit I was fortunate to meet our wonderful representatives of the Rural Fire Service in their headquarters in Coonabarabran, to inspect the bushfire damage, to meet with the firefighters and volunteers and to travel around Coonabarabran and surrounds with the local mayor, Peter Shinton, and the local federal member, Mark Coulton.

The destructive capacity of the fires was overwhelming. The images that we all saw on the nightly news simply do not do it justice. More than 51 homes were destroyed in the blaze along with over 110 sheds, machinery, fencing and yet untold livestock deaths. As the Prime Minister put it, the scene resembled a charred moonscape. We listened to locals as they told their heartbreaking stories on the spots where their homes used to sit, where their livestock used to feed or where their children used to play.

We also visited the Siding Spring Observatory and witnessed just how close that fire got to destroying one of our nation’s prized and valued astronomical assets. I wish to thank and congratulate the public servants, the men and women who work in and around that observatory for their hard work and dedication in saving that valuable asset. Many of them are volunteer firefighters and worked to save their workplace.

While the prevailing sense was one of sadness, there was also strength—strength from knowing that so many others were looking out and helping them in what must have seemed like their darkest days. Help did come from some of the unlikeliest of sources, but help also came from those who had been professionally trained as volunteers—people like Bob Fenwick. Bob is a rural fire captain and has been for many decades, and he fought the fires in the Warrumbungle National Park region. Whilst he was fighting fires his own house was burning down and burnt to the ground. We visited him and his wife on the site where his house once was. It is Aussies like Bob Fenwick that truly epitomise the strength and selflessness of our volunteers and emergency service workers. It is thanks to them that these devastating fires did not claim more lives.
One of the great aspects of these fires was the fact that we are getting better at them. We are learning from the mistakes of the past. The fire control systems and back-burning measures are improving; and, importantly, the warning systems are improving and people are planning their exits much earlier and much more effectively. It says so much about our nation and our people that we think of them in this disaster season. Help has not just come from within local communities; it has come from all over the country in the form of volunteers looking to pitch in and help out others in need.

But of course, when those fires had passed in north western New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, the season was not done. After the fires came the floods. Torrential rain and cyclonic conditions again hit Queensland and northern New South Wales, delivering another period of uncertainty with another of Mother Nature's cruel turns. More than 25,000 North Coast residents were left isolated and hundreds of homes were swamped by floodwaters along the Clarence River. Towns have been cut off, and locals have been left counting the cost of the disaster and cleaning up the mess. But again they did not do it alone. They showed again a strength and a resolve that is admirable and characteristic of the Australian spirit. Thousands of volunteers continue to help in the clean-up phase of this event. Many of them have left their families at home and taken leave from their jobs to put their lives on hold to help others get back on track. I know of many surf lifesavers who have been pitching in to help out despite their hands being more than full in protecting our beaches during this summer period. More than 30 lifesavers, including 10 from the Batemans Bay and Broulee surf clubs, travelled to Sussex Inlet to offer their assistance to those fighting fires in the Shoalhaven. And many of them have been helping out in Queensland and northern New South Wales in the clean-up operation.

The Aussie spirit has been on full display during this period of extreme weather events. We have seen it time and time again; when Australian communities are threatened, the greater Australian community mobilises and goes to work. On behalf of New South Wales I would like to sincerely thank these generous, selfless people for all they have done these last couple of months to help those who have been afflicted by the fires and floods over the summer period. This country would be far worse off without our volunteers and emergency service workers.

I would also like to draw to the Senate's attention the fact that disaster appeals have been set up, most notably to do with the floods in Queensland through the Red Cross disaster appeal. I encourage people to visit the Red Cross website and to make a donation to help those who are affected by flooding. Also, Warrumbungle Shire Mayor Peter Shinton has set up a bushfire appeal for those affected by the Coonabarabran fires. I encourage senators and members of the public to visit the Warrumbungle Shire Council website. In response to these appeals the government has granted tax deductibility for all donations to these wonderful appeals, and I join with the mayors and the leaders of these communities in expressing our gratitude, our thanks and our strength to those who have been involved this summer in again fighting the great foe that is the Australian weather.

**Tasmanian Innovation and Investment Fund**

**Senator BILYK** (Tasmania) (20:14): I rise tonight to speak about the Tasmanian Innovation and Investment Fund. Last year I had the opportunity to visit several businesses in the Kingborough and the Huon
Valley area in the south of Tasmania. I visited several businesses that were recipients of the Tasmanian Innovation and Investment Fund, or TIIF. The Australian government has provided $8.3 million in funding to establish the TIIF in recognition that Tasmania's native forest industry is in transition and has been under increasing pressure due to a broad range of factors. This funding is supporting 28 projects from all regions in Tasmania. The TIIF provides competitive, merit based grants to businesses seeking $50,000 or more to invest in activities that create sustainable employment and diversity in Tasmania's economy. Projects funded include those that support the introduction of innovation, new technologies and emerging industries particularly in regional Tasmania.

I would like to say at this point that when it comes to discussion about Tasmania's economy, there seems to be a lot of focus—in the media, in politics and in other public discourse—on the forest industry. I think it is important to understand that despite the challenges in the forest industry and forestry being an important and significant industry for Tasmania, the issues in forestry are not representative of the overall Tasmanian economy. There are areas of the Tasmanian economy that are affected by the high Australian dollar, but my home state still has many natural advantages and many economic opportunities which local businesses are taking advantage of. These businesses are showing that with innovation and with high-quality products they can overcome the competitive pressures that a high Australian dollar presents.

Just in recent years, Tasmania's dairy and aquaculture industries have doubled. Aquaculture has particularly thrived following the Australian government's decision to approve the expansion of fish farming in Macquarie Harbour, a decision that has been overwhelmingly welcomed by the Tasmanian salmonid industry, and viticulture has quadrupled. There are major projects in Tasmania's investment pipeline including the $100 million Parliament Square development and the $400 million Musselroe wind farm. Musselroe would not have gone ahead, mind you, without this government's decisions to boost Australia's renewable energy target and to introduce a price on carbon.

Despite the challenges in the forest industry, Tasmania is a place which, through its natural advantages, has a variety of economic opportunities. As an island state with an abundance of fresh water and quality soil, we are able to produce premium agricultural products which are regarded as clean and green. With low accommodation costs, short travel distances between destinations and an extraordinary natural beauty that is the envy of Australia, Tasmania lends itself well to interstate and international tourism.

And a new opportunity has emerged in Tasmania with the early rollout of the National Broadband Network paving the way for innovative business applications that rely on super-fast broadband. The early NBN rollout, coupled with the unique lifestyle that Tasmania offers, lends our state well to attracting new information and communications technology businesses. The great thing about the TIIF is that it capitalises on the opportunities that are already available in the Tasmanian economy. The businesses I have spoken to indicated that they were ready to invest money in their projects, but it was the TIIF that got those projects over the line. Through investing $8.3 million, this government has been able to leverage $21 million in private investment, delivering 267 ongoing jobs to regional Tasmania. I am proud of these 267 jobs being among the more than 800,000 that
this government has created since coming to office.

This figure means a whole lot more when you recognise that each one of these jobs represents a major life opportunity for someone in regional Tasmania. I have had the privilege to meet these people and to meet the proprietors of the businesses that employed them. These business owners and operators are extraordinarily proud of what they do and the opportunities they are delivering to their workers. Two of these businesses are active in Tasmania’s booming seafood industry. Salmon company, Tassal, received $770,000 which they more than matched with $1.7 million of their own money to expand their processing facilities in Margate. Margate is now a suburb, but when I was young and growing up there it was just a little country town. They export most of their salmon products to the world. The expansion has created 18 local jobs. I toured their new processing facility late last year to see the plant in full operation.

The other seafood company was Huon Valley Seafoods, which received $440,000 matched with private investment of almost $900,000 to expand their seafood processing, blast freezing and packing facility. Huon Valley Seafoods have contracts to process, pack and freeze fish from other companies and, through their expansion, more fish can be processed locally in Tasmania, creating 30 new jobs in the Huonville area. I also visited Huon Valley Seafoods last year to tour the new facilities and I met with the business owners, Stephen Oates and Ambrose Coad, and spoke to them about their plans for the company.

On the same day as my visit to Huon Valley Seafoods I travelled to nearby Glen Huon and had the opportunity to meet Bodie Cavanagh and his associates who run a small company called Dovetail Timbers. In a time when the forest industry is in transition, Dovetail Timbers are doing something truly innovative—they are salvaging timber that is unsuitable for mainstream use and would otherwise be treated as waste. One of their most popular products is a garden bed that can be quickly and easily assembled. They are also producing chicken coops, log cabins, sheds, and sandpits.

The timber industry, more broadly, has recognised that with the market for woodchips in decline, other value-adding proposals are needed to secure the industry’s future. Dovetail’s products are a great example of value-adding already in practice. The TIIF has given Dovetail Timbers $76,000, to which they have added $150,000 of private investment, to expand their processing facilities, adding another three jobs.

I also visited Pennicott Wilderness Journeys. Rob Pennicott and his wife have been operating a highly successful wilderness cruise business since 1999. With $506,000 from the TIIF, Mr Pennicott contributed $1.3 million of private investment to purchase a new craft to expand his Bruny Island tours, creating 14 new jobs. One of the reasons why I was particularly pleased that Mr Pennicott received a grant is that he has a strong commitment to the community. Twenty-five per cent of the profits from his business are donated to local, national and international conservation community and humanitarian projects. Just recently, and supported by the Rotary Club of D’Entrecasteaux Channel—of which I just happen to be a member—Mr Pennicott circumnavigated Australia in a 5.4-metre inflatable dinghy, raising over $250,000 for conservation and to assist Rotary International with the eradication of polio. Whilst Pennicott Wilderness Journeys has grown into a highly successful ecotourism business, creating many Tasmanian jobs,
Rob Pennicott is highly regarded in the local community not only for his extraordinary business acumen but also for his genuine commitment to serving his local community.

The TIIF has also supported projects in Scottsdale, Latrobe, Invermay, Triabunna, Wynyard, and Bridgewater, amongst other locations in Tasmania, and, as I mentioned earlier, it has supported the creation of 267 jobs. These jobs have been in fields as diverse as agriculture, baking, brewing and engineering, as well as many others. All the TIIF recipients I met were not only very grateful for the support the Australian government had provided but also genuinely excited about the possibilities that their projects had created for the future of their businesses. They were also passionate about Tasmania and the products and services they were providing. It is important to note that projects funded by the TIIF are expected to create economic diversification and sustainable jobs. This has meant that projects funded by the TIIF have typically been innovative proposals in growth industries. A common feature of these projects is that they involve investment in capital and the expansion of business facilities. The requirement that projects produce sustainable jobs means that the economic benefits that flow from the fund will stretch well into the future. The jobs I mentioned are not just created for a year or two; they are expected to be maintained indefinitely.

While the TIIF was developed in response to a microeconomic challenge, it provides an excellent model for promoting innovation, jobs growth and economic diversification in regions that are affected by a downturn in a major industry. Where opportunity exists and innovative, forward-thinking businesspeople are ready to take advantage of those opportunities, sometimes all they need is a little encouragement from government to help move their ideas forward. I would like to congratulate all the recipients of the TIIF, and I thank them for their commitment to growing jobs in Tasmania.

**Violence Against Women**

**Senator SINGH (Tasmania) (20:24):** I rise tonight to speak to an issue that, over the summer parliamentary break, has echoed around the world, with the shouts of protest from the Subcontinent resonating with good women and men in Australia and across the globe.

On 16 December, a young woman, an intelligent 23-year-old physiotherapy student, and her male friend boarded a bus in New Delhi to return home after an evening screening of a film. The only other passengers on that private bus, six young men, including one only 17 years old, attacked them. They beat the man with a metal bar. They stripped the woman, raped her and beat her within an inch of her life before dumping her body by the side of the road. She later died in hospital. The utter brutality of these crimes sparked an instant reaction from India and beyond. Thousands lined the streets to protest that such an act was ever allowed to happen. Their tears and their cries were not only for this individual tragedy. In the words of the President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, in his Republic Day address, they wept for 'a woman who was symbol of all that new India strives to be'. That emotion translated into more than 80,000 submissions to a panel headed by the former Chief Justice of India, JS Verma, on issues of violence against women. A 630-page report was handed down by that panel on 23 January, including a scathing assessment of the role of government, whom he noted were not able to make their own submissions to the panel on time. But the panel stuck to their urgent timeframe and delivered an important report.
More than 24,000 cases of rape were reported in India in 2011—not, of course, counting those cases that went unreported due the stigma associated with being a victim. These cases, all too common across urban and rural India, are devastating. But perhaps most disturbing of all is the perception of the role of women and men that gives rise to these acts and the way they are dealt with. Such cruel attitudes are not reflected on the streets lined with young people protesting this injustice. Nor do they reflect the heart of India, of what Indian society is or can be. They are not of the India freed by a movement of nonviolence, nor of the India that reveres Lakshmi, Durga, and the birth mother. These attitudes do not match the justice and the pride that fuels Indian civilisation.

Nor are these attitudes confined to the Subcontinent. We will all recall the tragic story of Jill Meagher, which unfolded slowly in television reports and over social media in Australia last year. She was a young Irish woman working in Australia who was abducted on the short walk back to her apartment in Melbourne and raped and murdered. The reaction to that story was a wave of public grief and, it must be admitted, some sense of fear and unease. But eventually, like in New Delhi, 30,000 people walked down Sydney Road in the suburb of Brunswick to honour her memory and resolve that such awful acts should never be repeated.

Nonetheless, for many women such confident resolutions do not match the reality of their lives. Violence against women is not achieved in a moment of epiphany but in the gradual transformation of a culture that has not adequately respected women and girls. Instead, the culture that many women encounter is one that only recognises their abilities, talents and potential next to a calculation of their value as an object of sexual desire. One cannot believe that these instances of violence are indicative of the natural culture either of India or of Australia, nor are they something just from the West, as some Indian leaders have asserted. That view is as cynical as it is complacent, and it is the kind of cynicism that, to again quote the President of India, 'is blind to morality'. Instead, these attitudes survive in all societies in which leaders, citizens and activists are forgetful that the price of freedom and of equality is eternal vigilance.

When we fail to be vigilant, these attitudes pervade our society. They are the lessons that young girls and boys learn through magazines and television shows. They are the signals that are sent to young people when the source of their role models are male captains of industry and powerful sportsmen on the one hand and women who must either talk about or take off their clothes to make the front page on the other. They are the product of an invented strain of machismo that robs women and men of their agency and forces them into roles under the false guise of what is termed as natural. They are the product of a part of an entertainment industry which makes an expectation or a joke of predation, obsession and unwanted attention towards women and girls. Ending these attitudes requires leaders, here in Australia as well as in India, and all over the world, to unite for the cause of preventing violence against women wherever it may occur. Fortunately, attitudes are slowly changing. A strong and active civil society has mobilised against these poisonous views, empowering women and men to reject the things that enable rape culture. The White Ribbon Foundation, for example, gives an opportunity to swear an oath never to commit, excuse or remain silent about acts of violence against women. Meanwhile, in newspapers, magazines and on weblogs, women are sharing their stories and...
supporting one another to stand up to a culture of disempowerment and misogyny.

For my government’s part, on 15 February 2011, the then Minister for the Status of Women, Kate Ellis, and the then Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, announced the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children with the endorsement of COAG. The plan, of course, is no quick fix. It provides for four successive stages, each supported by three years of programs and priorities. In the first stage, which ends this year, the focus is on strengthening the workforce, sharing information systems, improving the evidence base and tracking performance of different initiatives. All of these things will help us to understand the task ahead of us, but there is no doubt that elimination of violence and discrimination against women will require a shift in culture.

That will mean being alert to the portrayals, the jokes, the acts and the attitudes that treat women and girls as less than their male counterparts, and which give perverse justification to the violence and degradation. We must be alert to those in our homes, our schools, our workplaces and most importantly in our own minds. We must challenge those ideas wherever they persist, here or abroad.

To be a member of a community is to owe to that community a voice for what is right and against what is wrong. Recently, I had the chance to meet Migration Institute Australia executive officer, Pallavi Sinha, who, in the wake of the cases of gang rape about which I have spoken, immediately began a petition for change in India and organised and united the Indian diaspora in Sydney. Her response is one of the many examples of action guided by heritage, principle and responsibility of which diaspora communities are capable here in Australia.

I am deeply privileged to be a member of the great Indian diaspora living in Australia. As an Australian and as a person of Indian origin, I want to register not only my sadness at this kind of violence I have described but a deep resolve to change the culture that has allowed them to occur. I hope that in time, women will not only be safe from violence and all forms of discrimination but respected and enabled in each corner of the international community.

Gallipoli

Senator KROGER (Victoria—Chief Opposition Whip in the Senate) (20:32): The Christmas and New Year period is traditionally a time to share with family, friends and loved ones. It is a time to pause and reflect on a hectic year, to take stock, to recharge the batteries and to give thanks. It is also a time to give back to the community and remember those who are unable to celebrate the holiday season with us.

And so it was with these Christmas messages and values in my mind that I travelled to Turkey to make the journey to the Gallipoli Peninsula and spend Australia Day surrounded by thousands of patriots, who held their countries' values in such high regard that they made the ultimate sacrifice.

We have all been fortunate enough to grow up with the story of Gallipoli. So many Australians are aware of relatives or family friends who served at Anzac Cove or on the Western Front, where the Anzac spirit, the essence of larrikinism and our courage under fire were forged and put to the test.

So many Australians are aware of our nation’s quick response to the outbreak of war in Europe in August 1914, and the four months of training in Egypt that was provided to Australian troops before they sailed to the Gallipoli Peninsula. So many
Australians are aware of the Australian Infantry Forces fighting side-by-side with New Zealanders, Britons and the French, and being remembered for their compassion, their skills, and their 'can do' attitudes. So many Australians know the story of Anzac Day, where the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps were tasked with breaking through Turkish lines high above the rocky cliffs on the Gallipoli Peninsula. For the ANZACs and the Turks, attempts to end the stalemate were defeated. There were few successful battles during the campaign, but the bravery, courage and nerve of these incredible young men made military history.

One of the truest tests of Australian courage came between 6 and 9 August 1915 at the Battle of Lone Pine. Over 2,000 sons, fathers, brothers, uncles and grandfathers lost their lives there. That was 2,000 future doctors—dare I say—parliamentarians, teachers, engineers, artists and sportsmen that our nation lost.

I have to say that the most poignant time of my visit came when I came across a headstone that recognised Trooper GR Seager, who passed away on 7 August 1915. The trooper was a member of the 9th Australian Light Horse Regiment. His headstone indicated that he died at the age of 17. I could not help but think of my own two sons, who are older than that age now. I thought about my nephews, who are of a slightly different age, and those who are younger than that. I could not help but think of all the young Australians in my community in the east of Melbourne where my electorate office is. Almost a century ago if they could have been in the very place where I was standing, they would have been looking at a very different sight. They would have been wondering where their mates were. They may have been wondering whether they were ever going to see their families again. They could have thought about what they would be doing if they were fortunate enough to ever get out of that hellhole and get home.

Seven Victoria Crosses were awarded to Australians who fought in the Battle of Lone Pine. I for one will never forget them. We will never know nor fully appreciate the pain and anguish of their families. But as well as the 2,000 young Australians who died in those four long and torturous days, almost 7,000 Turkish soldiers lost their lives. You can actually appreciate the significance when you see headstone after headstone, with the names of Turkish soldiers, of just how many of those soldiers lost their lives as well. It was left to the 2nd Battalion of Australian Infantry Forces to bury the dead.

There are some 22,000 graves in 31 war cemeteries on the Gallipoli peninsula. Yet only 9,000 of these graves are identified. But for the symbolism, emotion and poignant that is associated with the Commonwealth War Graves at Anzac Cove, it is important for us to remember the hundreds of Australian nurses who cared for the wounded and dying troops on floating hospital ships. They worked in horrifying conditions, with constant shelling from the Turkish forces on the peninsula. On the first day of the Gallipoli campaign, over 550 wounded soldiers had been admitted to the ship and, in the next nine months alone, over 8,000 soldiers were taken via boat from Gallipoli to hospitals in Egypt, Greece, the United Kingdom and Malta.

Ironically, the evacuation of Allied forces from the Gallipoli Peninsula on the night of 19 to 20 December was the biggest success of the campaign. I hope that any Australian who has not had an opportunity to visit the peninsula actually does have an opportunity at some stage. It is so heartening to know that so many young Australians are actually visiting Anzac Cove not only to be there for
the dawn service on 25 April but to appreciate the significance of what our fellow Australians faced back at that time.

I considered it to be an honour to spend Australia Day there—the birth of our nation—at the location where our national identity, our values and our commitment were tested. Over 26,000 Australians were casualties of the Gallipoli campaign, and we should all be able to give thanks for their sacrifice and remember their loved ones who may never have had the chance to say goodbye. There were so many of those.

It is imperative that, less than 18 months from the first ANZAC Centenary, that we see the release of the government's public funding outline to assist the commemoration in local communities. This is something that Senator Ronaldson continues to pursue and is quite vocal about it. I think that we as a parliament should be bipartisan on this issue. We should have bipartisan support for the best possible way in which we can honour and recognise such a significant part of Australia's history.

Many veterans' groups in my patron seats of Deakin, Chisholm and Bruce are anxious about the goals for funding and the way in which the centenary celebrations will be administered.

Anzac Day should be a time to remember, never to forget. It is also a time to give thanks for the freedom and values that our nation holds dear. It is now time for the government to ensure that the spirit of ANZAC and the memory of the great sacrifice of ANZAC is celebrated and remembered with pride.

**Domestic and Family Violence**

**Senator PRATT** (Western Australia) (20:41): We know that in this nation, sadly, too many Australians have been victims of domestic and family violence. Whether or not you have experienced it or whether you have loved someone who has, mostly everyone today can now recognise what a dreadful thing it is and how it can have lifelong impacts on victims, families and children.

It was not all that long ago when domestic and family violence was thought of as a private matter. So I am very pleased that, where previously society silently ignored domestic violence, these days we are increasingly willing to speak out against it, to stop acts of domestic violence and to support its victims.

Australia has come a very long way in this regard. It has not happened by some kind of accidental epiphany. People over generations have worked hard to get domestic violence recognised as a crime and to give people secure places to live. Indeed, we have worked hard in recognising the professional skills that it takes to address what can be very delicate and damaging family matters and I am very pleased when community service workers were awarded an increase via the SACS award, recognising that they undertake very difficult work.

So we have, indeed, come a long way in addressing what was for too long seen as a private matter. We have come a long way in addressing what was for too long seen as the right of a man to control their family by whatever means. We have done a lot in changing the law state by state; changing policing; changing attitudes to women; changing attitudes to men; having the courage to speak out; promoting and giving people the skills to have respectful relationships; and, importantly, making resources available, such as places like domestic violence refuges and counsellors, counsellors to help people change their behaviour and to keep families safe. But it is an ongoing process and it is terrific that, today, we have a national plan that brings
together a lot of what we have now learnt over decades to address domestic and family violence.

The kinds of outcomes that we are looking for are strategies where communities are safe and free from violence, where relationships are respectful, where Indigenous communities are strengthened, where the services meet the needs of women and their children who are experiencing violence, where justice responses are effective and where perpetrators stop their violence.

We know that stopping domestic violence is about more than saying no, it is about more than saying, 'I'm against it,' and it is about more than speaking out. It is about the very practical change agents that we employ every day and the delivery of the services attached to those agents. It is about attitudinal change but it is also about the practical steps that make it easier for victims to stop what is happening to them—and to help perpetrators to stop. It is all very well to say that we want to take a stand against domestic violence, but the question is how we do that. What do we do? Refuge workers know how. They can support people through the practical steps you need to take every day to support victims and their families and work with them so that they are no longer victims. There are also those who work with perpetrators to help them stop.

There are many steps to help prevent family and domestic violence, but these steps need to extend to the workplace. Today we realise that these steps can and should extend to the workplace. The Commonwealth recognises this, and that is why it has been pleased and proud to support the development of the resource called the 'Domestic Violence Kit—Keeping you and your job safe'. I am very pleased that both Minister Shorten, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, and Minister Collins, Minister for the Status of Women, have actively supported the work done by the domestic violence clearing house at the University of New South Wales.

Also, unions have nationally moved to incorporate clauses in their enterprise agreements that provide support for employees who are victims of domestic violence. It does not naturally seem logical to say that domestic violence is a workplace issue, but it very, very clearly is. For example, additional paid leave or flexible work arrangements can help someone who might not have otherwise disclosed their situation to their employer and may have put their employment at risk by not showing up to work and saying, 'This is what is happening to me; I need some time off to go and sort this out.' What has happened to many women historically is that they end up losing their jobs because the shame and the fear of disclosure mean that they just do not say why they have not turned up at work, and this has really put many women's employment at risk.

I would really like to commend the maritime union and the Australian Services Union in Western Australia for being the first unions to work to put these clauses in their EBAs in my home state of Western Australia. They have taken real steps to support their employees, and I hope this is a lead that is followed. The Geraldton port was in fact the first place where this was included in the EBA. It is also time that this was recognised in the public service at both state and national levels in all employment contracts. This has been included in many public service contracts now around the country, and Western Australia needs to do this too. This would go a long way to recognising what a significant workplace issue this is. I would like to commend the work the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse has done in seeking...
to improve the capacity of unions, employers and employer organisations to support employees experiencing domestic or family violence and help them remain in work. The domestic violence clearing house has been a key change agent in these moves.

However, all of this will mean very little if we cannot empower victims of violence—both men and women—to use these clauses, and where these clauses do not exist to nevertheless take steps to protect themselves and their employment. I have seen firsthand the impact that skipped days at work can have because of domestic violence. It can take an already vulnerable family and make it more vulnerable because of the loss of employment and the loss of income, which then places housing at risk. It is a terrible, terrible cycle.

There is increasing recognition in Australia that domestic violence is a workplace issue. When people are victims of domestic violence it can lead to distraction at work and nonattendance, when there can be simple remedies to help someone retain their productivity at work. So I would really like to commend the advocacy of the domestic violence clearing house in putting forward that being a victim of domestic violence should be a protected attribute in our national anti-discrimination law. Employers and workers alike need to know that there are actions they can take to prevent the awful toll that domestic violence can take not only on those experiencing it but also on workplace productivity. This is not a murky private issue for the workplace to ignore. There are many practical supports and interventions that can assist in a responsive workplace and that can assist someone to remain and maintain themselves as a valuable employee who is able to continue to support their family.

Employers need to know that there is a reason that you are turning up late—and it is not because someone does not care about their job. It is about shame and fear; it is not that you do not value your employment and you do not want to do a good job. There are practical steps outlined in the domestic violence clearing house's handbook which is entitled 'Keeping you and your job safe'. There have been launches right around the country, with more to come.

In conclusion—because I have only got a short time—I want to highlight the international connection on this issue. The 'One billion women rising' campaign is now a global campaign against violence against women. One in three women will be raped or beaten in their lifetime. Australia has come a long way on this issue, but we have a long way to go. It is also really important that we extend our voices and our support to women globally to stand up against this violence, in the knowledge that there is something practical that can be done to stop it.

Chan, Ms Vicki

Senator MOORE (Queensland) (20:51): Last month while driving to a meeting, which we all do, I was listening to the ABC—another plug for the ABC—and I heard a wonderful interview. I recognised the voice, and I was listening; it was a woman I had met when I was working with midwives in that region: Vicki Chan. I thought, when it started, that Vicki would be talking about her passion for her job, her passion for working with women to ensure that they have safe, wonderful experiences for birth—and indeed she was. But she was not talking about her time working on the Sunshine Coast, where she is well known and well beloved for her professional skills. Vicki—a special woman—was talking about her experiences working in Kenya, and she led into the story by talking about how she got into this
particular position. From then on, anyone listening to the interview was caught up in this amazing story. I have spoken to Vicki several times since, and her same excitement and engagement is there. She was telling me, as she told the people on the ABC that afternoon, that she was having a bit of a low time in her work and she read a newspaper article in the local *Sunshine Coast Bulletin* talking about someone who had visited Kenya, gone to Nairobi and was concerned about what was happening over there for women and children—and there was an opportunity to work in that area.

All of us read these articles all the time, but Vicki then planned to go to Nairobi and work in the clinic—which she has now done, and that is part of what I am talking about this evening. Vicki actually read the story and arranged that she would go, all at her own expense, because she had always wanted to go to Africa and this seemed to be the right time. All of those stars fell into alignment and it was the time for her to go there. She went to work with a clinic that was run by two brothers. Moffat Osoro and Fred Sirgero had started a clinic in that area because they too were concerned about women and safety and birthing in this area—and Vicki arrived. She went to Nairobi and thus began a relationship which has now truly changed lives. She was speaking to me about the inspiration being offered by these two men who have decided that they can make a difference. I think the best way of describing the passion that is behind this clinic is a beautiful quote that is on the wonderful blog site—I discovered what a blog site was in this process—that is written by Vicki to talk about her experiences. I am quoting from Moffat, who you begin to feel as though you know through the words that he shares, and I am quoting a piece where he describes a gathering of mothers and their babies returning to the clinic for ongoing health and support:

I look at the beautiful children held firmly, innocent, and smiling by their mothers and was so proud that these children have been born in a safe environment and that their birth was honored. I started challenging these women that the journey to have life has begun but the biggest hurdle lied ahead. I stressed the need for these women to love their children unconditionally, the need to utter positive words to their children whenever they are holding them, breastfeeding them, feeding them, bathing them and when preparing them for sleep. If they feel tired and the baby is crying they should not curse them but be patient and love them even more. I emphasized that all great men were raised by loving, caring women who blessed their sons and daughter and gave them hope for the future. They were told they will be great men and women who will make the world a better place to live in.

I gave an example of my own. I told these women that whenever I am holding Frank—that is his child—I always utter positive words full of blessings and love. I will do it either quietly, whispering or loudly. Words said goes deeper and pierce through the soul. When I was almost done most of these women were intently listening and holding their babies tightly. I ended up by telling them that the world out there is very corrupt, dangerous, and yes with their care, security and protection they will raise a loving and caring, responsible nation. I summed up by telling them not to let their babies to be raised by nannies, government or strangers but to be involved fully in their upbringing.

I want to meet Moffat because those words are so beautiful, and Vicki has talked about her experience working there and feeling
valued, for the professional knowledge that she brings, but also the engagement she has with the community that feed this clinic.

The Kenyan government have made major advances in the way that they work to ensure that women have safe births. Of course, we know about the Millennium Development Goals, and we have said many times in this place that we need to remember MDG 4—which is to reduce child mortality through one target, to reduce the under-five mortality rate by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015—and also MDG 5—to improve maternal health by reducing the maternal fatality rate by three-quarters and achieving universal access to reproductive health. We saw by Moffat's words that he is talking not just about the birth, but also into the future by raising healthy, loved children.

Those two Millennium Development Goals are alive in this clinic in Kawangware, Nairobi. One of the reasons they are is that Vicki Chan is actually making that happen. She, with her family and friends—mainly through the social media—has raised over $20,000 to completely change the physical aspects of the clinic. We see photos on the blog site which show what it was like, and when you see Vicki's blog you can see some of the more challenging aspects of going to work in a slum area outside Nairobi and the conditions in which women came to have their children and to learn about maternal care into the future. Through that $20,000, they have made an enormous difference.

Vicki has changed this process to allow women to have ownership of the process and to have their husbands with them. It is also looking at basic ideas of hygiene and safety. One of the proudest moments was looking at running water in the clinic, something that we all know should be a given but is not always. I think that we need to work effectively with local communities so that they see the need for the change and work for it.

I am amazed by the work that Vicki does but I am not surprised because her work at home shares the vision that this clinic has in which:

We envisage a world where each woman is nurtured, heard, and valued and has the information, resources, confidence, and support she requires to achieve the best possible pregnancy, birth, and mothering experience.

In such a world, her baby would be born with a fair and equal chance at life and love. That is not a statement just for Nairobi. That is statement for all women and I think we can work towards that. We can learn more about Vicki by having a look at her blog site, seeing how we can be involved because what they need now is an ambulance and we need to help fund that ambulance. I do not know whether by reading a newspaper article or listening to a stunning interview on the ABC I could change my life immediately, but women like Vicki Chan give me the hope that you can. People like Vicki make us think
that we all can have a role to work effectively, no matter where we are, and to support this wonderful concept of freedom and security and safety for all women and all children. This is part of a future we can share.

**Women in Prison Advocacy Network**

**International Development Assistance**

**Senator RHIANNON** (New South Wales) (21:01): Women in the criminal justice system have a tough time in prison and when they are released. Fortunately there is now an organisation dedicated to making a difference to the lives of these women. Women in Prison Advocacy Network or WIPAN is a voluntary grassroots organisation founded in 2007 by women, some of whom are former prisoners. The organisation has dedicated itself to advancing social justice for women who have been criminalised and marginalised, advocating for them within the prison system and supporting them on their release. There are gender specific issues that face women in the criminal justice system. Their needs are different from and often more complex than those of men, and often poorly addressed. In New South Wales women are entering prison at twice the rate of men. They experience more violence, substance dependency, mental and physical health disorders and chronic homelessness than men. They also have unique needs around raising their children.

WIPAN is working to reduce the rates at which these women reoffend. Over the years I have been impressed with the way WIPAN advocates for change within the criminal justice system and provides individual practical support and mentoring for women on their release from prison. The results are impressive. The number of women entering prison has been reduced and, importantly, WIPAN is achieving real and lasting life changes for the many disadvantaged and marginalised women in our criminal justice system. WIPAN's work has been so successful that this organisation has been awarded the 2012 National Crime and Violence Prevention Award for outstanding work in crime prevention. One of the many practical and effective programs that WIPAN runs is an individual mentoring program for women leaving prison to help make the often difficult transition back into society. Former prisoners can face overwhelming issues when leaving prison: problems such as deep social isolation, destructive and sometimes violent or abusive relationships, returning to old patterns of addiction and substance abuse, through to practical issues such as regaining custody of children, debt management and finding suitable housing, training and employment. These factors, understandably, can lead to a high rate of recidivism.

From a one-off grant of $100,000 in 2010, WIPAN developed and ran the 18-month pilot mentoring program from May 2010 until November 2011. Under the pilot, WIPAN recruited and trained volunteers from the broader community as mentors and these were matched with 31 newly released prisoners as mentees. The resulting figures speak for themselves. The first woman to be matched with a mentor in 2010 is, as at August 2012, living a crime- and drug-free life. Of the 20 women who stayed in the program for two months or more, only one returned to prison. This woman represented a unique case. She had served nine previous custodial sentences with less than two months in the community in between. After mentoring, she did stay in the program for 14 months before reoffending and has since signed up to go back on the program. During the pilot period, 82 per cent of the women who stayed in the program for a year or more did not reoffend or return to prison. This is
despite the fact that 93 per cent of those women were previous recidivists and in some cases serial recidivists.

According to the Productivity Commission, the total operating costs per prisoner in prison is over $100,000 a year. It is time that we made a reassessment of how we are managing prisoners in this country. Under the pilot program that WIPAN worked on the average cost of operation per woman per year was approximately $4,200. If it was successful in keeping just one woman out of prison for a year, then the total cost of the pilot mentoring scheme has been saved.

I would like to especially commend the initiative of WIPAN founding members Kat Armstrong, Carol Berry, Marissa Sandler and Nicki Petroff. Co-founder Kat Armstrong spent many years in prison for fraud and armed robbery. In prison Kat managed to turn her life around and began mentoring other women prisoners. She studied for a law degree, which she completed on release. Kat is currently employed full time and volunteers tirelessly as a director and treasurer of WIPAN. I do say thank you to Kat and all her colleagues for their tremendous achievement. I hope governments will look closely at this program, give it ongoing support and ensure that it is extended across the country. I am a proud member of Women in Prison Advocacy Network and I encourage others to check out their work and consider joining. You can do that at wipan.net.au.

Christian Aid have identified that in recent decades tax reforms in developing countries have been regressive, with corporate taxes being lowered and consumption taxes, which hit the poor hardest, being increased. The World Bank is playing a key role in pushing low-income countries to change their laws on company taxes and financial management in ways that attract foreign investors to these countries. Many of these laws are why low-income countries are losing billions of dollars that go into the profits of large corporations. Australia needs to accept some responsibility for this robbery of wealth from low-income countries, because we are a member of the World Bank. Australian aid money goes to the World Bank and we are a voting member of that organisation. In 2012-13, Australia will contribute $189.5 million to the World Bank.

Christian Aid in their report Undermining the poor have brought together some important findings. Latin America has
closely followed the World Bank’s advice and generous tax incentives in providing generous tax incentives for foreign investors. These are now common. As a result, some countries have extremely poor mineral taxation regimes. There is growing realisation that Peru, Guatemala and Honduras are not getting a fair deal from their mineral tax and royalty contributions. These countries have among the lowest level of royalties in the world. Peru did not even charge royalties in 2004, and now many companies have refused to comply with the new legislation and are therefore not paying the new royalty. Both Guatemala and Honduras charge a paltry one per cent royalty. In Honduras they offer a five-year tax holiday. This has led to their share of the wealth from the minerals in that country being even lower than that of Peru.

The official data that Christian Aid has analysed shows Honduras does not even get the minimal amount it should be due from a one per cent royalty contribution. In 2007, it is reported that the minerals sector, worth US$198 million that year, contributed only US$283,000 in royalties, licences and fees together, giving the government an almost unheard of 0.1 per cent share in the sector’s turnover. Christian Aid make the important observation that the World Bank’s public commitment in development forums to raising tax revenue will take a back seat in any internal decision-making process related to investment.

A number of African leaders have also spoken on this issue. They have identified that they should not rely on foreign aid and that their countries need taxation reform. Africa currently has one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios in the world. A very low tax-to-GDP ratio makes it difficult for countries to raise funds internally to pay for government operations, forcing them to rely on outside financial assistance such as aid. Dambisa Moyo, a former Goldman Sachs economist, in writing on this problem has identified the associated political ramifications. Ms Moyo has said:

… the absence of taxation leads to a breakdown in natural checks and balances between the government and its people.

Back in Australia, many of the young campaigners who are advocating for greater corporate tax transparency will visit our parliament to speak with us about this problem in coming months. The Oaktree campaign has a clear message that the more money developing countries can collect in their tax revenue the less dependent they will be on aid, and that if multinational companies pay their dues the world’s poorest nations will be better equipped to sustainably lift themselves out of poverty.

I look forward to meeting members of Oaktree and the other aid groups who are working so hard to ensure our government keeps its promises on foreign aid. I feel their message is inspiring. They will tell us that
we can end extreme poverty in our lifetime, that our world has the resources and that transparency can help ensure our aid money, and money raised from progressive tax policies, benefit the people and the environment in low-income countries.

Superannuation

Senator CORMANN (Western Australia) (21:15): Mr President, I seek leave to speak for up to 20 minutes.

Leave granted.

Senator CORMANN: People across Australia saving for their retirement will have a clear choice at the next election: on the one hand the coalition led by Tony Abbott, which offers stability and certainty in superannuation arrangements, or, on the other, a continuation of the high-taxing, chopping and changing Labor ways in superannuation, a continuation of the current government's constant undermining of people's confidence in the superannuation system. Australians can support a coalition government after 14 September that will provide certainty and stability in superannuation so that people can plan their retirement with confidence, or support a continuation of the high-taxing track record of the current government.

Our leader, Tony Abbott, has made a firm commitment on behalf of the coalition that under an Abbott-led government there will be no more unexpected detrimental changes to our superannuation system. This will help ensure that people across Australia saving for their retirement can plan their retirement with confidence. Over the past five years Labor has constantly and continuously targeted people saving for their retirement with significant tax increases. Labor has a terrible track record of targeting Australians doing the right thing by saving to achieve a self-funded retirement, with more than $8 billion in increased taxes on super savings so far and with the clear threat of more to come.

Over the past five years Labor has made Australians working hard and saving, so that they can get themselves into a position where they can look after their own retirement needs and not be a burden on the public purse, pay the price for its wasteful spending. So far Labor has increased taxes on voluntary savings by reducing the concessional contribution caps from $50,000 and $100,000 under the Howard government, depending on your age, down to $25,000 across the board. Anyone who wants to save more than $25,000 per annum, which includes their compulsory super contribution, now has to pay more tax.

Labor have also dramatically reduced the government's super co-contribution for low-income earners and doubled the super contributions tax for high-income earners. They have fiddled with the definition of 'income' to ensure more income is captured in the super tax net. They have increased capital gains tax revenue from super. As if that is not enough, the Prime Minister and the Treasurer are arguing now that people saving to achieve a self-funded retirement should be taxed even more.

Superannuation is clearly a very important part of our retirement framework. The coalition support a three-pillar retirement system with the age pension as a safety net, the compulsory system of retirement saving through superannuation, and incentives for additional voluntary savings. We recognise the need to boost retirement savings as an important economic objective. Over the past few years the Labor-Greens government has focused on increasing compulsion, forcing businesses and employees to pay more into superannuation by government mandate while weakening the third pillar of our retirement system by reducing incentives to
encourage voluntary savings. The coalition’s focus in government would be on encouraging increased voluntary savings to complement compulsory superannuation if and when the budget can afford it.

We want to encourage as many Australians as possible to actively plan and save for their retirement, to take full advantage of the benefits the superannuation system has on offer and to work towards self-funded retirement. We will work with the superannuation industry and all relevant stakeholders to ensure our superannuation system is the most efficient, the most transparent and the most competitive possible. Only the most efficient, transparent and competitive superannuation system with appropriately high standards of corporate governance will deliver the best possible value to superannuation fund members across Australia, with their retirement incomes safe and maximised. Continuing to improve efficiency, transparency, competitiveness and corporate governance in the people’s superannuation industry will help to increase Australians’ level of confidence in the system and willingness to make additional voluntary superannuation contributions.

Labor in government has introduced an anti-competitive and non-transparent process for the selection of default superannuation funds under modern awards, channelling hundreds of thousands of Australians into union dominated industry super funds. Despite repeated promises to address this unacceptable situation, Labor has failed to do what needs to be done to ensure that all Australians, including those who find themselves in default super arrangements, can benefit from genuine competition. We have previously said that a coalition government will work to ensure that Australians in default superannuation funds can benefit from genuine choice and competition by ensuring any MySuper product can compete freely in the default superannuation market.

We have said before that a coalition government will improve superannuation governance by implementing a series of corporate governance reforms recommended by the Cooper review but not progressed by Labor. In particular we have said that a coalition government would ensure that there is a more appropriate provision for independent directors on superannuation fund boards. We have said that we would ensure that directors who want to sit on multiple superannuation boards must demonstrate to APRA that they do not have any foreseeable conflicts of interest. Disclosure of conflicts of interest should be and must be mandatory, and directors of superannuation funds must disclose their remuneration in line with the provisions that apply for publicly listed companies and other APRA regulated sectors. We will work to improve the transparency of information available to consumers so that they can properly compare super funds. We will properly address the issue of excess contributions to make sure that Australians are not unfairly penalised for genuine unintended errors when making superannuation contributions. If and when the budget and government debt are back under control we will revisit concessional superannuation contribution caps.

We will cut red tape and streamline employer superannuation reporting by implementing a superannuation clearing house through the Australian Taxation Office. We will review the regulatory barriers currently restricting the availability of relevant and appropriate income stream products for Australian retirees. And we will review the current mandated minimum payment levels for account based pensions to assess the adequacy and appropriateness in
light of current financial market conditions. That is a very comprehensive set of initiatives that we have previously announced. Of course the most important commitment that we have made so far is the commitment that was announced by our leader the other day, which is that a future coalition government will not make any unexpected detrimental changes to superannuation arrangements.

Yet the current Labor government—because they are desperate for more cash—are planning for more new taxes on Australia's super savers. Yet again there is talk about Labor increasing taxes on superannuation. Yet again this Labor government is short of cash. Yet again they are desperate for more. Yet again they have decided that hard-working families saving to achieve a self-funded retirement are an easy tax target. And yet again they are poised to create uncertainty for super savers by breaking a previous solemn promise. This time they plan to break their solemn 2010 promise that Labor—and I quote the Treasurer—would never remove tax-free superannuation payments for the over-60s, a commitment as emphatic as their other famous broken promise that there will be no carbon tax under a government led by Julia Gillard. In fact, this super promise was so explicit that the Henry tax review was formally prevented from considering a proposal to tax those payments.

The reason Labor want to break yet another superannuation related promise is that they are short of cash. Over the past five years Labor have spent too much. Over the past four budgets they have spent $172 billion more than they raised in revenue, and they have already made a further $120 billion in unfunded promises so far. If despite previous promises to the contrary Labor decide to proceed with yet another tax increase targeting Australian super savers to plug the Treasurer's various budget black holes, this must be put to the Australian people at the election before it is legislated by the parliament. Super savers across Australia deserve the opportunity to pass judgement on yet another Labor Party tax increase targeting superannuation, before it is enshrined in legislation.

Australians doing the right thing by saving for their retirement deserve certainty and stability in the rules and tax arrangements governing superannuation. Labor spin doctors are already working flat out behind the scenes to pre-emptively demonise those Australians the Gillard government is about to hit with massive additional taxes. It is exactly the same modus operandi as on previous tax-grabbing occasions. For example, when the Treasurer increased the luxury car tax, he suggested that he was only targeting the very rich: Australia's Maserati and Ferrari drivers, he said. However, since then, the increased revenue from the luxury car tax has overwhelmingly come from families buying a new family station wagon, or the like.

This time Labor's class warfare targets are those Australians saving to get themselves into a position where they can look after their own retirement needs and not be a burden on the public purse. Those super savers are doing the right thing, yet Labor's propaganda unit, in preparing the ground for increased super taxes, is branding them as rich, quasi-tax dodgers supposedly taking advantage of inappropriate and costly perks to avoid paying their fair share of tax. The reality, as always with Labor, is very different.

Firstly, any increased taxes on super will not predominantly hurt the rich and the wealthy. Superannuation is not the main retirement savings vehicle for the rich and very wealthy. It is, however, the main
savings vehicle for Australia's hard-working aspirational middle class trying to save enough for their retirement. Any increased taxes on super will be fairly and squarely targeted at them. Constantly changing the goalposts for people who have done the right thing by planning and sacrificing to save for their retirement will further undermine their confidence in the system. Younger people in particular will be more reluctant to lock up more of their money in super if they cannot have confidence in the stability of the rules.

Secondly, the lower 15 per cent rate of tax for income directed into superannuation is not a perk. It is a deliberate incentive to encourage people to save more voluntarily for their retirement during their working life.

Thirdly, only super contributions of up to $25,000 attract the lower 15 per cent rate of tax. Already under this government, any super savings above $25,000 a year—including compulsory super—is taxed at the top marginal tax rate of 46.5 per cent. This is irrespective of the lower tax rate an individual taxpayer may pay on income taken, pre-retirement, as take-home pay. It is simply not true that every Australian who puts $25,000 or more into super in a particular year is rich. We know that many Australians play catch-up with super by contributing additional larger amounts on top of their compulsory super after years of being unable to do so at all, such as when caring for their children or paying off their mortgage. In fact, so called non-concessional super contributions come from previously taxed take-home pay—previously taxed income—with anyone contributing more than the allowable $150,000 per year, or $450,000 over the three years, at risk of an overall tax hit of up to 93 per cent.

Fourthly, to qualify for the lower rate of tax, super savers are required to lock their money away, letting it earn investment income so that it is available in retirement. For this to work, there has to be a firm understanding between the saver and the government that Canberra will not play with people's locked away savings every time the federal budget is under threat. Why would anyone agree to lock any of their income away in superannuation, as opposed to taking it home now, if they are taxed on it at the top marginal rate anyway and will not have access to it for 20, 30 or 40 years?

Finally, why would the government think it is right to impose a further tax on taking money out of superannuation in retirement? Money invested anywhere else, say in a bank account, is not taxed when you make a withdrawal. Why would super be any different, particularly given that super is already taxed on the way in and on the money earned while locked up in the system? Labor's plan to increase taxes on superannuation will seriously undermine confidence in the system and severely weaken our retirement framework.

The Gillard government again have not thought this through. Blinded by their desperate need for cash, they have been cutting corners and those mooted super tax increases come, as I have mentioned, on top of more than $8 billion in previous tax increases on superannuation under this government already, including at the expense of low-income earners. Let me stress that again: including at the expense of low-income earners, despite promises in the lead-up to the 2007 election that there would be no changes to superannuation arrangements. After promising in 2007 that Labor would not make any change to superannuation, not one jot, not one tittle, they proceeded over the last five years to cut the government's super co-contribution for low-income earners by $1,000, even though they said before the election they would not. That is exactly what will happen again.
Let us be very clear: while Labor's rhetoric before the coming election will focus on increased super taxes on the rich, after the election any re-elected Labor government would do what they have done before and again target both low- and middle-income earners with additional taxes on superannuation. They will vehemently deny it before the election but after the election a re-elected Labor government would scrap the low-income earners super tax offset, for example. It is one of the measures supposedly funded by the mining tax, which has not raised any meaningful revenue. Labor cannot afford it and nobody can trust any promise to the contrary from Mr Swan or Mr Shorten. In 2007 Mr Swan promised no changes to superannuation and, as I have mentioned, since then he has repeatedly reduced the government's super co-contributions for low-income earners saving for their retirement by $1,000, down from the $1,500 under the Howard government to $500 now. In 2010 Mr Swan promised that Labor would never remove tax-free superannuation payments for the over-60s, and now that is exactly what they are about to do. Then we had the no carbon tax promise in 2010, and we know what happened to that. How can anyone believe any promise that this Labor Party makes this side of the election when again and again they promise one thing before the election and do the exact opposite after the election.

There is a better way. The coalition believes that Australian families doing the right thing by saving for their retirement deserve certainty and stability in superannuation so they can plan their future retirement with confidence. That is why we have made a commitment that an Abbott-led coalition government would not make any unexpected detrimental changes to superannuation. So I say it again. On 14 September Australian super savers will have a clear choice and Australian super savers deserve the opportunity to pass judgement on 14 September on any proposal by this Labor government to increase taxes on their super savings yet again. They should be given the opportunity to pass judgement on any further proposal to increase taxes on super savings yet again before any such proposal is enshrined in legislation.

So I call on the government, given that they are planning to break a previous solemn and firm commitment not to increase taxes on superannuation, to give the people the opportunity to pass judgement at the election. If Labor thinks it is such a good idea to increase taxes on Australians' super savings, put it to the vote of the people. Let people pass judgement before we vote on it in this chamber. People across Australia have reason to be really sick and tired of the constant chopping and changing, the constant increases in taxes that have been imposed on their super savings over the last five years. With those few words I do hope that people across Australia will reflect very carefully about the choice that they will have in front of them on 14 September.

Senate adjourned at 21:35

DOCUMENTS
Tabling
The following documents were tabled by the Clerk:

[Legislative instruments are identified by a Federal Register of Legislative Instruments (FRLI) number. An explanatory statement is tabled with an instrument unless otherwise indicated by an asterisk.]


Aged Care Act—
Classification Amendment Principles 2012 [F2012L02298].
Classification Amendment Principles 2013 (No. 1) [F2013L00074].
Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act—Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Rules Amendment Instrument 2012 (No. 5) [F2012L02563].
Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2008-2009, Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2009-2010, Appropriation Act (No. 3) 2009-2010, Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2010-2011, Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2010-2011, Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2011-2012 and Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2012-2013—Determination to Reduce Appropriations (No. 3 of 2012-2013) [F2012L02320].
Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2010-2011—Determination to Reduce Appropriations Upon Request (No. 2 of 2012-2013) [F2013L00035].
Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act and Remunerations Tribunal Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 285—Australian Broadcasting Corporation (Election of Staff-elected Director) Regulation 2012 [F2012L02400].
Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act—
National Capital Plan – Amendment 74 – Section 5 Campbell [F2012L02324].
National Capital Plan – Amendment 75 – Australian Defence Force Academy and Royal Military College Duntroon Master Plan [F2013L00036].
National Capital Plan – Amendment 76 – Policy 4.4(d) for Urban Areas [F2012L02325].
Australian Civilian Corps Act—Prime Minister's Australian Civilian Corps Directions 2012 [F2012L02492].
Australian Communications and Media Authority Act—
Australian Communications and Media Authority (Allocation Procedures – Reserve Prices) Direction No. 2 of 2012 [F2012L02472].
Radiocommunications (Interpretation) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02304].
Australian National Registry of Emissions Units Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 288—Australian National Registry of Emissions Units Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 3) [F2012L02443].
Australian National University Act—
Chancellorship Statute 2012 [F2012L02480].
Fees Statute 2006—Tuition Fees Order 2013 [F2013L00060].
Australian Prudential Regulation Authority Act—Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (Confidentiality) Determinations Nos—
22 of 2012—Information provided by life insurers and friendly societies under Reporting Standard LRS 100.0, LRS 120.0, LRS 210.0, LRS 300.0, LRS 310.0, LRS 330.0, LRS 340.0, LRS 400.0, LRS 420.0 and LRS 430.0 [F2012L02336].
23 of 2012—Information provided by life insurers and friendly societies under Reporting Standard LRS 100.0, LRS 120.0, LRS 210.0, LRS 300.0, LRS 310.0, LRS 330.0, LRS 340.0,
LRS 400.0, LRS 420.0 and LRS 430.0 [F2012L02373].

24 of 2012—Information provided by general insurers under Reporting Standard GRS 110.0 (2002), GRS 120.0 (2002), GRS 300.0 (2002), GRS 310.0 (2002), GRS 310.3 (2002), GRS 320.0 (2002), GRS 400.0 (2002), GRS 110.0 (2005), GRS 120.0 (2005), GRS 300.0 (2005), GRS 310.0 (2005), GRS 310.3 (2005), GRS 320.0 (2005), GRS 400.0 (2005), GRS 110.0 (2007), GRS 120.0 (2007), GRS 300.0 (2007), GRS 310.0 (2007), GRS 310.3 (2007), GRS 320.0 (2007), GRS 400.0 (2007), GRS 320.0 (2008), GRS 420.0 (2008), GRS 300.0 (2008), GRS 120.0 (2008), GRS 300.0 (2008), GRS 310.0 (2008), GRS 310.3 (2008), GRS 310.0 (2009), GRS 400.0 (2009), GRS 110.0 (2010), GRS 120.0 (2010), GRS 300.0 (2010), GRS 310.0 (2010), GRS 400.0 (2010) [F2012L02351].

26 of 2012—Certain information provided by specified entities under Reporting Standard SRS 100.0 [F2012L02526].

27 of 2012—Information provided by trustees under Reporting Standard SRS 200.0, SRS 210.0, SRS 210.1, SRS 230.0, SRS 240.0 and SRS 250.0 [F2012L02528].

28 of 2012—Information provided by locally-incorporated banks and foreign ADIs under Reporting Standard ARS 320.0 [F2012L02536].

29 of 2012—Information provided by Authorised Deposit-taking Institutions under Reporting Standard ARS 231.1a, ARS 231.1b, ARS 231.2, ARS 231.3a and ARS 231.3b [F2012L02538].

1 of 2013—Information provided by locally-incorporated banks and foreign ADIs under Reporting Standard ARS 320.0 [F2013L00115].

Australian Research Council Act—
Australian Laureate Fellowships Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2013 [F2012L02524].

Discovery Projects Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2014 [F2013L00009].

Future Fellowships Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2013 [F2012L02529].

Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 307—Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02385].

Aviation Transport Security Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 304—Aviation Transport Security Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 6) [F2012L02424].

Banking Act—Banking (Prudential Standard) Determinations Nos—
2 of 2012—Prudential Standard APS 001 Definitions [F2012L02328].
10 of 2012—Prudential Standard APS 117 Capital Adequacy: Interest Rate Risk in the Banking Book (Advanced ADIs) [F2012L02334].
12 of 2012—Prudential Standard APS 220 Credit Quality [F2012L02345].
16 of 2012—Prudential Standard APS 330

17 of 2012—Prudential Standard APS 610
Prudential Requirements for Providers of Purchased Payment Facilities [F2012L02346].

Banking Act and First Home Saver Accounts Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 319—Banking Sector Legislation Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02397].

Banking Act, Insurance Act and Life Insurance (Prudential Standard) Determinations Nos—
4 of 2012—Prudential Standard CPS 520 Fit and Proper [F2012L02445].

Broadcasting Services Act—
Broadcasting Services (Digital-Only Local Market Areas for the Remote Central and Eastern Australia TV1, Remote Central and Eastern Australia TV2, Remote and Regional WA TV1 and Western Zone TV1 Licence Areas) Determination (No. 1) 2013 [F2013L00056].

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Amendment No. 14 of 2012 [F2012L02322].
Amendment No. 15 of 2012 [F2013L00002].

Broadcasting Services (Regional Commercial Radio – Specification of Periods for Subsections 43C(1A) and 61CD(2)) Instrument 2012 [F2012L02471].

Television Licence Area Plan (Adelaide) 2012 [F2012L02437].
Television Licence Area Plan (Brisbane) 2012 [F2012L02495].
Television Licence Area Plan (Melbourne) 2012 [F2012L02431].
Television Licence Area Plan (Mildura/Sunraysia) 2012 [F2012L02447].

Television Licence Area Plan (Northern New South Wales) 2012 [F2012L02537].
Television Licence Area Plan (Perth) 2012 [F2012L02394].
Television Licence Area Plan (Regional Queensland) 2012 [F2012L02530].
Television Licence Area Plan (Regional Victoria) 2012 [F2012L02454].
Television Licence Area Plan (Southern New South Wales) 2012 [F2012L02457].
Television Licence Area Plan (Sydney) 2012 [F2012L02396].
Television Licence Area Plan (Tasmania) 2012 [F2012L02455].
Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act—
Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) (Destruction of Methane Generated from Dairy Manure in Covered Anaerobic Ponds) Methodology Determination 2012 [F2012L02571].


Civil Aviation Act—
Civil Aviation Regulations—
Civil Aviation Order 20.18 Amendment Instrument 2012 (No. 2) [F2012L02556].
Civil Aviation Order 20.18 Amendment Instrument 2013 (No. 1) [F2013L00070].

Instruments Nos CASA—
388/12—Permission – radiocommunication systems – Lloyd Helicopters Pty Ltd [F2012L02352].
390/12—Instructions – GNSS primary means navigation (B737 NG aircraft) [F2012L02428].

398/12—Direction – number of cabin attendants (Virgin Australia International Airlines) [F2012L02449].

Civil Aviation Safety Regulations—
Airworthiness Directives—
AD/CESSNA 400/119—Airframe Life Limitation [F2013L00104].
AD/EC 135/10 Amgt 1—Main Rotor – Sliding Sleeve [F2012L02319].
AD/TPE 331/63 Amgt 2—Fuel Control Unit Drive Spline [F2012L02317].

Instruments Nos CASA—
EX172/12—Exemption – minimum height and lateral separation for operations [F2012L02294].
EX175/12—Exemption – side-facing seats on aircraft not occupied for take-off or landing [F2012L02288].
EX176/12—Exemption – recency requirements for night flying (National Jet Express Pty Ltd) [F2012L02296].
EX177/12—Exemption – from flight simulator user approval [F2012L02323].
EX179/12—Exemption – minimum height and lateral separation for operations [F2012L02297].
EX180/12—Exemption – maintenance on limited category and experimental aircraft [F2013L00096].
EX181/12—Exemption – CASR Part 99 DAMP requirements for CAR 30 or Part 145 organisations overseas [F2012L02302].
EX184/12—Exemption – from standard take-off minima – Virgin Australia International Airlines [F2012L02425].
EX185/12—Exemption – carriage of children suffering from a serious medical condition [F2012L02426].
EX186/12—Exemption – Virgin Australia International Airlines from subregulation 217(2) of CAR 1988 and paragraph 3.3 of CAO 82.5 [F2012L02427].
EX190/12—Exemption – from standard take-off and landing minima – AirAsia X SDN. BHD [F2013L00003].
EX191/12—Exemption – solo flight training using ultralight aeroplanes registered with Recreational Aviation Australia Incorporated at Jandakot Aerodrome [F2012L02521].
EX193/12—Exemption – operations by paragliders in the Corryong Open and hanggliders in the Corryong Cup [F2013L02520].
EX194/12—Exemption – operations by hanggliders in the Forbes Flatlands Hang Gliding Championships 2012-2013 [F2012L02527].
EX01/13—Exemption – recency requirements for night flying (Alliance Airlines Pty Limited) [F2013L00114].
EX02/13—Exemption – use of ADS-B in aircraft operated by Hi Fly, Lisbon, Portugal [F2013L00066].
EX03/13—Exemption – recency requirements for night flying for F100 aircraft (Network Aviation Pty Ltd) [F2013L00068].
EX04/13—Exemption – recency requirements for night flying for Embraer 120 aircraft (Network Aviation Pty Ltd) [F2013L00069].
EX05/13—Exemption – use of ADS B for the provision of air traffic services [F2013L00061].
EX06/13—Exemption – for cabin crew member to use passenger seat [F2013L00103].
Revocation of Airworthiness Directives—
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025/12 [F2013L00005].
001/13 [F2013L00063].
002/13 [F2013L00106].

Clean Energy Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 289—Clean Energy Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 7) [F2012L02384].

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Commissioner of Taxation—Public Rulings—
Class Rulings—
CR 2013/1-CR 2013/10.
Erratum—CR 2012/98.
Goods and Services Tax Determination GSTD 2012/11.
Goods and Services Tax Industry Issues—
Notices of Withdrawal, dated 19 December 2012 [5].
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GSTD 2012/5-GSTD 2012/7.
Taxation Determinations—
TD 2013/1 and TD 2013/2.
Taxation Rulings—
Addenda—TR 93/35 and TR 93/37.
TR 2013/1.
Commonwealth Places (Mirror Taxes) Act—
Corporations Act—
Accounting Standards—
AASB 2012-9—Amendment to AASB 1048 arising from the Withdrawal of Australian Interpretation 1039 [F2013L00073].
AASB 2012-10—Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards—Transition Guidance and Other Amendments [F2013L00080].
AASB 2012-11—Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards—Reduced Disclosure Requirements and Other Amendments [F2013L00075].
ASIC Class Orders—
[CO 12/1592] [F2012L02299].
[CO 12/1712] [F2012L02579].
[CO 13/19] [F2013L00044].
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Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 308—
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Crimes Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 274—Crimes Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 3) [F2012L02379].
Crimes (Overseas) Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 275—Crimes (Overseas) (Declared Foreign Countries) Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02357].
Currency Act—
Currency Legislation (Royal Australian Mint) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 2) [F2013L00058].
Currency (Perth Mint) Determination 2013 (No. 1) [F2013L00065].
Currency (Royal Australian Mint) Determination 2012 (No. 6) [F2013L00053].
Customs Act—
Defence and Strategic Goods List Amendment 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02318].
Select Legislative Instruments 2012 Nos—
276—Customs Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 9) [F2012L02382].
327—Customs Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 10) [F2012L02416].
Customs Act and Customs Administration Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 320—Customs Legislation Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 2) [F2012L02371].

Defence Act—
Determinations under section 58B—Defence Determinations—
2012/68—Reserve employer support payments.
2012/69—Post indexes—price review.
2012/70—Benchmark schools and approved club—amendment.
2012/71—Reserve member attending for duty in special circumstances—amendment.
2012/72—Increment advancement—amendment.
2013/1—Legal officer specialist officer career structure—amendment.
2013/2—Salary non-reduction—amendment.
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11 of 2012—Legal Officer Salaries—Specialist Officers—Amendment.
12 of 2012—Officer Aviation Remuneration Structure Allowance.
13 of 2012—Salaries—Naval Imagery Specialist—Amendment.
14 of 2012—Salaries—Senior Officer Specialist Medical Officer—Amendment.
15 of 2012—Salaries—Air Intelligence Analyst.

Education Services for Overseas Students (TPS Levis) Act—Education Services for Overseas Students (TPS Levis) (Risk Rated Premium and Special Tuition Protection Components) Determination 2012 [F2012L02575].

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act—
Amendments of lists of—
Exempt native specimens—
EPBC303DC/SFS/2012/22 [F2013L00007].
EPBC303DC/SFS/2012/59 [F2012L02392].
EPBC303DC/SFS/2012/64 [F2012L02433].
EPBC303DC/SFS/2012/65 [F2012L02436].
EPBC303DC/SFS/2012/66 [F2012L02389].
EPBC303DC/SFS/2012/67 [F2013L00008].
EPBC303DC/SFS/2013/02 [F2013L00090].
EPBC303DC/SFS/2013/03 [F2013L00089].
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Specimens taken to be suitable for live import—
EPBC/s.303EC/SSLI/Amend/056 [F2012L02312].
EPBC/s.303EC/SSLI/Amend/057 [F2013L00105].

Heritage theme for prioritising nominations for assessment for the National Heritage List for the assessment period commencing 1 July 2013 [F2013L00001].

Threat Abatement Plan to reduce the impacts on northern Australia’s biodiversity by the five listed grasses [F2012L02359].

Excise Act—Excise (Volume—residual oil) Determination 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02350].


Fair Work Act—
Fair Work (State Declarations—employer not to be national system employer) Endorsement 2012 (No. 3) [F2012L02568].

Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 323—Fair Work Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 3) [F2012L02402].

Fair Work Act and Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 322—Fair Work Legislation...
Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 2) [F2012L02409].


Family Law Act—Select Legislative Instruments 2012 Nos—

278—Family Law Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 4) [F2012L02391].
331—Family Law Amendment Rules 2012 (No. 2) [F2012L02577].


Federal Court of Australia Act and Federal Magistrates Court Regulation 2012 [F2012L02411].

Federal Financial Relations Act—

Federal Financial Relations (General purpose financial assistance) Determination No. 44 (November 2012) [F2012L02531].

Federal Financial Relations (National Partnership payments) Determinations—

No. 56 (November 2012) [F2012L02534].
No. 57 (December 2012) [F2013L00042].

Financial Management and Accountability Act—


Financial Management and Accountability Determinations—

2012/31 – Section 32 (Transfer of Functions from DIISRTE to ASQA & TEQSA) [F2012L02506].

2012/33 – Section 32 (Transfer of Functions from DEEWR to DIISRTE) [F2012L02421].

Notice under section 39A—NBN Co Limited.

Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 328—Financial Management and Accountability Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 9) [F2012L02387].

Financial Sector (Collection of Data) Act—Financial Sector (Collection of Data) (Reporting Standard) Determinations Nos—

5 of 2012—Reporting Standard ARS 110.0 Capital Adequacy [F2012L02483].
6 of 2012—Reporting Standard ARS 111.0 Fair Values [F2012L02485].
7 of 2012—Reporting Standard ARS 112.1 Standardised Credit Risk – On-balance Sheet Assets [F2012L02486].
11 of 2012—Reporting Standard ARS 117.0 Repricing Analysis [F2012L02490].
12 of 2012—Reporting Standard ARS 120.0 Standardised Approach – Securitisation [F2012L02489].
1 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 001 Reporting Requirements [F2013L00076].
2 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 110.1 Prescribed Capital Amount [F2013L00077].
3 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 112.0 Determination of Capital Base [F2013L00081].
7 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 114.2 Derivatives Activity [F2013L00082].
9 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 114.4 Details of Investment Assets [F2013L00091].
10 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 115.0 Outstanding Claims Liabilities – Insurance Risk Charge [F2013L00109].
17 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 310.0 Income Statement [F2013L00078].
21 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 110.1 Prescribed Capital Amount (Level 2 Insurance Group) [F2013L00092].
22 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 112.0 G Determination of Capital Base (Level 2 Insurance Group) [F2013L00093].
29 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 112.3_G Related Party Exposures (Level 2 Insurance Group) [F2013L00094].
32 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 114.3_G Off-balance Sheet Business (Level 2 Insurance Group) [F2013L00095].
33 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 115.0_G Outstanding Claims Liabilities – Insurance Risk Charge (Level 2 Insurance Group) [F2013L00097].
36 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 117.0_G Asset Concentration Risk Charge (Level 2 Insurance Group) [F2013L00099].
39 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 302.0_G Statement of Financial Position by Region (Level 2 Insurance Group) [F2013L00101].
40 of 2013—Reporting Standard GRS 310.0_G Income Statement (Level 2 Insurance Group) [F2013L00102].
43 of 2013—Reporting Standard LRS 110.1 Prescribed Capital Amount [F2013L00113].
57 of 2013—Reporting Standard LRS 400.0 Statement of Policy Liabilities [F2013L00111].
Fisheries Levy Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 273—Fisheries Levy (Torres Strait Prawn Fishery) Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02355].
Fisheries Management Act—
Southern Squid Jig Fishery Total Allowable Effort Determination 2012 [F2012L02337].
Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act—
Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code—Standards—
1.2.7 – Nutrition, Health and Related Claims [F2013L00054].
1.2.11 – Country of Origin Labelling [F2013L00051].
1.4.2 – Maximum Residue Limits Amendment Instrument No. APVMA 11, 2012 [F2012L02303].
1.4.2 – Maximum Residue Limits Amendment Instrument No. APVMA 12, 2012 [F2012L02525].
1.4.2 – Maximum Residue Limits Amendment Instrument No. APVMA 1, 2013 [F2013L00048].
Food Standards (Proposal M1008 – Maximum Residue Limits (2012)) Variation [F2013L00047].
Food Standards (Proposal P293 – Nutrition, Health & Related Claims – Consequential) Variation [F2013L00050].
Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act—
Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 309—
Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02410].

Foreign Evidence Amendment Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 281—Foreign Evidence (Application of Amendments) Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02390].

Health Insurance Act—

Health Insurance (Allied Health Services) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 5) [F2012L02493].

Health Insurance (Diabetes Testing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Sites) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02513].

Health Insurance (Diagnostic Imaging Capital Sensitivity) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 3) [F2012L02510].

Health Insurance (Midwife and Nurse Practitioner) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 2) [F2012L02507].

Health Insurance (Pathologist-determinable Services) Amendment Determination 2012 [F2012L02532].


Select Legislative Instruments 2012 Nos—

293—Health Insurance Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 3) [F2012L02368].

294—Health Insurance Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 4) [F2012L02372].

295—Health Insurance (Diagnostic Imaging Services Table) Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02399].

296—Health Insurance (General Medical Services Table) Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 5) [F2012L02406].

297—Health Insurance (Pathology Services Table) Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 4) [F2012L02413].

298—Health Insurance (Professional Services Review) Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 2) [F2012L02370].

Higher Education Support Act—

Commonwealth Grant Scheme Guidelines 2012 [F2012L02442].

Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2012 [F2012L02535].


Higher Education Provider Approvals Nos—

13 of 2012—TAFE SA [F2012L02310].

14 of 2012—John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, Melbourne [F2012L02517].

List of Grants under Division 41, dated 3 December 2012 [F2012L02514].

Other Grants Guidelines (Education) 2012—Amendment No. 1 [F2012L02587].

Revocation of Approval as a Higher Education Provider—Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills (SA) [F2012L02314].

VET Guidelines [F2012L02569].

VET Provider Approvals Nos—


26 of 2012—Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney [F2012L02306].

27 of 2012—Australasian Academy of Cosmetic Dermal Science Pty Ltd [F2012L02516].


1 of 2013—Australian Wings Academy Pty Ltd [F2013L00032].

2 of 2013—Tabor College Incorporated [F2013L00055].

3 of 2013—The Bremer Institute of TAFE [F2013L00064].

Horticulture Marketing and Research and Development Services Act—Horticulture Marketing and Research and Development Services Export Orders Revocation Order 2013 [F2013L00028].


Insurance Act—Insurance (Prudential Standard) Determinations Nos—
1 of 2012—Prudential Standard GPS 001 Definitions [F2012L02349].
12 of 2012—Prudential Standard GPS 310 Audit and Related Matters [F2012L02369].

Judiciary Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 282—High Court of Australia (Fees) Regulation 2012 [F2012L02393].

Legislative Instruments Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 283—Legislative Instruments Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 2) [F2012L02376].

Life Insurance Act—
Life Insurance (Prudential Standard) Determinations Nos—
1 of 2012—Prudential Standard LPS 001 Definitions [F2012L02461].

15 of 2012—Prudential Standard LPS 600 Statutory Funds [F2012L02481].


Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 311—Life Insurance Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02401].

Migration Act—

Migration Regulations—Instruments IMMI—

12/076—Payment of visa application charges and fees in foreign currencies [F2012L02452].

12/076—Payment of visa application charges and fees in foreign currencies amendment instrument [F2013L00054].

12/077—Places and currencies for paying of fees [F2012L02456].

12/127—Class of persons [F2012L02566].

12/131—Travel agents for PRC citizens applying for tourist visas [F2012L02453].

12/132—Specified place [F2012L02578].

12/134—Payment of visa application charges and fees in foreign currencies [F2012L02580].

12/135—Places and currencies for paying of fees [F2012L02586].

Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 301—Migration Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 8) [F2012L02381].

Statements for period 1 July to 31 December 2012 under section 33 [2].

Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act—Instruments Nos MRCC—


Motor Vehicle Standards Act—

Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 305—Motor Vehicle Standards Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02377].

Vehicle Standard (Australian Design Rule 80/03 – Emission Control for Heavy Vehicles) 2006 Amendment 2 [F2013L00034].

Mutual Assistance in Business Regulation Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 312—Mutual Assistance in Business Regulation Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02432].

National Consumer Credit Protection Act—

ASIC Class Order [CO 13/18] [F2013L00043].

Select Legislative Instruments 2012 Nos—

313—National Consumer Credit Protection Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 3) [F2012L02415].

314—National Consumer Credit Protection Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 4) [F2012L02429].


National Health Act—

Instruments Nos PB—

93 of 2012—National Health (Listing of Pharmaceutical Benefits) Amendment Instrument 2012 (No. 8) [F2012L02291].
94 of 2012—National Health (Price and Special Patient Contribution) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 7) [F2012L02284].

95 of 2012—Amendment determination under paragraph 98C(1)(b) of the National Health Act 1953 [F2012L02287].

97 of 2012—National Health (Efficient Funding of Chemotherapy) Special Arrangement Amendment Instrument 2012 (No. 9) [F2012L02290].

99 of 2012—National Health (Listed drugs on F1 or F2) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 8) [F2012L02282].

100 of 2012—National Health (Prescriber bag supplies) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02289].

103 of 2012—Amendment Determination under section 84AH of the National Health Act 1953 (2012) (No. 3) [F2012L02285].

104 of 2012—Amendment determination—pharmaceutical benefits—early supply [F2012L02292].


106 of 2012—National Health (Highly specialised drugs program for hospitals) Special Arrangement Amendment Instrument 2012 (No. 10) [F2012L02286].


108 of 2012—National Health (Listing of Pharmaceutical Benefits) Amendment Instrument 2012 (No. 9) [F2012L02512].

109 of 2012—National Health (Price and Special Patient Contribution) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 8) [F2012L02511].

110 of 2012—National Health (Highly specialised drugs program for hospitals) Special Arrangement Amendment Instrument 2012 (No. 11) [F2012L02508].

112 of 2012—National Health (Concession card or entitlement card fee) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02500].

1 of 2013—National Health (Listing of Pharmaceutical Benefits) Amendment Instrument 2013 (No. 1) [F2013L00039].

2 of 2013—National Health (Price and Special Patient Contribution) Amendment Determination 2013 (No. 1) [F2013L00040].

3 of 2013—National Health (Efficient Funding of Chemotherapy) Special Arrangement Amendment Instrument 2013 (No. 1) [F2013L00046].

4 of 2013—National Health (Listing of Pharmaceutical Benefits) Amendment Instrument 2013 (No. 2) [F2013L00072].

5 of 2013—Amendment determination under paragraph 98C(1)(b) of the National Health Act 1953 [F2013L00071].

National Health (Immunisation Program—Designated Vaccines) Variation Determination 2012 (No. 3) [F2012L00031].

Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 299—National Health (Pharmaceutical Benefits) Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 5) [F2012L02388].

National Health Reform Act—Ministerial Direction to the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority on the Performance of its Functions (No. 1 of 2012) [F2012L02518].

National Measurement Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 302—National Trade Measurement Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02420].

National Rental Affordability Scheme Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 300—National Rental Affordability Scheme Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02444].

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act—ASQA Authorised Officer Requirements 2012 [F2012L02326].

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Charges) Act—National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Charges) Determination 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02582].

Native Title Act—Native Title (Assistance from Attorney-General) Guideline 2012 [F2012L02564].
Navigation Act—Marine Orders Nos—


Nuclear Non-Proliferation (Safeguards) Act—
Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 292—
Nuclear Non-Proliferation (Safeguards) Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02423].

Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 306—
Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Regulatory Levies) Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02494].

Paid Parental Leave Act—Paid Parental Leave Amendment Rules 2012 (No. 2) [F2012L02576].

Parliamentary Entitlements Act—
Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations—
Advice of decision to pay assistance under Part 3, dated 14 December 2012.

Parliamentary Entitlements (Supplement of Capped Entitlements) Determination 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02479].

Parliamentary Superannuation Act—
Parliamentary Superannuation (Default Fund) Declaration 2012 [F2012L02560].

Payment Systems (Regulation) Act—
Interchange Fees in the EFTPOS System [F2013L00038].

Revocation of the Standard on Interchange Fees for the EFTPOS System Designated in Designation No. 2 of 2004 [F2013L00037].

Variation to Standards Relating to Merchant Surcharging [F2012L02273].


Primary Industries (Customs) Charges Act—
Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 324—
Primary Industries (Customs) Charges Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 2) [F2012L02353].

Primary Industries Levies and Charges Collection Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 325—Primary Industries Levies and Charges Collection Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02354].

Private Health Insurance Act—
Private Health Insurance (Accreditation) Amendment Rules 2012 (No. 2) [F2013L00004].

Private Health Insurance (Benefit Requirements) Amendment Rules 2012 (No. 9) [F2012L02502].

Private Health Insurance (Benefit Requirements) Amendment Rules 2012 (No. 10) [F2013L00003].

Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act—Marine Order No. 1 of 2013—
Marine Order 95 (Marine pollution prevention – garbage) 2013 [F2013L00059].

Public Service Act—Public Service Classification Rules Amendment Instrument 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02311].

Radiocommunications Act—
Australian Radiofrequency Spectrum Plan 2013 [F2012L02523].


Radiocommunications (Compliance Labelling – Electromagnetic Radiation) Amendment Notice 2013 (No. 1) [F2013L00086].

Radiocommunications Devices (Compliance Labelling) Amendment Notice 2013 (No. 1) [F2013L00085].

Radiocommunications (Field Trial by Corrective Services NSW of PMTS Jamming Devices at Lithgow Correctional Centre) Exemption Determination 2012 [F2012L02561].

Radiocommunications (Electromagnetic Compatibility) Amendment Notice 2013 (No. 1) [F2013L00084].

Radiocommunications Licence Conditions (Amateur Licence) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02574].

Radiocommunications (Overseas Amateurs Visiting Australia) Class Licence Variation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02573].

Radiocommunications (Spectrum Access Charges – 1800 MHz Band) Determination 2012 (No. 1) [F2013L00010].

Radiocommunications (Spectrum Access Charges – 1800 MHz Band) Determination 2012 (No. 2) [F2013L00011].

Radiocommunications Spectrum Conversion Plan (2.5 GHz Mid-band Gap) 2012 [F2012L02542].

Radiocommunications (Spectrum Licence Allocation—Combinatorial Clock Auction) Determination 2012 [F2012L02548].

Radiocommunications (Spectrum Licence Limits) Direction No. 1 of 2012 (Amendment No. 1 of 2012) [F2012L02470].

Radiocommunications (Spectrum Licence Limits) Direction No. 2 of 2012 (Amendment No. 1 of 2012) [F2012L02473].

Radiocommunications Spectrum Marketing Plan (2.5 GHz Band) 2012 [F2012L02552].

Radiocommunications Spectrum Marketing Plan (700 MHz Band) 2012 [F2012L02547].

Radiocommunications (Unacceptable Levels of Interference – 2.5 GHz Band) Determination 2012 [F2012L02545].

Radiocommunications (Unacceptable Levels of Interference – 2.5 GHz Mid-band Gap) Determination 2012 [F2012L02553].

Radiocommunications (Unacceptable Levels of Interference – 700 MHz Band) Determination 2012 [F2012L02543].

Radiocommunications Act and Telecommunications Act—Protected Symbols Determination 2013 [F2013L00087].

Radiocommunications (Receiver Licence Tax) Act—Radiocommunications (Receiver Licence Tax) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 3) [F2013L00012].

Radiocommunications (Transmitter Licence Tax) Act—Radiocommunications (Transmitter Licence Tax) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 5) [F2013L00013].

Remuneration Tribunal Act—Determinations—

2012/24—Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Full-Time Public Office [F2012L02570].


2013/01—Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Public Office [F2013L00100].


Retirement Savings Accounts Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 315—Retirement Savings Accounts Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 3) [F2012L02403].


Social Security (Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment) Amendment Determination 2013 (No. 1) [F2013L00045].
Social Security (Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment) Determination 2013 (No. 1) [F2013L00029].

Social Security (Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment) Determination 2013 (No. 2) [F2013L00062].

Social Security (South Australian 'Individualised Funding') (DEEWR) Determination 2012 (No. 1) [F2013L00030].

Social Security (South Australian 'Individualised Funding') (FaHCSIA) Determination 2013 [F2013L00116].


Student Assistance Act—Student Assistance (Education Institutions and Courses) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02588].

Superannuation Act 2005—Seventh Amending Deed to the Superannuation (PSSAP) Trust Deed [F2013L00027].


Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act—ASIC Class Order [CO 12/1687] [F2012L02497].

Select Legislative Instruments 2012 Nos—

316—Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 4) [F2012L02386].

317—Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 5) [F2012L02407].

330—Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 6) [F2012L02408].

Superannuation Data and Payments Standards 2012 [F2013L00041].


Superannuation (Productivity Benefit) Act—


Superannuation (Productivity Benefit) (Qualified Employees Exclusion) Declaration 2012 [F2013L00026].


Taxation Administration Act 1953—PAYG withholding—Notice of exemption from providing payment summaries to passbook account holders [F2012L02333].

Telecommunications Act—

Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 286—Telecommunications Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 2) [F2012L02374].

Telecommunications Labelling (Customer Equipment and Customer Cabling) Amendment Notice 2013 (No. 1) [F2013L00088].

Telecommunications Service Provider (Mobile Premium Services) Amendment Determination 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02458].


Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act—

Telecommunications (Interception and Access) (Emergency Service Facilities – Australian Capital Territory) Instrument 2012 (No. 2) [F2012L02591].

Telecommunications (Interception and Access) (Requirements for Authorisations, Notifications and Revocations) Amendment Determination 2012 [F2012L02348].

Television Licence Fees Act—Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 287—Television Licence Fees Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 2) [F2012L02375].

Therapeutic Goods Act—

Poisons Standard Amendment No. 5 of 2012 [F2012L02515].

Therapeutic Goods Information (Stakeholder Consultation on the System for Australian Recall Actions) Specification 2013 [F2013L00117].

Therapeutic Goods (Listing) Notice 2012 (No. 4) [F2013L00014].

Therapeutic Goods (Listing) Notice 2012 (No. 5) [F2013L00015].

Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act—

Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 303—Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Amendment of Act) Regulation 2012 [F2012L02422].

Veterans’ Entitlements Act—

Instruments Nos—


Statements of Principles concerning—

Adenocarcinoma of the Kidney No. 9 of 2013 [F2013L00024].

Adenocarcinoma of the Kidney No. 10 of 2013 [F2013L00025].

Ankylosing Spondylitis No. 3 of 2013 [F2013L00018].

Ankylosing Spondylitis No. 4 of 2013 [F2013L00019].

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome No. 7 of 2013 [F2013L00022].

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome No. 8 of 2013 [F2013L00023].

Inguinal Hernia No. 5 of 2013 [F2013L00020].

Inguinal Hernia No. 6 of 2013 [F2013L00021].

Malignant Neoplasm of the Oral Cavity, Oropharynx and Hypopharynx No. 1 of 2013 [F2013L00016].

Malignant Neoplasm of the Oral Cavity, Oropharynx and Hypopharynx No. 2 of 2013 [F2013L00017].

Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act—Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Determination 2013 [F2013L00067].

Work Health and Safety Act—

Select Legislative Instrument 2012 No. 291—Work Health and Safety Amendment Regulation 2012 (No. 1) [F2012L02438].


Work Health and Safety Codes of Practice 2012 [F2012L02522].

Governor-General's Proclamations—

Commencement of provisions of Acts—

Fair Work Amendment Act 2012—Schedules 3 to 8—1 January 2013 [F2012L02450].

Higher Education Support Amendment (Streamlining and Other Measures) Act 2012—Schedules 1, 3 and 4—1 January 2013 [F2012L02378].


Tabling

The following government documents were tabled:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner—Reports for 2012—

Native title.

Social justice.

Audio-Visual Copyright Society Limited (Screenrights)—Report for 2011-12.
Indexed Lists of Files
Tabling

The following documents were tabled pursuant to the order of the Senate of 30 May 1996, as amended:

- Indexed lists of departmental and agency files for the period 1 January to 31 December 2012—Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio.
- Department of Veterans' Affairs.
- Department of Finance and Deregulation—Consolidated financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2012.
- Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC)—Report for 2011-12.

Departmental and Agency Contracts
Tabling

The following document was tabled pursuant to the order of the Senate of 20 June 2001, as amended:

- Departmental and agency contracts for 2012—Letter of advice—Cancer Australia.

Departmental and Agency Appointments
Tabling

The following documents were tabled pursuant to the order of the Senate of 24 June 2008, as amended:

- Departmental and agency appointments and vacancies—Additional estimates—Letters of advice—
  Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio.
- Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio.
- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship.
- Department of Infrastructure and Transport.
- Department of Veterans' Affairs.
- Finance and Deregulation portfolio.
- Human Services portfolio.
Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio.
Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio.
Treasury portfolio.

**Departmental and Agency Grants**

Tabling

The following documents were tabled pursuant to the order of the Senate of 24 June 2008:

- Departmental and agency grants—Additional estimates—Letters of advice—
- Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio.
- Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy.
- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship.
- Department of Infrastructure and Transport.
- Department of Veterans' Affairs.
- Finance and Deregulation portfolio.
- Human Services portfolio.
- Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio.
- Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio.
- Treasury portfolio.
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions were circulated:

**Defence: Hospitality**
*(Question Nos 1609 to 1611)*

*Senator Johnston* asked Minister representing the Minister for Defence, upon notice, on 5 March 2012:

(1) For the period 1 July to 31 December 2011: (a) what was the hospitality spend for each agency within the responsibility of the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary; and (b) for each hospitality event, can the following details be provided: (i) the date, (ii) the location, (iii) the purpose, (iv) the cost, and (v) the number of attendees. (2) For the period 1 July to 31 December 2011, can details be provided of the total hospitality spend for the office of the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary. 1609 Minister representing the Minister for Defence 1610 Minister representing the Minister for Defence Materiel 1611 Minister representing the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel

*Senator Chris Evans:* The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

(1) (a) The Defence Portfolio’s total expenditure on Hospitality (excluding the Minister’s Office and minor Portfolio bodies), for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011 is $658,977. Details for each agency are shown on Table 1.

(b) Details of: date, location, purpose, cost (GST exclusive) and number of attendees of each event are provided at Table 2.

(2) Table 3 provides Hospitality spend for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011, for Minister for Defence, Minister for Defence Materiel and Minister for Defence Science and Personnel. Details provided include: date, location, purpose and cost (GST exclusive) of each event for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011.

**Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research**
*(Question No. 1738 supplementary)*

*Senator Abetz* asked the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, upon notice, on 22 March 2012:

(1) Can a list be provided of all office locations for each department or agency within the Minister's portfolio, detailing:

(a) the department or agency;

(b) the location;

(c) the size;

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**
(d) the number of staff at each location and their classification;
(e) if the office location is rented, the amount and breakdown of rent paid per square metre;
(f) if the location is owned by the department or agency, the:
   (i) value, and
   (ii) depreciation, of the building; and
(g) the type of functions and work undertaken.

(2) For each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, can details be provided of all public relations, communications and media staff, listed by department or agency, including:
   (a) the number of ongoing staff, specifying:
      (i) their classification,
      (ii) the type of work they undertake, and
      (iii) their location;
   (b) the number of non-ongoing staff, specifying:
      (i) their classification,
      (ii) the type of work they undertake, and
      (iii) their location; and
   (c) the number of contracted staff, specifying:
      (i) their classification,
      (ii) the type of work they undertake, and
      (iii) their location.

**Senator Chris Evans:** The supplementary answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

(2) (a) (i) (ii) (iii)

The following table includes revised figures for ongoing public relations, communications and media staffing as at 22 March 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Ongoing staff</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Type of work undertaken</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>DIISRTE</td>
<td>3.7 EL2</td>
<td>Media and communications</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4 PAO3</td>
<td>Media and communications</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.5 EL1</td>
<td>Media and communications</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 SPAO2</td>
<td>Media and communications</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 APS 6</td>
<td>Media and communications</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 PAO2</td>
<td>Media and communications</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 APS5</td>
<td>Media and communications</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 EL2</td>
<td>Media and communications</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 EL1</td>
<td>Communications and media activities including science engagement</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.1 APS6</td>
<td>Communication activities</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2011-12 Budget
(Question No. 1890)

Senator Abetz  asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, upon notice, on 19 June 2012:

With reference to the answer to Senate question on notice no. 1791, does the Treasury modelling rely on the same assumptions used to forecast the creation of half a million new jobs, as announced by the Government in the 2011-12 Federal Budget.

Senator Wong: The Treasurer has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

The Treasury modelling for the Strong growth, low pollution report incorporated projections updated from the 2010 Intergenerational Report and consistent with the 2011-12 Budget. The modelling showed that jobs continue to grow under carbon pricing, with employment increasing by 1.6 million jobs by 2020, with or without carbon pricing.

The employment forecast produced in the 2011-12 Budget was only for the period between March 2011 and June 2013, and will be updated in the usual way at subsequent estimate updates.

Anzac Centenary Advisory Board
(Question No. 1893)

Senator Ronaldson  asked the Minister representing the Minister for Veterans' Affairs upon notice on 19 June 2012.

(1) Will the Minister confirm that the Government has established a sub-committee of the Anzac Centenary Advisory Board, to seek and coordinate corporate sponsorship for the Anzac Centenary commemorations?

(2) Who are the members of the sub-committee and how often has it met?

(3) What fundraising target has the Government or the Advisory Board established for the sub-committee?

(4) Does the sub-committee have a series of projects it is requested to fund; if so, what are they?

(5) Has a request been made for the sub-committee to raise funds to offset the cost of commemoration activities in Australia or overseas; if so, for which activities and to what value?

Senator Bob Carr: The Minister for Veterans' Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

(1) On 9 February 2012, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Anzac Centenary, the Hon Warren Snowdon MP, announced the membership of the six Anzac Centenary Working Groups supporting the Board; including a Business Working Group

(2) Membership for all Working Groups may be found at www.anzaccentenary.gov.au. The Chair of the Business Group, Mr Lindsay Fox, indicated his preference to work autonomously in raising money and therefore the members of the original Business Group have now joined the Partnerships Committee which is responsive to the Anzac Centenary Advisory Board regarding partnerships for the Anzac Centenary Program.

This committee is chaired by Mrs Kathryn Greiner AO, and its membership includes the Hon Arch Bevis, RADM Davyd Thomas AO CSC RANR; BRIG Bill Rolfe AO (Ret'); Professor Christine Charles; Mr Sandy Hollway AO; Ms Gabrielle Trainor; Ms Catherine Harris AO PSM and Mr Steven Skala AO.
The committee met for the first time on 13 September 2012 in Sydney and met again on 2 November 2012.

(3) The Anzac Centenary Advisory Board has not determined a fundraising target and at this stage the committee is responsible for advising the Board on opportunities for business participation for the Centenary, including potential sponsorship, philanthropy, profit and non-profit ventures, and partnerships with Government.

(4) No.

(5) No.

**CrimTrac**

(Question No. 1937)

**Senator Ryan** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Home Affairs, upon notice, on 28 June 2012:

1) Is the CrimTrac Board of Management aware of Mr Murray Rankin's appointment as Chairman of Connexxion Business Solutions; if so: when was the Board informed, and did Mr Rankin himself inform the Board of the appointment; if not, were any board members personally aware of the appointment.

2) On what basis did the Board make the decision to award contract for management advisory services and temporary personnel services at a cost indicated in the multiple AusTender Contract Notices, totalling approximately $785,551, for the period September 2009 to November 2011.

3) Is Connexxion Business Solutions currently providing services to CrimTrac; if so, what is the total cost of all services provided, for the period 1 July 2009 to 26 June 2012.

4) Did the Board consider any alternative service providers prior to awarding contracts to Connexxion Business Solutions; if so, which businesses; it not, why not.

5) Is the Board considering further contracts between CrimTrac and Connexxion Business Solutions.

6) Was the CrimTrac Chief Executive Officer (CEO) aware of the appointment of Mr Rankin as Chairman when the contracts referred to above were awarded; if so, when was the current CEO informed, and did Mr Rankin himself inform the CEO of the appointment.

7) Is the Board or the CEO of CrimTrac aware of any: (a) business nexus between Connexxion Business Solutions and Projects Assured; (b) contracts in which Connexxion Business Solutions was contracted for services provided by Projects Assured; and (c) subcontractors contracted by Connexxion Business Solutions to conduct work for CrimTrac; if so, can the details relating to each instance be provided.

8) Do any CrimTrac Board members, including the CEO, have a nexus with, or hold an appointment to the Board of, any other company that has dealings with CrimTrac, which may give rise to a conflict of interest.

9) Can a list be provided detailing the number of contracts CrimTrac has entered into with Connexxion Business Solutions that were not advertised on AusTender, including: (a) the total cost of each contract; and (b) other specific relevant information, such as services provided.

10) Can details be provided of all contracts entered into between CrimTrac and Connexxion Business Solutions to date.

**Senator Ludwig:** The Minister for Home Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

The Minister has been advised that the matters referred to above have been considered by the AFP and Mr Rob Cornall AO and no misconduct or criminality has been identified. Governance issues
relating to CrimTrac are being addressed in a number of ways. First, the States, Territories and the Commonwealth are in the process of moving CrimTrac onto a statutory footing with the normal requirements and safeguards that apply to a FMA Act agency. Second, the CrimTrac CEO is currently revising the Board practices relating conflict of interest and has strengthened procurement practices at CrimTrac including revising the Chief Executive Instructions, revising the reporting arrangements so that the procurement team now reports directly to the legal directorate and there is a mandatory requirement for all staff to attend procurement training. Third, the Government has announced that it is taking steps to bring CrimTrac, Austrac and Biosecurity staff at DAFF under the jurisdiction of ACLEI from 1 July 2013.

1) The CEO of CrimTrac advises that he informed the Board of Mr Rankin's role with Connexxion on 1 December 2011; Mr Rankin advises he did not directly inform the Board, for your information Mr Rankin no longer provides services to the CrimTrac Board or the agency.

2) The CrimTrac Board has no role in awarding contracts or the selection of preferred service providers for CrimTrac and no contracts have ever been entered into between the Board and any entity.

3) No.

4) See 2) above.

5) See 2) above.

6) The former CrimTrac CEO advises that he was unaware of Mr Rankin's appointment as the Chairman of Connexxion Business Solutions when any contracts with this company were awarded and cannot recall being advised of any link between Mr Rankin and any company which was awarded contracts by CrimTrac during his tenure as CEO. Mr Smith advises that he became aware of this appointment on 28 November 2011 but was not advised of this by Mr Rankin.

7) In respect of the Board see 2) above.

(a) Yes the CEO advises that he is aware a business relationship exists between Connexxion Business Solutions and Projects Assured

(b) Work Order 2011/01 (Project and Program Management Framework Development and Implementation), and Work Order 2011/02 (Gateway Review) permitted subcontracting to Projects Assured. Commonwealth contracts generally permit subcontracting arrangements by prior agreement which occurred in this case.

(c) See answer 7(b).

8) No CrimTrac Board of Management members have advised of any business dealings with any service providers to the CrimTrac agency which would give rise to a conflict of interest. The CEO advises that he does not have a nexus with, or hold an appointment to the Board of, any company that has dealings with CrimTrac which may give rise to a conflict of interest.

9) CrimTrac records indicate various Work Orders (each a 'contract') have been placed with Connexxion Business Solutions following limited tender processes pursuant to the Centrelink Deed of Standing Offer for ICT Contractor Services.

The Centrelink ICT Services Deed of Standing Offer was established in 2007 following an open market tender procurement coordinated by Centrelink. CrimTrac is an FMA Act Agency able to 'piggyback' the arrangement. CrimTrac does this by requesting quotes from participating suppliers on the panel arrangement and placing a Work Order.

Requests for quotes to members of the Centrelink ICT Services panel were not advertised on AusTender, as it is not a requirement to do so.

CrimTrac records indicate that four (4) Work Orders have been placed with Connexxion Business Solutions since 1 July 2010 pursuant to the Centrelink Deed of Standing Offer for ICT Contractor Services:
Work Order Detail Dated Value
Work Order 2011/0001: review and development of project and program management 31 January 2011 $82,778.85 (inc GST)
Varied in August 2011 to increase contract value to $125,472.75 (inc GST)
Work Order ICT 2011/0002: Gateway review On or about 7/2/2011 Contract notes estimated value of services at $144,522.00 (ex GST)
Work Order RFQ 83: technical review of SharePoint 2/8/2011 $15,840 (ex GST)
Work Order RFQ 85: technical review, implementation and integration testing 25/8/2011 $57,728 (ex GST)
10) Contracts included in response to question 9) and the additional contract:
   Work Order Detail Dated Contract Value
   RFQ 49: Middleware and integration specialist On or about 11/09/2008 $228,800.00 (inc GST)
The above contract was awarded under CrimTrac’s own ICT Services Panel established following an open market tender procurement coordinated by CrimTrac. The panel arrangement expired in or about April 2011.

Immigration and Citizenship: Visas
(Question No. 1960)

Senator Cash asked the Minister representing the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, upon notice, on 11 July 2012:
(1) For each month since January 2008, how many individuals have entered Australia on a valid visa and subsequently overstayed their visa to remain in Australia, and of those, how many: (a) still remain in Australia without a valid visa; and (b) have been granted a visa to remain in Australia since their arrival.
(2) What category or type of visa has been issued to the individuals referred to in paragraph (1) (b).
(3) Is the department aware of the location of the individuals who have entered Australia on a valid visa and subsequently overstayed their visa to remain in Australia; if not, how many of those individuals reside at a location known to the department.
(4) For each month since January 2008, how many individuals have been located in Australia without a valid visa.
(5) Of the individuals mentioned in paragraph (1) (b), how many individuals have been deported and to which specific countries were they deported.
(6) (a) What has been the cost of deporting those individuals in paragraph (5); and (b) how much of this cost have been repaid by those individuals.
(7) (a) For each month since January 2008, how many individuals have been located in Australia who remain in Australia without a valid visa; and (b) what has been the dollar value to the department of the specific resources utilised in locating these individuals.

Senator Lundy: The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:
(1) (a) Table 1 outlines the instances of estimated visa overstay for clients, by month since 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>1,420</td>
<td>1,420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1
Visa Overstayers

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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>1,460</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>1,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>1,160</td>
<td>1,950</td>
<td>2,260</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>1,220</td>
<td>1,330</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>1,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>1,140</td>
<td>1,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>570</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>1,520</td>
<td>2,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1,160</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>1,130</td>
<td>1,230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>1,040</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>1,240</td>
<td>1,190</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>1,160</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>2,190</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>2,650</td>
<td>3,870</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>2,040</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>1,130</td>
<td>1,210</td>
<td>1,660</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9,330</td>
<td>13,390</td>
<td>15,110</td>
<td>19,570</td>
<td>19,540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some people may overstay a visa more than once within the reporting period. This information is provided as an estimate only and numbers are rounded. This data does not include people who overstayed on a bridging visa (subclasses 010, 020, 030, 040, 041, 050, 051, 060).

(1) (b) Statistical reports are not available to show the current immigration status of the people covered in the table above.

(2) The Department does not have the reporting resources to readily identify the additional requested information, and a substantial diversion of resources would be required.

(3) No. The extent to which visa overstayers reside at locations known to the department cannot be determined before a compliance field visit takes place.

(4) Table 2 outlines for each month since January 2008, the number of instances where an individual has been located in the month, within Australia, without a valid visa. The same individual may be located and counted more than once.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>2007/08</th>
<th>2008/09</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>1,251</td>
<td>1,182</td>
<td>1,211</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>1,150</td>
<td>1,329</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>987</td>
<td>1,164</td>
<td>1,193</td>
<td>1,423</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>1,031</td>
<td>1,184</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>1,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>927</td>
<td>1,003</td>
<td>1,131</td>
<td>1,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>1,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,021</td>
<td>1,149</td>
<td>1,231</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>833</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>1,189</td>
<td>1,002</td>
<td>1,291</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>1,037</td>
<td>1,294</td>
<td>1,475</td>
<td>1,444</td>
<td>1,394</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>1,364</td>
<td>1,082</td>
<td>1,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>973</td>
<td>1,130</td>
<td>1,295</td>
<td>1,184</td>
<td>1,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>1,012</td>
<td>1,176</td>
<td>1,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10,925</td>
<td>12,230</td>
<td>14,169</td>
<td>13,831</td>
<td>15,477</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of updates to Departmental systems 2008-09 totals differ from those in Annual Report 2008-09.
Table 3 outlines for each month since January 2008, the number of instances of compliance related departures. The data does not relate to individuals mentioned at 1 (b) as the Department can not readily identify them. Furthermore, Departmental systems cannot readily determine figures on the countries to which these unlawful non-citizens were removed, but people are generally removed or returned to their country of citizenship.

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month /Year</th>
<th>2007/08</th>
<th>2008/09</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>780</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>689</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>679</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>720</td>
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<td>Nov</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>673</td>
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<td>Dec</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>739</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,916</td>
<td>5,436</td>
<td>6,921</td>
<td>8,008</td>
<td>8,513</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(6) (a) and (b) Reports are not available to identify the people in the cohort described at questions 5 and 1 (b) and who have since been removed. Accordingly the Department is unable to provide reports on the removal costs and repayments for these individuals.

Overall, the average costs per removal have remained relatively constant across the 2011-12 and preceding year, being in the vicinity of $4,000 to $5,000 per client. This is based on departmental removal supplier costs averaged out across the total removals conducted during each financial year. This figure does not include detention and case management costs.

(7) (a) Table 4 outlines for each month since January 2008, the number of instances where an individual has been located in the month, within Australia, without a valid visa as at 30 June 2012. The same individual may be located and counted more than once.

### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month /Year</th>
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<th>2009/10</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>Dec</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
(7) (b) The Department does not have the reporting resources to readily identify the additional requested information.

**Foreign Affairs**

(Question No. 2024)

Senator Johnston asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, upon notice, on 17 August 2012:

(1) What processes were followed and/or what criteria were used in determining which regions or program line items will be affected by the Government's 2012-13 Budget decision to defer the target spend of 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income on foreign aid by one year.

(2) Why has Australia begun pursuing membership of the African Development Bank in the same year it has deferred spending on foreign aid.

Senator Bob Carr: The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

(1) The slowing of the growth in the aid program to 0.5 per cent of GNI from 2015-16 to 2016-17 has not resulted in a cut to current aid levels or in reduced Australian aid to any region. Assistance to all regions will increase by 2015-16, with the exception of Latin America and the Caribbean which will be maintained around its current level. The deferral has been achieved through a more graduated increase in aid to most regions than originally planned, and a more graduated increase in our support for multilaterals.

Growth adjustments were informed by consideration of targets set in the Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework and existing commitments to particular countries, regions, or initiatives.

(2) Membership of the African Development Bank (AfDB) will demonstrate Australia's commitment as a long-term development partner to Africa. To join the AfDB, a full treaty process, the passage of legislation through the Parliament, and agreement from AfDB members is required. These membership processes are not expected to be concluded before 2014.

Australian membership of the AfDB offers the opportunity to extend our reach and impact in Africa and to work more effectively in more development areas than are possible when working alone or through bilateral mechanisms.

The AfDB works in areas that are critical to spurring sustainable growth and reducing poverty in Africa. The Bank received a favourable review in the Australian Multilateral Assessment, which found that funding to the Bank would deliver tangible development benefits in line with Australia's aid objectives and represent value for money.

**Superannuation**

(Question No. 2119)

Senator Bushby asked the Minister representing the Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation, upon notice, on 24 August 2012:

(1) With reference to the Australian Bureau of Statistics superannuation data for the 2011 December quarter, can an explanation be provided as to why contributions fell by 2.5 per cent, despite positive economic growth.
(2) What changes have occurred in consumer behaviour regarding salary sacrifice contributions following the decisions to substantially lower maximum superannuation contribution limits and to introduce a modified superannuation surcharge, and:
   (a) how will this impact on the growth of national superannuation assets;
   (b) is this trend likely to continue in coming quarters; and
   (c) what are the anticipated impacts on Government superannuation tax collection.

(3) Can a list be provided of the bills relating to the provision of financial advice and/or superannuation that are currently before the Parliament, or are likely to be introduced during 2012.

(4) Is there a crisis of confidence in superannuation as a result of excessive legislative intervention or the withdrawal of taxation incentives; if so, what measures are being taken to revitalise confidence in superannuation as the principal long term savings vehicle.

(5) What interactions have taken place between the department, the Australian Taxation Office and industry groups, such as the Australian Institution of Superannuation Trustees, the Association of Superannuation Funds Australia, the Financial Services Council, the Financial Planning Association of Australia, Association of Financial Advisors and the SMSF Professionals’ Association of Australia Limited, to counter the prospect of flagging superannuation contributions.

(6) Can the Minister confirm that there will be no additional adverse tax measures in the 2013-14 Budget, and that there are no existing projects of this kind.

Senator Wong: The Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

Please refer to the answers provided in BET 294-301 as these questions are materially the same.

**Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area**

(Question No. 2122)

Senator Waters asked the Minister representing the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, upon notice, on 24 August 2012.

With reference to projections of dredging, spoil dumping and shipping within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area:

1. (a) To date, what is the total quantity of dredging that has been approved, or applied for, within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area since 16 July 2000; and (b) for each dredging operation, can a breakdown be provided detailing: (i) with which development the dredging is associated, (ii) the location and quantities of dredge spoil involved, (iii) the timeframes for dredging activity, and (iv) whether the figures include maintenance dredging.

2. (a) To date, what is the total quantity of dredge spoil that has been approved, or applied for, to be dumped offshore within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, since 16 July 2000; and (b) for each dredging operation, can a breakdown be provided detailing: (i) with which development the dumping is associated, (ii) the location and quantities of dredge spoil involved, (iii) the timeframes for dumping, and (iv) whether the figures include any dumping associated with maintenance dredging.

3. (a) What are the current and projected levels of non-recreational shipping transiting, with or without docking, through the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area; and (b) can a breakdown of these figures be provided, including the: (i) industries, (ii) commodities, and (iii) ports or port developments with which the current and projected shipping levels are associated.

Senator Conroy: The Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:
(1) (a) The total quantity of dredging that has been approved, or applied for, within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area from 16 July 2000 to 10 September 2012 is 165,010,500 m$^3$.

(1) (b) Dredging approved under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPBC #</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total Volume (m$^3$)</th>
<th>Approval Timeframe</th>
<th>Maintenance</th>
<th>Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006/2602</td>
<td>Bowen</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>1/07/2027</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/4058</td>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>31/10/2060</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/4096</td>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>1,375,000</td>
<td>31/10/2060</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,375,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/4497</td>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>2,831,000</td>
<td>15/05/2060</td>
<td>1,880,000</td>
<td>951,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/4759</td>
<td>Hay Point</td>
<td>275,000</td>
<td>3/03/2015</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>275,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/4904</td>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>46,000,000</td>
<td>22/10/2030</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/4977</td>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>900,000</td>
<td>22/02/2061</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/5863</td>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>1,303,000</td>
<td>30/11/2016</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,303,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>53,234,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) To be approved upon submission of a Dredge Management Plan (DMP). The DMP will be submitted if pipeline construction involves dredging.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPBC #</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total Volume (m$^3$)</th>
<th>Approval Timeframe</th>
<th>Maintenance or Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004/1775</td>
<td>Port of Hay</td>
<td>14,000,000</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/2939</td>
<td>Shute Harbor</td>
<td>Not defined</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/4060</td>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>Not defined</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/4096</td>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>11,300,000</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>11,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/4468</td>
<td>Abbot Point</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/4837</td>
<td>Abbot Point</td>
<td>38,000,000</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>38,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/5158</td>
<td>Balaclava Is</td>
<td>Not defined</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/5521</td>
<td>Great Keppel</td>
<td>Not defined</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/5979</td>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>12,900,000</td>
<td>2035</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12,900,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(a) Project may be withdrawn;
(b) Referral documentation indicated that dredging is a component of the proposed action, however a dredge volume was not defined. Volumes will be specified by the proponent in subsequent assessment documentation such as draft Environment Impact Statements.

(2) (a) The total quantity of dredge spoil that has been approved or applied for to be dumped offshore within the GBRWHA since 16 July 2000 is 55,552,380m$^3$.

(2) (b) Approvals and applications for disposal of material under the Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981 in the GBRWHA since 16 July 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Volume (m$^3$)</th>
<th>Permit issue date</th>
<th>Permit duration</th>
<th>Maintenance Y/N/U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gladstone Port Authority</td>
<td>Gladstone maintenance dredging</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>25.7.2000</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakwater Island Limited</td>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>16.10.2000</td>
<td>15.10.2001</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville Port Authority</td>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>3,500,000</td>
<td>23.2.2001</td>
<td>22.2.2006</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ports Corporation of Queensland</td>
<td>Hay Point</td>
<td>1,700,000</td>
<td>6.5.2001</td>
<td>30.09.2002</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay Port Authority</td>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>21.5.2001</td>
<td>20.05.2002</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babcock and Brown Investment Services</td>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>1,700,000</td>
<td>12.12.2001</td>
<td>30.09.2002</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladstone Port Authority</td>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>8.7.2002</td>
<td>7.7.2007</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay Port Authority</td>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>26.3.2002</td>
<td>25.3.2007</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladstone Port Authority</td>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>21.3.2003</td>
<td>20.9.2003</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay Port Authority</td>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>27.8.2004</td>
<td>26.8.2009</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ports Corporation of Queensland</td>
<td>Hay Point</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>8.9.2004</td>
<td>15.10.2006</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal Berths</td>
<td>Hay Point</td>
<td>310,000</td>
<td>7.9.2005</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port of Townsville maintenance dredging</td>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>2,750,000</td>
<td>9.10.2007</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port of Gladstone maintenance dredging</td>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>7.11.2007</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port of Mackay maintenance dredging</td>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>580,000</td>
<td>25.1.2012</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port of Gladstone capital dredging</td>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>11,000,000</td>
<td>22.10.2012</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Volume (m³)</td>
<td>Permit issue date</td>
<td>Permit duration</td>
<td>Maintenance Y/N/U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port of Gladstone Clinton bypass channel</td>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>6.12.2012</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port of Townsville Berths 8 and 10A</td>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>96,000</td>
<td>14.6.2011</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port of Townsville Berth 12 and Platypus and Sea Channels maintenance dredging</td>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>1,303,000</td>
<td>30.11.2011</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port of Townsville</td>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>548,000</td>
<td>29.09.2011</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,480,000</td>
<td>N/A – application only</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 30,528,380


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Permitted Volume (m³)</th>
<th>Type (maintenance or capital)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G12/34915.1</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Half Tide Boat Ramp (Hay Point)</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD12/02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G12/34466.1</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Rosslyn Bay Boat Harbour</td>
<td>86,000</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD12/01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G11/34029.1</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Hay Point</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G10/33155.1</td>
<td>- 2010</td>
<td>Cairns Port</td>
<td>6,600,000</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD2010/03</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G10/16868.1</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Hay Point</td>
<td>185,000</td>
<td>Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD2010/02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G08/25493.1</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Abbot Point</td>
<td>295,000</td>
<td>Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G06/177331</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Rosslyn Bay</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G05/13116.1</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Cairns Port</td>
<td>2,100,000</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G0513306.1</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Hay Point</td>
<td>14,000,000</td>
<td>Maintenance and Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G04/12048.1</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Cairns Port</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns Port Authority*</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Cairns Port</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>31.1.2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G00/272</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Cairns Port</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>25,024,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) In assessing environmental impacts, including potential impacts of commercial shipping, at both an individual action and broader regional scale, the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities draws on a range of information sources.

However, the information requested is not available through this portfolio in the format sought.

The Bureau of Resources and Energy Economics report, Australian bulk commodity exports and infrastructure – outlook to 2025, July 2012, provides forecasts for a range of coal and mineral commodity exports. In addition, the preliminary draft Abbot Point Cumulative Impact Assessment, October 2012, provides forecasts of shipping from that port to 2032 and notes trends in shipping levels for all main Great Barrier Reef ports. The forecasts contained in the Cumulative Impact Assessment are not necessarily endorsed by the Australian Government.
Electricity Pricing
(Question No. 2142)

Senator Abetz asked the Minister representing the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, upon notice, on 7 September 2012:

With reference to the Australian Government flyer titled Where every $100 on your electricity bill goes, distributed to households in September 2012:
(1) Of the $100 total represented by the bar graph, what height in millimetres represents $1 across each of the four columns.
(2) Is the column that represents $51 proportionally greater on a per unit basis than the column representing the Carbon Tax.
(3) Who is responsible for these calculations.
(4) Who prepared the: (a) statistical representation; and (b) artwork.
(5) Why is this chart not consistent with the figure published at the advertised website address, http://www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au/your-electricity-bill.

Senator Ludwig: The Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:
The artwork was prepared by the graphic design team of the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency's Communications and Public Affairs Branch. It is not a statistical graph, rather it is a graphic representation of numeric information, which is based on Treasury figures and clearly displayed on each bar.
The website uses the same graphic, but the artwork was scaled down vertically to fit within the confines of the webpage. The website graph does feature a different heading to the hardcopy graph, but the numeric information presented is exactly the same.

It is worth noting that in developing a graphic such as this, the design needs to be able to be applied to a range of different formats. These different formats allow for necessary adjustments to the size and length of the graphic so that it maximises the space available, whether that is an elongated DL flyer or a square-shaped webpage. It is for this reason the focus of the graphic has always been on clearly presenting the numeric information.

Attorney-General: Accommodation
(Question No. 2148)

Senator Humphries asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 10 September 2012:

In regard to each department and agency within the Minister's responsibility:
(1) Has there been a reduction in the number of plants in departmental and agency offices; if so: (a) by what percentage; (b) on what date did it come into effect; (c) what was the reason for the reduction; and (d) how much will each department and agency save as a result.
(2) What is the budget for the facilities management branch (or equivalent) in the: (a) 2011-12; and (b) 2012-13 financial years.
(3) What is the name of the organisation contracted to supply plants to departmental and agency offices.
(4) If a reduction in the number of office plants has taken place, when was the contracted organisation first made aware of the decision.
(5) Were staff consulted regarding a possible reduction in plants prior to it taking place.
(6) Have any complaints been registered from staff in relation to reductions in office plants.
Senator Ludwig: The Attorney-General has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

Please refer to the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department/Agency</th>
<th>Reduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General's Dept.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Appeals Tribunal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Security Intelligence</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity</td>
<td>No—there has been no reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Crime Commission</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Customs and Border Protection Service</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Federal Police</td>
<td>No. There has been no reduction in office plants at NHQ since July 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Government Solicitor</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGS is a government business enterprise (GBE) operating on a commercial and competitive basis in providing legal and related services to government and its agencies. AGS does not receive any appropriations. It would be an unreasonable diversion of AGS business resources to provide the further details sought having regard to the records kept, the nature of the information sought and AGS's role as a GBE.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Human Rights Commission</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Law Reform Commission</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Institute of Criminology</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a cost savings measure AUSTRAC has not engaged plant hire services since March 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CrimTrac</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Court of Australia</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Court of Australia</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Magistrates Court of Australia</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Court of Australia</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insolvency and Trustee Services of Australia</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITSA has reduced the number of plants in its Sydney office by 66% with effect from 30 June 2012. The reduction was a result of refurbishment work in the foyer area which reduced the space available for plant displays. This reduction will result in annual savings of $1,560</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Native Title Tribunal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Australian Information Commissioner</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Director of Public Prosecutions</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Parliamentary Counsel</td>
<td>No, there has been no reduction in plant numbers only a reduction in cost (see answer to (d) below)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(1) (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Percentage Reduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General’s Dept.</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Appeals Tribunal</td>
<td>100% reduction in Adelaide and Perth Registries by early 2009.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canberra Registry has not had plant hire within the last decade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brisbane Registry retained its plants on termination of the maintenance contract in 2008 and plant numbers have steadily declined as dead plants are not replaced. An exact percentage reduction in plant numbers is unknown, but 100% of costs were eliminated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hobart Registry plant hire is provided via arrangements in place as part of the Commonwealth Law Courts tenancy at a cost of $826pa but is likely to be reduced in 2012-13 as part of a review of funding arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne and Sydney Registries reduced plant hire in 2008 limiting coverage to public areas only. An exact percentage reduction in plant numbers is unknown, however costs reduced 72% in Sydney and 55% in Melbourne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Security Intelligence Organisation</td>
<td>20% reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity</td>
<td>See response to Q(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Crime Commission</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Customs and Border Protection Service</td>
<td>Approximately 75.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Federal Police</td>
<td>See response to Q(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Government Solicitor</td>
<td>AGS is a government business enterprise (GBE) operating on a commercial and competitive basis in providing legal and related services to government and its agencies. AGS does not receive any appropriations. It would be an unreasonable diversion of AGS business resources to provide the further details sought having regard to the records kept, the nature of the information sought and AGS’s role as a GBE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Human Rights Commission</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Law Reform Commission</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Institute of Criminology</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre</td>
<td>See response Q(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CrimTrac</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Court of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Court of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Magistrates Court of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Court of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insolvency and Trustee Services of Australia</td>
<td>See response to Q(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Native Title Tribunal</td>
<td>The National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT) has reduced its expenditure on pot plant hire by approximately 87% since 30 June 2010. The details of the NNTT's expenditure on pot plants are not available.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
plants from the year 2009-10 are set out in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Expenditure</th>
<th>Savings (year to year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>$8052</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>$7261</td>
<td>$791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$2951</td>
<td>$4,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>$1040 (estimated)</td>
<td>$1,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>$7,012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner N/A
Office of Director of Public Prosecutions N/A
Office of the Parliamentary Counsel N/A

(1) (b)  
Attorney-General’s Dept. August 2012 under the new plant contract when AGD moved into National Circuit (4NC), Barton
Administrative Appeals Tribunal Reductions were effective in August/September 2008
Australian Security Intelligence Organisation 1 November 2011
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity N/A
Australian Crime Commission N/A
Australian Customs and Border Protection Service Between December 2008 and December 2011 (as contracts expired)
Australian Federal Police N/A
Australian Government Solicitor N/A
Australian Human Rights Commission N/A
Australian Law Reform Commission N/A
Australian Institute of Criminology N/A
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre N/A
CrimTrac N/A
Family Court of Australia N/A
Federal Court of Australia N/A
Federal Magistrates Court of Australia N/A
High Court of Australia N/A
Insolvency and Trustee Services of Australia N/A
National Native Title Tribunal Savings in respect of pot plant hire by the NNTT commenced in 2009-10
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner N/A
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency/Department</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General's Dept.</td>
<td>To keep in line with the same as existing allocation as premises at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Appeals Tribunal</td>
<td>Robert Garran Offices (RGO), Barton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Security Intelligence Organisation</td>
<td>As part of an internal budget review in 3rd quarter 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity</td>
<td>A sub-tenant relocation to another building (the tenancy agreement included plants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Crime Commission</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Customs and Border Protection Service</td>
<td>Reduction in leased properties and to reduce property operating expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Federal Police</td>
<td>See response to Q(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Government Solicitor</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Human Rights Commission</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Law Reform Commission</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Institute of Criminology</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre</td>
<td>See response Q(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre</td>
<td>See response Q(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre</td>
<td>See response Q(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre</td>
<td>See response Q(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Court of Australia</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Court of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Magistrates Court of Australia</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Court of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insolvency and Trustee Services of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Native Title Tribunal</td>
<td>The NNTT implemented savings measures in 2009-10 in response to a 7.7% reduction in its annual appropriation (from $32.15m in 2008-09 to $29.68m). Discretionary expenditure, including pot plant hire, was significantly reduced, in order to meet budget targets for 2009-10 and also in anticipation of further decreases in the NNTT’s appropriation in the forward years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Australian Information Commissioner</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Director of Public Prosecutions</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Parliamentary Counsel</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(1) (d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Budget Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General's Dept.</td>
<td>Approximately $40,000 pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Appeals Tribunal</td>
<td>$26,172 pa inc GST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Security Intelligence Organisation</td>
<td>ASIO will save $304 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity</td>
<td>See response to Q(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Crime Commission</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Customs and Border Protection Service</td>
<td>Approximately $108,792 from 1 July 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Federal Police</td>
<td>See response to Q(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Human Rights Commission</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Law Reform Commission</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Institute of Criminology</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre</td>
<td>See response Q(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CrimTrac</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Court of Australia</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Court of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Magistrates Court of Australia</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Court of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insolvency and Trustee Services of Australia</td>
<td>See response to Q(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Native Title Tribunal</td>
<td>As reflected in the table at 1(a), savings from year to year amount to $7,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Australian Information Commissioner</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Parliamentary Counsel</td>
<td>As a result of new contractual arrangements from 1 November 2011 OPC negotiate a more competitive price for the supply of office plants, a reduction of 39% and $1,764 per annum (inc GST)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Budget Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General's Dept.</td>
<td>The facilities management budget was: $1,513,739 in financial year 2011-12. The budget for plants, as a subset of the facilities management budget, was: $108,000 in financial year 2011-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Appeals Tribunal</td>
<td>The Administrative Appeals Tribunal does not maintain a facilities management branch or equivalent due to its size. These duties form as part of the Manager, Property &amp; Security's role and the Finance and Accounts area of the Tribunal. During periods of lease renewal or fitout, additional support is sought from commercial suppliers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Budget Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Security Intelligence Organisation</td>
<td>The facilities management budget was: $5,851,500 in financial year 2011-12. The budget for plants, as a subset of the facilities management budget, was: $34,400 in financial year 2011-12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity</td>
<td>ACLEI's Corporate Services Section manages ACLEI's premises and facilities. ACLEI does not run separate budget line items for facilities management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Crime Commission</td>
<td>$3,518m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Customs and Border Protection Service</td>
<td>Customs and Border Protection does not have a facilities management branch as this function is embedded across the agency. The actual spend on plant hire for 2011-12 was $66,553.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Federal Police</td>
<td>2011-12 Actual - $3,274,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Government Solicitor</td>
<td>In 2011-12 AGS spend around $23,500 on plant hire which is about the same amount as in the previous year. AGS does not have a facilities management branch or equivalent. The actual spend on indoor plant hire for 2011-12 was $18,831.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Human Rights Commission</td>
<td>The ALRC does not have a specific budget for facilities management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Law Reform Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Institute of Criminology</td>
<td>$415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre</td>
<td>$1,332,000, which includes $802,274 in contracted property related services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CrimTrac</td>
<td>$2,452,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Court of Australia</td>
<td>2011-12 - $1,399,301 (GST Exclusive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Court of Australia</td>
<td>$1,434,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Magistrates Court of Australia</td>
<td>2011-12 $45,746 (GST Exclusive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Court of Australia</td>
<td>The budget for the building operations section for 2011-12 was $2,661,735.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insolvency and Trustee Services of Australia</td>
<td>The facilities management budget for 2011-12 was $4,450,365. This budget comprises rental expense, instalment outgoings, carparking, energy, cleaning and repairs and maintenance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Native Title Tribunal</td>
<td>N/A. As of 1 July 2012, the NNTT is funded as a sub-program of the Federal Court of Australia, which meets all of its corporate expenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Australian Information Commissioner</td>
<td>The Finance and Services section of the Australian Human Rights Commission co-ordinates indoor plant hire on behalf of the OAIC under a memorandum of understanding in relation to the provision of corporate services. The actual spend on indoor plant hire for 2011-12 was $6,277.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Director of Public Prosecutions</td>
<td>$329,000 (ex GST) actual expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Parliamentary Counsel</td>
<td>As a small agency OPC has no facilities management area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(2) (b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Budget Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General's Dept.</td>
<td>For the 2012-13 budget facilities management merged with the property section and the combined budget is $1,430,161 of which the plant budget is $66,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Appeals Tribunal</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Security Intelligence Organisation</td>
<td>The facilities management budget was: $5,940,500 in financial year 2012-13. The budget for plants, as a subset of the facilities management budget, was: $35,800 in financial year 2012-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity</td>
<td>ACLEI's Corporate Services Section manages ACLEI's premises and facilities. ACLEI does not run separate budget line items for facilities management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Crime Commission</td>
<td>$3.243m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Customs and Border Protection Service</td>
<td>Customs and Border Protection does not have a facilities management branch as this function is embedded across the agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Federal Police</td>
<td>The Budget for 2012-13 is $32,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Government Solicitor</td>
<td>See response to Q(2) (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Human Rights Commission</td>
<td>The Budget for 2012-13 is $19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Law Reform Commission</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Institute of Criminology</td>
<td>$415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre</td>
<td>$1,713,360 which includes $1,066,153 in contracted property related services. Note: figures exclude office and car parking lease costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CrimTrac</td>
<td>$2,235,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Court of Australia</td>
<td>2012-13 - $759,029 (GST Exclusive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Court of Australia</td>
<td>$183,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Magistrates Court of Australia</td>
<td>2012-13 $47,148 (GST Exclusive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Court of Australia</td>
<td>The budget for the building operations section for 2011-12 was $2,661,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insolvency and Trustee Services of Australia</td>
<td>The facilities management budget for 2011-12 was $4,450,365. This budget comprises rental expense, instalment outgoings, carparking, energy, cleaning and repairs and maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Native Title Tribunal</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Australian Information Commissioner</td>
<td>The Finance and Services section of the Australian Human Rights Commission co-ordinates indoor plant hire on behalf of the OAIC under a memorandum of understanding in relation to the provision of corporate services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Director of Public Prosecutions</td>
<td>$272,800 (ex GST) estimated full year expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Parliamentary Counsel</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Attorney-General's Dept.
**Institute Indoor Plant Hire**

**Administrative Appeals Tribunal**
Current suppliers are:
- Melbourne – Frenchams
- Sydney – Tropical Plant Rentals
- Hobart – Penny Dann

### Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
For security reasons ASIO does not reveal details of service providers

### Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity
N/A

### Australian Crime Commission
**Instyle Plant Maintenance**
Frenchams

### Australian Customs and Border Protection Service
**Tropical Folige Pty Ltd T/A Living Simply**

### Australian Federal Police
**Instyle Indoor Plant Hire** has been contracted as the office plant supplier for NHQ (EBB) since July 2011

### Australian Government Solicitor
**Capital Plants Hire**. On a month by month basis rather than a contract.

### Australian Human Rights Commission
**Instyle Indoor Plant Hire**

### Australian Law Reform Commission
N/A

### Australian Institute of Criminology
**Capital Indoor Plant Hire**

### Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre
N/A

### CrimTrac
**Instyle Indoor Plant Hire**
Ambius

### Family Court of Australia
**Instyle Indoor Plant Hire**
Ambius

### Federal Court of Australia
**Green Design. In the Commonwealth Law Courts Buildings, plants are provided through the building managers**

### Federal Magistrates Court of Australia
**Ambius**

### High Court of Australia
**Capital Indoor Plant Hire**

### Insolvency and Trustee Services of Australia
The organisations contracted to supply plants to ITSA are Capital Indoor Plant Hire and Ambius

### National Native Title Tribunal
Since 2009-10, the NNTT has used a total of three suppliers to provide hire plants at various times:
- Ambius Indoor Plants
- Advance Plant Services Pty Ltd
- Pynes Indoor Garden Hire & Garden Management

### Office of the Australian Information Commissioner
**Instyle Indoor Plant Hire**

### Office of Director of Public Prosecutions
**Capital Indoor Plant Hire**

### Office of the Parliamentary Counsel
**Instyle Indoor Plant Hire**
(4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General’s Dept.</td>
<td>When the tender was put out in 2009 for 3-5 Nation Cct and January 2011 for 4 National Cct, they were advised of the new building and the requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Appeals Tribunal</td>
<td>August 2008 (excluding Hobart)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Security Intelligence Organisation</td>
<td>27 October 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Crime Commission</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Customs and Border Protection Service</td>
<td>November 2008 (first ACT reduction), November 2010 (national).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Federal Police</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Government Solicitor</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Human Rights Commission</td>
<td>There has been no reduction in plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Law Reform Commission</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Institute of Criminology</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CrimTrac</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Court of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Court of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Magistrates Court of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Court of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insolvency and Trustee Services of Australia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Native Title Tribunal</td>
<td>1 June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Australian Information Commissioner</td>
<td>Suppliers were informed of the decision to terminate or reduce pot plant hire (as relevant) as soon as practicable after the decision was made to terminate or reduce. All terminations or reductions were made in accordance with the terms of the relevant agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Director of Public Prosecutions</td>
<td>There has been no reduction in plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Parliamentary Counsel</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General’s Dept.</td>
<td>No. Staff were advised that the cost of hiring plants was going to be centralised and that we would be keeping the same allocation of plants throughout 4NC to match RGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Appeals Tribunal</td>
<td>Limited consultation, however management explained the reasoning to all staff via e-mail at the time of implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Security Intelligence Organisation</td>
<td>Not applicable – reduction in plants occurred in a sub-tenant area, where the sub-tenant relocated to another building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity N/A
Australian Crime Commission N/A
Australian Customs and Border Protection Service N/A
Australian Federal Police N/A
Australian Government Solicitor N/A
Australian Human Rights Commission N/A
Australian Institute of Criminology N/A
Australian Law Reform Commission N/A
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre Yes
CrimTrac N/A
Family Court of Australia N/A
Federal Court of Australia N/A
Federal Magistrates Court of Australia N/A
High Court of Australia N/A
Insolvency and Trustee Services of Australia Yes
National Native Title Tribunal Yes. Information about the measures being taken to reduce expenditure (including through the hire of pot plants) was communicated to employees through national video link ups conducted by the Registrar and President, initial and follow-up announcements on the Tribunal's intranet and discussion at the Tribunal's Consultative Forum
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner N/A
Office of Director of Public Prosecutions N/A
Office of the Parliamentary Counsel N/A
(6) No
Attorney-General's Dept. No
Administrative Appeals Tribunal Minor complaints at the time of implementation
Australian Security Intelligence Organisation N/A
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity N/A
Australian Crime Commission N/A
Australian Customs and Border Protection Service N/A
Australian Federal Police N/A

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Senator Humphries asked the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Minister for Disability Reform, the Minister for Housing and Homelessness, and the Minister for Community Services and Minister for the Status of Women, upon notice, on 18 September 2012:

In regard to the 2012-13 financial year:

(1) What is the net financial effect on the department's budget of: (a) the original 1.5 per cent efficiency dividend; (b) the additional 2.5 per cent efficiency dividend; and (c) other savings measures as introduced in the 2012-13 Budget papers.

(2) What measures or strategies are being considered to ensure continued operation within the budget and efficiency dividend targets of the department.

(3) What percentage of total expenditure is represented by staff costs.

(4) Is a net reduction in: (a) staff; and (b) consultants and/or contractors, expected for the financial year; if so, can a quantitative total for each reduction be provided.

(5) How many: (a) voluntary redundancies; and (b) involuntary redundancies, are expected to be executed.

(6) What is the current distribution of full-time equivalent staff across classification bands.

Senator Chris Evans: The Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Minister for Disability Reform, the Minister for Housing and Homelessness,
and the Minister for Community Services and Minister for the Status of Women provide the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

(1) For the 2012-13 financial year, the net effect on the department's budget of:
   (a) The original 1.5 per cent efficiency dividend is $8.9 million.
   (b) The additional 2.5 per cent efficiency dividend is $11.5 million.
   (c) Other savings measures as introduced in the 2012-13 Budget papers is 'Nil'.

(2) The Department's primary strategy for managing within budget has been to set balanced budgets early and carefully monitor and regularly review these budgets.

   In addition, there is a continuing focus on business improvements and reducing operational costs wherever possible. Examples include:
   - Information Technology improvements/savings;
   - reducing travel and increasing the use of videoconferencing;
   - reducing our accommodation footprint; and
   - reducing our publishing/printing costs.

(3) The Department's 2012-13 budgeted employee benefits expense is 57% of total expenses.

(4) Quantity of expected net reduction:
   (a) A net reduction in staff is not expected for the 2012-13 financial year.
   (b) It is too early to predict the quantity of any reduction in consultants and/or contractors for this financial year.

(5) Redundancies in 2012-13:
   (a) We do not currently have any specific plans or targets for voluntary redundancies.
   (b) We do not currently have any specific plans or targets for involuntary redundancies.

(6) The Department's staffing profile is available in the 2010-11 Annual Report at Appendix B, Table B-2.

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**Budget: Efficiency Dividend**  
(Question Nos 2185, 2194, 2201, 2202 and 2213)

Senator Humphries asked the Minister representing the Minister for School, Education, Early Childhood and Youth, the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, the Minister representing the Minister for Early Childhood and Child Care, the Minister representing the Minister for Employment Participation and the Minister representing the Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development, upon notice, on 18 September 2012:

In regard to the 2012-13 financial year:

(1) What is the net financial effect on the department's budget of:
   (a) the original 1.5 per cent efficiency dividend;
   (b) the additional 2.5 per cent efficiency dividend; and
   (c) other savings measures as introduced in the 2012-13 Budget papers.

(2) What measures or strategies are being considered to ensure continued operation within the budget and efficiency dividend targets of the department.

(3) What percentage of total expenditure is represented by staff costs.

(4) Is a net reduction in:
(a) staff; and
(b) consultants and/or contractors, expected for the financial year; if so, can a quantitative total for each reduction be provided.

(5) How many:
(a) voluntary redundancies; and
(b) involuntary redundancies, are expected to be executed.

(6) What is the current distribution of full-time equivalent staff across classification bands.

Senator Bob Carr: The Minister for School, Education, Early Childhood and Youth has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

(1) The net financial effect on the department's 2012-13 budget of:
   (a) the original 1.5 per cent efficiency dividend is approximately $8.8 million;
   (b) the additional 2.5 per cent efficiency dividend is approximately $14.7 million; and
   (c) other savings measures as introduced in the 2012-13 Budget papers is $6.6 million.

(2) During 2011-12 the department undertook a series of workshops designed to generate ideas at all levels for stopping and changing work. Over a period of approximately six weeks, workshops were delivered for every branch and state office in the department. In excess of 1800 staff participated in the workshops which generated thousands of ideas. The outcomes of the workshops are being implemented. The department also continues to explore opportunities for savings in areas such as property and travel.

(3) The percentage of total expenditure for 2012-13 represented by staff costs is 68.6 per cent.

(4) A net reduction in:
   (a) the department's average staffing level is expected to reduce from 4738 in 2011-12 to 3,593 in 2012-13. The reduction includes the impact of the transfer of the Tertiary Education function to the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education; and
   (b) The department is not expecting a significant reduction in the number of contractors in 2012-13.

(5) How many:
   (a) voluntary redundancies; and
   (b) involuntary redundancies, are expected to be executed.

   No voluntary or involuntary redundancies are currently planned for 2012-13.

(6) The distribution of employees across classification bands as at 30 June 2012 is provided in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cadets</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentices/Trainees</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS Level 1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS Level 2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS Level 3</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS Level 4</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS Level 5</td>
<td>692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS Level 6</td>
<td>1,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Level 1</td>
<td>1,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Level 2</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Lawyer</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Government Lawyer</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Government Lawyer</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES Band 1</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES Band 2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES Band 3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Budget: Efficiency Dividend**

(Question No. 2203)

Senator Humphries asked the Minister representing the Minister for Veterans' Affairs upon notice on 18 September 2012.

(1) What is the net financial effect on the department's budget of:
   (a) the original 1.5 per cent efficiency dividend;
   (b) the additional 2.5 per cent efficiency dividend; and
   (c) other savings measures as introduced in the 2012-13 Budget papers.

(2) What measures or strategies are being considered to ensure continued operation within the budget and efficiency dividend targets of the department.

(3) What percentage of total expenditure is represented by staff costs.

(4) Is a net reduction in:
   (a) staff; and
   (b) consultants and/or contractors, expected for the financial year; if so, can a quantitative total for each reduction be provided.

(5) How many:
   (a) voluntary redundancies; and
   (b) involuntary redundancies, are expected to be executed.

(6) What is the current distribution of full-time equivalent staff across classification bands.

Senator Bob Carr: The Minister for Veterans' Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

(1) (a) The impact of the 1.5% efficiency dividend for the 2012-13 Financial Year is $4.5 million.
   (b) The impact of the 2.5% efficiency dividend for the 2012-13 Financial Year is $7.3 million.
   (c) There were no other decisions of Government that resulted in other savings measures for the Department in 2012-13.

(2) The Department has implemented the efficiency dividend targets without impact on any services to the veteran community. Areas of where savings were made include:
   - reduction in ICT expenses;
   - realigning functions in various areas of the Department, for example realigning the current appeals and support functions through the redefining of roles within VEA Appeals and Reviews;
   - realignment of Department compliance activities, for example in the internal audit program; and
   - reduction in the area of consultants, contractors and travel.

(3) For the 2011-12 Financial Year, out of a total expenditure of approximately $360 million, DVA spent approximately $192 million on staffing costs, equating to 54%.
(4) As a result of the efficiency dividend for 2012-13 a net reduction is expected of:
   (a) approximately $6.07 million savings from 67 staff reduction (which equates to approximately 62 FTE); and
   (b) approximately $3.6 million savings due to reduced expenditure on contracts and consultants.

(5) As a result of the efficiency dividend:
   • 46 staff received voluntary redundancies; and
   • 0 staff received involuntary redundancies.

(6) The current distribution of full-time equivalent staff across classification bands is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification band</th>
<th>FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS1</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS2</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS3</td>
<td>294.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS4</td>
<td>212.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS5</td>
<td>417.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS6</td>
<td>417.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>306.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>123.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal 1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal 2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Officers</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1925.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures as at 30 September 2012.

The Christian Brothers
(Question No. 2223)

Senator Cash asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, upon notice, on 25 September 2012:

(1) Is the Minister aware that the former Maltese Minister for Immigration, Mr Alexander Cachia Zammit, in an article in the Times of Malta dated 21 January 2010, claimed that during his 1963 visit to Perth he did not meet with the Director of the Christian Brothers due to police investigations.

(2) Is the Minister aware that the former Minister stated that the Australian Government advised the Maltese Government of suspicions, causing the Maltese Government to cease sending Maltese children to Australia under the Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946.

(3) Can any documents relating to the 1963 police investigation of Christian Brothers institutions in Western Australia in relation to child migrants be provided; if not, why not.

(4) Can any advice given to the Government of Malta, which may have caused that Government to cease sending children to Australia under the Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946, be provided; if not, why not.

Senator Bob Carr: The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

(1) No
(2) No
(3) No. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade no longer holds any records from the 1960s. Questions relating to access to Commonwealth records under the Archives Act 1983 should be directed to the National Archives of Australia.
(4) No. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade no longer holds any records from the 1960s. Questions relating to access to Commonwealth records under the Archives Act 1983 should be directed to the National Archives of Australia.

Financial Management and Accountability
(Question No. 2234)

Senator Bernardi asked the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, upon notice, on 9 October 2012:

In regard to each department and agency under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 and each Commonwealth authority under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 within the Ministers portfolio:

(1) Is information collected from stakeholders and the broader community; if so: (a) what forms or other methods are used to collect information; (b) how many of these forms are: (i) paper-based, (ii) electronic-based; and (iii) both; (c) do these forms request an estimate of the time taken to complete; if not, why not; and (d) is data collected on how long it takes to complete each form; if so, can this data be provided.

(2) For each proposed regulatory initiative since August 2010: (a) how many stakeholder consultations have been conducted; and (b) have there been any complaints from stakeholders about the consultation process; if so, from whom.

Senator Chris Evans: The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

Given the broad nature of the question and the diverse range of information collected by the Department and its Agencies, providing the information is an unreasonable diversion of resources.

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
(Question No. 2235)

Senator Bernardi asked the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, upon notice, on 4 October 2012:

Senator Bernardi: In regard to each department and agency under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 and each Commonwealth authority under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 within the Minister's portfolio:

(1) Is information collected from stakeholders and the broader community; if so:
   a. What forms or other methods are used to collect information;
   b. How many of these forms are:
      i. paper-based,
      ii. electronic-based; and
      iii. both;
   c. Do these forms request an estimate of the time taken to complete, if not, why not;
   d. Is data collected on how long it takes to complete each form; if so, can this data be provided.

(2) For each proposed regulatory initiative since August 2010:
   a. how many stakeholder consultations have been conducted; and
b. have there been any complaints from stakeholders about the consultation process; if so, from whom.

Senator Conroy: The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

Responses are outlined below from the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and agencies under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 and Commonwealth authorities under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997. In relation to part (2) of the question this is only applicable to the Department, and the Australian Communications and Media Authority, with regulatory responsibilities.

Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy

(1) Yes.

(a-b) The Department of Broadband Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE) collects information from stakeholders and the broader community in relation to a broad range of matters. Details of the Department's programs and links to its funding programs/consultations and submissions are available via the Department's Information Publication Scheme on its website http://www.dbcde.gov.au/about_us/information_publication_scheme_ips

The Department also provides its Personal Information Digest to the Australian Information Commissioner each year (as required under the Privacy Act 1988), listing personal information holdings.

(c-d) Where forms (online/paper) are used to collect information, the forms do not request an estimate of time taken to complete. Forms are designed to only collect the data necessary, for example, to enable an assessment of a grant application. In the main, data is not collected on how long it takes to complete forms. However, it is noted that the Digital Switchover Taskforce collects information via the Digital Tracker telephone survey. Verbal responses to this survey are entered into a computer system and respondents are advised of the approximate duration of the survey (less than 15 minutes depending on the length of the respondent's answers).

(2)


Consultation opportunities are identified for planned regulatory activities in the Regulatory Plan. The Department complies with the Australian Government's regulatory impact analysis requirements administered by the Office of Best Practice Regulation. No formal complaints are on record with our central complaints manager as having been lodged about any consultation processes relating to regulatory initiatives. However, it is sometimes the case that there may be dissatisfaction with the consultation process expressed as part of the stakeholder's submission to a review or inquiry. These are dealt with as part of the review or inquiry process.

Australian Communications and Media Authority

(1) Yes. Information is collected in multiple ways and in multiple forms. Much of the information the ACMA receives is provided voluntarily by citizens, consumers, industry groups, industry participants and so on.

(a) Where the ACMA seeks to collect information a form is often provided for that purpose. The ACMA website provides a comprehensive online list of forms which can be downloaded or completed on-line (www.acma.gov.au).

(b) As per above, these forms are provided online:

i. All forms are available for download
ii. A number of these forms are able to be completed and submitted online

iii. All forms, since all of the electronic forms may be downloaded and printed.

(c) No. There is no such requirement for Commonwealth Government forms, however, the ACMA sometimes collects information on time taken to complete specific forms, such as through industry surveys or on the forms themselves, e.g. where a form is being released for the first time to meet a requirement of new legislation.

(d) No.

(2)

(a) The ACMA engages in full consultation in relation to all significant regulatory initiatives which it proposes, in line with legislative obligations contained in the Legislative Instruments Act 2003 and in the various pieces of legislation administered by the ACMA, and as required by the Australian Government's regulatory impact analysis requirements administered by the Office of Best Practice Regulation. Each such regulatory initiative therefore involves at least one consultation process. Within that consultation process there may be a large number of elements of various forms, tailored to the nature of the issue under consideration. Those elements of the consultation process may include one or more discussion papers, conferences, public hearings, one-on-one meetings with particular stakeholders, seminars, webinars, research activities and so on.

(b) It is sometimes the case that some persons may be dissatisfied with the process or outcomes of a consultation. Responses to consultation in relation to regulatory proposals are addressed in Regulation Impact Statements (RISs). These are prepared to inform decisions that are likely to have a regulatory impact on business or the not-for-profit sector that is not of a minor or machinery nature and do not substantially alter existing arrangements. Each RIS is a publicly available document which is available from the Department of Finance and Deregulation's website (www.ris.finance.gov.au).

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

(1) The ABC collects information from the community for a range of purposes related to the performance of its Charter obligations. The ABC collects personal information (within the meaning of the Privacy Act 1988), and information about stakeholder and community attitudes (for instance, comments and feedback). The ABC assumes that the question is not directed at information that is collected for content purposes, for instance, by a journalist in the preparation of program material.

Details of the manner in which personal information is collected by the ABC is set out in the ABC Privacy Policy.

(a-b) The ways in which the ABC collects information from stakeholders and the community include the following:

- Electronic forms. For instance, the ABC’s general online feedback form, where the public can leave comments, make complaints, ask questions or seek information. Information is also collected through the ABC’s online Reception Assistance Feedback form.

- Paper-based forms. These are used primarily as an alternative for individuals who do not have access to, or prefer not to use, electronic forms. For instance, the ABC has a paper-based application form to join the ABC Shop VIP loyalty program.

- Telephone. Feedback is received via the ABC’s general feedback phone line and Divisional contact phone numbers (listed on the ABC’s corporate website). Feedback is received via phone by ABC program and content areas, radio stations and television channels. The ABC also collects information from callers to its Reception Advice Line.

- Online message boards/forums and guestbooks. Feedback and contributions are posted online using message boards/forums and guestbooks. The ABC has a range of message boards and guestbooks connected to its content and programs, including, for example, ABC TV programs, triple j, iview,
ABC Science, ABC Ramp Up, ACB3, ABC News & Current Affairs, arts & culture, religion & ethics, rural, science & nature, lifestyle, music, etc.

- Social media. Feedback and contributions are posted on the ABC's facebook pages. The ABC has over 150 official facebook pages covering ABC programs and content areas such as triple j, triple j unearthed, ABC News, ABC TV, ABC Radio National, ABC Technology and Games, Radio National Drive, ABC Local Radio stations and ABC iview. The ABC also collects information regarding users' interactions with ABC facebook programs to send content suggestions. Feedback is received through official ABC twitter accounts. The ABC has over 200 official twitter accounts. Information is also collected when audience members interact with the ABC's accounts on other aggregation and social media services, including Flickr, YouTube, Soundcloud, tumblr, Pinterest and Google+.

- Online tracking. Information is collected about users visiting and interacting with the ABC's online platforms. The information collected relates to a user's browsing habits and is used by the ABC to tailor content promotions to a user's preferences.

- Websites. Comments can be made on the ABC's interactive opinion and analysis site The Drum. Community information is submitted to any of the 54 ABC Local websites (users can contribute information about upcoming local events and can contribute photos and other media). Information and media contributed to ABC Open.

- Forums. Feedback is collected through Community Forums held regularly around Australia. The ABC Advisory Council provides an avenue for members of the community to provide feedback to the ABC.

- Written correspondence. Stakeholders and members of the community provide comments and feedback by writing letters to the ABC.

(c) Any forms that require completion do not require an estimate of the time taken to complete as this information is not required for our purposes.

(d) Not applicable.

Special Broadcasting Service

(1)

(a-b) SBS provides the following information in its Personal Information Digest to the Australian Information Commissioner each year (as required under the Privacy Act 1988).

The 'classes' of information SBS collects relevant to this query are as follows:

- Audio And Language Content Consultation Records
  The purpose of these records is to record and process feedback from internal and external stakeholders on the selection criteria for the SBS Radio schedule review.

- Audio And Language Content Feedback Records
  The purpose of these records is to record and process public feedback in relation to SBS Radio content.

- Audience Correspondence Records
  The purpose of these records is to process and respond to audience comments and requests for information.

- The Exchange Register
  The purpose of these records is to maintain a register of SBS viewers, listeners and website users for the purpose of market research.
In respect of information the SBS collect from stakeholders (refer to the SBS Personal Information Digest for more information).

(c) No. Not relevant as SBS does not collect information on a consistent and ongoing basis.

(d) Not applicable.

Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency

(1) The Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency (TUSMA) was recently established on 1 July 2012. Since its establishment, no information has been collected from stakeholders and the broader community.

Australia Post

(1) Australia Post regularly seeks information and feedback from key stakeholder groups via surveys and customer channel modelling. Where appropriate, Australia Post obtains independent advice to ensure the length of time required to complete such surveys/modelling is appropriate.

Financial Management and Accountability

(Question Nos 2238, 2267 and 2271)

Senator Bernardi asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, Minister representing the Minister for Defence Personnel and Science and Minister representing the Minister for Defence Materiel, upon notice, on 3 October 2012:

In regard to each department and agency under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 and each Commonwealth authority under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 within the Minister's portfolio:

(1) Is information collected from stakeholders and the broader community; if so:

(a) what forms or other methods are used to collect information;

(b) how many of these forms are:

(i) paper-based,

(ii) electronic based; and

(iii) both;

(c) do these forms request an estimate of the time taken to complete; if not, why not; and (d) is data collected on how long it takes to complete each form; if so, can this data be provided.

(2) For each proposed regulatory initiative since August 2010:

(a) how many stakeholder consultations have been conducted; and

(b) have there been any complaints from stakeholders about the consultation process; if so, from whom.

Senator Bob Carr: The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

(1) and (2) Given the broad nature of the question and the diverse range of information collected by Defence, attempting to answer this question would cause unreasonable diversion of resources.

Financial Management and Accountability

(Question No. 2240)

Senator Bernardi asked the Minister representing the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, upon notice, on 3 October 2012:
In regard to each department and agency under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 and each Commonwealth authority under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 within the Minister's portfolio:

(1) Is information collected from stakeholders and the broader community; if so: (a) what forms or other methods are used to collect information; (b) how many of these forms are: (i) paper-based, (ii) electronic-based; and (iii) both; (c) do these forms request an estimate of the time taken to complete; if not, why not; and (d) is data collected on how long it takes to complete each form; if so, can this data be provided.

(2) For each proposed regulatory initiative since August 2010: (a) how many stakeholder consultations have been conducted; and (b) have there been any complaints from stakeholders about the consultation process; if so, from whom.

Senator Kim Carr: The Minister for Infrastructure and Transport has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

Given the very broad nature of the question and the diverse range of information collected by Australian Government agencies, attempting to answer this question would cause an unreasonable diversion of resources.

Financial Management and Accountability
(Question Nos 2241, 2242, 2272 and 2273)

Senator Bernardi asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General; the Minister for Emergency Management; the Minister for Home Affairs; and the Minister for Justice upon notice, on 3 October 2012:

In regard to each department and agency under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 and each Commonwealth authority under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 within the Minister's portfolio:

Is information collected from stakeholders and the broader community; if so: (a) what forms or other methods are used to collect information; (b) how many of these forms are: (i) paper-based, (ii) electronic-based; and (iii) both; (c) do these forms request an estimate of the time taken to complete; if not, why not; and (d) is data collected on how long it takes to complete each form; if so, can this data be provided.

For each proposed regulatory initiative since August 2010: (a) how many stakeholder consultations have been conducted; and (b) have there been any complaints from stakeholders about the consultation process; if so, from whom.

Senator Ludwig: The Attorney-General has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

Given the very broad nature of the question and the diverse range of information collected by Australian Government agencies, attempting to answer this question would cause an unreasonable diversion of resources.

Financial Management and Accountability
(Question Nos 2243, 2244, 2261, 2262, 2274 and 2275)

Senator Bernardi asked the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Minister for Disability Reform; the Minister for Housing and the Minister for Homelessness; and the Minister for Community Services and the Minister for the Status of Women, upon notice, on 3 October 2012:
In regard to each department and agency under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 and each Commonwealth authority under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 within the Minister's portfolio:

(1) Is information collected from stakeholders and the broader community; if so: (a) what forms or other methods are used to collect information; (b) how many of these forms are:

(i) paper-based, (ii) electronic based; and (iii) both; (c) do these forms request an estimate of the time taken to complete; if not, why not; and (d) is data collected on how long it takes to complete each form; if so, can this data be provided.

(2) For each proposed regulatory initiative since August 2010: (a) how many stakeholder consultations have been conducted; and (b) have there been any complaints from stakeholders about the consultation process; if so, from whom.

Senator Chris Evans: The Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Minister for Disability Reform; the Minister for Housing and the Minister for Homelessness; and the Minister for Community Services and the Minister for the Status of Women provide the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

(1) (a) to (d) and (2) (a) and (b) Given the very broad nature of the question and the diverse range of information collected by Australian Government agencies, attempting to answer this question would cause an unreasonable diversion of resources.

Financial Management and Accountability

(Question No. 2345)

Senator Ryan asked the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, upon notice, on 10 October 2012:

For each department and agency under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 and each Commonwealth authority under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 within the Minister's portfolio: For each of the following items: (a) licences; (b) registrations; (c) fee for services; and (d) permits (and all other permission structures):

(1) How many are administered to the non-government sector.

(2) What are the associated fees with each item, and which sectors of the community are required to hold each.

(3) How often does each item require renewal.

(4) What fees have been paid for each item for the following financial years (or since the item was introduced since 2007-08): (a) 2007-08; (b) 2008-09; (c) 2009-10; (d) 2010-11; (e) 2011-12; and (f) 2012-13.

(5) How much total revenue is collected annually from each of the listed items.

Senator Wong: The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Department of Finance and Deregulation</th>
<th>Australian Electoral Commission</th>
<th>ComSuper</th>
<th>Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation</th>
<th>Future Fund Management Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Licences | Two types of licences to the non-government sector are administered: 
the Rural Grazing Licence; and 
(ii) the licence related to the usage of the Malabar Headland. 
(i) There are no associated fees in obtaining the Rural Grazing Licence. However, rent for the use of the site applies. The Rural Grazing Licence affects the users of Lot 22, Lot 71 and Lot 48 Hall Block, ACT. 
(ii) There are no associated fees with obtaining a | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Department of Finance and Deregulation</th>
<th>Australian Electoral Commission</th>
<th>Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation</th>
<th>Future Fund Management Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

licence to use the Malabar Headland. However, rent for the use of the site applies. Currently, this licence only affects the New South Wales Rifle Association.
(i) The Rural Grazing Licence is a month-to-month licence and renewal is not a requirement.
(ii) Licence renewal is no longer available for the use of Malabar Headland site.
(i) The fees in the form of rent paid by the graziers for Rural Grazing Licence in the specified financial years are:
| Lot 22 | Lot 71 | Lot 48 |
| Hall Block | Hall Block | Hall Block |
| 2007-08: | | |
| 2008-09: $196.22 | $196.22 | $412.50 |
| 2009-10: $1,645.91 | $1,645.91 | $1,650.00 |
| 2010-11: $1,654.15 | $1,654.15 | $825.00 |
| 2011-12: $1,650.00 | $1,650.00 | $2,062.50 |
| 2012-13: $825.00 | $825.00 | $825.00 |
All figures are inclusive of GST.
(ii) The fees in the form of rent paid by the licensed user of the Malabar Headland in the specified financial years are:
| $69,684.25 | $69,684.25 | $69,684.25 | $69,684.25 | $43,031.82 | $27,859.32 (anticipated revenue) |
All figures are inclusive of GST.
(i) The annual revenue collected from the Rural Grazing Licence is provided in our answer in 4 (i).
(ii) The annual revenue for the Malabar Headland usage is provided in our answer in 4 (ii). The decreases in the annual revenue for 2011-12 and 2012-13 are due to the termination of a number of licensees on site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registrations</th>
<th>Fee for Services</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2007-08: 44</td>
<td>2008-09: 117</td>
<td>2009-10: 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Elections Gross Revenue</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2007-08: $1,974,883</td>
<td>2008-09: $656,863</td>
<td>2009-10: $467,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please refer to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tuesday, 5 February 2013

Financial Management and Accountability

(Question Nos 2346, 2355, 2362 and 2374)

Senator Ryan asked the Minister representing the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, the Minister for Early Childhood and Childcare, the Minister for Employment Participation, and the Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development, upon notice, on 9 October 2012:

For each department and agency under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 and each Commonwealth authority under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 within the Minister’s portfolio: For each of the following items: (a) licences; (b) registrations; (c) fee for services; and (d) permits (and all other permission structures): (1) How many are administered to the non-government sector. (2) What are the associated fees with each item, and which sectors of the community are required to hold each. (3) How often does each item require renewal. (4) What fees have been paid for each item for the following financial years (or since the item was introduced since 2007-08): (a) 2007-08; (b) 2008-09; (c) 2009-10; (d) 2010-11; (e) 2011-12; and (f) 2012-13. (5) How much total revenue is collected annually from each of the listed items.

Senator Bob Carr: The Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

Details are provided in Attachment A.

Attachment A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety and Compensation Policy Branch</th>
<th>(a) licences</th>
<th>(b) registrations</th>
<th>(c) fee for services</th>
<th>(d) permits (and all other permission structures)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) How many are administered to the non-government sector</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>The Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations has the ability to grant permits exempting, in certain defined circumstances, individuals or organisations from the general prohibition on asbestos imports and exports under the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956 and Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958. In the 2011/12 financial year, six exemptions were granted to organisations in the non-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Safety and Compensation Policy Branch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) licences</th>
<th>(b) registrations</th>
<th>(c) fee for services</th>
<th>(d) permits (and all other permission structures) and all other permission structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>government sector, under the <em>Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956</em>. No exemptions were granted under the <em>Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958</em> during the same period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) What are the Nil associated fees with each item, and which sectors of the community are required to hold each.

| Nil          | Nil              | Nil                  | No fees are charged. All individuals, organisations and Government agencies are required to hold an exemption to import or export asbestos into or out of Australia, unless certain criteria are met. These criteria are listed in the Regulations named above. |

(3) How often does Nil each item require renewal.

| Nil          | Nil              | Nil                  | Exemptions can be granted for either a one-off importation or exportation or on an on-going basis for a period of twelve months. |

(4) What fees have Nil been paid for each item for the following financial years (or since the item was introduced since 2007-08):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) 2007-08;</th>
<th>(b) 2008-09;</th>
<th>(c) 2009-10;</th>
<th>(d) 2010-11;</th>
<th>(e) 2011-12;</th>
<th>(f) 2012-13.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5) How much total Nil revenue is collected annually from each of the listed items.

| Nil          | Nil              | Nil                  | Nil          |

### COMCARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) licences</th>
<th>(b) registrations</th>
<th>(c) fee for services</th>
<th>(d) permits (and all other permission structures) and all other permission structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Hazard Facilities (MHF) - 17</td>
<td>Plant and Plant Design - approx. 1,300</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Rehab provider approval - approx 5 per year. Rehab Provider renewal -variable approx. 130 every 3 years. Health Safety Representative (HSR) Course approval - 12 Entry Permit Holder (EPH) Course approval - 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) How many are administered to the non-government sector

| Major Hazard Facilities (MHF) - 17 | Plant and Plant Design - approx. 1,300 | N/A | Rehab provider approval - approx 5 per year. Rehab Provider renewal -variable approx. 130 every 3 years. Health Safety Representative (HSR) Course approval - 12 Entry Permit Holder (EPH) Course approval - 2 |
(2) What are the associated fees with each item, and which sectors of the community are required to hold each.

- **Major Hazard Facilities** - no fee for any facilitator that meets the requirements under the WHS Act to be classified as a MHF (may be public or private sector).
- **Self insurance licence** (workers compensation) – various fees, dependant on grant of licence, a licence application fee under s102 of SRC Act and each 1 July licence fee under s104A of SRC Act.
- **Plant and Plant Design** – fee $100 every 5 years for plant registration and $90 for one off design registration. Any employer using high risk plant as defined by the WHS Act (may be public or private).
- **Rehab provider approval** – fee $2000 any rehab provider wishing to be approved to deliver rehabilitation services under the SRC Act (may be public or private).
- **Rehab Provider renewal** - fee $1,000, $3,000 or $5,000 depending on how many state approvals they are also applying for. Any rehab provider wishing to be approved to deliver rehabilitation services under the SRC Act (may be public or private).
- **HSR Course approval** - fee $5,500 any training provider wishing to be approved to deliver HSR Training (may be public or private)
- **EPH Course approval** – fee $550 any training provider wishing to be approved to deliver EPH Training (may be public or private).

(3) How often does each item require renewal.

- **Major Hazard Facilities** - every 5 years.
- **Self insurance licence** (workers compensation) - term of licence determined by Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission usually for an initial period of 2 years and then each four years.
- **Plant and Plant Design** - every 5 years.
- **Rehab Provider renewal** - every 3 years.
- **HSR Course approval** - every 5 years.
- **EPH Course approval** - every 5 years.

(4) What fees have been paid for each item for the following financial years (or since the item was introduced) since 2007-08:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Application Fee</th>
<th>Design Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>6.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>8.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>9.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>10.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>11.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>12.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rehab provider approval – fee $2000 any rehab provider wishing to be approved to deliver rehabilitation services under the SRC Act (may be public or private).
Rehab Provider renewal - fee $1,000, $3,000 or $5,000 depending on how many state approvals they are also applying for. Any rehab provider wishing to be approved to deliver rehabilitation services under the SRC Act (may be public or private).
HSR Course approval - fee $5,500 any training provider wishing to be approved to deliver HSR Training (may be public or private).
EPH Course approval – fee $550 any training provider wishing to be approved to deliver EPH Training (may be public or private).
## COMCARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) licences</th>
<th>(b) registrations</th>
<th>(c) fee for services</th>
<th>(d) permits (and all other permission structures) and all other permission structures.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5) How much total revenue is collected annually from each of the listed items.</td>
<td>See above question four.</td>
<td>See above question four.</td>
<td>See above question four.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Fair Work Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) licences</th>
<th>(b) registrations</th>
<th>(c) fee for services</th>
<th>(d) permits (and all other permission structures) and all other permission structures.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) How many are administered to the non-government sector</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>From 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012, 1583 Right of Entry permits were finalised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) What are the associated fees with each item, and which sectors of the community are required to hold each.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) How often does each item require renewal.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Section 516 of the Fair Work Act 2009 provides unless it is revoked, an entry permit expires at the earlier of the following times: (a) at the end of the period of 3 years beginning on the day it is issued, or that period as extended under subsection (2); (b) when the permit holder ceases to be an official of the organisation that applied for the permit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) What fees have been paid for each item for the following financial years (or since the item was introduced since 2007-08): (a) 2007-08; (b) 2008-09; (c) 2009-10; (d) 2010-11; (e) 2011-12; and (f) 2012-13.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) How much total revenue is collected annually from each of the listed items.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Building Industry and Programs Branch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) licences</th>
<th>(b) registrations</th>
<th>(c) fee for services</th>
<th>(d) permits (and all other permission structures) and all other permission structures.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) How many are administered to the non-government sector</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) What are the associated fees with each item, and which sectors of the community are required to hold each.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) How often does each item require renewal.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) What fees have been paid for each item for the following financial years (or since the item was introduced since 2007-08): (a) 2007-08; (b) 2008-09; (c) 2009-10; (d) 2010-11; (e) 2011-12; and (f) 2012-13.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) How much total revenue is collected annually from each of the listed items.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fair Work Australia</th>
<th>(a) licences</th>
<th>(b) registrations</th>
<th>(c) fee for services</th>
<th>(d) permits (and all other permission structures)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) How many are administered to the non-government sector</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Builders seeking to undertake Australian Government funded building work are required to be accredited in accordance with the Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme. Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) What are the associated fees with each item, and which sectors of the community are required to hold each.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Regulation 12(1) (b) of the Fair Work (Building Industry – Accreditation Scheme) Regulations 2005 states that accreditation must not be longer than three years. At the expiry of a period of accreditation, builders are required to reapply for accreditation. Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) How often does each item require renewal.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) What fees have been paid for each item for the following financial years (or since the item was introduced since 2007-08): (a) 2007-08; (b) 2008-09; (c) 2009-10; (d) 2010-11; (e) 2011-12; and (f) 2012-13.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) How much total revenue is collected annually from each of the listed items.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fair Work Australia collects fee for making an application to FWA under subsections 367(2) (c), 395 (2) (c), 373 (2) (c) and 775(2) (c) of the Fair Work Act 2009. This is not a fee for service.

1 Fair Work Australia charge application fees prescribed by s.367 of the Fair Work Act 2009. These fees are obtained by consolidated funds.

2 Right of Entry permits are upon application by a person wishing to exercise a right of entry into a workplace. They are not compulsory unless you seek to exercise the right under Part 3 4 of the Fair Work Act 2009.
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
(Question No. 2347)

Senator Ryan asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 9 October 2012:

For each of the following items: (a) licences; (b) registrations; (c) fee for services; and (d) permits (and all other permission structures):

1. How many are administered to the non-government sector.
2. What are the associated fees with each item, and which sectors of the community are required to hold each.
3. How often does each item require renewal.
4. What fees have been paid for each item for the following financial years (or since the item was introduced since 2007-08): (a) 2007-08; (b) 2008-09; (c) 2009-10; (d) 2010-11; (e) 2011-12; and (f) 2012-13.
5. How much total revenue is collected annually from each of the listed items.

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

(1) Within the Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry Portfolio there are currently 327 fees administered to the non-government sector. This is broken down by agency and item type in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>No. of Fees</th>
<th>DAFF</th>
<th>AFMA</th>
<th>WEA</th>
<th>APVMA</th>
<th>Portfolio Total</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fee For Service</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permits</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrations</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>327</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note the following;

i. The permit item category for DAFF includes permits, government certificates & other official documentation

ii. The license item category for AFMA incorporates an observer FFS charge where a company/individual chooses to be directly invoiced as opposed to receiving a levy for Observer services. Noting that an Observer FFS forms part of the total licensing charge calculation.

iii. The FFS item category for WEA relates to accreditation of bulk wheat exporters

These fees are administered by four agencies;

- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF)
- Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA)
- Wheat Export Australia (WEA)
- Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA)

(2) See Table 2, available from the Senate Table Office, for all the associated fees and industry sectors.

(3) See Table 2, available from the Senate Table Office, for renewal (frequency) of fees.

(4) See Table 3, Available from the Senate Table Office, for details of fee rates throughout the various financial years.

(5) See Table 4 for revenue by item over the various financial years.
DAFF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fee For Service</td>
<td>$189,317,40</td>
<td>$185,452,82</td>
<td>$247,076,94</td>
<td>$263,374,18</td>
<td>$276,190,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permits</td>
<td>$9,550,945</td>
<td>$11,327,272</td>
<td>$20,211,519</td>
<td>$23,225,560</td>
<td>$24,179,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrations</td>
<td>$5,899,098</td>
<td>$5,851,733</td>
<td>$9,595,301</td>
<td>$13,408,292</td>
<td>$16,665,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licence</td>
<td>$140,780</td>
<td>$149,563</td>
<td>$148,143</td>
<td>$136,804</td>
<td>$141,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>$204,908,23</td>
<td>$202,781,39</td>
<td>$277,031,90</td>
<td>$300,144,84</td>
<td>$317,177,74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AFMA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fee For Service</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permits</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrations</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licence*</td>
<td>$9,090,000</td>
<td>$9,115,000</td>
<td>$11,940,000</td>
<td>$13,445,000</td>
<td>$13,807,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>$9,090,000</td>
<td>$9,115,000</td>
<td>$11,940,000</td>
<td>$13,445,000</td>
<td>$13,807,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fee For Service</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>$494,538</td>
<td>$104,390</td>
<td>$61,215</td>
<td>$98,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permits</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrations</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licence</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>-$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>-$</td>
<td>$494,538</td>
<td>$104,390</td>
<td>$61,215</td>
<td>$98,307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APVMA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fee For Service</td>
<td>$40,085</td>
<td>$38,350</td>
<td>$44,045</td>
<td>$49,805</td>
<td>$51,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permits</td>
<td>$236,345</td>
<td>$254,206</td>
<td>$230,665</td>
<td>$255,457</td>
<td>$210,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrations</td>
<td>$6,132,880</td>
<td>$6,388,359</td>
<td>$6,297,541</td>
<td>$7,782,790</td>
<td>$8,118,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licence</td>
<td>$240,925</td>
<td>$169,210</td>
<td>$197,590</td>
<td>$217,450</td>
<td>$116,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>$6,650,235</td>
<td>$6,850,125</td>
<td>$6,769,841</td>
<td>$8,305,502</td>
<td>$8,496,692</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note the following:

i) The revenue provided in DAFF’s response to this question must be reviewed in context of the following details:

a. Some revenue data cannot be allocated to a specific fee category and is not included. These revenue adjustments can be made in the general course of business such as transfers, accruals, sundry revenues or payments without sufficient remittance information.

b. Revenue reported for DAFF excludes Government transitional assistance (rebates) of $79.4m across three financial years, in 2009-10 ($26.3m), 2010-11 ($38.6m) and 2011-12 ($14.5m).
ii) The revenue provided in AFMA's response to this question must be reviewed in context of the following details:
   a. * AFMA does not differentiate between licence, permits and Registrations in terms of Charges.
   b. AFMA revenue reported exclude Industry Levy subsidy of $15.0 million across three financial years in 2006/07 ($7m), 2007/08 ($5m) and 2008/09 ($3m).

Resources and Energy; and Tourism
(Question Nos 2348 and 2349)

Senator Ryan asked the Minister for Resources and Energy and the Minister for Tourism, upon notice, on 9 October 2012:
For each department and agency under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 and each Commonwealth authority under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 within the Minister's portfolio: For each of the following items: (a) licences; (b) registrations; (c) fee for services; and (d) permits (and all other permission structures):
(1) How many are administered to the non-government sector.
(2) What are the associated fees with each item, and which sectors of the community are required to hold each.
(3) How often does each item require renewal.
(4) What fees have been paid for each item for the following financial years (or since the item was introduced since 2007-08): (a) 2007-08; (b) 2008-09; (c) 2009-10; (d) 2010-11; (e) 2011-12; and (f) 2012-13.
(5) How much total revenue is collected annually from each of the listed items.

Senator Chris Evans: The Minister for Resources and Energy and the Minister for Tourism has provided the following response to the honourable senator's question:
The Department (excluding Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency Division and Resources Division) and Tourism Australia
(1) (a) T-QUAL Accreditation Scheme – Master Licenses.
   (b) China Approved Destination Status (ADS) Scheme – Registrations.
(2) (a) The T-QUAL Accreditation Scheme is open to quality assurance schemes. This includes accreditation programs that accord, rate or certify operators, or Large Tourism Organisations that apply a quality standard to their operations, business units or related business entities. After a quality assurance scheme submits their application, their standards and processes are assessed by independent assessors on behalf of the Tourism Quality Council of Australia (TQCA) against the T QUAL Accreditation criteria. Following approval by the TQCA, the applicant will be required to sign a Master Licence with the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism. A Master Licence allows quality assurance schemes to use the T-QUAL Tick under licence. Master Licence holders may then issue a Sub-licence to their operators or related business units to use the T-QUAL Tick
   The T-QUAL Accreditation Scheme Master License Fee is currently $1,500 per annum.
   (b) Appropriately qualified tourism businesses can apply to be registered as approved inbound tour operators under the ADS scheme. There are no registration fees associated with the China ADS Scheme.
(3) (a) The T-QUAL Accreditation Scheme Master License requires renewal every 2 years.
   (b) Registration as an approved inbound tour operator under the ADS Scheme is ongoing and does not require renewal. Approved ADS inbound tour operators are required to comply with the ADS Code
of Business Standards and Ethics. Penalties for breaches of the Code may include suspension or revocation of an operator's ADS approval.

(4) and (5) (a) T-QUAL Accreditation Scheme Master License Fees - $4,500 paid in 2010-11; $3,000 paid in 2011 12 and $18,000 paid in 2012-13 (to end October 2012).

(b) China ADS Scheme Registrations – no registration fees are payable.

**Clean Energy & Energy Efficiency Division**

(1) to (3) See table below for the 8 classes of title instruments administered under greenhouse gas sections of the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006 (OPGGSA). Non-government or government entities may apply.

Three greenhouse gas title instruments have been issued to date under the OPGGSA, but these have all been administered to government entities (1 Greenhouse Gas Assessment Permit to the Victorian Department of Primary Industries in 2011; 1 Greenhouse Gas Research Consent to the Victorian Department of Primary Industries in 2010; 1 Greenhouse Gas Research Consent to Geoscience Australia in 2012.)

**Title instruments administered under Greenhouse Gas (GHG) activities under OPGGSA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title instrument</th>
<th>Title Term</th>
<th>Application Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GHG Assessment Permit</td>
<td>6 years + possible 3 year extension</td>
<td>Application for Greenhouse Gas assessment permit (s296 of the Act). Application Fee: Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration of a Storage Formation</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>Application for Declaration (s312 of the Act). Application Fee: Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHG Injection Licence</td>
<td>Indefinite - or if no injection for a period of 3 years</td>
<td>Application for Greenhouse Gas injection licence (s361 of the Act). Application Fee: $1,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHG Holding Lease</td>
<td>5 years + one renewal for a further 5 years</td>
<td>Application for Greenhouse Gas holding lease (s324 of the Act). Application Fee: $1,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse Gas Search Authority</td>
<td>In force for a specified period which must not exceed 180 days</td>
<td>Application for Greenhouse Gas search authority (s407 of the Act). Application Fee: Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse Gas Special Authority</td>
<td>In force for a specified period which can be extended</td>
<td>Application for a Greenhouse Gas special authority (s415 of the Act). Application Fee: Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse Gas Research Consents</td>
<td>In force for a specified period</td>
<td>Application for Greenhouse Gas research consent (s425 of the Act). Application Fee: Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infra-structure &amp; Indefinite Pipeline Licences</td>
<td></td>
<td>Applications for licences (s198 &amp; s217 of the Act) respectively. Application Fees: $1,835 &amp; $4,590 respectively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(4) $0.
(5) $0 year to date.

**Resources Division**

(1) (a) A range of Offshore Petroleum fees are collected under the legislation listed below. Please see Attachment A for data from 1 January 2012.

Petroleum Revenue Act 1985

(b) Custom (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958 – A Kimberley Process Certificate is a permit which allows the holder to export a shipment of rough diamonds to another country which participates in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

(c) Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958 - as of 15 October 2012, there were 64 current permissions under Regulation 9 for the export of controlled ores and concentrates.

(d) The Offshore Minerals Act 1994 (Fees) allows for the collection of offshore minerals exploration licenses, from exploration companies.

(2) (a) Please see attached spread sheet for fees for each item. Oil and gas companies which require offshore petroleum titles are required to pay these fees.

(b) Kimberley Process Certificates – no fees are levied by the Department, although applicants for Kimberley Process Certificates are required to apply to the AFP for a Police Criminal History Check, which currently costs $42.

Any individual, company or organisation which wishes to export rough diamonds from Australia is required to hold a certificate for each shipment. In the 2011 calendar year, 122 certificates were issued, covering shipments valued at $240 million.

(c) Controlled ores and concentrates - no fees are levied by the Department. Any proponent that wishes to export controlled ores or concentrates is required to hold an export permission.

(d) An application for an exploration license costs $3,000, and its renewal after four years (for a further two years) costs $600. Minerals exploration companies require a license to explore offshore areas of Australia.

(3) a) Please see Attachment A.

(b) Each shipment of rough diamonds requires a certificate (a baseline requirement under the international Kimberley Process Certification Scheme).

(c) Controlled ores and concentrates – permissions are renewed for up to 10 years dependent upon type of material exported and whether shipment is a one-off or involves multiple shipments over an extended period.

(4) (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fee Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>Not administered by the Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>$36,413,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>$19,743,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$42,835,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>$26,371,778 (year to date, to the end of October)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) $0.

(c) $0.

(d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fee Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>Not administered by the Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>$48,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$12,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>$5,600 (year to date, to the end of October)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(5) (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fee (Year to Date, to the End of October)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>Not administered by the Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>$26,371,778</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) $0.
(c) $0.
(d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fee (Year to Date, to the End of October)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$12,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>$5,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA)

(1) (a) Fee for services applies to NOPSEMA, in the form of early engagement safety case assessment.
(b) Fee for services is administered only to the non-government sector.
(2) The costs for the assessment of early engagement safety cases are recovered via the fee for safety case assessment provisions of Regulation 36 of the OPGGS Regulations. Fees for assessment shall be billed quarterly in arrears (October, January, April and July). The hourly rate applied will be the NOPSEMA annual cost recovery rate set at the commencement of each financial year.
(3) As fee for service involves provision of a service, renewal does not apply.
(4) Early engagement fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>$213,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$178,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5) Total revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>$213,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$178,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Geoscience Australia

Only fee for services (c) applies to Geoscience Australia.

Library Membership:
(1) The number of memberships varies yearly. Across the requested reporting period the Library has had 4 - 8 individual and 1 - 2 corporate members.
(2) $100+GST for individuals, $500+GST for Corporate memberships.
(3) Annually.

(4) and (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>$900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>$1800</td>
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<td>2009-10</td>
<td>$1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>$1595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$1458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>$1400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inter-Library Loans:**

(1) The number of Inter-Library Loans provided by the agency's Library to the non-government sector are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>552</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>64 year to date.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) The Library follows the price recommendations of the Australian Interlibrary Resource Sharing Code (ILRS) under which prices have varied over the requested reporting period. Until October 2011, the base price for a standard inter-library loan was $12+GST. After this date, the standard price became $15+GST. Higher charges apply to urgently required items as detailed on the ILRS website.

(3) The vast majority of inter-library loans are single transactions.

(4) and (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>$8839.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>$8961.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>$9692.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>$8456.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$9758.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>$1569.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**National Earth Observation fee for Satellite imagery relating**

(1) One.

(2) $1,918. The fee was determined on a full cost recovery basis.

(3) N/A.

(4) and (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Petroleum Data Repository – distribution of products**
(1) Almost all items are administered to the non-government sector.

(2) Fees for distribution of products from the Petroleum Data Repository are set in accordance with the Australian Government's Spatial Data Access and Pricing Policy 2001. Under this policy fees are set at the marginal cost of transfer.

   Marginal cost of transfer is defined as:
   - Free, when the data is routinely available on-line for self service;
   - Run-on cost, for standard, bulk-produced products;
   - Full cost of distribution for all other products.

(3) N/A.

(4) and (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Compass Calibration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>$1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>$2100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>$3850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>$4150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$4550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>$350/year to date, to the end of October</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compass Calibration**

(1) All.

(2) Compass calibrations - $350+GST. Compass swing bay calibrations – fees will be calculated on full cost recovery basis.

(3) Geoscience Australia does not impose any renewal requirements. The Civil Aviation Safety Authority and Australian Maritime Safety Authority govern compass calibrations in relation to aviation and maritime activities.

(4) and (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Compass Calibration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>$1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>$2100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>$3850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>$4150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$4550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>$350/year to date, to the end of October</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ATTACHMENT A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGISTRATION FEES – applicable to both Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Titles</th>
<th>Registration Fees Act Provisions</th>
<th>Current Fee ($)</th>
<th>2011-12 Number</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
<th>2012-13 Number</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
<th>Renewal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum fee for approval and registration of transfers and dealings</td>
<td>Section 5 – Items 2 &amp; 3 (Petroleum) Section 6 - Item 5 (Petroleum) Section 6A – Items 2 &amp; 3 (GHG) Section 6B – Item 5 (GHG)</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>56,120</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34,040</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration fee in the case of related corporations (ie</td>
<td>Section 5 – Item 4 (Petroleum)</td>
<td>4,590</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9,180</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4,590</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**
### Registration Fees Act Provisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Application</th>
<th>Current Fee ($)</th>
<th>2011-12 Number</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
<th>2012-13 Number</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
<th>Renewal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration fee (entry into/alteration of register) petroleum</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,418</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>315</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration fee (entry into/alteration of register) GHG</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register inspection fee petroleum</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register inspection fee GHG</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document and certification fee petroleum</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>837</td>
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<td>Document and certification fee GHG</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document and certification fee petroleum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Document and certification fee GHG</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information fees petroleum</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information fees GHG</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample inspection fees petroleum</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sample inspection fees</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Schedule 6: Application – Part 1 (petroleum)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Type of application</th>
<th>Current Fee ($)</th>
<th>2011-12 Number</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
<th>2012-13 Number</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
<th>Renewal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Work-bid petroleum exploration</td>
<td>5,220</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>97,290</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tuesday, 5 February 2013

SENATE

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

2011-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Type of application</th>
<th>Current Fee ($)</th>
<th>2011-12 Number</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
<th>2012-13 Number</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
<th>Renewal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Special petroleum exploration permit</td>
<td>5,220</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Petroleum production licence over a surrendered block</td>
<td>5,220</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Pipeline licence</td>
<td>5,220</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Cash-bid petroleum exploration permit</td>
<td>2,090</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27,170</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12,540</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Renewal of petroleum exploration permit (all types)</td>
<td>2,090</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Petroleum retention lease (all types)</td>
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<td>106</td>
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<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Petroleum production licence (other than in items 107 and 108)</td>
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<td>110</td>
<td>Renewal of petroleum production licence (all types)</td>
<td>2,090</td>
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<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Infrastructure licence</td>
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<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Petroleum production licence over an individual block</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>9,690</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4,200</td>
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<td>Variation of pipeline licence</td>
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<td>Petroleum special prospecting authority</td>
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Schedule 6: Application – Part 2 (GHG)

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Type of application</th>
<th>Current Fee ($)</th>
<th>2011-12 Number</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
<th>2012-13 Number</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
<th>Renewal</th>
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<td>203</td>
<td>Renewal of greenhouse gas assessment permit</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>204</td>
<td>Greenhouse gas holding lease (all types)</td>
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<td>Greenhouse gas search authority</td>
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Human Services

(Question No. 2361)

Senator Ryan asked the Minister for Human Services, upon notice, on 9 October 2012:

For each department and agency under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 and each Commonwealth authority under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 within the Minister's portfolio:

For each of the following items: (a) licences; (b) registrations; (c) fee for services; and (d) permits (and all other permission structures):
(1) How many are administered to the non-government sector.

(2) What are the associated fees with each item, and which sectors of the community are required to hold each.

(3) How often does each item require renewal.

(4) What fees have been paid for each item for the following financial years (or since the item was introduced since 2007-08): (a) 2007-08; (b) 2008-09; (c) 2009-10; (d) 2010-11; (e) 2011-12; and (f) 2012-13.

(5) How much total revenue is collected annually from each of the listed items.

Senator Kim Carr: The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

(1) The following are administered to the non-government sector:

(a) Licences: Not applicable.

(b) Registrations:

(i) Medicare Specialist Recognition registration (Health Insurance Act 1973 sections 3DB and 3E)—application for specialist recognition as a medical specialist, in order to claim Medicare benefits.

(ii) Approved Pathology Laboratories registration (Health Insurance Act 1973/Health Insurance (Pathology) (Fees) Act 1991)—registration as an approved pathology laboratory in order to obtain Medicare benefits for pathology services rendered.

(iii) Approved Pathology Authorities registration (Health Insurance Act 1973/Health Insurance (Pathology) (Fees) Act 1991)—registration as an approved pathology authority in order to claim the Medicare rebate for pathology services.

(iv) Approved Collection Centres registration (Health Insurance Act 1973/Health Insurance (Approved Pathology Specimen Collection Centres) Tax Act 2000)—registration as an approved pathology specimen collection centre in order to receive Medicare benefits.

(v) Approved Pathology Practitioner registration (Health Insurance Act 1973/Health Insurance (Pathology) (Fees) Act 1991)—registration as an approved pathology practitioner in order to obtain Medicare benefits.

(vi) Approved Suppliers of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines registration.

(vii) Botox registered doctors under the PBS registration.

(viii) Medication Management Programs:

(i) Home Medicines Review (HMR) registration—registration for accredited pharmacists and community pharmacies to conduct HMR's.

(ii) Residential Medication Management Review (RMMR) registration—registration for pharmacists in collaboration with a general practitioner to conduct RMMR's.

(iii) Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance (RPMA) registration—registration for pharmacies to obtain the RPMA.

(iv) Medicines Use Review (MedsCheck) registration—registration for pharmacies to obtain the status of MedCheck service provider.

(v) Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) registration—registration for accredited pharmacists to provide QUM services.

(c) Fee for services: Not applicable.

(d) Permits: Not applicable.

(2) The associated fees for each item and the sectors of the community that are required to hold each, are as follows:
(a) Registrations:
   (i) Medicare Specialist Recognition registration fee.
   Fee: $30.00
   Required by: Specialised medical practitioners.
   (ii) Approved Pathology Laboratories registration fee.
   Fee: $750 - $2,500 depending on the assessment from the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA).
   Required by: Pathology services.
   (iii) Approved Pathology Authorities registration fee.
   Fee: $1,500
   Required by: Approved Pathology Authorities.
   (iv) Approved Collection Centres registration fee.
   Fee: $1,000
   Required by: Pathology companies.
   (v) Approved Pathology Practitioner registration fee.
   Fee: $500
   Required by: Any medical practitioner that wants to become an approved pathology practitioner.
   (vi) Approved Suppliers of PBS medication registration.
   Fee: Not applicable.
   Required by: Approved pharmacists, doctors, private and public hospitals to supply/dispense PBS medicines.
   (vii) Botox registered doctors under the PBS registration.
   Fee: Not applicable.
   Required by: Approved doctors that are registered to inject Botox under the PBS.
   (viii) Medication Management Programs:
   (i) HMR registration.
   (ii) RMMR registration.
   (iii) RPMA registration.
   (iv) MedsCheck registration.
   (v) QUM registration.
   Fee: Not applicable.
   Required by: Pharmacists, pharmacies and other non specialist medical practitioners who provide non referred services.

(3) How often does each item require renewal:
   (i) Specialist Recognition registration—this is a one off application (unless registration is revoked).
   (ii) Approved Pathology Laboratories registration—this registration needs to be renewed every 6 months to 3 years, depending on the determination from NATA.
   (iii) Approved Pathology Authorities registration—annually.
   (iv) Approved Collection Centres registration—annually.
   (v) Approved Pathology Practitioner registration—annually.
(vi) Approved Suppliers of PBS medicines registration—this is a one off application, unless the approved supplier's circumstances change.

(vii) Botox registered doctors under the PBS registration—this is a one off application.

(viii) Medication Management Programs:
   (i) HMR registration - this is a one off application, unless the reviewer's circumstances change.
   (ii) RMMR registration—annually.
   (iii) RPMA registration - annually.
   (iv) MedsCheck registration - this is a one off application, unless the reviewer's circumstances change.

(v) QUM registration - this is a one off application, unless the reviewer's circumstances change.

(4) The fees that have been paid for each item for the following financial years (or since the item was introduced since 2007-08): (a) 2007-08; (b) 2008-09; (c) 2009-10; (d) 2010-11; (e) 2011-12; and (f) 2012-13 include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
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<tr>
<td>Specialist Recognition registration</td>
<td>$42,122</td>
<td>$49,983</td>
<td>$46,187</td>
<td>$51,507</td>
<td>$50,530</td>
<td>$10,752</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approved Pathology Laboratories registration</td>
<td>$1,600,027</td>
<td>1,520,158</td>
<td>$1,608,033</td>
<td>$1,497,250</td>
<td>$591,750</td>
<td>$87,050</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approved Pathology Authorities registration</td>
<td>$210,500</td>
<td>$220,000</td>
<td>$212,000</td>
<td>$200,001</td>
<td>$199,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approved Collection Centres registration</td>
<td>$2,193,492</td>
<td>$2,465,790</td>
<td>$2,484,229</td>
<td>$3,108,384</td>
<td>$5,818,205</td>
<td>$1,022,612</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approved Pathology Practitioner registration</td>
<td>$377,010</td>
<td>$363,000</td>
<td>$312,500</td>
<td>$279,296</td>
<td>$283,500</td>
<td>$71,376</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5) The total revenue that is collected annually from each of the listed items is as follows:
   Refer to the table at question 4.

Special Minister of State
(Question No. 2368)

Senator Ryan asked the Minister representing the Special Minister of State, upon notice, on 10 October 2012:

For each department and agency under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 and each Commonwealth authority under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 within the Minister's portfolio: For each of the following items: (a) licences; (b) registrations; (c) fee for services; and (d) permits (and all other permission structures):

(1) How many are administered to the non-government sector.

(2) What are the associated fees with each item, and which sectors of the community are required to hold each.

(3) How often does each item require renewal.

(4) What fees have been paid for each item for the following financial years (or since the item was introduced since 2007-08): (a) 2007-08; (b) 2008-09; (c) 2009-10; (d) 2010-11; (e) 2011-12; and (f) 2012-13.

(5) How much total revenue is collected annually from each of the listed items.
Senator Wong: The Special Minister of State has supplied the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

Please refer to the Minister for Finance and Deregulation's response to Question No. 2345.

Intellectual Property Laws Amendment (Raising the Bar) Bill 2012
(Question No. 2379)

Senator Ludlam asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 10 October 2012:

In regard to amendments to the Intellectual Property Laws Amendment (Raising the Bar) Bill 2011 that improve mechanisms for trade mark and copyright enforcement (Schedule 5):

(1) Can examples be provided of situations in which the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service has needed more personal information to pass onto companies or individuals alleging infringement of their copyright about those alleged to have imported infringing goods (section 135AC(8)(a))?

(2) Can a description be provided of the kinds of personal information which the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service envisages collecting.

(3) Can an outline be provided of the safeguards for persons or companies whose personal information is being divulged to the complainant.

(4) Is there a requirement that the alleged copyright infringer be made aware that personal information is being disclosed.

(5) Do those filing a notice with the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service asking for the seizure of goods have to prove to that organisation that the goods are infringing copyright before customs will intervene?

(6) Can personal information be passed on to a complainant without proof of infringement of copyright?

(7) Would recent amendments to the Copyright Act 1968 and the inclusion of 'personal information' make permissible the kinds of surveillance conducted in New Zealand in the Megaupload case.

Senator Wong: The Attorney-General has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

(1) Can examples be provided of situations in which the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service has needed more personal information to pass onto companies or individuals alleging infringement of their copyright about those alleged to have imported infringing goods (section 135AC(8)(a))?

Customs and Border Protection will not collect any additional personal information under the revised legislation. Currently, some importers may avoid identification for civil action by nominating fake addresses or storage facilities on their import documentation, or the documentation itself maybe incomplete. Under the revised legislation, where it is known and considered appropriate, Customs and Border Protection may release, for example, the name of a company principal or an alternative private address to assist with the serving of legal documents.

Disclosure of the overseas supplier will also be permitted under the revised amendments.

(2) Can a description be provided of the kinds of personal information which the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service envisages collecting.

As noted above, no additional personal information is to be collected. Commercial trade information is received from importers as part of normal import clearance reporting procedures, copied from international mail consignments or taken from international travellers carrying commercial quantities of...
suspected counterfeit goods. Information may also be received and recorded by Customs and Border Protection from objectors as to persons or entities they suspect of infringing their rights.

(3) Can an outline be provided of the safeguards for persons or companies whose personal information is being divulged to the complainant.

Existing provisions under s16 of the Customs Administration Act 1985, restricts the release of information acquired by Customs and Border Protection, except in specific circumstances, including where it is authorised by another law. Severe penalties apply to breaches of the Act.

The Trade Mark and Copyright Acts authorise the disclosure of those information fields specified under the amended Acts. Information may only be disclosed where a rights holder has asserted their rights under the Notice of Objection Scheme, where a Customs Officer has a reasonable suspicion that goods detected at the border are counterfeit or pirated, the goods appear to be for a commercial purpose or public display, and formal seizure action has been undertaken.

Any personal information disclosed to a rights holder is limited to information that will assist a right holder to identify the importer name and locate the home or business address and address for service. Additionally the name and address of any entity responsible for making arrangements on behalf of the designated owner for the goods to be brought to Australia may also be disclosed.

(4) Is there a requirement that the alleged copyright infringer be made aware that personal information is being disclosed.

No. However there is an obligation for Customs and Border Protection to advise the importer / designated owner of the seizure of the goods, in which case the infringer would become aware that information relevant to the seizure will be released to the rights holder.

(5) Do those filing a notice with the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service asking for the seizure of goods have to prove to that organisation that the goods are infringing copyright before customs will intervene?

No. Customs and Border Protection makes the decision to seize based upon information or intelligence the agency holds that leads to a reasonable suspicion that the goods are counterfeit or pirated. In most cases, the goods seized will provide the evidence of the goods being infringing for any subsequent litigation action undertaken by the rights holder.

(6) Can personal information be passed on to a complainant without proof of infringement of copyright?

Personal information is disclosed to a rights holder / objector only when a seizure is made, and in the circumstances described above. In Australia, only the courts can determine if goods are infringing.

(7) Would recent amendments to the Copyright Act 1968 and the inclusion of 'personal information' make permissible the kinds of surveillance conducted in New Zealand in the Megaupload case.

The Copyright Act does not provide law enforcement agencies with specific surveillance powers relating to IP infringement.

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
(Question No. 2383)

Senator Ludlam asked the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, upon notice, on 18 October 2012:

To ask the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy—With reference to the brief employment of Mr Tim Byrnes by the Department and his dismissal:

(1) Did Mr Byrnes voluntarily disclose information to the Department arising from his work immediately preceding his engagement?

(2) Did the Department know what the alleged document was, what country it referred to or any of its details?
(3) Did departmental staff view, read, review or examine the alleged material to confirm its existence and content?

(4) Did Mr Byrnes have any opportunity to discuss the issues raised in his letter of dismissal before being escorted from the building on his fourth day of work?

(5) Did the Department undertake any inquiry or investigation before the instant dismissal on account of Mr Byrnes' prior, legitimate activities as a journalist?

(6) Why did the Department contact the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) after Mr Byrnes dismissal was reported in the Canberra Times, and not at the time of dismissal if a security issue was involved?

(7) Why was it necessary to call the National Security Hotline to discuss information voluntarily disclosed by an Australian Government employee on a protected clearance level?

(8) Has a protected clearance level employee ever been reported to ASIO or the National Security Hotline in the past?

(9) On what occasions has the Secretary of the Department, the Minister, and/or Senator Conroy’s office been briefed in regard to matters concerning Mr Byrnes?

Senator Conroy: The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

Mr Byrnes was employed as a non-ongoing employee by the Department from 6 March 2012 to 9 March 2012.

The Department does not comment on personal matters concerning current or former employees for privacy and other reasons.

The Department can confirm Mr Byrnes non-ongoing employment was terminated on 9 March 2012 on grounds relating to matters that occurred prior to his employment with the Department, which Mr Byrnes did not disclose until after the commencement of his non-ongoing employment contract.

In ceasing Mr Byrnes employment, the Department met all its obligations under the Fair Work Act 2009.

Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
(Question No. 2385)

Senator Ludlam asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, upon notice, on 19 October 2012 -

With reference to the mandatory disclosure of payments for listed extractive companies and the Publish What You Pay initiative:

(1) Is the Government aware of the efforts to stop corruption across the world through new rules for the mandatory disclosure of payments made by extractive industry companies to governments.

(2) Has the department conducted any research or provided any advice on these laws; if so, can copies be provided.

(3) Has the Minister been briefed on these developments and what steps is the department taking to determine whether Australia should follow suit.

(4) Given that BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto and other ASX listed companies will be covered by the new regulations as they are also listed in the United States (US), has the department discussed with these companies the possibility of aligning Australia's legislation with rules in other nations.

(5) What progress has been made in regard to the pilot Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) program being undertaken in Australia.
(6) What is the Minister's view on the statement by the Chair of EITI, former United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Development, Ms Clare Short, that the 'SEC and EU transparency requirements are complementary to, and not in conflict with, the EITI transparency requirements. Let us be clear, the extraction of oil, gas, and minerals is still failing to bring the benefits to ordinary citizens that it should, particularly in the poorer countries. Implementation of the EITI standard does not achieve enough in isolation. We need a range of different transparency, accountability and governance reforms'.

(7) Has the US Government, which is undertaking the EITI in addition to implementing legislation, got it wrong.

**Senator Wong:** The Treasurer has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

1. The Government is aware of such efforts by some countries.
2. No. The Government is undertaking a domestic pilot of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Consideration of alternative rules will be considered after the completion of the pilot.
3. Refer to response to Question 2.
4. No.
5. A Multi Stakeholder Group has been formed to oversee the pilot process, which is chaired and supported by the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism. The MSG will deliver a report to the Government outlining the outcomes of the pilot upon completion.
6. The Government will consider the various approaches to transparency in the extractives sector upon completion of the domestic pilot of the EITI.
7. The Australian Government is not in a position to comment on legislative approaches taken in the US, as it is a matter for their Government.