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SITTING DAYS—2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>11, 12, 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>3, 4, 5, 6, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27</td>
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<td>June</td>
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<td>7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
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<td>September</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27</td>
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<td>December</td>
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FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FOURTH PERIOD

Governor-General
His Excellency General the Hon. Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, MC (Retd)

Senate Office holders
President—Senator Hon. Stephen Parry
Temporary Chairs of Committees—Senators Christopher John Back, Cory Bernardi, Sam Dastyari, Sean Edwards, Alexander McEachin Gallacher, Susan Lines, Deborah Mary O'Neill, Nova Maree Peris OAM, Dean Anthony Smith, Zdenko Matthew Seselja, Glenn Sterle, Peter Stuart Whish-Wilson and John Reginald Williams
Leader of the Government in the Senate—Senator Hon. Eric Abetz
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate—Senator Hon. George Henry Brandis QC
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate—Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Manager of Government Business in the Senate—Senator Hon. Mitchell Peter Fifield
Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate—Senator Claire Moore

Senate Party Leaders and Whips
Leader of the Liberal Party in the Senate—Senator Hon. Eric Abetz
Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in the Senate—Senator Hon. George Henry Brandis QC
Leader of The Nationals in the Senate—Senator Hon. Nigel Scullion
Deputy Leader of The Nationals in the Senate—Senator Hon. Fiona Nash
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate—Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate—Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy
Leader of the Australian Greens—Senator Christine Anne Milne
Leader of the Palmer United Party in the Senate—Senator Glenn Patrick Lazarus
Deputy Leader of the Palmer United Party in the Senate—Senator Jacqui Lambie
Chief Government Whip—Senator David Christopher Bushby
Deputy Government Whips—Senators David Julian Fawcett and Anne Sowerby Ruston
The Nationals Whip—Senator Barry James O'Sullivan
Chief Opposition Whip—Senator Anne McEwen
Deputy Opposition Whips—Senators Catriona Louise Bilyk and Anne Elizabeth Urquhart
Australian Greens Whip—Senator Rachel Siewert
Palmer United Party Whip—Senator Zhenya Wang
Deputy Palmer United Party Whip—Senator Jacqui Lambie

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senator</th>
<th>State or Territory</th>
<th>Term expires</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abetz, Hon. Eric</td>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>30.6.2017</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Back, Christopher John</td>
<td>WA</td>
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<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bernardi, Cory</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>30.6.2020</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bilyk, Catryna Louise</td>
<td>TAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birmingham, Hon. Simon John</td>
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<td>30.6.2020</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandis, Hon. George Henry, QC</td>
<td>QLD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown, Carol Louise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bullock, Joseph Warrington</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bushby, David Christopher</td>
<td>TAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cameron, Hon. Douglas Niven</td>
<td>NSW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canavan, Matthew James</td>
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<td>30.6.2020</td>
<td>LNP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carr, Hon. Kim John</td>
<td>VIC</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Cash, Hon. Michaelia Clare</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>30.6.2020</td>
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<td>Colbeck, Hon. Richard Mansell</td>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>30.6.2020</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collins, Hon. Jacinta Mary Ann</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>30.6.2020</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conroy, Hon. Stephen Michael</td>
<td>VIC</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cormann, Hon. Mathias Hubert Paul</td>
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<td>30.6.2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dasttyari, Sam</td>
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<td>30.6.2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day, Robert John</td>
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<td>Di Natale, Richard</td>
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<td>Edwards, Sean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faulkner, Hon. John Philip</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fawcett, David Julian</td>
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<td>Fierravanti-Wells, Hon. Concetta Anna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifield, Hon. Mitchell Peter</td>
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<td>30.6.2020</td>
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<td>Gallacher, Alexander McEachian</td>
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<td>Hanson-Young, Sarah Coral</td>
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<td>30.6.2020</td>
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<td>Heffernan, Hon. William Daniel</td>
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<td>Lazarus, Glenn Patrick</td>
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<td>Leyonhjelm, David Ean</td>
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<td>Lines, Susan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ludlam, Scott</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lundy, Kate Alexandra</td>
<td>ACT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Macdonald, Hon. Ian Douglas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madigan, John Joseph</td>
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<td>Marshall, Gavin Mark</td>
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<td>McEwen, Anne</td>
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<td>McGrath, James</td>
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<td>McKenzie, Bridget</td>
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<tr>
<td>McLucas, Hon. Jan Elizabeth</td>
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<td>Milne, Christine Anne</td>
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<td>30.6.2017</td>
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<td>Moore, Claire Mary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muir, Ricky Lee</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>30.6.2020</td>
<td>AMEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nash, Hon. Fiona Joy</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>30.6.2017</td>
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Pursuant to section 42 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, the terms of service of the following senators representing the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory expire at the close of the day immediately before the polling day for the next general election of members of the House of Representatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territory</th>
<th>Senator</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Senator</th>
<th>Party</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>Lundy, K.</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Seselja, Z.M.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>Scullion, N. G.</td>
<td>CLP</td>
<td>Peris, N. M.</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(1) Chosen by the Parliament of New South Wales to fill a casual vacancy (vice R. Carr), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

AG—Australian Greens; ALP—Australian Labor Party;
AMEP—Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party; CLP—Country Liberal Party;
FFP—Family First Party; IND—Independent, LDP—Liberal Democratic Party;
LNP—Liberal National Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia;
NATS—The Nationals; PUP—Palmer United Party
Heads of Parliamentary Departments

Clerk of the Senate—R Laing
Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—C Mills
Parliamentary Budget Officer—P Bowen
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Minister</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Hon Tony Abbott MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Employment</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Eric Abetz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development</td>
<td>The Hon Warren Truss MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional</td>
<td>The Hon Jamie Briggs MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>The Hon Julie Bishop MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>The Hon Andrew Robb AO MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Brett Mason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Employment</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Eric Abetz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
<td>The Hon Luke Hartsuyker MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Employment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of the House)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td>The Hon George Brandis QC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for the Arts</td>
<td>The Hon George Brandis QC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Justice</td>
<td>The Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon Joe Hockey MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Small Business</td>
<td>The Hon Bruce Billson MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon Steven Ciobo MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Agriculture</td>
<td>The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Education</td>
<td>The Hon Christopher Pyne MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Leader of the House)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Education</td>
<td>The Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Scott Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Industry</td>
<td>The Hon Ian Macfarlane MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry</td>
<td>The Hon Bob Baldwin MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Social Services</td>
<td>The Hon Kevin Andrews MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Social Services</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Manager of Government Business in the Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Human Services</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Marise Payne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Communications</td>
<td>The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communications</td>
<td>The Hon Paul Fletcher MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Health</td>
<td>The Hon Peter Dutton MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Sport</td>
<td>The Hon Peter Dutton MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Health</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Defence</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon David Johnston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Veterans' Affairs</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Hon Stuart Robert MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Hon Darren Chester MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for the Environment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment</td>
<td>The Hon Greg Hunt MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</td>
<td>The Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Finance</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Minister of State</td>
<td>The Hon Michael McCormack MP</td>
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</table>

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 Human Services in the Social Services portfolio and 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>SHADOW MINISTER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon Bill Shorten MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader for Science</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Kim Carr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader for Small Business</td>
<td>Hon Bernie Ripoll MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business</td>
<td>Julie Owens MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon Michael Danby MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager of Opposition Business (Senate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>Hon David Feeney MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Penny Wong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Gai Brodtmann MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</td>
<td>Hon Anthony Albanese MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Cities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Regional Development and Local Government</td>
<td>Hon Julie Collins MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Infrastructure</td>
<td>Hon Alannah MacTiernan MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Western Australia</td>
<td>Hon Warren Snowdon MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon Chris Bowen MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation</td>
<td>Hon Bernie Ripoll MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Shadow Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon Ed Husan MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon Tony Burke MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager of Opposition Business (House)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water</td>
<td>Hon Mark Butler MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon Lisa Singh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Vocational Education</td>
<td>Hon Sharon Bird MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Higher Education</td>
<td>Hon Amanda Rishworth MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Manufacturing</td>
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The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. Stephen Parry) took the chair at 10:00, read prayers and made an acknowledgement of country.

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.

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

COMMITTEES

Meeting

The Clerk: Committees have lodged proposals to meet as follows: the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee for a public hearing today, from 5 pm; the Finance and Public Administration References Committee for a private meeting today, from 1.50 pm; the Select Committee on Health for a private meeting today, from 4.45 pm; and the Community Affairs References Committee for a public hearing today, from 7 pm.

The PRESIDENT (10:01): I remind senators that the question may be put on any proposal at the request of any senator.

Senator Fifield: Could the clerk go through those again? We only have listed on the red the Finance and Public Administration References Committee and the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee as sitting today.

The Clerk: In addition to the proposals for the finance and public administration legislation and references committees to meet, as printed on the red, subsequently received were proposals from the Select Committee on Health for a private meeting today, from 4.45 pm and the Community Affairs References Committee for a public hearing today, from 7 pm.

The PRESIDENT: Again, I mention that any senator may request that the question may be put on any proposal.

Senator Fifield: I would just indicate that I do not think this process is working particularly well. If matters are circulated only an hour before the chamber meets, that really does not give a great deal—

Senator Ludwig interjecting—

Senator Fifield: You are leaving this place, aren’t you, Senator? It is something that we have flagged in the Procedure Committee previously.

The PRESIDENT: Senator Fifield, I think that is a matter to be discussed between whips and maybe by the Procedure Committee. This is the process we have at the moment. There has been no request to put the question, so we will continue.
BILLs

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 6) Bill 2014

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Senator BILYK (Tasmania—Deputy Opposition Whip in the Senate) (10:03): I rise to speak on the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 6) Bill 2014. This is the bill the Senate should have considered five months ago. It is a bill which contains sensible savings measures—measures which the government could have had passed through the Senate with the opposition's support if they weren't so stubborn. The government knew that their social services budget measures Nos 1 and 2 bills would not get through the Senate in that form, and yet they persisted with their all-or-nothing approach.

The result is that the savings measures which can be supported are now going to be passed a few months late. They are going to be passed late because, unlike the previous Labor government, which negotiated a record amount of legislation in minority government, this government does not have the skills or the temperament to negotiate effectively with the opposition or crossbenchers in the Senate.

The savings the government put forward in the original social services bills—the bills which implemented some of the worst elements of their cruel and heartless budget—were supposed to be in response to a so-called budget emergency. But we know that the budget emergency is simply a political tool to try to make their claims of an economic disaster a self-fulfilling prophecy. Perhaps they hoped that the harshest, cruellest measures of the budget would pass the Senate and that Australians suffering their cruel cuts would blame Labor for their pain. But the Australian people are much smarter than that. They can see through these amateur parlour tricks. The budget emergency is not looking like an emergency at all. It is not looking like a real emergency, because the government are not treating it as such.

I will use a simple analogy to explain what I am talking about. Imagine the budget emergency is a house fire. What would our emergency services do in response to a house fire? More importantly, what would they not do? First of all, they certainly would not add more fuel to the fire. Yet that is exactly what Australia's Treasurer, Mr Hockey, did immediately after getting into government when he doubled the deficit; when he gave an $8.8 billion gift to the Reserve Bank of Australia, against the advice of his own Treasury department; and when the first legislative priority of this government was to deliver tax breaks for big polluters and billionaire miners.

If there were a real emergency, the government would not destroy the house in order to stop the fire. After all, the government have had the gall to claim that our standing of living is under threat unless we accept their savings proposals. But many of their savings proposals fundamentally undermine the very standard of living that the government purport to defend. It is precisely because of standard-of-living issues that Labor rejected the cruel proposals in the original version of this bill, which would have cut pensions by $80 a week over the next 10 years, which would have cut family tax benefit part B for families—including single parent
families—when their youngest child turned six and which would have seen young unemployed people going without any income whatsoever for six months of every year.

If the government believe that the way to maintain Australians' standard of living is to plunge seniors, young job seekers and families into poverty, then they really are trying to have their cake and eat it too. Our fundamental sense of equity and fairness, the idea that everyone has the right to a safety net that guarantees them a fair standard of living regardless of their circumstances, is a foundation stone of Australian society. And you do not save a house by pulling down its foundations. Finally, if there were a real emergency—to use our house fire analogy once again—they would try and douse the flames of the fire as quickly as possible. In other words, they would take whatever agreement on savings they could, when they could.

You will hear those on the government benches claim that Labor are not playing a constructive role or that we are standing in the way of so-called budget repair. This is rank hypocrisy from a government which already doubled the deficit shortly after coming to power. Not only is this claim hypocritical; it is fundamentally false. For example, we have put forward the sensible and constructive suggestion that the government dump its costly, ineffective and wasteful Paid Parental Leave scheme, the scheme that is rejected by business, rejected by the unions, rejected by sensible economic commentators and even rejected by some of the government's own experts in the Productivity Commission, who said that a wage replacement scheme would have 'few incremental benefits' over the highly successful scheme that Labor put in place. The bill we are considering right now is strong evidence that this claim is false, because Labor have shown that we will accept sensible savings measures when the government puts them forward.

I will go back to what I said at the start of this speech. This is the bill that the government could have—and would have—had passed by the Senate had they introduced it five months ago. It implements those savings measures that the opposition agreed to support from the Social Services and Other Legislation (2014 Budget Measures No. 1) Bill and the Social Services and Other Legislation (2014 Budget Measures No. 2) Bill. There are a couple of relatively minor expense measures, and the financial impact statement shows the net effect of the measures in the bill to be a saving of about $2.7 billion over the forward estimates. But the Abbott government have been so determined to push ahead with their harsh, cruel and unfair proposals—cuts to pensions, cuts to the family tax benefit and cuts to income support for young job seekers—that they rejected the cooperation that Labor was offering on passing the savings measures contained in the bill we are now debating.

As a result of this government's stubbornness and this government's pig-headed arrogance, it has had these savings measures delayed by five months. These are not the actions of a government that is dealing with a so-called budget emergency, and that is because there is no budget emergency at all. There is no burning building. There is just a group of people on that side of the chamber running around yelling, 'Fire, fire!' and hoping that, if they yell it loud enough and for long enough, the Australian people will believe them. It is pretty juvenile behaviour from a government that is claiming that the adults are back in charge.

We know there is no budget emergency because 63 eminent Australian economists signed an open letter clearly stating that there is no budget emergency. In fact, the economists claimed in their letter:
… Australia's ability to manage public debt is very strong.
They said that Australia is not facing 'any present or imminent debt crisis'. In a major inconvenience to this government and its narrative, the economists warned that severe spending cuts would hamper job creation and economic growth. In fact, the open letter states:

Major spending reductions by the Commonwealth government are economically unnecessary and socially damaging.

I will come to the 'socially damaging' part a bit later on. I repeat: 'economically unnecessary and socially damaging'.

The actions of the government to date—their new spending commitments, their axing of revenue streams, their wasteful projects like the gold-plated Paid Parental Leave scheme and the widely ridiculed Direct Action—combined with their lack of urgency to secure Senate support for reasonable savings measures, indicate that the government do not really believe in their manufactured emergency anyway. If it were a real emergency, we would have seen this bill in this place five months ago when the original bills were introduced.

The truth is that the budget emergency is a fiction. It is a political tool designed to fool Australians into thinking that Labor left this government with some kind of fiscal disaster. How inconvenient for the government that Australia's leading economists have so comprehensively rebuked this narrative. I think it is about time that the government dropped this ridiculous pretence that somehow it had no choice but to adopt the cruel cuts that it put forward in the original bills. Labor does not accept the premise that there is some budget emergency in urgent need of repair. Australia's leading economists do not support the premise. It is clear from the government's actions that it does not accept the premise either, at least not for anything but some cynical political stunt which is turning into quite a comical charade.

Even if we did, for argument's sake, accept the premise, how could that possibly excuse the abject cruelty that this government seeks to unleash with its welfare changes? Let us not forget that, despite the humiliating backdown which led to the government introducing this bill in this place today, it is still committed to its original social services bill. It is still committed to the most cruel and painful measures at the centre of its heartless budget, the measures which attack the most disadvantaged people in our society and which easily have the potential—and I am not exaggerating here—to push people who are already vulnerable into starvation, poverty and homelessness.

It is interesting to reflect on the fact that only a few weeks ago it was Anti-Poverty Week, and this government marked the week by pushing ahead with measures that will further entrench poverty and disadvantage. After all, what options does a young unemployed person have if they have no family support, cannot get a training place and face the prospect of going six months without any income? What options do a family have, particularly a single parent family, when their budget is stretched to the limit and they face the prospect of losing $100 a fortnight of family tax benefit?

The Australian people have already been loud and clear in their rejection of this unfair budget, so why is the government persisting? It is as if it is determined to unleash as much cruelty as possible on the Australian public and keep trying to blame Labor for the consequences. That cheap political trick will not work, because the Australian people are a lot smarter than that. They know that budgets are about choices and that there are plenty of
alternatives available to the government other than attacking pensioners, young job seekers and low-income families. For example, the government did not have to hand over $8.8 billion to the Reserve Bank against the advice of Treasury. It did not have to give a tax break to some of Australia's wealthiest mining companies or to Australia's 16,000 richest superannuants. It did not have to write out $50,000 cheques to millionaire mums.

Australians understand the sensible, fair alternative savings that are available to this government. They are fully aware of the choices that are facing this government. But this government takes the Australian people for fools, because it is trying to convince the Australian people that it is being forced to unleash abject cruelty on the most vulnerable people in our society. It wants Australians to think there is no choice other than to attack the pensions, the incomes and the standard of living of the poorest and the most disadvantaged. It wants Australians to think that there is no choice other than to force millions of sick Australians, particularly pensioners, into choosing between food or heating or their health. Well I want the Australian people to understand this: this government was not forced to be cruel; it has made that choice. This government has made a conscious decision to be cruel. It has made a conscious decision to launch an unprecedented attack against the social fabric of our society, against the standard of living of some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Australia.

The government has, of course, accused Labor of being alarmist when it comes to our claims about the impact of its budget. But when we on this side of the chamber talk about the true impact of this cruel budget, these are not just our claims. They are the claims of the many community organisations who have given evidence to Senate inquiries about the frightening extent of the harm these budget proposals could do to vulnerable Australians. Inquiries such as the Senate's community affairs references committee inquiry into out-of-pocket expenses in Australian health care, the committee's inquiry into the extent of income inequality in Australia—both of which I have participated in—and the community affairs legislation committee, which conducted an inquiry into the two original social services bills that preceded the government's humiliating backdown.

This latter inquiry heard evidence from ACOSS, from welfare agencies such as the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Brotherhood of St Laurence, that the changes to Newstart would increase levels of poverty and homelessness. It heard from organisations like the National Welfare Rights Network and the Council on the Ageing that the changes to pension indexation meant that pensions would not keep pace with the true cost of living for pensioners. And in relation to family payments, the inquiry heard evidence that the government's budget would leave a single-income couple or family on $65,000 with two school aged children around $6,000 worse off each year by 2016, in large part due to the measures in those bills.

The changes to income support for unemployed people under the age of 30 could easily be described as the harshest welfare measure ever proposed in Australian history. If a young person goes six months without income, how will they pay to live, for accommodation? Where will they sleep? What will they eat? How will they clothe themselves? How will they even be able to afford to apply for jobs? I can just imagine this measure, if it were passed by the Senate, leading to a wave of homelessness and potential depression and suicides the like of which Australia has never seen before. And it will be down to those opposite if that
happens. I can just imagine social welfare organisations struggling to meet the demands of tens of thousands of additional people needing their support when their resources are already strained. These organisations are already under increased pressure, and to shift the responsibility of helping so many young Australians is completely heartless and very thoughtless.

Welfare spending in Australia is not out of control. The truth is that Australia has one of the most sustainable and best targeted welfare systems in the world. In 2001, 23 per cent of working aged people received a welfare payment each week. By 2011, this had dropped to 18½ per cent. Australia’s welfare spending is 8.6 per cent of national income, and this is compared to an OECD average of 13 per cent. In fact, the only OECD country with a lower welfare bill in percentage terms is Iceland. So is Australia’s welfare system sustainable and well-targeted? Of course it is. Can our welfare system be better targeted? Of course it can, and that is why Labor is accepting the savings measures put forward in this bill. But what we will not accept is cuts to income support payments, which would completely undermine the social safety net that is the foundation of our income support system. We will not accept cuts that push Australians further into poverty and tear apart our social fabric.

There is no budget emergency and there is no welfare spending crisis. And even if there were, it is still no excuse for the horrific suffering that this government proposes to unleash on Australia’s most vulnerable and disadvantaged people. Labor support the measures in this bill, but continue to oppose the remaining cruel, heartless measures in the original bills—measures which the government stubbornly insists it is determined to press ahead with. We will continue to fight these changes. We will fight cuts to pensions, cuts which Mr Abbott said before the election would not happen. We will fight the government’s harsh attacks on families and we will continue to fight proposals which would leave young people struggling in poverty and destitution for months on end. We will fight these cruel cuts in the community, we will fight them through the media and, yes, we will also fight them in the parliament.

Senator LINES (Western Australia) (10:19): I to rise to speak on the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 6) Bill 2014 before us this morning. While I indicate Labor’s support for these measures, I also will talk more broadly about what is happening right across our social security system. Labor has always supported families, pensioners and young people and Labor will continue to support those groups in our society. Not only that, we will also fight, and fight really hard, against any negative impacts on families, on pensioners and on young people.

To that end, recently in the Perth electorate of Swan I held a forum and asked pensioners to come along to talk about the impact of the Abbott government’s harsh, cruel budget and its direct attack on pensioners, particularly on those in the electorate of Swan, in which I live. I had hundreds and hundreds of emails from pensioners very, very concerned about the Abbott government’s attack on them. As Australians who have well and truly paid their way—whether they have fought in wars for Australia, worked their whole lives, contributed to our tax system, raised their families, bought their homes—they are under attack from the Abbott government. The Abbott government can say over and over again that there are no cuts to pensions, but pensioners know better. They are not stupid. These are senior Australians. They have seen it all before.
Interestingly, when I held the forum in Swan I had well over 100 pensioners from the electorate come along, and they were well and truly aware that the switch to CPI for measuring their pension as an indication of what increases they get means a reduction in their incomes. And no matter how the Abbott government tries to dress it up, the pensioners in the electorate of Swan, and I suggest pensioners right across this country, are not fooled. The government can say, 'There's an increase in your pension,' for as long as it likes, but pensioners in Australia know that this new way of indexing actually means a cut.

Interestingly, at the same time as I held this meeting at Swan, the Liberal member for Swan was out at the Juniper village of senior citizens in Rowethorpe, where he again made the claim that pensions will continue to increase. He also made the claim that somehow the Abbott government was funding roads in Swan—roads funded by Labor. Just changing the name to the Perth Freight Link from the Gateway project does not fool anyone. People know where that funding is coming from, the same way that the pensioners the Liberal member spoke to out at Rowethorpe would not have been fooled.

Using CPI actually means a reduction in the pension. It means a reduction, and economist after economist has made that point plainly. The Australian Council of Social Service, the peak welfare body in this country, has also made the claim that pensioners will be worse off over a few years, to the tune of $80 a week. That is a cut in the pension. The government can dress it up and dress it up, but I can assure this Senate that over 100 pensioners who came to the event in Swan, who were invited to come along, were not under any illusion that somehow the government was doing them a favour.

Interestingly, the government knows that those harsh measures will not get through this Senate, which is why it has chosen today to present another bill with a range of measures that Labor does support. But, like the Australian community, we are not going to be fooled into supporting measures which actually cut people's pensions, particularly for the Australians who have worked their whole lives, who have contributed to society, who should not at the age of 70 have to start worrying about how they balance their budgets.

Of course, that is not the only hit on pensioners that we are seeing in this harsh, cruel Abbott government budget. The pensioners will also be hit if the GP tax gets through. No matter how you dress it up by saying, 'You will only pay for X number of visits,' the fact remains that when pensioners front up to the doctor they will have an increased cost. It is not rocket science: we know that as we age we use the healthcare system more. We are more likely to need referrals. We are more likely to need prescriptions. We are more likely to need specialist services. So that cost for pensioners goes on and on and on as they continue to pay and pay and pay over time, on the reduced weekly earnings which the Abbott government is still seeking to introduce into this parliament—a disgraceful attack on senior Australians if there ever was one.

In Western Australia the other attack on pensioners, again instigated by the Abbott government, has been the reductions in the local government costs. Their licensing costs will no longer be funded by the federal government, and the state government has indicated it is not going to foot the bill either. So Western Australian pensioners, particularly those pensioners in the Swan electorate, in which I live, are absolutely being slammed by both levels of government, and they know that. They know that the Barnett Liberal government is hitting them and they also know that the Abbott government is hitting them. You can dress it
up and you can say Labor is out there whipping pensioners up. No, we are not. These are senior Australians who can read and understand very clearly what is on the table and they are not fooled. I am sure that the pensioners out at Rowethorpe who the Liberal member for Swan spoke to were not fooled either.

This is a harsh attack. What we also know is, despite the government now having to make this absolutely humiliating backdown, having to separate out its bills and bring them back, that these attacks on pensioners are still there. They are still in the back pocket of the government. The government is still looking at who in the parliament might support them. Can they win over any of the independents to try and get them to support these measures? Labor has made it absolutely crystal clear we will not support the sorts of harsh measures that the Abbott government wants to introduce to Australia's pensioners. We will not do that. We will continue the fight against these harsh measures right up until the next election.

The other hypocrisy that goes with this harsh, cruel budget is that we had the Prime Minister in the lead-up to the election commit over and over again and promise no cuts to pensions, no cuts. 'You can vote Liberal and we'll assure you that we won't make cuts.' Australian pensioners are now reeling and waiting for that axe to fall on their pensions, as the Abbott government will cut their pensions. No matter how they dress it up, using CPI is a cut.

It is a hugely embarrassing backdown for the government and in my view it destroys any credibility that the Prime Minister may have had, if indeed he had any credibility, particularly in relation to broken promises and Mr Hockey's whole budget strategy. We saw over the weekend—and I am sure it will be discussed in this place—how embarrassing it was at the G20 to have the Prime Minister of this country complaining to world leaders about his internal budget problems. For goodness sake!

Again, particularly talking about the GP tax which will hit pensioners if it gets through this place, it was interesting that he bemoaned to world leaders that he cannot get this 'groundbreaking', according to him, tax through the parliament, but he never mentioned it in the lead-up to the election. He never ever mentioned—not once, not at any time—to the Australian public that there was a GP tax on the horizon. Indeed, when it first started to circulate in the community he still denied it, but nevertheless here it is. He has just shown that the Abbott government cannot be trusted on any election commitments it makes to anybody, and Australian pensioners—particularly those in the seat of Swan—certainly know that.

This is a hugely embarrassing backdown for the government and again flies in the face of this view of a budget emergency. Labor were not cute about this; we said up-front what we would support. We were very clear which measures we would support. Equally, we were very clear about which measures we would not support. We know we have been very clear about it. In fact, the government has accused us of scaremongering, but we are not scaremongering; we are out there telling the truth to the Australian community. But what we do know is that Mr Abbott still wants to cut the pension. He has made it clear. We have heard Mr Andrews say that as well.

But where is this so-called budget emergency? We agreed to these changes four months ago, so the government could have had them through four months ago. But no, its ideological bent is to try to destroy the Australian way of life, not only to try to Americanise our universities but to try at the same time to Americanise our social security system. That is not
what a fair go Australian community wants, and it has been loud and clear in its condemnation of the Abbott government's proposals.

Australians have always wanted and advocated for a fair go society, and that means that our taxes are used to support those who need a helping hand. It is not the sort of society where, according to the Abbott government, people simply look after themselves. That is not the society the Australian community wants. It is not our fair go society, and yet that is at the heart of what the Abbott government is trying to change with this Americanisation and this Tea Party philosophy that we are now seeing coming loud and clear from the Abbott government. It is at the heart of all of its harsh, cruel measures. There is a very strong message there: you have to look after yourself, otherwise you will fall by the wayside because you are a leaner, not a lifter, and you do not have a place in our society. I can tell you the pensioners in Swan absolutely reject that notion and I know the voters across Australia also reject that notion. It is about a fair go. We are a society that looks after and accepts our responsibility as a community to see that we pay our taxes and that taxes are distributed to those who need a helping hand, not the Tea Party, right-wing ideological agenda the Abbott government is pushing that somehow those who need support will have to find it somewhere else.

The other harsh, cruel measure that is part of why Labor have rejected these bills is what the Abbott government wants to do to young unemployed people. It is still not very clear. We tried at Senate estimates to get a lot of information out of the government in relation to penalties, but apparently that is still being figured out. But the view is that somehow a young person who finds themselves unemployed is to be blamed for that. The definition of 'young' is now being stretched right up to 30. If you are a young person, the Abbott government is saying to you: if you find yourself unemployed, look in the mirror because the fault is yours. We are going to punish you by saying that for at least six months—in fact, we think it will be more than that—you will go without any unemployment payments.

What happens to that young person? If they have family, they fall back onto family, presumably, but what happens if they are a low-income family? What happens if they are part of a pensioner family? That will create very real hardship for those families. And what of young people who do not have those strong family links? What happens to them? They will well and truly fall through the cracks. We know that and the government knows that too, because the other thing the government has done is increase emergency relief money. It knows its harsh, cruel measure will impact young people, who will not get any support at all from the government for six months and will have to go knocking on the doors of community based organisations and ask for handouts for food, help with electricity bills and so on.

But what we also know is that, because Australians on low incomes are finding it tough, the call on that emergency relief money has gone through the roof. We had the Salvation Army, who help the most marginalised in our community, tell us last week at a Senate estimates hearing in Perth that they had never seen so many people needing help. That is before these harsh, cruel budget measures the Abbott government is proposing even see the light of day. I was alarmed to hear the Salvation Army, who we all rely on to look after the most needy in our community, making that statement. They told us at the Senate inquiry they had run out of food.
We also know in Western Australia a couple of weeks ago Foodbank released its report, and there are thousands and thousands of children in Perth who go hungry currently because they do not have enough food to hand out to those vulnerable families, families that are under attack by the harsh, cruel Abbott government budget measures—the sorts of measures it has now taken out of this bill but still has in its back pocket to bring in at some other time when it has managed to hoodwink some of the Independents and others in this chamber to get them to agree. Australians will not forget. They know who is at the heart of the harshness that they are feeling. We saw the backdoor methods a couple of weeks ago on the fuel tax, so we know the Abbott government is desperate. It is embarrassed that it put up its harsh, cruel budget and cannot get anyone to support it, so it will do whatever it takes to get its measures through.

We saw the disgraceful deal it did six weeks ago with the Palmer United Party when it froze superannuation benefits for working Australians, which has got to be one of the dumbest moves I have seen in a very long time. If we are to make retirement savings livable, if we are to get that retirement income to a level where people can sustain themselves and do not need to call on pension benefits, that to me seems to be a very good economic outcome. But instead of that the Abbott government, in a sneaky, last-minute deal with the Palmer United Party, who somehow claim they support workers, froze superannuation payments. What a disgraceful move. We will see a real decline in retirement incomes through superannuation. And the government's sneaky attempts to change the way the pension is increased via the CPI, which will mean a reduction, means pensioners will be much worse off. It will be a loss of retirement incomes because of the freezing of super and this pension CPI indexing measure.

We know that the Prime Minister is not listening to Australians, because there is not one credible expert and very few Australians agree. Even the big the end of town has questioned the government on its move to take income off young people for six months. Yet, this right-wing, Tea Party agenda just keeps churning through the Abbott government. Australians are not fooled by this and Labor senators in this place and indeed the Labor Party will continue to be vocal on these harsh budget cuts right up until the next election. We are watching very carefully. We will scrutinise every attempt the government makes to try to cut the benefits of pensioners, families and young people under 30. We will watch and we will be vocal about it. We stand for a good society, not an Americanisation attempt—a right-wing, Tea Party agenda that the Abbott government is trying to push through. We will defend the Australian community.

Senator LUNDY (Australian Capital Territory) (10:39): I rise to speak on the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 6) Bill 2014. Almost five months ago Labor announced that it would support those measures in this year's budget that represented sensible savings. The government had the opportunity to pass those sensible savings all that time ago. But instead this government has continued to push its cruel agenda of pension cuts, leaving young people without any income support for six months and cutting family tax benefits.

The bill we are speaking about today will improve targeting of the family tax benefit by reducing the primary earner income limit to $100,000 a year. Labor supports this type of targeted support. It ensures that the support goes to those who need it most. What I and my colleagues cannot support, however, are the cruel measures that will disproportionately
impact on the most vulnerable in our community—cruel measures that expose the government's intention to target those in Australia who have the least. This will have the effect of increasing the divide between those who have and those who have not in modern Australian society. This government has delayed the opportunity to bring in these sensible savings because it is still intent on imposing on Australian people the changes proposed to family tax benefits. The cuts proposed will make it harder than ever for Australians and Australian families to pay their bills and meet their financial obligations.

Here in the Australian Capital Territory over 31,000 families currently receive family tax benefit A and B to support them to meet their financial responsibilities that come with raising children. These families will be significantly worse off under the government's proposed changes. Family tax benefit A and B support low- and middle-income families to meet the costs of raising their children.

The overall impact of the combined cuts to these supports is that a family on an average income of $65,000 a year will be $6,000 a year worse off. That is a cut of almost 10 per cent. The magnitude of this cut will significantly impact the ability of the family to maintain a level of wellbeing that is somehow—and I do not know how this would happen—'free from financial stress'. In effect the changes will cause greater financial stress on thousands upon thousands of families that I represent.

This government has delayed the opportunity to bring in sensible savings because they are still intent on forcing families whose children are over the age of six to lose these benefits altogether. Around 700,000 families across Australia will lose their support payments once their child turns six years old under changes to the eligibility age. These benefits were designed to assist families who need it by giving them support while their children are young. Labor believes in a targeted welfare system where support goes to those who need it most. That is why we support the targeting of the family tax benefit B by reducing the primary income limit from $150,000 a year to $100,000 a year, but we do not support slashing family tax benefit end of year supplements, the ceasing of indexation to family tax benefit, and the cutting of families from the family tax benefit part B when their youngest child turns six.

Prior to the election Mr Abbott and his Liberal colleagues stated that, 'We must reduce the cost-of-living pressures on families.' However, these changes to family tax benefit part A and part B do exactly the opposite; they increase financial pressures on low- and middle-income families. They do not reduce the cost-of-living pressures on families; they make it worse. This is just one of many broken promises made by Mr Abbott and the Liberal Party with the sole purpose of getting elected. These promises were made. They have now been broken.

The government has delayed the opportunity to bring in sensible savings because they are still intent on targeting single parent families. They want to index the parenting payment for single parents to CPI instead of male total average weekly earnings. Over time this will leave 2,500 vulnerable families here in the Australian Capital Territory $80 a week worse off than they are currently. It will greatly increase the gap between the wealthy and those doing it tough in our community. This measure is almost the perfect example of how this government has chosen to disproportionately target the people in our community who have the least. It is those with the least who will hurt the most.

The government has delayed the opportunity to bring in sensible savings because it is still intent on implementing draconian measures that will leave young job seekers with no
financial support for six months. It says it is helping unemployed Australians into work. It claims to be helping unemployed youth into work. But we know and young people certainly know that by stripping young people of any financial support for a six-month period the government is pushing them into poverty.

The impact of this one policy will be far-reaching. It will seriously affect the social and emotional wellbeing of those young people. I know that in this place the links between poverty and mental illness are well known. Apart from the detrimental effects on the wellbeing of young people, there will be a social and economic impact from supporting those whose emotional wellbeing is hit hard. This is because of the terrible circumstances that young people may then find themselves in because of the elimination of the safety net for this group. Obviously, there will be additional costs, perhaps on our health system, which will be left to pick up the pieces from young people whose lives have fallen apart as a result of this disgraceful attack on their ability to survive when they need support the most, as young people finding their way in the world.

Young people at extreme risk as a result of these changes are those leaving out-of-home care. In Australia there are more than 35,000 children in out-of-home care—that is, in foster care, kinship care or residential care. These young people are already facing enormous difficulties, being forced into supporting themselves at a very young age. They have often experienced abuse or neglect prior to entering care, compounded perhaps by poor in-care experiences. While most young people acquire the skills to transition into independent living over a long period of time with the support of parents or family, this is often not the case for out-of-home-care leavers. Leaving this group of young people with no income support at such a critical time will significantly impact on the outcomes for these young Australians. I am gravely concerned that this impact will be universally negative and that problems will be specifically created for young people in this circumstance. As I mentioned before, they are the young people with the greatest need of income support at that period in their life.

These attacks on young people come on top of cuts to services such as Youth Connections. Youth Connections has provided services that have been highly successful in Canberra and across Australia in helping young people transition into work and education. It is my observation that the Abbott government clearly does not accept or understand the barriers that some of our youth face in trying to find work or in engaging in education. Rather, they choose to paint young people as leaners, who have been benefiting somehow from an age of entitlement. The language used by this government and the changes to social security that it seeks to impose on young people show a profound lack of respect for young people who, against all odds, have been able to pick themselves up and find their way from school to work. It was Youth Connections that, through several evolutions, often provided this bridge for them, that helped them through this extraordinarily difficult time of everybody’s life. It is not just young people living with disadvantage, but that is where we need to target it. Those services have been cut. Combined with the social security changes, this is a travesty for a generation of young people. As a senator for the ACT, I am deeply concerned about how the young people in my electorate will be affected by these unfair and heartless policies. Like my colleagues, I will not sit by and watch members of this government force members of my community into poverty and homelessness.
The government has delayed the opportunity to bring in sensible savings because of their intent to target older Australians as well. The change in indexation of the age pension to CPI will considerably lower the income, in real terms, of older Australians over time. Furthermore, the government is increasing from 67 to 70 the age at which Australians will be eligible for the age pension. This will be the highest age for pension eligibility in the OECD. By the time these hardworking people are able to retire, their available pension will be significantly lower as a result of these changes. If the government's proposed legislation succeeds as it currently stands, self-funded Australian retirees will also lose out. A single retiree whose income is below $50,000 a year will no longer receive the seniors supplement. This supplement was designed to help this group of people pay bills such as rates and motor vehicle registration. Labor strongly opposes these measures, which will negatively impact older Australians.

People living in my electorate, the Australian Capital Territory, are being targeted on all fronts. Not only will they feel the effects of the cruel cuts to pension payments and to families, the reduced support for pensioners and the changes to income support that will leave young people with nothing for six months, a large number have already been affected by the government’s decision to slash 16,500 Public Service jobs, the majority of which have come from Canberra. Now young people across the territory who lose their job or who have even more difficulty in finding work may find themselves in a situation with no income support to rely on. Those above 30 who lose their jobs will be welcomed to unemployment with reduced family tax benefit payments and support pensions that do not keep up with the real cost of living.

Territorians from all sectors will be touched by this government, by Mr Abbott and Mr Hockey's cruel budget. While my colleagues and I, as I have said, are happy to support sensible savings, we cannot support these attacks on each and every pensioner in this country by effectively cutting their pensions, cutting a staggering $449 million over five years from the pockets of people who can least afford it. We cannot support the attacks on families across Australia through the dramatic decreases proposed to family tax benefit A and B and the removal of eligibility for this support for families whose youngest has turned six. And we cannot support the attacks on young Australian job seekers by removing income support for people under 30 who cannot find employment.

We have fought the government's attempt to impose these cruel measures and we will continue to fight for justice for all Australians. We do so in the context that these measures are not necessary, that they are the product of a contrivance in this year's budget, where we saw the Abbott government pretend that there was some kind of budget crisis. We know, not just because we understand how our budget works but because those with the expertise—many esteemed economists—have called the government out on their claim that a budget crisis required such draconian measures, that that is not true. What we see contained in these bills, beyond the sensible savings that we have indicated we will support, is an ideological attack on those most in need in our society. When you look at who is affected by these cuts, you see they are an attempt by the government to reshape where taxpayers’ money is expended, away from those most in need.

For someone who has been a member of the Labor Party for a very long time, this is unfathomable, but I think there are many Australians out there today asking the question:
where in any of the conversations leading up to the last election did the then opposition, now the Abbott government, give an indication that they would take these steps? The fact of the matter is they did not. They said the opposite. They said they would fight for and protect families' ability to afford the cost of living. In fact, they made a virtue of it, attacking us, the then government, for putting a price on carbon. Not once did they say, 'We're going to make it harder for families to cope with the cost of living.' They wore it as a badge of honour that an affordable cost of living was theirs to protect. And yet, now that they have been elected, we see a new agenda, an agenda brought forth in the budget, an agenda that seeks to take support away from those most in need.

When you look at this budget, you see it targets low-income families, young people—who are traditionally in one of the hardest phases of life, that transition from school to work—and pensioners, for whom the cost of living is a daily assessment as they manage meagre budgets with rising costs around them. These are the three groups that we are dealing with in this group of bills that the government still have before the parliament, regardless of their knowledge of our sustained opposition to them. They seek to bring forward these agendas yet.

In conclusion, I would like to remind those participating in and listening to today's debate that we are dealing with a government who made no declaration about these cuts before the election. Here in the ACT, my constituents feel particularly vulnerable because the cuts are coupled with a reduction in employment across the Public Service that, again, has no rationale. It is an ideological attempt to shrink the Public Service by percentage points, by job numbers, not by function, not by seeking efficiencies. We are bearing the brunt of that, at a time when our young people will not be able to find support and our older people will not be able to meet their obligations because, as the cost of living rises around them, their pensions will not rise to the degree that they otherwise would have. And we will see low-income families on family tax benefit A and B lose thousands of dollars a year. That loss of thousands of dollars a year was nowhere in last year's election campaign. Nowhere did I see, 'And we're going to target low-income families, school leavers and pensioners with cuts,' on a fabrication of a budget that somehow needs some dire work. That budget myth has been put to bed, and now we need to put this unfair legislation to bed. I urge those opposite and anyone else in this chamber to reconsider their position in supporting such draconian cuts. From Labor's point of view, we will remain steadfast in continuing to oppose those unfair measures and in that way represent those who I know are looking to the Labor opposition to prevent these harsh measures being imposed upon the Australian community.

Senator URQUHART (Tasmania—Deputy Opposition Whip in the Senate) (10:58): I also rise to speak on the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 6) Bill 2014. It has become very clear that the Abbott government is no friend of low-income families, the unemployed, the sick or Australians in times of trouble. Far from it: this government has shown it would prefer to see the most vulnerable Australians go without while it props up multinational companies and the well-to-do. This is a government that wants to sentence young unemployed people to six months without an income while at the same time handing out $50,000 cheques to millionaires to have babies.

From the beginning we have seen an ongoing parade of seriously twisted priorities from those opposite. They are determined to tear up the Australian tradition of the fair go and create a new Australian underclass. There is no greater illustration of this callous, cruel and,
quite frankly, shameful attitude to Australians than in the area of social services. It is no
overstatement to say that the policies in this area are amongst the harshest this country has
ever seen. They tear up key elements of our social contract and launch a direct attack on
Australia's national identity as a fair, supportive and egalitarian nation.

No-one will be more betrayed more than young Australians who are out of work. The
Abbott government would sentence these people to live on absolutely nothing for six
months—nothing to pay for food with, nothing to pay for shelter with and certainly nothing to
support job-seeking activities with. I have said it before and I will say it again: unemployment
is not a lifestyle choice. The vast majority of job seekers are genuinely seeking work, to break
free from the dire impacts of an income that is far below the poverty line. The government's
plan to rip away income from young unemployed people is nothing but a recipe for mass
desperation, crime and destitution. We need to support our young people to achieve their
potential, not toss them out in the cold with few prospects for food or shelter—let alone the
money to tackle job searching. Given that youth unemployment hit its highest level since
2001 this month, under the Abbott government, this is a particularly senseless and ill-
considered betrayal. Young people need jobs, not punishment.

Next in the crosshairs are pensioners. These people, who have contributed to the social and
economic wealth of our great country, are now being treated as little more than a drain on the
system. Despite solemnly promising before the election that there would be no cuts to
pensions, the Abbott government has set about doing exactly that. They want to change the
indexing arrangements so that pensioners will be $80 a week poorer within a decade. They
want to change deeming thresholds so that fewer Australians will qualify for the pension and
that those who do will receive less. They want to cut the seniors supplement that will see
300,000 pensioners close to $900 a year worse off. And they want to change the pension age,
to force Australians to keep working until they are 70 years old. This is a despicable way to
treat those who have contributed to this country for decades.

These measures and many others were contained in the original social services legislation
that the government has so far failed to get through the Senate. From the beginning, Labor's
position was clear: we were not going to support the cuts to the pension; we were not going to
allow unemployed people to be plunged into serious and ongoing poverty; and we would
never agree to kicking families off family tax benefit B when their youngest child turned six.
We were, however, willing to look at sensible measures that would relieve some budgetary
pressures, without placing massive burdens on the most vulnerable Australians. The bill
before us today is a recognition by the government that they simply do not have the support
for their other cruel attacks on vulnerable Australians.

The measures in this bill are the ones that Labor is willing to support. Included are more
than $2 billion dollars' worth of savings that the government could have acted on five months
ago. Labor was willing to support improved targeting of family tax benefit B by reducing the
primary earner income limit from $150,000 a year to $100,000 a year four months ago. Labor
was willing to support ceasing of indexation on the clean energy supplement five months ago.
Labor was willing to support a two-year indexation pause on the assets value limits for
working age allowances five months ago. Labor was willing to support the end of relocation
scholarship assistance for students relocating between major cities five months ago. Labor
was willing to support plans to limit the six-week overseas portability period for student
payments five months ago. Instead, the government decided to forego the savings and bluster on with their harsh attacks on the most vulnerable Australians.

Thankfully, Labor has managed to hold off some of the worst attacks for the time being. However, we should not kid ourselves that the siege is over. We know the Abbott government remains committed to forcing the lowest income Australians to do the heavy lifting while richer Australians escape relatively unscathed.

The ultimate test for Labor in what we would support is that of fairness. This is a test that the government has failed again and again and again. The Abbott government's vicious budget measures, which we heard nothing about before the election, place the vast majority of cuts on the shoulders of low-income Australians. This has been confirmed independently by Australia's premiere modelling outfit, NATSEM. In its analysis of the budget, NATSEM found that the poorest 20 per cent of Australians would pay $1.1 billion more into government coffers than the richest households. Over the next four years, the poorest 20 per cent of families, or those with $35,000 or less in disposable annual income, would lose $2.9 billion over four years as a result of the harsh changes to family benefits, payments and pensions. Contrast this with the wealthiest 20 per cent of families, who earn $88,000 or more after tax. These families will lose a total of $1.78 billion which is a full 40 per cent less than low-income families. Low- and middle-income single parents would suffer the most, losing between 10 and 15 per cent of family income of up to $60,000 by the time the full brunt of the budget comes into effect in 2017-18.

But it is not just Labor and NATSEM that know how unfair this budget is. The government obviously knew full well what the dire impacts would be on low- and middle-income Australians. The proof of this is in their decision to end the longstanding practice of publishing detailed family outcomes tables in the budget papers. These tables, which have been included in the budget papers since 2005, show how the budget would impact on different types of families with varying incomes.

After a freedom of information request from Fairfax, Australians learnt that Treasury had in fact prepared a 56-page distributional analysis and a 21-page cameo analysis of the impacts of the budget measures for cabinet. At the same time, Treasury also released a shorter analysis which showed that the budget cuts would hit low-income families to the tune of $842 a year, while an average high-income family would lose only $71 a year. Clearly, cabinet knew of the massive inequity of the impacts of the budget but decided to hide these impacts from Australians. The Abbott government did not want us to see this information, because they knew very well what it revealed about the twisted priorities of this cruel budget.

As a last-minute ruse to try to cover up the rank unfairness of the budget, the Abbott government decided to bring in an extra levy for those earning above $180,000 a year. However, this levy cuts out after three years, while the burden on poorer Australians will continue indefinitely if the government gets its way. Not only that, but the levy also includes a loophole that means people with high incomes can easily avoid the levy by employing a few clever tax arrangements and deductions. Make no mistake: despite what Mr Hockey tells us, the age of entitlement is not over. Corporate welfare continues; superannuation perks remain; and those opposite have done everything they can to stand against the global tide to make multinational companies pay their fair share of tax.
Labor has managed to hold back some of the most abhorrent measures in the government's attack on poor Australians, but the fight is not over. In an extraordinarily arrogant move, the government have also reintroduced their savage budget cuts into the parliament in a number of separate bills. The Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, still wants to slash pensions. He still wants to cut support for struggling families. He is committed to leaving young job seekers with no income for six months at a time. Make no mistake: Labor will continue to stand up for families, pensioners and young people and fight against Tony Abbott's savage budget cuts.

Senator LAMBIE (Tasmania—Deputy Leader and Deputy Whip of the Palmer United Party in the Senate) (11:09): I rise to speak to the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 6) Bill 2014. This bill will have a severe financial impact on struggling Tasmanian and Australian families, students, disabled people, seniors and veterans through a range of 10 heartless measures, and I will not support this legislation.

In particular, limiting the family tax benefit part A large-family supplement to families with four or more children, removing the family tax benefit part A per child add-on to the higher income-free area for each additional child after the first and targeting family tax benefit part B by reducing the primary earner income limit from $150,000 a year to $100,000 a year will cause real hardship for more than 50 per cent of the Tasmanian population, so I will not support this cruel legislation.

Of course, there is another reason why I have chosen to vote against this legislation, and that is: as a protest and as a matter of conscience and principle, I will vote against all government legislation until the men and women of our Army, Navy and RAAF receive a fair pay rise and their Christmas leave entitlement back.

Before I detail the reasons for my conscience vote to support members of the ADF, it is important to note that even if I had not made that promise to our Defence families I would have voted against this bill because it also targets our veterans by ceasing the indexation of the clean energy supplement; pausing from 1 July 2015 the indexation for two years of the assets value limits for all working-age allowances, student payments and parenting payment single; pausing from 1 July 2017 the indexation for three years of the assets-test-free areas for all pensions other than parenting payment single; and including untaxed superannuation in assessment for the Commonwealth seniors health card for all new cardholders from 1 January 2015.

It is a well-known fact that this chamber is not controlled by the Abbott led Liberal-National Party government. For the greater majority of Tasmanians and for the greater majority of Australians, the fact that this chamber is not controlled by the Liberal-Nationals government is a huge relief because, by their actions, they have proven that they are bullies and liars. By their actions they have proved that, under the smokescreen of budget repair, they simply want to take money and entitlements from ordinary, struggling Australians whilst rewarding their rich mates who give money and favours to the Liberal and National parties.

The government legislative program presented before this Senate has no mandate. It has no moral force. Reasonable, fair-minded Australians have no choice but to oppose the greater majority of government policies presented to this place because they are nothing more than a political ambush. The key Abbott government reforms in health, education and social entitlements were not taken to the Australian people before the last federal election. The government legislation and budget cuts that we are asked to consider daily in this Senate are
illegitimate. They were hidden and covered from the Australian people before the last election. If the truth about the Liberals' plan for Australia had been known before the last election then the Abbott-Hockey government would never have been placed in a privileged position of power—not ever.

It was only after the Liberal-National Party government was formed that the Tasmanian and Australian people were told that university funding would be cut and that, under the smokescreen of reform, students would be forced into massive debt and bullied into paying double or triple for their tertiary education. It was only after the PM and Hockey took charge of the nation's capital in the lower house that their true legislative reform agenda was revealed: the universal nature of our health system would be undermined, and sick people and families would be charged what is effectively an extra tax to visit the doctor. It was only after the PM and Hockey took charge of the nation's capital in the lower house that we found out that billions of dollars of desperately needed entitlements and tax concessions would be taken away from struggling Tasmanian and Australian families. And it was only after the majority of Australian Defence Force members voted to support Mr Abbott and Mr Hockey—indeed, on the day just before the Melbourne Cup—that the men and women of our Army, Navy and RAAF were officially told that they would have thousands of dollars worth of holidays, travel entitlements and meal allowances stripped away from them for efficiency dividends and that a real pay cut would be imposed on the members of our Defence Force.

Surely government members in this chamber are not arrogant or delusional enough to think that the 75,000, give or take, full-time and part-time members of the ADF and the tens of thousands of their families and friends would have voted for this Abbott government if they had known that our ADF's pay and working conditions would have been attacked in such a cowardly manner by the PM and Mr Hockey. If you think that, then call a double dissolution election and see what verdict the people of Tasmania and Australia deliver this time, when they are fully informed.

Getting back to the point I made at the beginning of my speech, if all Labor opposition, Greens and crossbench senators unite on a particular bill or issue presented in this place and vote against it, then the government's bill will be defeated in this great chamber of debate. In defeating the government's legislation, the Senate—the states' house of review—will have sent the government a powerful, clear message.

Today I am calling on all crossbenchers, Greens and the Labor opposition to unite on one important matter: to vote against all government legislation and send a powerful and clear message to the Abbott led government. That message that I would like all non-government senators to unite on is a unique and special one, about something which fundamentally affects Australia's ability to maintain our national security and defend ourselves.

Quite simply, by voting against government legislation, this Senate chamber would reflect the overwhelming will of the Australian people and say: 'PM, your pay offer to the men and women of the Australian Defence Force is unfair, unjust and an appalling insult. As a matter of fact, it is absolute rubbish.' How you government people over there can do that to these men and women who put their lives on the line is beyond me. Do you have any idea of the consequences it is going to have for our national security and the morale of these men and women, or what it is already doing? I am getting hundreds of emails and phone calls, because these men and women have no voice. Mr Abbott, your pay offer to our ADF must be
withdrawn and replaced with new deal—a fair deal which at least keeps track with inflation and safeguards their existing holidays and travel, meal and accommodation allowances.

My critics will say that I should not be so naive and idealistic. How dare a senator suggest that the government be held to ransom over one issue! Ordinarily, I would agree; one issue should not be able to bring this place to a halt. However, the ADF pay crisis caused by this government is, in my view, without peer or precedent and is the only issue that should bring the nation's capital to a halt.

And, speaking of bringing the nation's capital to a halt, it was no coincidence that the Abbott government chose to announce their disgusting and humiliating pay offer to the ADF, and the Christmas leave they are taking off them, on the eve of the Melbourne Cup—trying to slip it under the carpet. Shame. Our Prime Minister and his cabinet knew exactly what they were doing by tasking the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence with the dirty job of announcing, on the eve of that race that stops the nation, the decision which confirms the Abbott government's betrayal of the men and women of our defence forces. The Abbott government were deliberately attempting to minimise the political damage that would be caused to them, by having the ADF pay betrayal compete for media attention with issues generated by the Melbourne Cup, one of Australia's great cultural events.

What this Abbott led government did not count on was the genuine community outrage generated by this slap in the face to the men and women of our Defence Force. What they did not count on was the media attention and public debate generated by the non-government members of this place who chose to speak out in favour of a better deal for our Army, Navy and RAAF. So, what started as a sneaky, slick government campaign to cover up and lessen the political fallout from an appalling government decision will now blow up in the face of this mean and tricky government that still thinks it can lie its way into office and bully or bribe the crossbenchers into becoming accomplices in what is nothing more than a filthy little crime.

If we do not have a secure Australia, if Australia's national security is undermined, then we have absolutely nothing. Everything we work for—education, health, food security, energy security—is placed at risk for this and future generations.

Today I want to remind members of this chamber that the eyes of the 75,000, give or take, members of the ADF and their families, and the 300,000 recipients of veterans affairs entitlements and their families—the eyes of nearly a million Australians—will be watching how you vote on this bill, and their ears will be listening for reasons why you chose to support the Abbott government in betraying the men and women of our defence forces. Their hearts will feel it if you are prepared to fight for them when it counts in this chamber or to just use them for photo opportunities on a few days of the year, when Australia remembers its fallen, the wounded and their grieving families and friends.

I have no doubt that, if the non-government members of this chamber show courage—like our Defence Force personnel—and unite on and rally around this unique matter; vote against the government's legislation program; and turn every vote in this chamber into a referendum on the Abbott government's appalling pay offer to the members of our armed forces, then the Abbott government will be forced to bow down before the will of the Australian people and immediately renegotiate a fairer and just pay deal for the men and women of our Army, Navy and RAAF.
Due to the enormous amount of feedback that I have received over the last week or so since the Melbourne Cup, I am going to quote a few of the emails and letters that have been sent to my office. Of course, I will be redacting any names associated with those, for the people who are still serving, in uniform, because otherwise we all know what will happen: they will be punished. One of them says:

I am currently serving in the RAN, having worked my way through the ranks from a 15 year old Junior Recruit thus currently have served 38 years in defence of our country.

I have deployed on Special Operations in Submarines, served in the Solomon Islands on Op Anode, 3 tours with Op Catalyst (Middle East Area of Operations, Iraq and Afghanistan) and Op Resolute, Border Protection.

Over the period of my service I have seen a steady decline in conditions of service which has resulted in a loss of allowances, leave travel warrants and travel conditions, to name a few. And if I was considering joining the ADF today, I would think twice. I am disappointed to realise that the general population does not really understand how serving Defence members feel as they cannot voice their issues in public.

Radio shock jock, Ray Hadley from 2GB, believes 'Defence members must be satisfied' as he has not heard from any of them complaining about the 1.5 per cent pay increase. It is quite obvious he does not understand the constraints members are under when wanting to complain about their conditions of employment or their employer—the federal government.

One particular thing I am uneasy about is that we are effectively taking a pay cut when compared to the rate of CPI and have lost leave and removal entitlements. I can see a greater cut looming when rental allowance is increased to reflect CPI and the 'current civilian market rent'. I do have a point I wish to make about double standards. Although a politician would argue it is a 'condition of their service' and thus an entitlement, as a Defence member if your partner has a home in the area you are posted to, you are not entitled to receive rent allowance as it is deemed you have an interest in that property even if it belongs to your partner, not to you personally. Yet if a politician—let's say the Treasurer—has a wife who owns a property in Canberra then the politician can claim an allowance to rent that property from their partner as it is deemed that they do not own or have an interest that property. Go figure.

How is it that one set of rules applies to Defence—a rule that can see the member charged with fraud and serve a custodial sentence—yet a politician gets away scott free? I would appreciate your point of view on this matter and thank you for representing Defence members who are voiceless in the matters of pay and conditions of service.

Email No. 2 reads:

Thank you be being the voice for all of us service personnel who are unable to voice our disgust and disdain about the pay rise or should I say pay cut that has been forced upon us. I would have been happier without the 1.5 per cent pay rise as long as the other conditions were not cut, which they term as 'productivity improvements'.

How is the Defence force now measured in productivity since we don't make profit from our business...

From my calculations, which maybe wrong... I will get an extra $3.56 a day pre-tax or a massive total of about $1301 per year pre-tax.

Since I have signed on the line and accept all the inherent conditions of being on call, this makes an hourly rate increase of about 14.85c an hour. In what they term as 'productivity Improvements' they are taking six days leave off a majority of us, which works out to about $1,443 on my current rate, which outweighs the pay rise by about $142.
So please keep doing what you can to make everyone aware of what they are doing to us.

Email No. 3 reads:

I have listened to John Laws since 1972 when I was working in Sydney as a police officer. I have generally agreed with most of his comments and views.

I have previously listened with interest to your conversations with John Laws on his radio show.

Today I listened to your latest conversation with Mr Laws. Based on my experiences in the police force, as far as pay and conditions are concerned, I can empathise with the plight of our military personnel.

The general public appears to have more idea of how it feels to be treated the way our military personnel are currently being treated than does Mr Laws.

It is a common phenomenon for people who become wealthy and powerful to lose touch with reality and lose any humble traits they may have once possessed. I urge you to continue in your fight for fairness in this country.

Email No. 4 says:

Currently I am due to be posted from Sydney to Perth and will be leaving my family in losing my Sydney location. Previously I would have been eligible for the $94.34 per week.

Now I get $385 to stock the pantry as described in the above link to para 16. This is a substantial amount of money and is far greater than the entire pay rise over the three-year period.

This point has not been identified, I believe, at any level and I feel the only person currently willing to defend Defence members is Jacqui Lambie.

In addition, where I currently work and with the Navy having a 18-month posting cycle, we have a large amount of members who choose to have their dependents remain at their losing posting location for whatever reason.

This massive pay cut which is under the heading 'productivity increases' has come at a massive shock to these members who only today realised this.

This was last Friday. The email continues:

This pay cut will reduce capability as currently members are happy to move with their postings at a short notice and have the family follow up once kids schools and spouse employment are sorted out.

This will change this and force many members to choose between remaining with family and permanently leaving the Defence Force or moving with a massive pay cut.

Defence Force members are happy to deploy at short notice and be away from family; however, you know you are coming home after the deployment.

There is a major difference moving whole families from one side to the other side of the country by removing was deemed adequate last week from $5,000 per year potentially down to $385.

MWD(U) provisions were added to the pay and conditions manual, PACMAN, to allow Defence greater flexibility and to retain members.

It would be great if we could collect the data of members who are in MWDU discharge from Defence.

If members discharge in a large number, any deemed productivity increase would be quickly dissolved.

As a matter of fact, if they get out and walk, like I am hearing they are going to, the amount of money it is going to cost this country for what? All over $130 million? I will not be the only person in this country laughing at you. Wake up. This is about national security. This is about our Defence Force personnel. (Time expired)
Senator FIFIELD (Victoria—Manager of Government Business in the Senate and Assistant Minister for Social Services) (11:29): If no further colleagues wish to contribute to the debate, then I shall close it. It might not have been clear from a number of the contributions by opposition senators, but the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 6) Bill 2014 seeks to reintroduce several 2014 budget measures in the Social Services portfolio which were previously introduced in other budget bills.

It is important that I correct some of the fantasies which have been shared with this chamber by Labor senators in the course of the debate on this legislation, chief amongst which is that the government had an opportunity to separate the various provisions in this bill into a form that the Australian Labor Party would support. That is in fact what the government endeavoured to do. When the package of legislation was originally introduced, the government was quite happy to not oppose the amendments that the Australian Labor Party circulated in this place, which had the intent of deleting from the original bill those elements which the Australian Labor Party would not support. We recognised where the numbers lay on that issue, and we would have accepted that occurring in this place. Where we would have ended up is exactly where we are now with these provisions in this bill that the Labor Party in fact support.

The perverse thing was that the Australian Labor Party circulated amendments to delete those provisions of the original bill that they did not support, but the Australian Labor Party did not allow the bill to be read a second time so that the amendments that they in fact circulated could be moved in the committee stage. The Australian Labor Party contended that they could not possibly allow the bill to be read a second time, because that would in some way, shape or form indicate that they supported elements of the bill that they were not in fact supportive of. That is not the case. For instance, the Australian Labor Party supported the second reading of our MRRT repeal legislation. I do not think anyone took the fact that they allowed the bill to be read a second time and to go to the committee stage as evidence that the Australian Labor Party had changed their mind and were going to support the repeal of the MRRT. So it is not an uncommon thing in this place for parties to allow legislation to be read a second time and to go to the committee stage, even though there are elements of that legislation that they do not support. The Australian Labor Party put the government in a position where we had no option but to bring forward a separate bill that in fact sought to give effect to what the Labor Party actually wanted and what could have been achieved if they had allowed their own amendments to the original legislation to be moved in committee.

I read a fictional account in a newspaper of a meeting that Minister Andrews and I had with Jenny Macklin. The account said that Minister Andrews and I looked at each other in a surprised way, realising for the first time that the bill was not going to proceed and could in fact have been introduced in a separate form originally that Ms Macklin could have supported. That was complete bunkum. The Senate committee report that the Labor Party contributed to simply made clear those elements that they would support and those elements that they would not support. It did not say, 'We will only support the elements of the budget that we agree to if they are packaged in a particular way.' It did not say that. In fact, it is common in this place that bills get sliced and diced and provisions get deleted, which we thought would be the course in this place and in fact which we assumed the Labor Party
thought would be the approach, given they themselves circulated amendments. The Labor Party did not allow those amendments to be moved and that is why we find ourselves in this place. So, when the Labor Party say, 'The government could have had these measures passed through this place much earlier if only they had done what we wanted,' we in fact tried to do what the Labor Party wanted, but they would not let us, which is why we are in this place. I do not put blame for that at the feet of Senator Moore, the Manager of Opposition Business in this place, because I know that she endeavours to work practically and cooperatively wherever she can. I lay the blame at the feet of Ms Macklin, over in the other place, for being, as I think is the technical term, sheer bloody-minded in relation to this matter. It is true that these particular budget measures could already have been passed if Ms Macklin in the other place had actually allowed her Senate colleagues to move the amendments that they themselves had circulated. If Ms Macklin had allowed the previous bill to be read a second time and if Ms Macklin had allowed the circulated amendments to be moved in the committee stage, then these budget measures would have been passed some time ago.

I think we are now at a point where we are getting excruciatingly close to having the opportunity to vote on this legislation. With those few remarks, I will conclude the second reading debate.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Back): The question is that the bill be now read a second time.

The Senate divided. [11:40]

(The Acting Deputy President—Senator Back)

Ayes ......................37
Noes ......................11
Majority.................26

AYES

Back, CJ
Bullock, J.W.
Cameron, DN
Colbeck, R
Cormann, M
Day, R.J.
Fawcett, DJ
Fifield, MP
Leyonhjelm, DE
Ludwig, JW
Macdonald, ID
McGrath, J
Moore, CM
O'Neill, DM
Peris, N
Ruston, A (teller)
Smith, D
Urquhart, AE
Wong, P

Bilyk, CL
Bushby, DC
Canavan, M.J.
Collins, JMA
Dastyari, S
Faulkner, J
Fierravanti-Wells, C
Ketter, CR
Lines, S
Lundy, KA
McEwen, A
McKenzie, B
Muir, R
O'Sullivan, B
Polley, H
Sinodinos, A
Sterle, G
Williams, JR
Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Back) (11:43): As no amendments to the bill have been circulated, I shall call the minister to move the third reading unless any senator requires that the bill be considered in the Committee of the Whole.

Senator FIFIELD (Victoria—Manager of Government Business in the Senate and Assistant Minister for Social Services) (11:43): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Senator SIEWERT (Western Australia—Australian Greens Whip) (11:44): I seek to make some third-reading remarks on the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 6) Bill 2014 and to point out that, although the Labor Party may try to put across the image that this bill and these measures are the more benign elements of the dreadful budget cuts, they are not benign, and they will have an impact on people with disability, on students, on families and on single-parent families. It is disingenuous for people, in the comments that have been made in this chamber in their contribution to this debate, to act as if these measures are not going to negatively impact Australians. People on disability support pensions are having the portability of their pensions reduced from six weeks to four weeks. Now that is going to have a significant impact on people with disabilities.

It only raises $5 million, so this is not about money. This is about demonising and punishing people with disabilities. There are also the measures that force people under the age of 35 with disabilities to be reassessed and to apply penalties, the ultimate sanction of which is to drop them off income support—some of them will be dropped onto Newstart while others, if they miss a compliance requirement, may be dropped from income support altogether—and all of this is in the face of reports that are showing growing youth unemployment. A NATSEM report, released just yesterday and reported on in the media today, shows just how hard it is for younger Australians to find work in a tightening employment environment. These are young people with disabilities who face many barriers to work, whose futures are being threatened by this reassessment process against new eligibility criteria and who will be dropped into Newstart. They will not only be living with a disability on a reduced income but also with more compliance requirements to find work in an area where it is already hard for people who do not have the same barriers as people with disabilities have to find work.

In an estimates spillover hearing last week, we heard about what some of those barriers to employment are. Those barriers include: people without the necessary skills, they do not have
job seeking skills and they have other barriers, such as transport and accommodation. All of these things particularly apply to people with disabilities, such as access to transport and formal skills—often people with disabilities have had trouble accessing the necessary training, education and support—so this bill does put in place measures that significantly impact on people with disabilities. It also impacts on students with the changes to the relocation allowance, and single parents are being hit yet again around the issues to do with freezing of the indexation on assets. So this bill will significantly hurt Australians. None of those measures from the budget that cut access to income support are benign; they are cruel and they demonise people, particularly people with disabilities, particularly single parent families who have been repeatedly hit with these measures.

So the ALP, to be clear, has combined with the government to pass measures that will cut funding to families, students and people with disabilities and single parent families. I do not want any Australians to think that these measures are somehow benign because they are not. They are the prelude to the other budget cuts that this government wants to make in the face of growing inequality and a tightening employment market that will make it even harder for young people, single parent families, people with disabilities and families to struggle to survive in the current climate. That is what these measures do.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Amendment Bill 2014

First Reading

Bill received from the House of Representatives.

Senator FIFIELD (Victoria—Manager of Government Business in the Senate and Assistant Minister for Social Services) (11:48): 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 FIFIELD (Victoria—Manager of Government Business in the Senate and Assistant Minister for Social Services) (11:49): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

The speech read as follows—

AUSTRALIAN SPORTS ANTI-DOPING AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL 2014

The Australian government strongly supports a fair, safe and healthy environment for all athletes from all nations and is committed to clean sport. Not only is doping a serious risk to an athlete's health and wellbeing, it is fundamentally about cheating and debasing all that is good about sport to which we hold close to our hearts—from improved health through physical endeavour to the pursuit of athletic excellence and the values it teaches.
The World Anti-Doping Code (the code), administered by sports and governments around the world, ensures that athletes are treated the same and abide by the same rules everywhere, regardless of nationality and sport.

WADA, as custodians of the code, initiated a comprehensive review of the code in late 2011. In reviewing the code, there was a common understanding that anti-doping authorities are now operating in an environment where the potential rewards from sporting success combined with the availability of substances and techniques that are not able to be easily detected through testing provide a greater incentive to cheat through doping.

In response to this, some of the key changes in the code include:

- higher penalties for serious anti-doping rule violations such as use of anabolic steroids;
- the addition of two new anti-doping rule violations;
- smarter targeted testing of samples;
- the development of seamless information sharing arrangements between relevant national and international government agencies and improved information flows with sporting organisations; and
- greater use of intelligence gathering and investigations in detection strategies.

To ensure that anti-doping arrangements are harmonised across the world, over 300 international sporting federations and 170 governments and anti-doping organisations who are signatories to the code are currently updating their anti-doping policies, rules and legislation to reflect the revised code.

The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Amendment Bill 2014 brings Australia's anti-doping legislation into alignment with the revised world anti-doping code and international standards which will come into force on 1 January 2015. We need to bring our arrangements into line with the code, to ensure that our athletes are working under the same rules.

The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) is the Australian government agency responsible for working with sporting organisations to eliminate doping. ASADA's powers and functions are specified under the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Act 2006 (ASADA Act) and Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Regulations 2006 (ASADA Regulations).

One of the key aspects of the code is the anti-doping rule violations (ADRVs). Appropriately, athletes or athlete support personnel who are found to have committed anti-doping rule violations are subject to sanctions such as ineligibility to compete and disqualification of results from sporting competitions. The international anti-doping community has agreed that it is time to take action to protect sports from those support persons who orchestrate systematic doping programs.

From 1 January 2015, it will be an ADRV for an athlete or support person to associate in a professional or sports-related capacity with another person who is banned from sport or has been criminally convicted or professionally disciplined for an action that would constitute an ADRV.

In the act, athletes and athlete support persons are adequately protected in this new arrangement. Any association needs to be in a professional or sports-related capacity before it can be prohibited. This allows, for example, for athletes who may have family members in this category. Second, the athlete receives a warning in writing from ASADA to advise on prohibited association. ASADA will also be required to use reasonable efforts to issue a notice to the athlete support person that they should not be associating with an athlete and allow that person an opportunity to contest the notice. It is also a requirement under the code that the association is one that the athlete or other person can reasonably avoid. The bill provides the CEO with the ability to issue the necessary advice.

Athlete support is extended through enabling review of decisions by the Australian Sports Drug Medical Advisory Committee (ASDMAC). ASDMAC is responsible for considering applications by athletes for the legitimate therapeutic use of prohibited substances or methods. Athletes who have their
application approved by ASDMAC receive a therapeutic use exemption (TUE). Revisions to the code appropriately require ASADA to provide a review mechanism for TUE decisions.

This review mechanism will be achieved by expanding the current membership of ASDMAC so that the minister may appoint up to three appropriately qualified review members for the sole purpose of reviewing decisions at the request of athletes.

Given the increasing complexity of substances and use of intelligence over time to catch cheats, an extension to the time available to commence action is sought through the code. Under the current code, action on a possible anti-doping rule violation must be commenced within eight years from the date the violation is asserted to have occurred. The code was revised so that, from 1 January 2015, authorities would have up to 10 years upon which to commence action. It is proposed to amend the act to align with this revision.

Since its establishment in 2006, ASADA has established information sharing arrangements with agencies such as the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service. Access to this information has been critical in assisting ASADA to pursue non-analytical violations, such as trafficking or the possession of prohibited substances.

With investigations and intelligence gathering now forming an integral element of any strategy for detecting doping, the revised code emphasises the need for effective information flows between government agencies, sporting bodies and anti-doping organisations. Accordingly, amendments to the information sharing provisions in the act are proposed to ensure clarity and simplicity.

With the recent revisions to the code, it has also been necessary to update a number of definitions in the act. The definitions are mainly technical and minor in nature.

Given the need for legislative amendments to align Australia's arrangements with the revised code, it is also proposed to take this opportunity to make minor administrative amendments that aim to simply the operation of the act.

One of these simplifications is to remove the requirement for the Anti-Doping Rule Violation Panel (the panel) to enter the details of a possible ADRV onto a register of findings.

An entry on the register does not reflect a final decision that an ADRV has taken place. Rather, it indicates that, based on the evidence reviewed by the panel, it is possible an ADRV has occurred. Making an entry on the register provides a legislative trigger for a number of notifications to be made under the National Anti-Doping Scheme. Ultimately, it is a matter for a sports administration body to determine whether an ADRV is established.

The presence of the register has led some people to believe incorrectly that the panel is the final hearing body for considering ADRV cases when its purpose is to independently review the evidence collected by ASADA prior to it being forwarded to the relevant sporting organisation for future action and final consideration by the relevant sports tribunal.

To assist with correcting these misapprehensions, the concept of 'register of findings' has been removed from the legislation. Instead, the ADRVP may make an 'assertion' of a possible anti-doping rule violation. This assertion is brought to the attention of the ASADA CEO, who, in turn, will refer it to a sports administration body for determination. This brings the legislation in line with the terminology used in the code.

Currently a decision to place details on the register of findings may be reviewed by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). The bill includes amendments that will maintain an affected person's access to the AAT, by way of reviewing the ADRVP decision to make an assertion.

It is also proposed that a 'violation list' will publically record ADRVs and sanctions at the completion of an ADRV process after any hearings and appeals have been finalised. The maintenance of such a public list is a requirement under the code. Provisions are also proposed to give the ASADA
CEO discretion not to include an athlete or athlete support person on the violation list in certain circumstances, including for minor athletes.

The fight against doping in sport continues to get tougher. The key factor in addressing doping across the world is the unrelenting commitment of the international sporting movement and governments to work together to implement harmonised programs that are robust, effective and fair. This bill ensures that Australia meets its obligations to contribute to a safe and fair sporting environment, safeguard athlete health and continue to protect the fundamental values of sport.

**Senator MOORE** (Queensland) (11:49): The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Amendment Bill 2014 aligns Australia's anti-doping legislation with the revised world anti-doping code, the code, and the international standards, the standards, that come into force on 2 July 2015. As people in this chamber know, the Senate community affairs committee did an inquiry into this particular bill a couple of weeks ago and the report has been published. The Labor Party's position has always been that we were supporting this legislation. We were interested in the process of the inquiry and the various issues that were raised during that process. I was surprised at the large media interest that was shown to this particular piece of legislation. The community affairs committee is not always blessed with this amount of media interest in its inquiries, but with this one we had significant coverage from just about all sectors of the media, and I think that reflects the interest in ASADA.

Labor are supporting the bill. We have said that; Mr Ripoll in the other place has made a speech around the agreement that we reached in doing that. We say quite openly that doping is, plainly and simply, cheating. It is using banned substances and practices to gain an unfair advantage, and it also can be seriously detrimental to the long-term health of athletes. We know that the community is concerned and we know that we have a situation, both in our own nation and internationally, where we have to ensure that sport is respected, that athletes are respected and that there is no concern or fear about the equity and the honesty of our sports.

This particular legislation gives effect to our international obligations under the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport. The UNESCO convention requires states, such as Australia to implement arrangements that are consistent with the principles of the code. The International Sporting Code, including the International Olympics Committee and other international federations who are signatories to the code, are committed to updating their anti-doping policies to reflect the revised code. And there has been significant work done internationally bringing together representations from athletes, athletes' supporters and from the various organisations to ensure that there is a genuine international response to the concerns about cheating in sport.

Within Australia, ASADA implements code complaint programs and activities that encompass deterrence, detection and enforcement. ASADA works closely with Australia's national sporting organisations in implementing these arrangements and has always done so. All antidoping policies replicate the essential parts of the code in each sport. This includes provisions for the sanctioning of athletes who are found to have committed an antidoping-rule violation, an ADRV.

In late 2011 the World Anti-Doping Agency initiated a comprehensive review of the code, and revisions to the code arising from this review were adopted by the international antidoping community at the World Conference on Doping in Sport in Johannesburg on 15 November 2013. The key revisions to the code include an enhanced focus on the role of
investigations and intelligence gathering, mandatory four-year sanctions for certain ADRVs relating to the use of performance enhancing substances such as anabolic steroids, and a relaxation of the rules surrounding the requirement for specific athletes to provide ongoing notification of their whereabouts to facilitate testing. These are known as the 'whereabouts requirements', which have been criticised in the past for being unjust and unfair, and we had evidence about that in our committee.

Other revisions relate to systems to promote more effective and efficient testing regimes to maximise the chances of catching doping by ensuring that the testing targets the substances most likely to be used by athletes in that sport, and there is a new requirement on sporting organisations that coaches and support staff do not use prohibited substances themselves.

To ensure continued operation of a globally harmonised antidoping framework, international sporting federations and governments are now required to amend their own antidoping frameworks to align with the revised code and standards by 1 January 2015. This was a significant issue of discussion at the committee—the time frame and the date by which we need to ensure that we are signed up: 1 January 2015. We know that Australia is a signatory to the UNESCO convention and that the Australian government is obliged to amend our own antidoping arrangements to align with the principles of the code. That is what this bill does, and that is why Labor is supporting it.

There are serious implications for noncompliance or failure to enforce the WADC. All national Olympic committees and international sports federations are required to sign this code. Sporting codes or countries that fail to sign up to or enforce the code risk exclusion of their athletes from the Olympics and from other key sporting events. This was reinforced at the committee hearing.

For national sporting organisations, the consequence at the local level of noncompliance includes being ineligible for Commonwealth funding and other support delivered by the Australian Sports Commission and potentially being liable for breaches of existing contracts. At the international level, the relevant groups would be excluded from major international events. It was clear at the committee that no-one wanted that. There was no objection to being linked into the international arrangements, but there were significant issues raised during the committee hearings which I think we need to address.

The bill provides for the creation of a new antidoping rule violation. The code currently specifies a list of eight actions that individually constitute an ADRV. The international antidoping community has agreed to increase the number of violations from eight to 10, and this includes a new violation called 'prohibited association'. This was the cause of a number of issues raised at our committee. It will become an ADRV for an athlete to associate in a professional or sports related capacity with an athlete support person who is serving a period of ineligibility or who has been convicted of a crime or sanctioned for professional misconduct for activity that otherwise would constitute a doping violation. This ADRV is designed to curtail the influence of people with a proven history of doping and with the skills to facilitate systematic doping programs.

We heard concerns about the way this will operate. Indeed, this raised an issue which I raise consistently in this place about the marriage between legislation and regulations—and I know you have raised the same issue in your committees, Mr Acting Deputy President Back. At the hearing it became clear that a lot of the actual details of how this will operate will be in
the regulations, which we confirmed were going to be disallowable instruments, so they will come back before the parliament for consideration. But, seeing the amount of concern that this raised at the committee with various athletes and their support organisations, it seems to me that this is crucial. We need to see and to clarify exactly what is involved at the time of passing the bill.

I believe that the answers we received at the committee respond to the concerns that were raised. I believe that the intent and the need is there and that this legislation with its regulations will make it clear that we are looking at exactly what the goal of the legislation was. But, because those regs were not before us at the time, it led to confusion. I just want to put on the record again that this is a concern. We are comfortable with the department's explanation, but it seems to me it would have been a better way if we had been able to have the detail in the regulations before the committee so that the concerns could be addressed.

Another core element of the legislation is the extension of the limitation period. The bill will extend the limitation period for authorities to commence action after a violation is believed to have occurred. Currently, action on a possible ADRV must be commenced within eight years from the date the violation is asserted to have occurred. The code has been revised so that, from 1 January 2015, authorities will have up to 10 years in which to commence action. This change improves the scope for antidoping agencies to uncover sophisticated doping programs and provides greater scope for the retrospective analysis of stored samples as new technologies to identify prohibited substances are developed. Again, this was an issue that was raised. Because of the way the doping industry is becoming more and more sophisticated and technologically advanced, it is important that there is scope for investigation to occur so that any incidents can be identified and effective responses put in place.

The bill also seeks to make changes to the operation of the Australian Sports Drug Medical Advisory Committee—I am not going to say 'ASDMAC'. This committee is responsible for considering applications by athletes for the legitimate therapeutic use of prohibited substances or methods through the granting of therapeutic use exemptions. This process aims to ensure that athletes can obtain legitimate medical treatment without committing an offence. Under the revised code, antidoping organisations are explicitly required to provide for reviews of decisions on these therapeutic use exemptions. While currently there is a clear authority for the committee to approve the applications in Australia, the only mechanism available to athletes to appeal decisions of the committee if unsuccessful is to challenge that decision with the world authority, WADA.

The bill will allow the minister to appoint three people with the sole function of reviewing committee decisions in the first instance. While these people are committee members, they will be completely independent from the committee decision-making process, ensuring that reviews are independent of the initial decision. The bill also seeks to enshrine in the ASADA Act the requirement of the revised code that at least one member of the committee should have experience in the care and treatment of athletes with impairments. Labor believes it is important that the needs of athletes with impairments be considered at all stages through this process, and we also believe the issue of independence remains critical and is protected by the provision in the bill.

Under information management, when we consider that the ASADA CEO recently stated that the positive blood or urine tests detect on average between one and two per cent of
violations, it is clear that intelligence gathering is an essential element of any strategy for detecting doping. The revised code emphasises the need for effective information flows between government agencies, sporting bodies and antidoping organisations. This bill enhances and simplifies the information-sharing provisions in the ASADA Act to improve the exchange of information. The bill repeals the current sections of the ASADA Act which distinguish between national antidoping scheme personal information, national antidoping scheme contract personal information and protected customs information and restructures the information, sharing provisions around a single concept of protected information. It is absolutely critical that protected information, and the concept was raised a couple of times in the committee about breaches of privacy, be maintained and that we understand that there needs to be exchange for official reasons but not the kind of open discussion we may have seen.

The violations list also caused a couple of questions at the committee. The potential to be publicly named as a drug cheat is considered to be part of an important deterrent for any athlete, and all athletes and support persons should be aware that the details of an antidoping rule violation may be made public. It is the current practice for ASADA to report on its website the details of an ADRV—a violation—once the matter is finalised. This bill, to be consistent with article 14 of the code, will propose that ASADA will now be required to maintain a public list of ADRVs, to be known as the violations list. The violations list will include information such as the name of the athlete or athlete's support person, date of birth, sport, team, nature of the violation, date when the ADRV was determined and the period of ineligibility and other consequences imposed. Importantly, the bill provides discretion for the ASADA CEO not to place the details of a violation on the violations list in limited circumstances. For example, this may include a first violation by a person under the age of 18, where the need for confidentiality for an underage person outweighs the need for transparency.

Around the issue of public disclosure of information, the high-profile ASADA investigations that have dominated news and continue to dominate news in the AFL and NRL over the past two years have taught us that there is a significant public interest in antidoping and significant pressure on persons involved to make public comment. The new code provides that no antidoping organisation shall publicly comment on the specific facts of a pending case except in response to public comments attributed to an athlete, other person or their representatives. While existing legislation prevents public comment from ASADA on specific facts of a pending case, it does not recognise explicitly this exception, which is provided for in the code. This bill seeks to recognise this exception so that a public comment can be provided by ASADA to correct or to clarify facts where an athlete or their representative initiates public discussion about his or her case.

There are also a number of minor technical amendments proposed in the bill. A definition for 'recognised laboratory' has been added to reflect the accreditation process specified in the international standard for laboratories. The definition of 'international standard' and 'registered medical practitioner' have been updated and reference to safety checking service removed to better reflect current practice. This bill also contains one measure that is not required for consistency with the new WADS. Currently, the operation of the register of findings—the register—midway through the ADRF process creates complexity and confusion, leaving some
people to assume that the antidoping rule violation panel is the final hearing body for any ADRV. This is not the case. The purpose of the ADRVP—another acronym—is to review the evidence collected by ASADA, and entry on the register of findings after the ADRVP review only indicates that, based on the evidence that the ADRVP has reviewed, it is possible that a violation has taken place. Once an entry is made, the matter is referred to a sports administration body for determination.

In a recent case, the full Federal Court observed that, despite the terms used in legislation, the ADRVP makes an assertion of a violation rather than finding that an athlete has committed the breach. It is proposed to reduce complexity and the scope for any misunderstanding in such a sensitive area by referring to assertions rather than findings in the ASADA Act and by removing the register. Placing an entry on the register is currently a trigger to allow a number of notifications to be made under the scheme. These include ensuring that the athlete has the right to appeal. Importantly, despite the removal of the register, the right of the person to appeal to the AAT in respect of an assertion made by the ADRVP will be retained. That was an issue of importance; people had a sense that they had an effective right to appeal.

In conclusion—and this is echoing the words that Mr Ripoll made in both the lower house and in different discussions around this bill—Labor has strong support for the antidoping measures. As parliamentarians, we must do whatever is possible to protect the integrity of the Australian sport, and we will be supporting the bill.

I want to make a couple of comments about issues raised about effective resourcing of the various bodies that have the ownership of this legislation. It is important that there is trust in the community that any of the issues will be able to be looked at and action taken as quickly as possible. Concerns were raised on a number of occasions that resourcing had led to delays, that people were left in limbo for too long. We asked these questions directly of the various organisations that came before the committee. They asserted they had effective resourcing and that they would continue to talk with government about what they would need to ensure that they do the job that the parliament has told them that they want them to do. It is extraordinarily important that we understand the need. If we put in place legislation that ensures that there is due process, we must ensure that the organisations that have to take the action are effectively resourced. Because this was raised by a number of people at the committee, I felt it was important to reinforce the need. We need to respect the organisations. We do respect the organisations, but we must have confidence that they have the resources to do the job that everyone wants them to be able to do.

Senator Di Natale (Victoria) (12:08): I rise today to also speak on the introduction of the bill here that seeks to align Australia's antidoping legislation with the revised World Anti-Doping Code. Before I speak to specific aspects of the bill let me put on the public record that the Greens, like the current government and indeed the opposition, want to see our sports to be clean and free of drug cheats. I know there is a view in some parts of the community that this is a battle that we cannot win and in fact what we should do is effectively admit that it will be impossible to eliminate doping from sport and therefore drop any effort to try to combat doping in sport. I do not subscribe to that view. I think it is really important for the integrity of sport that we know that people are competing on a level playing field. I also think it is very important in terms of people's health. Some of the substances that are used are
potentially very, very harmful. Indeed, we have already seen a number of high-profile athletes who have had significant complications as a result of drug or performance-enhancing substances.

To get on to the substance of the bill, it seeks to align Australia's sports and antidoping act with the world code—that is, the WADA World Anti-Doping Code. It does this through a variety of mechanisms. It creates a new part which would mean that somebody who is associating with an individual that is deemed to have been a prohibited person is in fact subject to a penalty. That is, should an athlete associate with another individual and that individual is somebody who is deemed to be a prohibited person, the athlete themselves and not the person who is deemed to be prohibited would be subject to a penalty. The Greens have got serious concerns about that. It challenges the right to freedom of association. We are concerned about that specific aspect.

There are a number of other parts to the bill that we think are sensible: the fairly minor changes to the Australian Sports Drug Medical Advisory Committee; the provisions around information sharing; and the removal of the requirement for the Anti-Doping Rule Violation Panel to maintain a register of findings. We understand the move in that direction. We do have, however, broader concerns about the doubling of penalties that will be implemented as a result of this change. On balance we think the time has come for a much broader review into the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority. We have got an opportunity here to decide whether the current framework we have adopted is in fact achieving what it sets out to do, and that is to ensure that people are competing on a level playing field.

We do not think the majority report into this bill gave enough attention to the concerns that were identified by a number of groups. There were concerns identified by athletes' associations, by a number of people within the legal fraternity, who had very serious concerns about the impact of this bill on athletes and their families, and particularly on athletes who are not engaged in any serious antidoping violation. Let us acknowledge here that there is a spectrum. On one end of the spectrum we have got the Lance Armstongs of the world—the people who are engaged in deliberate, systematic, deceptive cheating. No-one, I think, would argue that someone like Lance Armstrong deserves anything other than the full force of the law when it comes to antidoping. But there is a spectrum. We have seen recently investigations into the Essendon Football Club and Cronulla. We have seen football clubs push the boundaries, shall we say, and it appears now, with the issuing of infraction notices, transgressing in some instances. But then at the other end of the spectrum we have innocent athletes who may be caught up, for example, in the prescription of medication from their doctor that may in fact be captured under the WADA code as a banned substance. They will be subject to a doubling of the penalties along with other people, as outlined in this bill.

So our concern is that the bill does not target accurately enough or appropriately the people we want to weed out of sport—that is, the drug cheats—and there will be many innocent athletes who will be caught up in this. Often we have this debate about sport and we have this view of sports people at the elite end of the spectrum, but in fact most people who are involved in sport do not play sport professionally. They may be in second- and third-tier sports. Of course there is concern about their ability to represent themselves in inadvertent or innocent breaches. There is a doubling of the penalties under the current code. A two-year penalty will now be doubled to four years. Somebody who may be guilty of an inadvertent
breach, who previously would have been suspended for one year, may now, as a result of these changes, be suspended for two years. That is a significant change. If we are going to introduce legislation like this we need to ensure that we are not using a very blunt instrument to tackle people who are not intended to be the target of the antidoping framework that we have in this country.

The WADA code effectively is designed to address the legal use of performance-enhancing drugs, but we have to recognise that there are many other ways that we can achieve that aim and that in fact many other countries have pursued a different path to the ones we have pursued. Rather than targeting an athlete because they are associating with somebody who is deemed to be a prohibited person—again, putting the onus on the athlete—why is it that we cannot adopt some of the other measures that were identified during the hearing into this bill, which look at other opportunities that might exist to target people who are involved in the importation and distribution of what are often illegal substances. It seems to me that through the framework we have adopted, which is one of strict liability for and onus on the athlete, we are ignoring many of the other issues that exist further up the chain and that, indeed, we are targeting athletes who in many cases will be innocent of a serious breach. We could amend sections of the Crimes Act, as was suggested during the inquiry, because of the issues I have just spoken about.

We heard from the Australian Athletes' Alliance, which represents Australia's eight major playing associations and about 3½ thousand elite athletes, which was very strongly opposed to the bill on a number of grounds. Its view is the view that I have just put forward: that the legislation does not do enough to protect the rights of clean athletes and that it is often those people who are the victims of antidoping legislation, while the serious drug cheats, those people who do it deliberately and systematically—the Lance Armstrongs of the world—are very rarely captured by legislation such as this. There is a huge gulf in the problem that we face—the issue of drug cheats in sport—and the outcomes that the bill is trying to achieve. We need to keep an open mind about other possible measures that we can introduce.

Australia is saying that we have to change our own antidoping framework to align with WADA code, but there are major sporting associations right around the world that have made a decision that the WADA code does not actually address some of the issues in the way it needs to for their sport. We were told right through the inquiry that we had no choice other than to sign up to this legislation, because if we did not align our legislation with the WADA code there would be serious penalties. It is not the case in the US. In the US some major sports, such as the National Football League, have not signed up to the WADA code. They have made a decision that they accept that the WADA code has changed The NFL has decided to take a very different path. The NFL uses negotiation between the employer—the major sporting bodies—and their employees, the athletes, to make very clear what expectations exist around their employment. That includes ensuring that athletes are not using any substances that may be deemed to be performance enhancing. You have only to look at the investigation into the Essendon and Cronulla football clubs to know that this is a very blunt tool. It is very difficult to achieve the desired outcomes simply by increasing the powers of our antidoping authority. Maybe we need to look at other opportunities. The NFL has shown us that it believes that there is a different pathway open to us. We need to explore it.
Doubling the penalty, from two years to four years, makes it for many people a career-ending penalty. If you are footballer in your mid-20s in one of the major codes and receive a four-year ban, that is the end of your career—done and dusted. What if that breach is the result of being within a sporting organisation that assures you that what it is doing is within the bounds of the law but which later turns out to be something that is subject to a four-year ban? Imagine you are a young kid from the country. You come to a football club. There is a culture within that club of sporting personnel providing and administering injections or other substances. You are reassured that what is being done is absolutely within the antidoping framework. Under this legislation, you are expected to challenge that. You are expected to have the knowledge, the wherewithal and indeed the confidence to take on your employer and challenge what you have been given through your sporting organisation. That is the problem with this strict liability. The onus ends up being just on the athletes rather than on the employer and the sporting code. What you end up with is a situation where young athletes, who may be taking a substance, thinking that what they are doing is appropriate, end up having their career end. That is what will be the impact of increasing the ban from two years to four years. It goes too far.

The WADA code is really designed with an eye on the Olympic Games, and international competition, with a specific focus on Olympic competition. Because we have adopted it as a universal framework that is to be used through all of our sporting codes we end up with penalties that are disproportionate and not appropriate for some of our local codes. There was no justification expressed to the inquiry that this increase was necessary. It is not as though we were given any convincing evidence that simply increasing the penalty from two years to four years would result in a reduction of the number of people who use illicit substances. I think there are often assumptions built into this, but the drivers that are at play here are not going to be addressed by simply doubling the penalty and potentially ending someone's career.

The question of whether ASADA actually needs more powers as opposed to more resources was alluded to throughout the inquiry, but we did not really get to the heart of that. We have seen, through the investigation into those two major codes, a complete inability to provide a timely resolution to those cases. It does call into question whether we need to have a much broader look at the resourcing of that organisation, if that is going to be the pathway through which we are going to prosecute the attempt to reduce doping in sport.

We also know that the focus on testing and penalties is probably, again, not backed up by the evidence in terms of where most of the gains are to be made. For example, in 2011-12, we saw 10½ thousand drug tests and there were 13 positive results. A couple of those were for illicit drugs that most people would not consider to be performance enhancing. Just think about that—13 positive tests out of 10½ thousand. It points to the fact that we need to look at different ways of prosecuting this, and simply increasing powers, increasing penalties and putting the onus on the athlete around changes to things such as prohibited association probably are not going to give us the sorts of gains that we want to achieve. What we would like to see is a much more broad-ranging inquiry into our antidoping framework. We think that is the best place to start.

It is interesting that in the previous parliament, when a bill was presented by the then Labor government to increase ASADA's powers—that is, to increase powers around the right to
silence and a number of other matters—the coalition voted against those changes. I was involved in that inquiry. It was a bill to increase ASADA's powers, and we had the coalition vote against that legislation. Granted, it was at the start of the investigations into the matters at Essendon and Cronulla, and there was clearly a lot of interest in that. I do not want to speak for the coalition, but I suggest they smelt a political opportunity there and were prosecuting their case around the way that was handled. But it is interesting that at that time they refused to grant ASADA more powers, sought to make a political issue of what was going on in the investigation, and now we have them in government seeking to introduce a bill that goes even further than the previous government went in terms of granting ASADA more powers. So we have this very confused attitude to how we should be prosecuting the case around drugs in sport.

What I would like to see—and I think the time has come—is a much broader inquiry into the current Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority, to look at the level of resourcing available to them, to look at whether our commitment to the WAD Code is the best way of reducing drug use in sport—that is, not just Olympic sport but all of our major sporting codes. I think that is where we are going to make the most gain here when it comes to this issue that we all think is incredibly important—that is, trying to ensure that it is the team with the best athletes rather than the best pharmacists who achieve success on the sporting field.

Senator SESELJA (Australian Capital Territory) (12:26): Before I get to some of the detail of the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Amendment Bill 2014, which our committee was able to look at in some detail, I want to say that it is unfortunate that, whenever we talk about anything in relation to drugs in sport and in relation to ASADA in recent times, it is always looked at—even in the contribution of Senator Di Natale there—in the context, to some degree, of the 'darkest day in sport' and the shameful way that that was handled. I will come back to that, but first I want to deal with the bill. We are dealing with two very separate issues, but I can understand how, in the public's mind and in sporting bodies' minds, they would look at even legislation like this, which I think is pretty uncontroversial broadly and is certainly legislation that should be supported, and have difficulty separating those two issues because of the politicisation we saw some time ago by the former Labor government.

There is no doubt that Australians value their sporting teams. We enjoy sport, we enjoy watching sport and we have great and understandable pride in the performance of our elite athletes, be they our athletes who compete in the Olympics or be they our athletes in our major sporting codes—the NRL, the AFL, the A-League, rugby union, netball, a whole range of elite sports in this country. We have a proud tradition and we are justifiably proud of our athletes. But what is critically important to that is the idea that we expect that it will be a fair contest. There are some things we can agree on. We do want to see a fair contest. We do want legislation that ensures we have the maximum confidence that we are not seeing widespread cheating, with people using drugs to get a competitive advantage over others. Australians have absolutely no time for people who would seek to cheat, for people who would seek to use drugs to get an unfair advantage, and for anyone who might facilitate that.

What we are debating in the Senate today is legislation that will help to give us more confidence and help to improve our regime so that Australians, when they see our elite athletes, be it at an international level, be it at a domestic level, will know that all that can
reasonably be done is being done to ensure we have a fair playing field, that we are stamping out drugs in sport and that we are sending a very clear message to our athletes—not just our elite athletes but our younger athletes coming through—that there is no time for this and that, in some cases, severe penalties will be needed to deal with some of the worst abuses of our laws and of the rules of various sports.

We know that antidoping regulation is a key part of the approach. To maintain sport integrity in the WAD Code is the global standard for over 170 governments and 300 international sporting bodies. As a signatory to the WADA convention the Australian government has made a commitment to abide by the principles of the code. The example that Senator Di Natale used of the NFL is a false comparison because what we are talking about here is what the government does—what kind of framework we put in place. If we do not put in place the right framework it will undermine particularly our Olympic athletes' ability to compete on a world stage. We do not want to be laggards in this area; we want to be leaders. And we want to ensure that we have the best possible compliance with the WAD Code here in Australia. So the comparison with the NFL is a false one—that needs to be said. That is an individual sporting code. What we are talking about here is our nation's response to doping and our nation's response to the WAD Code, which we have signed up to—both sides of politics have committed to it. We are committed to the WAD Code and this is our legislative framework for implementing that WAD Code.

There is a lot of detail in this, some of which is in the headline legislation and some of which necessarily must come through regulation. That is also important to ensure that we comply with the WAD Code. It is worth just going through some of the key changes because the committee looked through the changes to the code and additional administrative changes in detail.

We have the prohibition of athletes and support persons from associating with convicted drug cheats. This is designed to protect athletes from known doping facilitators, such as unscrupulous doctors or support staff. This is the prohibited persons violation and I will come back to that because that was one of the most controversial parts of it. But I think that in broad terms this is a very important part. This is a recognition, in fact, that we cannot always test for every substance; testing alone does not always get to the bottom of it. We do know that in many cases there needs to be a whole range of mechanisms for regulatory bodies to deal with these issues. As we have seen in the broad publicity around recent cases—and I will not go into details of recent cases, some of which may be ongoing—we know it can centre around one or two individuals. So it is an important tool, and there are important safeguards that were outlined to the committee in some detail to ensure that a casual association is not something that is likely to bring someone undone. We are talking about protecting athletes, in fact, from people who would in some cases lead young, impressionable athletes astray; who would take them down a path that is detrimental to their health and potentially detrimental to their careers and to their reputations. So it is actually a great protection for athletes as much as it is an inhibition on them.

We have complicity: aiding and abetting or covering up a doping violation is now a violation in its own right. There is increasing the sanction under the code from two years to four years for deliberate doping infractions, such as taking anabolic steroids. There is smarter target testing by testing for specific substances for particular sports—for example, steroids for
strength sports and blood doping for endurance sports, making testing more efficient and targeted. The establishment of a violations list formalises a WADA requirement to publish a list of people who have received an anti-doping sanction for the period of that sanction.

The provision of a review panel in the Australian Sports Drug Medical Advisory Committee, which is separate to ASADA, will provide mechanisms for athletes who apply unsuccessfully for a therapeutic use exemption. A therapeutic use exemption is where an athlete is approved for legitimate use of an otherwise prohibited drug for medical reasons, such as asthma medication. There is the removal of unnecessary distinctions in types of information received by ASADA by clarifying content as protected information, regardless of the source, and ensuring that the same provisions apply for all information to protect the unlawful use of that content. ASADA will be enabled to comment publicly in response to incorrect statements by an athlete or their representatives to correct the record—that was certainly something that the head of ASADA put to us as being important.

There is the removal of the register of findings. The register is currently confusing to athletes and the public, as the Anti-Doping Rule Violation Panel does not in fact make a 'finding', rather they make an 'assertion' that it is possible that a violation has occurred and then this information is provided by ASADA to the sport to consider through the normal tribunal process. Importantly, whilst the register is removed, safeguards for athletes to appeal a decision by the ADRVP are retained. There is one that I recall that is not in my notes here about the ability to go back and test. At the moment it is eight years; that will go to 10 years. I think that is also an important provision because that sends a message to dopers who think they can get away with things now and who think that maybe there is no test for the substance that they are taking. In fact they will have 10 years of technological advancement where we might be able to go back and find out if they actually are cheating now. I think that is a very sensible change, and a very reasonable change, to ensure that we can use future technologies to provide a deterrent right now and get to the bottom of doping in the future.

We found a lot of support for these changes, notwithstanding—as Senator Di Natale has raised—that there were a number of organisations who were opposed to these changes. We had some of the lawyer representative groups and we had the Australian Athletes' Alliance opposed to a number of the changes. But I commend the committee's report, which has been tabled in the Senate, to senators and to others because it actually dealt with each of these objections one by one and in some detail. It dealt with the responses and the safeguards that we have. We had submissions to the inquiry stressing the importance of Australia taking a stronger stance on drug use in sport for the benefit of all athletes and the importance of protecting Australia's integrity as a sporting nation. The majority of submissions expressed support both for the revised code and for the measures in this bill to facilitate the implementation of the code.

A key point raised by a number of submitters was that they wanted to make sure that we were able to continue to compete on the world stage. Simon Hollingsworth, of the Australian Sports Commission, noted in his evidence:

... if the bill were not to go through in its current form, national sporting organisations would be placed in a situation where they would be required to comply with their international federations and organisations like the International Olympic Committee and the Australian Olympic Committee, which would be different to the legislative framework that would exist in Australia.
John Coates, of the Australian Olympic Committee, submitted:

In order to continue this longstanding commitment, any staging of future Olympic Games, World Championships and other major international events in Australia, such as the Asian Football Cup in January 2015 and the Commonwealth Games in 2018, must be Code compliant.

With this in mind, passage of this bill is important to secure our participation in world sporting events.

I will deal with the prohibited persons violation because this was, I think, probably the most contentious part of this legislation, and it certainly got the most commentary as the committee examined this. Some argued that the prohibited persons violation is broad and might implicate athletes whose family members or other unavoidable associates have previous doping violations. However, in response, the department made clear:

… the association which might be the subject of a prohibition must be in a professional sports related capacity.

So there are limitations around that prohibition to start with. It is not meant to interfere with the day-to-day interactions between individuals outside those particular provisions. It is targeted at athlete-support personnel. There are numerous safeguards in place that ensure that athletes will not be charged due to accidental or unavoidable association with a prohibited person, including opportunities to explain associations and rights to appeal.

The new WADA code comes into force on 1 January 2015, so it is vital that we help these clean athletes by enacting the amendments as soon as we can to avoid any consequences that might come from not being compliant. In the AOC submission we had a number of quotes from some of our athletes imploring the parliament to pass this legislation and imploring us to protect these clean athletes through changes such as are being proposed in the legislation we are debating today. Matthew Dunn, a three-time Olympian, said:

As an ex-athlete I hope all stakeholders will be able to use the new WADA Code with maximum effect to protect all clean athletes and ensure a level playing field.

Claudia Bokel, also a three-time Olympian, said:

… I am proud to say that all athletes' representatives unanimously supported strong bans for athletes convicted of a deliberate and aggravated doping offence. We actually wanted lifetime bans. Clean athletes don't want to compete against dirty athletes!

We had a number of other quotes from Beckie Scott, from Cydonie Mothersill and from Kim Crow. Kim Crow said:

For every doper out there, clean athletes suffer. We dedicate our hearts and souls to pursuing our sporting dreams. To have those dreams stolen by cheats is an irreplaceable theft.

This is an important piece of legislation. It has been thoroughly examined. I think it has stood up to the scrutiny in terms of some of the criticisms that have been put by some groups, but I think there is a far more compelling argument put by the many submissions in favour as to why it is important that we do this.

In passing, I note Senator Di Natale's comments in relation to a broader inquiry. I think that is something that needs to be considered. I think that any inquiry would need to look at the politicisation of ASADA that occurred under the former government. I do not think that we can turn our eyes away from that. It was something that I know that all sporting bodies in Australia now look at and see the damage of those kinds of inflammatory comments and the
way that that particular press conference—the 'darkest day in sport' press conference, as it is now known—was handled. It cast a pall over all Australian athletes, unfortunately, when we know that the vast bulk of Australian athletes do absolutely the right thing. They stay within the rules. They work their butts off to compete, but they have no time for doping and they have no time for cheating. The way that that particular issue was handled and the way that that particular press conference was handled damaged Australian sport in the eyes of others. Those headlines were damaging and unnecessarily so.

We do not need inflammatory rhetoric. We need a sensible approach. We need sensible legislation. If there is a case to look at things like ASADA resources, well, so be it. But I think we should also look at how we can avoid the type of politicisation that we have seen in the past to ensure that ASADA can get on and do its job, that we give it the legislative tools that it needs and that we give it the resources that it needs. We, as legislators, have a responsibility to do that, and governments have a responsibility to make sure that independent bodies like ASADA can do their job so that the integrity of sport is not called into question—certainly not called into question unnecessarily—and so that Australians can have confidence that all is being done to ensure that we have a fair and level playing field. I commend the bill to the Senate.

Senator LEYONHJELM (New South Wales) (12:42): In the game of bridge, table talk is ruinous. A player might let their partner know that they have hearts by touching their chest, or they might play with their wedding ring when they have diamonds. This is cheating, plain and simple. Table talk is unfair for current players, discourages new players and hurts the organisations that host casual games of bridge and more serious bridge competitions. And they are serious, including national and international competitions.

When some people see a problem, they decide that something should be done about it, and they pretty quickly conclude that the government should be doing that something. So what should we do to crack down on table talk in bridge? Should we establish a government agency and fund it to police the bridge tables around the nation? And, if this agency finds a table talker, should we write a law that allows the agency to ban the table talker from ever sitting around a bridge table again? Surely the answer is no. I would like to think that everyone in this chamber believes that the answer is no. After all, bridge is just a game. Table talk is not a criminal act, and the organisations running the game can ban table talk without getting the government involved. In fact, they already do.

That brings me to the bill before the chamber, the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Amendment Bill 2014. In the late 1980s, some people came to see Ros Kelly, the sports minister at the time, to say that something should be done about cheating in sport. I would imagine they did not mention table-talking in bridge. Instead, they would have focused on the use of steroids in more physically demanding sports. Ros Kelly should have told those people that sporting codes are perfectly capable of banning the use of performance-enhancing substances by their players. Instead, she created the Australian Sports Drug Agency, which has now become ASADA.

ASADA is a government agency that tells players in various sporting codes not to use various substances, from caffeine to peptides, many of which are perfectly legal. ASADA tests the players and, if it finds that the players use any of the various substances, it tells the sporting codes that the players cannot play anymore. I emphasise that we are talking about
legal substances here, not illicit drugs. Taxpayers pay more than $12 million a year for ASADA to do this.

There is absolutely no justification for it. Sporting codes are owned and managed by private organisations. If they think their players should not take various legal substances, they can make that a rule of their sport. No-one wants to maintain the integrity and popularity of a sport more than the sporting codes themselves. What ASADA does cannot be justified on health grounds. There is no case for stopping a tiny percentage of people, mostly elite athletes, from taking caffeine or peptides while letting them punch each other in boxing, torture themselves in triathlons or attack each other's hamstrings in rugby league. It is none of the government's business.

This bill before the Senate ramps up ASADA's powers. ASADA already requires sporting codes to ostracise players who have taken the wrong substances. The bill will give ASADA the power to require sporting codes to ostracise players who merely associate with previously ostracised players. This is government overreach in the extreme, and for that reason I oppose this bill.

Finally, to those who agree that it would be ridiculous for the government to spend taxpayers' funds to crack down on cheating in a game like bridge but who fail to see the connection with the ASADA bill we are now debating, let me pass on some news: ASADA regulates the humble game of bridge. So, if your mother is on a diuretic and is playing in a serious bridge competition, she might be in for a shock; and, if you associate with her and play bridge, you might be as well.

Senator LAMBIE (Tasmania—Deputy Leader and Deputy Whip of the Palmer United Party in the Senate) (12:48): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Amendment Bill 2014. In summary, the bill seeks to align Australia's antidoping legislation with the revised World Anti-Doping Code and international standards that will come into force on 1 January 2015.

The bill would amend the Australian Sports and Anti-Doping Authority Act 2006 to (1) authorise the making of regulations to allow the Australian Sports and Anti-Doping Authority Chief Executive Officer to implement a new prohibited association, the antidoping rule violation; (2) extend the time period in which action on a possible antidoping rule violation must commence from eight to 10 years from the date the violation is asserted to have occurred; (3) expand the membership of the Australian Sports Drug Medical Advisory Committee to allow the appointment of three members for the sole purpose of reviewing decisions, where requested, in relation to applications for therapeutic use exemptions; (4) require that at least one Australian Sports Drug Medical Advisory Committee primary member possess general experience in the care and treatment of athletes with impairments; (5) simplify information-sharing provisions in the act to improve the exchange, between relevant stakeholders, of information that would assist in identifying and substantiating antidoping violations; (6) require that the Australian Sports and Anti-Doping Authority maintain a public record of antidoping rule violations, to be known as the violations list; (7) remove the requirement for the Anti-Doping Rule Violation Panel to maintain a register of findings; and (8) allow the ASADA CEO to respond to public comments attributed to an athlete, other person or their representatives with respect to a doping matter.
These measures contained in the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Amendment Bill 2014 are reasonable, and, ordinarily, I would have supported them. However, as I indicated in my speech earlier this morning, I remind this chamber that today we have an opportunity to make a stand in this place for the men and women of the Australian Defence Force. Today, if each non-government member chose to do so, we could say no to the government's disgusting pay rise offer to the ADF by saying no to their legislative program—and yes to a fair deal for our Defence Force families. It would only take a couple of votes against the Abbott government's legislative program, for what is a matter of conscience with regard to defence pay, and this government would fold like a house of cards. Today in this place we have the power to undo the harm that the coalition government have done to the men and women of our Army, Navy and Air Force, not to mention to their morale. On behalf of the men and women of our defence forces, this chamber can make the Abbott government taste some of their own medicine.

The Liberal and National party members have bullied the states into increasing the GST, by ripping funding from them so that they cannot meet their budgets. They bully our major universities by ripping funding from them, backing them up against the wall. They bullied the Senate with their recent tax hikes on fuel. They bully the public to put pressure on the Senate, telling them that if the Senate does not toe the line they will hike up taxes.

And now they are bullying our Defence personnel, who have rules not allowing them to fight back, not allowing them to speak, not allowing them to have a union to represent them. If they do not do as they are told, they will wear the repercussions—that is, they will have to do extra duties, they will be charged and they will have a black mark put next to their name. They are basically being held captive.

There is only one way to deal with a bully and that is to stand up to them. The government's behaviour would never be accepted in any schoolyard or any workplace, and I do not see why we should put up with it from our governments in our parliaments. Unless there are any objections from those opposite, I will give voice to the men and women of our Defence Force who have contacted my office because of this appalling pay offer, not to mention the reduction of their Christmas leave.

As I said earlier, I have received numerous emails from Defence Force personnel and so will continue to read them. Email No. 4 reads:

Congratulations, Jacqui on going into bat for the Defence Force over this disgraceful pay offer to the serving members. You have our total support.

Tony Abbott is a Defence Force junkie who loves to have his photo taken at any opportunity with serving members, and now he insults them with a pay offer that does not even keep up with inflation.

Keep up the fight, and thank you for your stance on behalf of the Defence Force members.

Email No. 6 reads:

Thank you for your stand on the pay issue for our ADF members. Congratulations and give the government heaps.

You have my full support and admiration. Please tell uncle Clive Palmer, he should be making a statement of support for this business.

As an ex service member, my pension has suffered over the years because of the application of the CPI instead of the MTAWE. I guess you have seen the gap. If not, I can send you a copy.
They will sit up and take notice, they will change their minds and they will give our ADF members a decent pay rise entirely due to your efforts. Please keep up your fight. Please do not buckle to any external pressure.

Email No. 7 reads:

This is an admirable position by Jacqui and we support what she has placed upon the table. It is a national disgrace that Defence conditions of service and veterans' entitlements are being eroded by this cruel and un-caring government just to save money.

The government and the people of Australia have an obligation to ensure that our ADF personnel and veterans are given the best entitlements and not to erode these entitlements for their service to this country. After all, they are the only ones who have or are prepared to sacrifice their lives, health, wellbeing and quality of life. This particularly affects their respective families.

Email No. 8 reads:

I am writing to you to thank you for your efforts with regards to ADF personnel pay offer. I have three members of my family in the ADF and I too am disgusted in the way they have been treated.

They have not only been offered a pittance but their conditions and allowances have also been eroded to pay for it as an offset. I do not see how the Abbott government can consider this to be any sort of pay rise.

One of my family has been to the Middle East, is now severely traumatised and facing medical discharge, another has been in the RAAF for 23 years and has been told there are no prospects for promotion.

He has been forced to relocate to another base and, due to the dire financial situation he has been put under, he has had to leave his wife and children in Queensland. The other member has been highly trained, has completed several degrees and masters qualifications and she too has been told that the chance of promotion is remote.

They are asked to put themselves in the firing line and then when they ask for some monetary return they are treated in this manner. Once again, I thank you for your interest and support.

I have written to my local member and am yet to hear from him. I wish a few more of members such as yourself spoke up on their behalf so their life might be just that bit better. They are not asking for much.

Once again, thank you for your efforts. With kind regards, father of three proud members.

Email No. 9 reads:

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Bernardi): Senator Lambie, I would ask you to remain relevant to the legislation we are discussing. I would ask you to return to the substance of it please.

Senator LAMBIE: Acting Deputy President, I can do that. We are aware that steroids are used in service and I think this has certainly got to do with this thing here. This is obviously very important. This has got to do with national service. Is this not a free and fair performance of a senator here that needs to be cut down? This is obviously very important to these people.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The matter is relevance. We are discussing the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Amendment Bill 2014. I have given you a great deal of leeway and I would ask you to return to the substance of the bill so that your remarks are relevant.

Senator LAMBIE: Email No. 9 reads:
I would like to congratulate you and thank you for standing up for us in the ADF. I would just like to outline to you how this pay 'increase' will impact on me and my family.

One day of leave is worth about $250 to me. The leave day they want to take is over Christmas. If I do not have the leave, I can buy it or I would need to put my children in care. I have three children. My two boys would be in out-of-school holiday program at $55 per day per child, My daughter is in daycare at $90 per day. This totals $200, so I am working for $50.

That is the pay side of it; let's look at the family and social impact.

Our family is in Western Australia and we are in Townsville. Christmas every second year is when we can afford to travel over to see them and one less day means we need to come home a week early as that stand down day is between Christmas and New Year. My husband and I are both serving so when we come home we have to work. That is one less day to spend with our children, considering my husband is away with work 4-5 months of a year. We cherish each and every day.

We live in a married quarter and every time we have a pay increase, we also get a rental increase. However, those increases are in line with CPI, unlike this very low pay increase. So with this, I truly hope you stand your ground and block whatever you can until they listen. I think you will face backlash from your party. Let's face it, it will not be a party for long and Clive is a whack job. So go for it alone, go independent, and you will achieve so much more.

Email No. 10—

Senator Di Natale: I had to step outside for a brief moment. I have lost track of proceedings. I thought we were doing the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Amendment Bill 2014.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Are you drawing a point of order on relevance, Senator Di Natale?

Senator Di Natale: Are we still on that bill?

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Indeed, we are.

Senator Di Natale: I would like to draw a point of order on relevance.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you. I agree with you. I have already asked Senator Lambie to return to the substance of the bill. Senator Lambie, I must insist that you address the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Amendment Bill 2014.

Senator LAMBIE: I have finished with that bill. Thank you.

Senator NASH (New South Wales—Deputy Leader of The Nationals in the Senate and Assistant Minister for Health) (13:01): I thank senators for their contributions to the debate on this bill. The debate has shown that we recognise it is essential that Australia is committed through action to protect clean athletes and the integrity of sport through internationally harmonised antidoping principles. It is important for Australian and world sport that athletes, regardless of where they compete and in what sport, are protected by the same antidoping rules globally. We want our athletes to compete with integrity on a level playing field and we are committed to ensuring that Australian athletes have the same responsibilities.

The objective of this bill is to adjust Australia's antidoping arrangements so they align with the revised World Anti-Doping Code, due to come into force on 1 January 2015. The revisions to the code were developed through an extensive two-year consultation process involving all stakeholders, including athletes, sports administrators, antidoping officials and governments. This process provided a comprehensive review of the current arrangements and
a broad consensus on how to best deal with the future threats that doping poses. International sporting federations are expecting their member national sporting organisations to have code-compliant antidoping policies in place by 1 January 2015.

If these amendments are not passed, Australia's antidoping legislation will to varying degrees fall out of step with the antidoping arrangements under which our national sporting organisations operate. This would create a confusing scenario where our sporting organisations would simultaneously face differing antidoping requirements between their international federation counterparts and ASADA. This would mean the potential for different violations, sanctions and athlete reporting requirements. The changes to the code target the more serious doping practices, place greater scrutiny on athlete support persons involved in doping, recognise the growing importance of investigations in the detection of doping and facilitate smarter, targeted testing regimes.

At the same time, the changes are designed to promote the rights of athletes and ensure adherence to procedural fairness in doping matters. The proposed amendments embody these principles. It is entirely appropriate that people who cheat can no longer be able to compete in the very sports that they have tarnished. Clean athletes deserve better, sports deserve better and the public should have faith in the athletes and competitions they follow.

It is also appropriate to make additional administrative changes at this time. With investigations and intelligence gathering now forming an integral element of any strategy for detecting doping, ASADA's capacity to undertake these activities in partnership with key stakeholders is enhanced by proposed amendments to the management of information. However, these amendments include appropriate protections. Another example is the streamlining of the independent Anti-Doping Rule Violation Panel process to ensure that it is clear that findings are, and will continue to be, made by sporting tribunals.

The struggle to rid sport of doping and ensure our athletes compete on a level playing field requires a coordinated, consistent and harmonised global effort. This bill ensures Australia is fulfilling its role as part of that global effort to protect the rights and wellbeing of clean athletes, while improving the ability to detect and sanction intentional doping cheats.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (13:04): As no amendments to the bill have been circulated, I shall call the minister to move the third reading unless any senator requires that the bill be considered in Committee of the Whole.

Senator NASH (New South Wales—Deputy Leader of The Nationals in the Senate and Assistant Minister for Health) (13:05): I move:

That the bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.
Tax Laws Amendment (Research and Development) Bill 2013

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Senator CAMERON (New South Wales) (13:05): I stand to oppose the Tax Laws Amendment (Research and Development) Bill 2013. This bill amends the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 to deny access to the research and development tax incentive for companies with an aggregated assessable income of $20 billion or more for an income year. The amendment apparently better targets the R&D incentive to businesses that are more likely to increase their R&D spending in response to government incentives, delivering a greater return for taxpayers. That is the argument the coalition has put up in relation to the changes that they want to deliver on this. But what this does is it actually denies some of our biggest companies in this country the capacity to invest in research and development and the incentive to invest in research and development.

We looked at a similar proposition, but what we did when we were in government was this: we actually used any savings that were made from this proposal to build a stronger manufacturing and engineering base in this country. We wanted to create jobs. But that is not what this bill is about. This bill is about part of the coalition's position, where they simply want to cut costs. They want to make sure that this country cannot invest in a proper health system, a proper education system, a proper welfare system and a decent industry policy in this country. This bill is not about trying to balance one part of industry development with another; this bill is simply about an austerity measure. It is about pushing costs out of the cost of government doing business.

The problem with this is that everyone who knows the importance of research and development, everyone who knows the importance of innovation, understands that this is what drives an economy into the future. I have been gravely concerned about the activities of the coalition in relation to the economic base of this country. The economic base of this country over many, many years has had a strong manufacturing and engineering sector, and one of the main drivers for spending on research and development and spending on innovation has been our engineering and manufacturing sector. What we saw from the coalition not long after they came to power was that they basically dared our manufacturing sector, our vehicle sector, to leave the country. That is what they did, and that has resulted in a decline and a diminishing and a narrowing of our economic base. This bill will continue that process because this bill is simply about cost cutting. It is not about trying to look at government investing with industry to create new innovation, to create new research and development, to create new jobs. It is simply cost cutting at its lowest level. And that is not good for this country.

I remember being on the Senate committee of inquiry into the mining tax. I remember that at that time the mining industry and some of the analysts in the mining industry were saying that we had something like 80 years of recoverable iron ore resources in this country. Recently I saw on the ABC a report that said that, because of the increased production in the mining industry, those resources are now down to somewhere around 70 years, and, if we continue to get low prices and we continue to try and increase production, that will decline.
more and more. It is foreseeable in this country that we have young people at school now who may still be in the workforce when there is no iron ore industry of any significant capacity in this country.

What does that mean? That means that you need to have a broader economic base, and that economic base must include manufacturing and engineering. That economic base must provide the skills, the skilled jobs, the decently paid jobs and the future for the kids who are at school now, because they will not all be able to get into the mining industry. That is the problem. As you see, the mining industry, the coal industry and the iron ore industry are very quick to get rid of jobs as soon as a chill wind hits them. That is why we need innovation. That is why we need research and development. That is why we need a broad base in this country to provide jobs for the future. And what this bill does, simply to try and make savings in the budget, is to deny the reality of innovation and research and development in this country.

Innovation, research and development are the backbone of any advanced economy. I am on the record over many years as saying that Australia cannot simply be a quarry, a farm and a tourist destination. But that is where we are heading under this government, because it fails to understand the need to get a balance between research and development, innovation and co-investment in industry. It does not understand the important issues of ensuring that we have skilled jobs for young Australians into the future.

We need, in my view, a complete re-look at what this government is doing, because this government has lost the plot when it comes to building a strong industry base in this country. The industry base has to be broader. The industry base has to be innovative. The industry base has to be technologically competent. If we simply narrow the base, we will go nowhere in a hurry. The problem with the government is that it simply wants to take money out of research and development. It wants to take that money out of investment without doing the other things that are so important to this economy.

What we did in government was that we said that we would provide a range of incentives in association with changes to the research and development approach, that we would look at ensuring that steel suppliers in this country had access to a fair go around the country, that metal fabricators would get a fair go, and that we would start developing approaches where they could get into the international approach that is taken everywhere else, where you have to get access to jobs through that international supply chain. We said we would look at building and construction and create jobs in building and construction. We said we would look at construction management services, design and engineering as part of the overall broad industry base that is so important for this country.

You can do that a number of ways. One way is through research, development and innovation. Another way is providing co-investment opportunities and support for those industries. Another way is to have a balance between co-investment and support and research, development and innovation. This government, simply as a cost-cutting measure, is saying that major companies that invest significantly in research and development in this country will not have access to any support.

There was an inquiry by the Senate Economics Legislation Committee into this bill. It became clear through the submissions that industry does not support this. Typical of the coalition, they found some little piece of 'evidence'. They used that and said, 'This is the
theory: basically, we will reduce support for research and development and reduce industry support, and through this hidden hand the economy will suddenly recover and make everything great. Jobs will be created. Industry will look better.’

But the Australian Industry Group said in their submission, No. 18, to this inquiry:

Innovation by business, including innovation associated with business engagement with research and development, is critical to the future success of the Australian economy. It is particularly important at the moment because we have a legacy of low productivity growth to address and because there is a need for new sources of growth to emerge to assist the economy rebalance as the boom in mining investment wanes.

The Australian Industry Group are saying that we are going to get a decline and rebalancing as mining industry investment wanes and that it is critically important to future success to have a proper research and development approach and innovation approach in this country.

They are also saying that we need to rebalance. That is the point I have been making so far. We must get a proper balance between mineral resources on the one hand and manufacturing and services on the other hand. There has to be a balance in this. We cannot have a position where some young kids now at school may still be in the workforce when we just do not have access to mineral resources in this country. It is a scary thought.

The coalition’s whole agenda is more and more to lock this country into having mineral resources as the basis of the economy. I do not think that is smart. I think it is another short-term approach. It is short-termism at its worst. It is not looking ahead to what this economy might look like in 10, 20, 30, 40 or 50 years time. You have to look ahead. How do you look ahead? You look ahead through innovation. You look ahead through research and development. You look ahead by training the workforce in this country to have the proper skills to compete internationally not only in digging up coal and iron ore but also in manufacturing goods in this country that can sell overseas, ensuring that there are decent paying, highly skilled jobs for Australians around this country.

These are the issues that are important, not some short-term nonsense argument about the budget being in crisis and that we have to slash and burn; it is not our Prime Minister going in front of all the major leaders in the world and having a whinge about not being able to put a $7 tax on pensioners when they go to the doctor. We have to get better than that. We have to get bigger than that. This bill does not help us do that. This bill does not create the proper balance between assistance on research and development and assistance to create jobs in other ways. It is so important that we have a broad base position in this country that will create skilled jobs in the future.

Rebalancing the economy, as the AiG said, is critical. You do not rebalance the economy by simply pouring more and more resources into a mining industry that is creating fewer and fewer jobs. That is the problem we have. We need to have a more sophisticated approach. In that sophisticated approach around the world, as the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia, Mr Glenn Stevens, said, 'a culture of innovation is the real key to the challenges of economic transition'.

If we are going to transition, we need support. If we are going to transition, we need industry policy. If we are going to transition, we need research and development and we need innovation. That is something that this government does not understand. It is something that
the Abbott government is sacrificing for this push for austerity measures against pensioners, the health system and the education system.

It was interesting: just last week I was having a debate with a coalition member and that coalition member spoke about us, the Labor Party, not having a moral compass. The coalition are the people who lied to this country about health, who lied to this country on education, who lied to this country on manufacturing jobs and who have continually lied to this country about the economic so-called crisis that we are in. So, if you want to talk about a moral compass, let us have a look at the practical position that the coalition have put themselves in.

They could not lie straight in bed, this mob. They are simply the world champions of lying to the Australian public. Look at their position prior to the election on a whole range of issues and look at their position now. They lied their way to power. They coupled that with fear campaigns that would not take into account the science on climate change and a range of other issues. They are unscientific. They are anti-science. They have no understanding of what builds a good economy. They are absolute economic troglodytes, this mob. Do not listen to any of the arguments you hear from them that they are great economic managers. They drive our manufacturing industry into the ground, and they may be about to do the same with our engineering industry. This bill will simply make sure that research and development by some of the biggest companies in this country goes overseas. That is not good.

If we are going to rebalance our economy, we need jobs for our kids, we need jobs for our grandkids and we need to look at where this economy will be, not in five years and not in 10 years but in decades down the track. That is what the good countries do. That is what the smart countries do: they look at how they can rebalance their economies and create jobs for their citizens. Is this mob doing that? No, they are not, because they are so short-term and so unsophisticated in their thinking. They would want to rip away support for industry policy. They rip away support for investment in research and development. They rip away support for innovation. These are really the troglodytes of the coalition in action. And it will mean problems for this economy in the future. Not only did they lie to Australian citizens but they also cannot deliver an economic strategy.

This bill is a bad bill because it is about austerity principles. It is about ripping money out of what builds jobs into the future. They should be condemned for this. We will not support this bill. It is a bad bill—bad for Australia.

Senator IAN MACDONALD (Queensland) (13:25): It is always a pleasure to follow Senator Cameron in any debate! Senator Cameron has a nice way of building himself up into a frenzy, thinking that he is addressing a union branch meeting of some of the only 14 per cent of Australian workers in private industry who bother to belong to a union. I might say to the previous speaker that that sort of rhetoric might impress some of those whom Senator Cameron, as a union boss in a past life, might have related to, but it certainly does not contribute to a serious debate on research and development.

I understand that this bill very much mirrors a bill that was introduced by the former government—one which, unfortunately, was not dealt with through this chamber before parliament was prorogued. Why wasn't it dealt with? Because the Labor Party in government demonstrated time and time again that they could not manage themselves, they could not manage the parliament and, indeed, they could not manage the economy of Australia. So it is a bill that is principally the same as a bill that the government of which Senator Cameron was
a part actually introduced. It targeted access to research and development tax incentives to small- and medium-sized entities that were more responsive to increasing their R&D spending as a result of government incentives. I think the second reading speech on this bill has clearly indicated that it is a bill worth supporting. It is good. It better targets the limited money we have available for research and development. It would be easy to spend a whole 20 minutes going through some of the achievements that have been made over the years by the assistance that government has given to industries through research and development support.

This is a debate, and Senator Cameron raised the issue of governments lying. This comes from a man who was part of a party whose leader, the then Prime Minister, Ms Gillard, supported by the then Treasurer, Mr Wayne Swan, before the 2010 election promised, hand on heart, 'There will be no carbon tax under a government I lead!' Remember that promise? Everybody in Australia remembers that promise, and they remembered it pretty well at the last federal election. They understood: here you had a government that made a deliberate, major, much-televised promise to never ever introduce a carbon tax. Within three months of making that promise, the Labor Party government—of which the previous speaker was, at the end, a minister for a few days—introduced it immediately, in deliberate breach of the commitment and solemn promise they had given. Senator Cameron cannot stand this; he is leaving the chamber, because the truth always hurts him. He is one to talk about governments lying! His party in government set the standard for lying in government. I am always amused when Senator Cameron dares to raise that issue, which just attracts more and more attention to the inconsistencies, the untruthfulness and the mismanagement of the previous Labor government.

I also want to take issue with Senator Cameron on the impassioned plea in his speech about manufacturing industries in Australia. I think he is going to be followed in this debate by Senator Carr, who was, during the term of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments, the industry minister for a period of time. Senator Carr and the Labor Party presided over a government that did more damage to Australia's manufacturing industry than any government of any other country over many, many decades. They shut down industry. They sent it overseas. How did they do this? They did it by making Australian industry uncompetitive. Australian industry could not compete with industries in Europe, America, South-East Asia and Asia generally, because the Labor government introduced a tax on energy that impacted so heavily on manufacturing industries that it simply made Australian industry uncompetitive; it made Australian manufacturing unaffordable. This is the greatest problem that our manufacturing industries have seen over many, many decades. There have been other issues, there is no doubt about that, but the work of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments with their tax on energy has been the greatest failure for Australian manufacturing. You will hear Senator Carr after me try to find a few things where he will say they have supported industry. He will spend a lot of time attacking any other government over their lack of support for industry. But I can assure the Senate that any industry will tell you that, during the Labor period, they simply became uncompetitive because of the carbon tax. That, more than anything, has hastened the demise of Australia's manufacturing industries.

I note a recent announcement by a couple of world leaders. I am delighted to say that one of these world leaders will be joining us in this parliament building later on this afternoon—the Chinese President. I warmly welcome him to Australia, and I warmly welcome his close
involvement with Australia. What I am reading in the media is that there will be the signing of a major free trade agreement with one of the world's biggest economies. Coming on top of free trade agreements with the United States, Korea and Japan, this agreement with China will be a wonderful boost for Australia and for many Australian industries. I look forward to it. However, I note that the Chinese government joined with President Obama—I will not say the government overall of the United States, but the one man who is the President of the United States at the moment—to announce a promise to do something about carbon emissions by, I think, 2030. As you see from the Labor Party, promises are easily made but much harder to keep. The Labor Party promised 'no carbon tax' but immediately broke that promise. I understand the Chinese government has entered into some sort of non-binding agreement with the American President to do something about carbon emissions. Good luck to President Obama and to the Chinese President if they have this wish, this goal, of reducing carbon emissions. It is also a goal that all Australian governments have had for some time. The current Australian government has a goal of reducing emissions by five per cent, which is the same goal as that of the previous Labor administration—that is, to reduce Australia's emissions by five per cent.

I have to point out that, when dealing with commitments in this area, there was the Kyoto agreement. Does everyone remember the Kyoto agreement? Many nations signed up to it and made commitments to reduce their emissions. Which country actually achieved the promises they made? Australia was one of the few. So when Australia says, 'We will reduce our emissions by five per cent by 2020', you can believe that we will do it, because under the Howard government and to a certain degree not interfered with by the Labor government and now under the Abbott government this five per cent target will be reached. Those who were around at the time, as I was, remember the Kyoto agreement and the great work that the then environment minister, the then senator Robert Hill, did at the Kyoto gathering to get commitments from nations. The Australian government was at that time determined to make a commitment that we could keep—and we have done that.

President Obama indicating that America is going to reduce its emissions by some substantial amount into the never, never is not the same as the Australian government's commitment to a five per cent reduction, which the world knows we will keep. President Obama may have certain views on this, but I suggest they are not shared by his parliament, the Congress of the United States. Indeed, my reading of American politics is that a recent nationwide election in America returned a political party that does not agree with President Obama on the sorts of promises he is currently making. Everyone knows that President Obama is a nice fellow—he is a bit of a lame duck president at the moment; he has only got a couple of years in his reign left—but of course he has the Congress, a parliament elected democratically by the American people, who on many issues including this one disagree with him. So what weight do we put on his promises? Not a lot, I would say. I know the Greens political party are lauding this as a magnificent breakthrough—as they did before the Copenhagen failure; they said that was going to be the great breakthrough. But, of course, sensible people know this will not be the case.

Mr Acting Deputy President, I laud the fact that the President of America and the Chinese government have a vision and a commitment towards a goal of a reduction in carbon emissions, and that is great. But so they should have a goal to reduce emissions! Because
China emits 22 per cent of the world's emissions of carbon, and President Obama's country emits 15 per cent of the world's emissions of carbon. Australia, I might add, emits less than 1.4 per cent. And I will repeat that: Australia emits less than 1.4 per cent of the world's carbon.

Now if carbon emissions are destroying the Great Barrier Reef, as President Obama seemed to say, then his country, and China and India and the European Union, should reduce their carbon emissions to an extent where it will make a difference. It is not Australia's 1.4 per cent that is—according to President Obama—destroying the Great Barrier Reef; it is the emissions of countries like his own, and like China. If the emissions are destroying the Barrier Reef—I must add that I do not think they are, but if they are—then it is no good President Obama coming to Australia and indirectly lecturing us. He needs to look into his own backyard, and do something about the 15 per cent of world emissions which his country is putting into the atmosphere and which, according to him, is destroying the Great Barrier Reef. So President Obama: lovely to see you in Australia—a great leader, a great man—but do not come here and raise issues of domestic politics when you have a real problem in your own country. Your country emits 15 per cent. From what I understand on my reading of American politics, you have got Buckley's chance of getting any real movement on that over the foreseeable future. Australia, by contrast, has a five per cent target, which we will keep and which we will meet.

Again I say: the Greens political party get all excited about this; the ABC get all excited about this—President Obama and the Chinese government have made this agreement. But they do not seem to realise that the Chinese nation emits 22 per cent of the world's emissions of carbon, and that the United States emits 15 per cent. Sure, they should do something, but what they emit makes Australia's situation tiny by comparison. We always need a reality check when it comes to these highfaluting, fine-sounding promises—and they are no more than promises—about reduction of emissions. And I emphasise: they are only promises. I again remind the Senate that it was the Labor Party that promised, hand on heart—hand on Bible, almost—that there would be no carbon tax. So we can see what promises mean. We want action. We want to see things happening. Under the coalition's Direct Action Plan, we are already seeing that happen, and it will increase in speed as the legislation to support that plan is passed through the parliament and is put into effect. Those are the reality checks we need to have, when we are talking about this whole issue of research and development, and about the manufacturing industry. Australia under the Labor government nubbled our manufacturing industries. At the same time, manufacturing industries in China and America—who had very little or no constraints whatsoever on carbon emissions—increased and exploded. Australia's manufacturing industries, under the stewardship of the last government and particularly its industry minister, sent Australian jobs overseas, as Labor made Australian industry uncompetitive.

Finally on this topic, I want to say that research and development is very important in relation to clean coal techniques. A lot of research has been done in this area, and I am forever proud of James Cook University of Townsville and Cairns—and, I might say, the next speaker, the former industry minister, seems to have a bit of a thing about James Cook University: he is there criticising it whenever he can. But I greatly support that great institution, which is one of the leading tropical universities in the world. They are doing a lot
of work on algae functions and on research that can help clean up emissions from power stations. It is great research, and that is supported, and has to be supported, by government help—taxpayer help—for research and development. That is why I think this bill is timely. It is very much along the lines of a bill introduced by the former government, and I would assume that the Labor Party would be supporting it because it is, by and large, their bill. We need research and development. I support the bill.

Senator KIM CARR (Victoria) (13:44): We have just heard from Senator Macdonald from Queensland, who gave us a dissertation on the American President being a lame duck; he attacked the Chinese and he attacked the Americans. Of course, he failed to point out his particular expertise in these matters, because if ever there were a lame duck, it is Senator Macdonald, with 5½ years yet to serve and of course having been dumped by his own party. He is a senator who really has no influence whatsoever within this government. He made the point about the question of the government's integrity, when we know that, in relation to betrayal, Mr Abbott has reached the gold medal standard when it comes to the question of saying one thing before an election and another thing after an election. Who could be no greater expert on that than Senator Macdonald himself? His bitterness and hostility towards his government, not to mention towards every other section of this parliament, is predicated on his betrayal by Mr Abbott, and the fact that he is not on the frontbench highlights that. He said that promises were easy to make and hard to keep. He knows only too well what the promises were within the Liberal Party which have seen him end up in this parlous position of being a lame duck senator for 5½ years, for the remaining period of this term.

I would like to suggest that his commitment to R&D is very limited, because this is a government bill that gives effect to one of those acts of betrayal, where the government seeks to remove $620 million of R&D support from Australian industries. We know that in advanced industrial economies innovation is the chief driver of increases in productivity, that firms that innovate are more competitive and more able to sustain high-skilled, high-paid jobs. According to the *Australian innovation system report*, innovation almost doubles the likelihood of productivity growth in Australian businesses, that firms that innovate are 78 per cent more likely to report increases in productivity over the previous year and that firms that collaborate with research organisations and universities are almost 2½ times more likely to report increases in productivity. So, without a strong innovation system, Australia cannot build the diversity in its economy that we so desperately need to ensure the continued prosperity of this nation. Without a diverse economic base, future growth will be unreliable and there will be much higher levels of fluctuation, with booms and declines, particularly as we are so heavily dependent on commodity exports. In Australia, overall levels of business and research collaboration compare badly with those of other OECD countries.

The tax incentive that the government offers is one of the most effective means of encouraging firms to invest in innovation. In the 1980s Labor introduced the R&D tax concession, making Australia one of the first countries in the world to seek to foster innovation through the development of taxation support, through measures such as what is at the core of this particular bill. Another progressive Labor government updated the scheme. I am very proud that, in 2011, the government changed the R&D tax concession to a tax incentive, converting the concession to a credit. We doubled the benefit for smaller firms and raised it by a third for larger firms. These are all measures that were undertaken when I was
the minister. The R&D tax incentive was a landmark reform and built on a great Labor legacy of investing in innovation and R&D. The effect was immediate. The sums invested by businesses have grown by 20 per cent and the number of registrations has increased by 16 per cent since the program started.

Now, a little less than two years since the scheme has been in place, the Abbott government has proposed through this legislation a major overhaul of the R&D tax incentive. First, the entire scheme is the subject of two reviews as part of the legislative requirement and through Mr Hockey's taxation white paper. These are in addition to the measures taken through the Commission of Audit—which it has sought to call an independent review—which would stretch the imagination by anyone's standards, even by the somewhat rough and ready standards of this government.

To add insult to injury, in April this year the government continued to clamp down on independent expert advice by disbanding the R&D Tax Incentive Advisory Committee. I understand the minister recently went along to the Innovation Australia board and proposed its abolition as well, only to be told by the board itself: 'But, Minister, this is a board established in legislation. You cannot get rid of this particular board without a deliberative decision by the parliament.' But this is not a matter that the government would be concerned about. When the minister goes to a board and proposes its abolition, and he is told it is covered by legislation and he does not appear to know that, that suggests that the advice he has been getting is somewhat poor. I say it fits within a pattern, because this bill reflects that pattern of poor advice. What do you expect? The R&D Tax Incentive Advisory Committee, which was established to monitor the implementation of the scheme at the request of stakeholders, has been abolished. The government is relying upon Treasury to provide it with advice and Treasury has not been able to provide substantive advice on this matter for the better part of the whole period that it has been in place.

The group of industry experts on the R&D Tax Incentive Advisory Committee demonstrates that the government is not too comfortable when it comes to the issue of genuine industrial consultation and independent advice. The government's decision to take $620 million from the scheme in the 2014-15 budget established just how astounding the government is when it comes to making sure there is a huge gap between theory and practice. The unending cycles of review and changes to the system make it very difficult for any company that is interested in investing in its own future to rely on this government's own advice. It undermines business confidence and it becomes a disincentive to investment in R&D. It brings me particularly to the example of the duplicity of this government through this matter, which Senator Macdonald sought to lay at the feet of the previous government.

What Labor did was introduce a $1 billion plan for Australian jobs, a package of measures designed to encourage innovation and stimulate investment. To fund it, there was a proposal to provide some savings out of the R&D tax incentives—to transfer moneys across to ensure that there was investment to enable us to ensure that we were able to provide the incentives to build jobs into the future. What this government has done is strip away that program and undertake to actually cut the jobs plan.

The other part of the measure that we were committed to were quarterly credit payments, a move strongly endorsed by the biotech sector and small business—once again, aimed at building the innovative capacity of the country. What does this government do? It takes away
those measures that help, especially start-up companies and smaller companies who are cash strapped, and who, until they get themselves up and running, are left with great exposure to the market. The shadow industry minister said the exclusion of firms earning more than $20 million was destroying confidence in the tax incentive. That was the position the Liberal Party took in opposition—that such a measure would undermine confidence in the industry—but, as Treasurer, Mr Hockey actually proposed that these reductions occur. Having said in opposition that cuts to the incentive were immensely unpredictable on taxation policy, he went ahead and proposed these reductions in such a way.

So we know that the government has in opposition said one thing and in government said another. It has undermined the basic principles of the quarterly credits minus the reinvestment programs to create jobs, and it has created an environment in which the policy rationale has had no basis other than the government's search for budget savings. The government has trashed Labor's jobs package, the innovation precincts have been fundamentally undermined and the Australian Jobs Act is now up for review.

This is a bill which demonstrates the government's retreat from industry policy—a long list of initiatives—

**Senator Cormann:** A good savings measure.

**Senator KIM CARR:** You call them good savings measures; they are good savings measures in exporting jobs. That is what you are good at: you are about exporting jobs, destroying Australian industry and undermining the capacity of this country to provide the high-skill, high-wage jobs that we need. This is a government that is not actually interested in genuine industry consultation about its plans. This is a government that has a predetermined hostility to Australian industry. We see the Minister for Defence sitting there. We cannot even build boats in this country anymore, because of the government's predetermined hostility to manufacturing. The government will not invest in Australian jobs and will do all that it can to export jobs.

The unending cycle of reviews does not do anything other than add to the uncertainty and the government's cover, when in reality there is an unmitigated hostility: the destruction of Commercialisation Australia, of Enterprise Connect, of the Innovation Investment Fund and of the Australian Industry Participation Plan, and the attempts to destroy the TCF support program—the list goes on and on and on. We know that this is a government that promises one thing before the election and does the opposite in this budget. We are now noticing this attempt to strip away the incentives from the largest firms affected by these measures. This again reflects government hostility to Australian firms investing in jobs in Australia.

The evidence on R&D is very clear. We know that these programs work and that small- and medium-sized enterprises are lean innovators, accounting for a very small proportion of the total investment, and are much less likely to generate new-to-the-world innovations. By contrast, large Australian businesses make up the majority of total investment in innovation and are much more likely to collaborate with the research sector and generate new-to-the-world innovations.

What this bill does is strip away support for the innovation system and target particularly the larger firms, who are the backbone of the R&D program in this country. We also know that, of the 18 submissions to the Senate committee inquiry on this bill, all but one opposed
the change. The people who are actually involved in making decisions about the development of our innovation system—the people who are actually making it happen—regard this bill as being a fundamental setback for the development of jobs in Australia. The truth of this government's motivation is nothing other than a reduction in public support for jobs, investment and the development of the new technologies, new skills and new industries that this country desperately needs to ensure that it is able to maintain the prosperity that this nation desperately needs to secure its future.

I am told that there will be an amendment proposed to this bill as a result of discussions between Senator Wang and the government. I think Senator Wang has acted out of good intent and is seeking to ameliorate the effects of the bill, but these are substantial amendments and, when they are moved, a Labor senator will be seeking to move that these matters be referred back to the Senate committee so that we can actually look at the implications of Senator Wang's amendments. I would urge all senators who are concerned about this issue to have a look at this proposal and allow us the chance to consult with industry about the consequences of what is a very significant change in the innovation system in this country.

I understand that questions are about to start, so I will be seeking to continue my remarks after—

The PRESIDENT: There being a minute to go, Senator Carr, you can continue for one more minute.

Senator KIM CARR: I am happy to continue if you like. I am delighted. We know that an official from the Department of Industry's Innovation Policy Branch told the Senate committee that this was nothing more than a savings measure and, as such, was extremely short sighted. KPMG pointed out in their submission to the committee:

The estimated savings of $1.1 billion gained by the proposed changes are flawed and will provide the Government with at best a small increase in consolidated revenue now at the price of longer term growth in Australia in future.

... ... ...

To the best of our knowledge, Australia will be the first country in the world to exclude such a specific and targeted subset of large companies from claiming an R&D tax incentive—which is an entitlement that you find all over the world. So this proposal will set back Australian industry and will be the first in the world in terms—

Debate interrupted.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Trade with China

Senator WONG (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (14:00): Mr President, my question is to the minister representing the Prime Minister, Senator Abetz. Can the minister confirm that sugar has been excluded from the recently concluded China-Australia Free Trade Agreement? When was the National Party informed of this?

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:00): Mr President, we are hopeful that later today the President of China and the Prime Minister of Australia, and, indeed, their trade counterparts, will be signing off on an historic trade
agreement. This is, without doubt, good news for all Australians and for the largest market in the world—namely, the people of China. Over all, it is a very, very good deal for both countries that will strengthen our capacity to grow jobs within this country.

The President of China will be addressing a joint sitting of this parliament later on today and, in relation to the specifics of that free trade agreement, it seems only appropriate that no comment be made until such time as the matters are fully disclosed. But having said that, it stands to reason that with any free trade agreement negotiations a country will not get everything it wants. It would, therefore, be fair to say that Australia has not achieved everything that she would have liked; similarly, China has not necessarily achieved everything that China would have liked in these negotiations. But the question has to be asked—

The PRESIDENT: Pause the clock. Senator Moore, a point of order?

Senator Moore: Mr President, my point of order is on direct relevance. Allowing for the minister's position about not releasing detail to the public, it would be useful to know whether the National Party has been advised of the detail of the agreement.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Moore. The minister has been relevant. He responded to the first portion of Senator Wong's question. Minister, you have the call; you have 20 seconds remaining.

Senator Wong: Why did you tell The Australian newspaper and the SMH and all the newspapers, but not the Senate?

The PRESIDENT: Order, Senator Wong! The minister has the call.

Senator Wong: Mr President, he is saying it's confidential; it's in the papers from the government! So you are happy to tell everybody but the Senate? Everybody but the Senate or the National Party!

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Senator Wong interjecting—

Government senators interjecting—

Senator Wong: The ABC knows. Everybody knows! Do you know? What did you say when they said they'd done over sugar?

Senator ABETZ: Mr President, I trust that our distinguished overseas visitors have not just witnessed this outburst on the eve of an excellent agreement, an agreement that even Labor's former trade minister Dr Emerson tweeted 'This is as good a deal as could have been hoped for'. Congratulations Andrew Robb and Prime Minister. (Time expired)

Senator WONG (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (14:03): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Can the minister further confirm that wheat, rice and cotton have been excluded from the recently concluded China-Australia FTA? When was the National Party informed of this?

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:03): Mr President, I repeat my initial answer for the benefit of the honourable senator. I have indicated
that I will not be going through chapter and verse of the free trade agreement until it is publicly announced. Having said that, as I indicated before: is everything that we wanted in the agreement? No, it is not. It is similar from the Chinese perspective.

Mr President, I indicate this is going to be an agreement, when announced, that will overwhelmingly be a good deal for Australian workers, for the Australian economy. Indeed, I indicate that these agreements are as a result of excellent work by Chinese and Australian bureaucrats and ministers and first ministers determining that it is within the interests of both the countries and their peoples. *(Time expired)*

**Senator WONG** (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (14:04): Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Can the minister explain why it is appropriate for the government to provide the information asked for to the media but not to the Senate? Will the government now release the full text of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement—not a glossy pamphlet, not a one-page press release, not a photo opportunity, but the full text?

**Senator ABETZ** (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:05): Mr President, Senator Wong would well know how these agreements are undertaken and how they are rolled out. Today an announcement was made that agreement had been reached. There will then be a signing ceremony later on today between the relevant trade ministers. After that, there will need to be a comprehensive agreement signed in the two languages—word for word, chapter for chapter—to ensure that everything is as both countries had agreed so as to ensure that the legal document reflects that which had actually been agreed. Will we release it beforehand? Of course not. Exactly like Senator Wong's Labor government did not do either. There is an established practice here. Senator Wong knows it, I know it, and she should be honest with the Australian people. *(Time expired)*

**Trade with China**

**Senator BACK** (Western Australia) (14:06): Mr President, my question is to the Leader of the Government in the Senate, Senator Abetz. I ask: in light of the visit today of President Xi to parliament and, as foreshadowed, the announcement that Prime Minister Abbott and President Xi will witness the signing of an historic free trade agreement, can the minister outline to the Senate the benefits that will accrue to Australia from a free trade agreement with China?

**Senator Wong interjecting**—

**Senator ABETZ** (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:07): It is great to get a positive question about such an historic arrangement that will hopefully be entered into later on today. This morning the Prime Minister and President Xi announced—

**Senator Wong interjecting**—

**The PRESIDENT:** Pause the clock.

**Senator Back:** It is a point of order, Mr President. Having asked the question from here, I actually cannot hear the answer because of interjections from the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate.
The President: I remind senators that it is disorderly to interject. The questioner and the answerer must be heard in silence.

Senator ABETZ: This morning the Prime Minister and President Xi announced the conclusion of negotiations for a free trade agreement after more than 10 years. The signing of the landmark China-Australia free trade agreement today reflects a new high in the Australia-China relationship. Minister for Trade and Investment, Andrew Robb, and his Chinese counterpart will later today sign a declaration of intent. This is an undertaking to prepare the text of the agreement for signature.

This high-quality FTA will open significant opportunities for Australia in the world's second largest economy and our largest trading partner. It advances and protects access for our service providers and will attract greater investment into Australia, driving growth and creating jobs.

Senator Wong interjecting—

Senator ABETZ: For Senator Wong's continual interjections, I am only making overarching comment, not talking about specific elements. Importantly, it positions Australia to benefit from China's growth and economic transformation over the coming decades. The China free trade agreement complements those that have already been entered into with South Korea and Japan. This trading bloc represents about 50 per cent of our export markets. That these three free trade agreements have been signed up within the first 12 months of the coalition government just goes to show what you can do when you put your mind to something.

Senator BACK (Western Australia) (14:09): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. I ask: will the minister outline to the Senate the benefits that will flow into Australia's services sector from the China free trade agreement?

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:09): Our services sector, apart from the agriculture and resources sectors, will benefit. Senator Back, being the distinguished chair, as he is, of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee, has a good understanding of the issues involved and therefore it is not surprising that he shows such a great degree of interest in this historic agreement.

The Chinese-Australian free trade agreement will provide many Australian service industries an unmatched position in China's economy. This will create historic opportunities for Australians and Australian workers. Labor needs to decide whether they support trade or whether they remain slaves to their perverse protectionist philosophy. That is going to be a real challenge for Labor in the days ahead. (Time expired)

Senator BACK (Western Australia) (14:10): Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. I ask: will the minister apprise the Senate why it has taken some 10 years to conclude this historic agreement between Australia and China?

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:10): As I said in answer to the first question from Senator Back, it is amazing what you can do when you set your mind to it. On 3 April 2012, former Labor trade minister Craig Emerson said:
Free trade agreements, I think frankly, are overrated in what they can achieve in terms of a relationship between Australia and China.

Off the agenda. On 18 April a year later, Mr Emerson told the Global Food Forum that a comprehensive trade deal with China was 'just beyond both countries'. I am pleased to say that is no longer so. Indeed, Labor's former trade spokesman, Richard Marles, said the idea that the government could conclude the deal with China within a year was 'pure fantasy'. I adopt one of those words: this is fantastic.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT (14:11): Before I call Senator Bilyk, could I acknowledge in the President's Gallery former senator Alan Eggleston. Good to see you with us.

Honourable senators: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Climate Change

Senator BILYK (Tasmania—Deputy Opposition Whip in the Senate) (14:12): My question is to the Minister representing the Prime Minister, Senator Abetz. I refer to comments by President Obama that for Australia climate change means: … longer droughts, more wildfires. No nation is immune … Does the minister agree?

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:12): The government's position on climate change is well known and there is no need to rehearse that which the government has already announced and stated. But can I indicate that one of the reasons the government was so anxious to be able to come to an agreement on the Direct Action Plan was that we were committed to doing something for the environment which Labor and the Greens so steadfastly ensured we could not implement. Thanks to the crossbenchers, we were able to come to a landing on that and implement our Direct Action Plan.

I respect the President of the United States of America, but can I simply say that when it comes to emissions and the promises made by relevant countries I just have a look at the promises made and then at that which has actually been achieved. Australia is one of the very few countries in the world that can hold its head high and say that it will achieve the targets which it signed up to, unlike some other countries.

So are we concerned to ensure that the least possible pollutants are emitted into the atmosphere? Of course we are. That is why we were so concerned to get our Direct Action Plan through the parliament, and thanks to the crossbenchers we have been able to achieve that. Can I also say that at all times we have said that, as a country that emits less than two per cent of the world's emissions, we would watch this space very closely and would seek to walk in lockstep with other countries once they decided on a particular course of action. If events develop, as have been asserted, we will be closely monitoring them and ensuring that the right decisions are taken at the right time. (Time expired)

Senator BILYK (Tasmania—Deputy Opposition Whip in the Senate) (14:14): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. I refer to the Treasurer's comments that climate...
change is absolutely not an impediment to growth. I also refer to the G20 communique, which states that taking action on climate change supports economic growth and certainty for business and investment. Who is correct, the Treasurer or the G20 world leaders?

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:15): Having listened closely to what the Senator said, I could not actually see a dichotomy or contradiction between the two comments or statements that the senator read out. Climate change does not have to be an impediment to economic growth. Climate change was mentioned in the communique. The communique talked about economic growth being of benefit to the world. So I indicate to Senator Bilyk that I see no conflict in the two statements as she has presented them to the Senate.

We are concerned with ensuring that we do get proper economic growth in this country, because we are concerned about the 6.2 per cent of Australians that are unemployed and also the huge numbers that are underemployed. We want to provide them and the next generation with a genuine future.

Senator BILYK (Tasmania—Deputy Opposition Whip in the Senate) (14:16): Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. I refer again to the G20 communique, which calls on member states to take strong action on climate change and to support adaption measures such as the Green Climate Fund. Will Australia be making a contribution alongside the United States, Germany, France and Japan?

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women, Senator Cash) (14:16): The Prime Minister has already spoken on this. As I understand the situation, he has indicated that he will not be making a contribution in circumstances where Australia, courtesy of the Labor legacy of which Senator Bilyk was part, is borrowing $1,000 million a month just to pay the interest on the existing borrowings. At this stage in time, it is appropriate, as the Prime Minister said, that we would watch this space very carefully, but at this stage we are not going to be making a commitment to the Green Climate Fund to which the honourable senator referred. If the world community comes to a landing on these issues then of course we will look very carefully and make the right decisions at the right time. But, Senator, you and your government left a sad legacy of deficit and debt.

Employment

Senator RUSTON (South Australia—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (14:17): My question is to the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women, Senator Cash. Could the minister please outline to the Senate the commitment made at the G20 in relation to women?

Senator CASH (Western Australia—Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women) (14:17): I thank Senator Ruston for her question. Boosting female participation in the workforce has been a key focus of the G20 throughout this year of Australia's presidency because of the important links between workforce participation and economic growth. Indeed, in his keynote address in Davos over 10 months ago the Prime Minister outlined his vision for the G20's presidency in Australia and identified female participation in the workforce as a priority. As a direct result
of this focus, women's workforce participation was on the official G20 agenda for the very first time, with G20 leaders committing to reducing the gap in participation rates between men and women by 25 per cent by 2025. This is a groundbreaking goal that was formally proposed at the labour and employment ministers meeting in September and is now being adopted by all leaders of the G20 nations. Twenty-five by 25 is an ambitious but credible goal that will be good for our global economy and good for women, their families and communities.

Across the world, the knowledge of 865 million women is seriously underutilised when it comes to contributing to economic growth. G20 leaders recognise that this underutilisation of women must change and that the 25 by 25 goal will positively improve economic growth and resilience. The focus on women's issues within a powerful forum such as the G20 has the potential for strong and far-reaching impacts across the world and for generations to come. Australians should be very proud of the government's efforts in securing this goal; 25 by 25 will stand as an important legacy for Australia's G20 presidency.

Senator RUSTON (South Australia—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (14:19): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Could the minister further explain to the Senate what the 25 by 25 will actually mean to G20 nations?

Senator CASH (Western Australia—Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women) (14:19): Delivering on this commitment will bring more than 100 million additional women into the labour force across G20 economies. It will significantly increase global growth. It will deliver financial independence to millions of women and reduce poverty and inequality. Increasing women's participation can help mitigate the impact of ageing populations and support stronger economic growth and productivity. The OECD estimates a boost to women's participation of this scale would increase the G20's GDP by between 1.2 and 1.6 per cent by 2025, adding more than $1 trillion to the global economy. The actions G20 leaders will take will vary from country to country but could include improving access to education and child care, expanding maternity leave options, fostering female entrepreneurs, improving financial literacy and better access to business finance. I believe that we will all look back on 2014 as a pivotal year in the G20.

Senator RUSTON (South Australia—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (14:20): Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Could the minister advise the Senate why the 25 by 25 goal is so important for Australia?

Senator CASH (Western Australia—Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women) (14:21): Increasing female participation in the workforce is essential to boosting our productivity and achieving sustainable, inclusive growth. In achieving the 25 by 25 goal Australia will see up to 200,000 additional women participating in the labour force above current employment projections. We want to see an Australia that has taken full advantage of the skills and talent that Australian women have to offer our economy. We already have a number of policies either in place or proposed which will achieve this target, including improving access to affordable, flexible, accessible child care; instigating the largest review of the childcare system since the 1990s; and enhancements to existing paid parental leave, which will recognise PPL as a workplace entitlement and will include superannuation. The government has the fundamentals in place,
and we will consider additional avenues to ensure that we meet this ambitious but credible aim.

**Clean Energy Finance Corporation**

**Senator MILNE** (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (14:22): My question is to the Minister representing the Prime Minister, Senator Abetz. Now that the Prime Minister has cited the Clean Energy Finance Corporation’s $10 billion as one of his three excuses to German Chancellor Angela Merkel for not giving funding to the Green Climate Fund, can the minister tell me whether the government has now decided to abandon its plan to abolish the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, or was the Prime Minister deliberately lying to another world leader?

**Government senators interjecting—**

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Senator Milne, it would be advantageous—you did reflect on the Prime Minister by indicating he deliberately lied. It would be better if you could rephrase your question.

**Senator MILNE:** I am happy to do so, Mr President. I ask: was the Prime Minister deceiving another world leader?

**Senator ABETZ** (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:23): No.

**Senator MILNE** (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (14:23): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. I ask the minister again: the Prime Minister cited the Clean Energy Finance Corporation to Chancellor Angela Merkel. Is the government going to abolish the Clean Energy Finance Corporation—yes or no?

**Senator ABETZ** (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:23): Again, no.

**Senator MILNE** (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (14:24): Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. I take from that that the government is not going to abolish the Clean Energy Finance Corporation. Everyone heard it here, did we not?

**Opposition senators interjecting—**

**Senator MILNE:** I feel like I need to get clarification from Senator Abetz. Senator Abetz, is the government going to abolish the Clean Energy Finance Corporation?

**Senator ABETZ** (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:24): Our policy remains.

**Workplace Relations**

**Senator McKENZIE** (Victoria) (14:25): My question is to the Minister for Employment, Senator Abetz, and relates to a recent Fair Work Building Industry Inspectorate report which investigated the unexplained abandonment of litigation involving the Victorian desalination plant and other matters. Can the minister inform the Senate of the government’s reaction to this report as well as the federal context to the failings detailed within it?
Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:25): Senator McKenzie is quite right as a Victorian senator to be concerned about the activities that were highlighted in that report. They reflect on matters that occurred in the state of Victoria at the desalination plant and elsewhere under the Fair Work Building Industry Inspectorate, as the Labor Party had it.

The government is extremely concerned about this report, which reveals that under Labor's emasculated inspectorate the CFMEU was allowed to get away with blue murder. According to the report, the inspectorate collaborated with the CFMEU to abandon litigation against the union for unlawful industrial action at the Victorian desalination plant. In doing so, the inspectorate knowingly disregarded external legal advice which confirmed there were reasonable prospects of success.

The report also exposes sweetheart deals negotiated between Labor's inspectorate and the CFMEU under which the union received a 50 per cent discount on the inspectorate's assessment of the likely penalties for numerous cases of industrial lawlessness. And you may well ask, 'In exchange for what?' The answer is: absolutely nothing. Under Labor working days lost due to industrial action in the building industry multiplied sevenfold. When Labor came to office it abolished the Australian Building and Construction Commission and replaced it with its weak and ineffectual inspectorate. Labor's inspectorate not only failed to prosecute the CFMEU for its unlawful actions but adopted a policy of appeasement which emboldened the union's militancy. I would urge all senators to support the reintroduction of the ABCC. (Time expired)

Senator McKenzie (Victoria) (14:27): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Can the minister advise the Senate of any impediments to restoring fairness and the rule of law on building sites across Victoria?

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:28): The greatest threat to restoring fairness and the rule of law on Victorian building sites is a Labor government led by Daniel Andrews and controlled by the CFMEU. In its recently released election platform Labor has recklessly pledged to abolish the construction code of practice and its compliance unit. The effect of their abolition would be catastrophic. According to the Productivity Commission the Victorian code is the 'most promising policy approach against conduct that leads to high costs, sweetheart deals and coercion'. So successful is the code that earlier this year the Productivity Commission recommended that all Australian governments adopt its framework for their own major infrastructure purchases. An Andrews' Labor government would not only trash the advice of the Productivity Commission but would make more sweetheart deals with the CFMEU. (Time expired)

Senator McKenzie (Victoria) (14:29): Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Can the minister inform the Senate how Victorians can ensure that their building sites will be safer, fairer and more productive?

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:29): I would encourage Victorians to ask themselves a few questions: would I trust an Andrews' Labor government that is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the CFMEU? Would I trust an Andrews'
Labor government in which the planning minister is a proud, passionate and paid-up member of the CFMEU? I am sure the Labor Party people do not want the Victorian electorate to know that. Would I trust an Andrews Labor government that turns a blind eye to coercion, corruption and criminality simply to appease the CFMEU? If Victorians want safer, fairer and more productive building sites they cannot trust the Labor Party, which is beholden to John Setka and his CFMEU goons. Victorians face a very real choice. They can choose an Andrews Labor government that will act in the vested interests of a corrupt construction union or a Napthine coalition government that will act in the interests of all Victorians. (Time expired)

Trade with China

Senator MADIGAN (Victoria) (14:30): My question is to the Minister representing the Minister for Trade and Investment, Senator Cormann. The Australian today announced that Mr Abbott and the President of China will sign a memorandum of understanding on an Australia-China free trade agreement. This free trade agreement is likely to ensure that 85 per cent of Australian exports will enter China tariff free. The three per cent tariff on coking coal that China has imposed recently will possibly be removed and the Foreign Investment Review Board threshold for foreign investment by privately held Chinese firms will increase to over $1 billion. Can the minister outline what percentage of Chinese exports to Australia currently attract no Australian tariffs?

Senator CORMANN (Western Australia—Minister for Finance) (14:31): I thank Senator Madigan for his question. I can confirm for the chamber that this morning the Prime Minister and President Xi announced the conclusion of negotiations for a free trade agreement. After more than 10 years of negotiations, the Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister Robb, and his Chinese counterpart, Minister Gao, will later today sign a declaration of intent, which is an undertaking to prepare the text of the agreement for signature. The Prime Minister said already that the government will release details of the outcome soon.

This is a historic agreement. It is a high-quality free trade agreement which will open up significant opportunities for Australia in the world’s second-largest economy and our largest trading partner. It will ensure the competitiveness of our agriculture, industrial goods and manufacturing industries, it advances and protects access for our service providers and it will attract greater investment into Australia, driving growth and creating jobs.

Senator Madigan: Mr President, a point of order on relevance: I asked what percentage of Chinese exports to Australia currently attract no Australian tariffs. Surely to God the government knows that.

The PRESIDENT: The minister has 55 seconds left to answer the question. I remind the minister of the question.

Senator CORMANN: As part of the announcement that will be made later today and subsequent announcements, the Minister for Trade and Investment will deal with all of these sorts of issues at the time when the government is in a position to release the formal details of the agreement that has been reached. The free trade agreement to be announced today complements the free trade agreements—

Senator Madigan: Mr President, I rise on a point of order on relevance. Senator Cormann, it is a pretty simple question: what percentage of China's exports to Australia currently attract no Australian tariffs? Surely to God the government knows that.
The PRESIDENT: I remind the minister of the question.

Senator CORMANN: I appreciate that question. I of course am only the Minister representing the Minister for Trade and Investment in this chamber. I will take that part of the question on notice and provide an answer to Senator Madigan, but I would point out that together the free trade agreements in relation to Korea, Japan and China cover 39 per cent of Australia's total trade, which is a very significant proportion of our total trade.

Senator MADIGAN (Victoria) (14:34): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Considering that the three per cent tariff on coking coal was only introduced recently, does the government believe it is a possibility that the tariff was predominantly introduced only as a bargaining chip?

Senator CORMANN (Western Australia—Minister for Finance) (14:34): Our focus as a government, led by Minister Robb, was to achieve the best possible deal for Australia in our national interest. Minister Robb has done an outstanding job over the last 12 months in not only successfully concluding free trade agreements with Japan and South Korea but also now reaching a successful conclusion in relation to a free trade agreement with China. I am not a commentator on what happens in these negotiations except to say that the government is very, very pleased with the deal that has been achieved, which is a significant advance when it comes to trade opportunities for Australia in what is one of our most important markets. More trade means more jobs. More trade means stronger economic growth in Australia. Today really is a very good day for Australia.

Senator MADIGAN (Victoria) (14:35): Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Can the minister outline what percentage of foreign investment from China in Australia is by solely privately owned companies and what percentage is from state-owned companies?

Senator CORMANN (Western Australia—Minister for Finance) (14:35): I will take that question on notice and provide Senator Madigan with an answer.

Higher Education

Senator McGrath (Queensland) (14:35): My question is to the Minister representing the Minister for Education, Senator Payne. Can the minister update the Senate on support for the government's higher education reforms?

Senator PAYNE (New South Wales—Minister for Human Services) (14:36): I think Senator McGrath very much for that question. There is indeed overwhelming support for the higher education reforms with amendments, from the leaders of higher education around Australia. All of the higher education peak bodies support the need for reform of the sector. In recent weeks there have been a number of statements that have urged the Senate to support the reforms with amendments. They have come from Universities Australia, the Regional Universities Network, Innovative Research Universities, the Australian Technology Network and the Group of Eight.

Senator Kim Carr: Where are the government amendments?

Senator PAYNE: There have been similar calls from TAFE Directors Australia, from COPHE, the Council of Private Higher Education, and from ACPET, the Australian Council for Private Education and Training.
Senator Kim Carr: Show us the colour of the money!

The PRESIDENT: Pause the clock!

Senator PAYNE: And those calls of course have also been supported by a number of newspaper articles and a number of media conferences given by those university leaders.

Senator Kim Carr interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: On my left!

Senator PAYNE: It seems to us that it is unprecedented—in fact it is highly significant—that all of those representing our higher education institutions say that the present system is unsustainable, that it is in desperate need of reform and that there would be major benefits for students in reform. Universities Australia, in fact, have noted that opinion polling which they have commissioned shows a strong majority of Australians 'support the deregulation of university fees if the Senate makes important changes'. The Australian Financial Review has also recently argued that, with the huge growth in the number of students, and therefore a significantly higher cost to the taxpayer as well, these are reforms which are essential to maintain a high-quality university system which is open to all Australians. The Australian newspaper also has argued—

Senator Kim Carr interjecting—

Senator PAYNE: that a deregulated system with a strong system of needs based scholarships would— (Time expired)

The PRESIDENT: Before I call Senator McGrath for the first supplementary question, I just remind senators it is disorderly to shout out during the answering of a question, and I will continually pause the chamber if this continues.

Senator McGrath (Queensland) (14:38): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Will the minister advise the Senate what these experts say about how the government's higher education reforms will benefit students?

Senator PAYNE (New South Wales—Minister for Human Services) (14:39): The benefits to students are stressed by university leaders when they talk about the necessity for the reforms. It is about ensuring access for students, and especially students from disadvantaged backgrounds, to the higher education system. Professor Peter Lee, the Chair of the Regional Universities Network, has said—

Senator Kim Carr interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Pause the clock. Thank you. Minister.

Senator PAYNE: Professor Peter Lee has said: ... the passage of the bill with changes proposed by RUN would help regional students attend and succeed at regional universities and would increase the number of professionals working in regional Australia.

And, of course, as I have said before, and as the university leaders have stressed, no student will need to pay one cent up-front to attend university. It is just a scare campaign—

Opposition senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Pause the clock.

Senator Ian Macdonald interjecting—
The PRESIDENT: Order on my right!

Honourable senators interjecting—

Senator Wong interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order, Senator Wong! Minister, you have the call.

Senator PAYNE: Those university leaders have also pointed to what will be their ability to offer greatly expanded support to disadvantaged students, and Sydney university is the best example—(Time expired)

Senator McGrath (Queensland) (14:40): Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Will the minister further inform the Senate what these experts say would be the consequences of these reforms being thwarted?

Senator Payne (New South Wales—Minister for Human Services) (14:40): Thank you, Senator McGrath. The potential blocking of any of the reforms is something that people like Professor Greg Craven have made some interesting observations on. It would be, in his words, 'a vote for failing institutions, random cuts, a declining student experience and embarrassingly weak national research'. He also says, 'It can never be in the interests of students to be enrolled in a third-rate university system.'

Another vice-chancellor, Professor Margaret Gardner, has said that rejecting the reforms would mean less funding for universities, lower teaching and research quality and less funding available for scholarships—the sorts of scholarships that are going to take the numbers at Sydney university available to students from 700 to 9,000 at that one university alone. Tens of thousands of other students will miss out on the benefits from Commonwealth scholarship if this legislation is not passed by the Senate. There would be other consequences as well. (Time expired)

National ICT Australia

Senator Kim Carr (Victoria) (14:41): My question without notice is to the Minister representing the Prime Minister. I refer to NICTA, the Australian government ICT research organisation, which is a world leader in bringing science and industry together. I draw the minister's attention to the fact that the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, has used her last morning in Australia to visit NICTA, which has pioneering partnerships with Germany's Fraunhofer and Max Planck institutes. How did the ministers accompanying Chancellor Merkel explain the government's short-sighted budget decision to abandon NICTA by ceasing its funding in 2016?

Senator Abetz (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:42): In case people had not noticed, I am not in Sydney. I was not part of that discussion, so I am not aware of what my colleagues may or may not have said to the Chancellor of Germany when she undertook that tour. But I trust that, if a discussion did take place about policy, they may have reminded the Chancellor of Germany—a great lady, if I might say, and a great stateswoman who is doing wonderful things for the world, especially in Europe—they may have taken time out to explain to the Chancellor the sorts of policies that Senator Carr as minister presided over in the research and development area in the very first budget that he was responsible for.
You can do a compare and contrast. This government have the restrained financial circumstances that we inherited. Keep in mind that Labor's first budget was when there was a stack of money in the bank and we were running huge surpluses. Labor and then minister Kim Carr deliberately cut funding for research and development—deliberately cut it. Compare that with what we face, where we have to borrow $1,000 million every month just to pay the interest component on existing loans—clearly and utterly unsustainable. Leaving a legacy of deficit and debt for the next generation is not something that we as a coalition want to preside over. Labor does. It does so regularly. But we are always given the task of cleaning up the mess that Labor leaves, and we are going about this task. What that means, regrettably, is that certain things that you might fund otherwise are no longer capable of being funded because of this legacy of debt and deficit occasioned by pink batts, school halls and other measures.

(Time expired)

Senator KIM CARR (Victoria) (14:44): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Is the minister aware that under Labor research funding increased by 43 per cent? NICTA currently trains 300 PhD students who work directly with industry partners. Can the minister explain how the decision to cut off NICTA's funding and return those students to university labs will improve the link between industry and research?

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:45): As is always the wont with Labor, they have the headline figure and they have the big announcement. Senator Johnston will undoubtedly recall the big announcements in defence—huge! Huge white paper; defence spending was going to be bigger than anything and then—what? They stripped $16 billion—$16,000 million—out of defence. So get the big headline as to what they are going to do and then they do the exact opposite.

The sad thing is they did exactly the same in the research and development area. Big headlines, big spending and big announcements, and then when you had a look—

The PRESIDENT: Pause the clock. A point of order, Senator Moore?

Senator Moore: Yes, Mr President, my point of order is on direct relevance. Senator Carr asked the minister about the link between the decision to cut off NICTA's funding and improving the link between industry and research. It is very straightforward and the minister has 16 seconds.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Moore. I do remind the minister that he has 16 seconds to complete his answer.

Senator ABETZ: Part of the question was about the alleged 43 per cent increase. Can I remind the former minister that in 2008 Labor cut $63.4 million from CSIRO over four years?

The PRESIDENT: Pause the clock. A point of order, Senator Moore?

Senator Moore: Mr President, again it is to direct relevance. We raised the issue about the links between NICTA funding, industry and research. It is now three seconds to go and it has not been touched.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Moore, but Senator Carr did also ask about the 43 per cent and Senator Abetz was answering that directly.
Senator ABETZ: Senator Carr's excuse at the time was, 'Because we are fighting a war on inflation.' *(Time expired)*

Senator KIM CARR (Victoria) (14:47): Mr President I ask a further supplementary question. I ask again—

*Government senators interjecting—*

The PRESIDENT: Pause the clock! Order on my right! Senator Carr you can commence your question again; we will start the clock again.

Senator KIM CARR: I ask again: why does the government keep saying it wants to build links between science and industry while cutting world-leading collaboration programs like NICTA and the cooperative research centres?

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:47): In relation to cuts, can I remind the former minister in this area that he also cut $2.5 million from ANSTO? He cut $33 million from cooperative research centres in the 2010 budget and so the list goes on. I think we released a statement on 29 October, so relatively recently, entitled the *Boosting the commercial returns from research* discussion paper. We are actually getting on with the business of ensuring that taxpayers' money will be directed appropriately for the maximum benefit of the Australian taxpayer.

And so, he who presided over these massive cuts—be those to ANSTO, be those to CSIRO or be they to cooperative research centres—has the audacity to get up here and complain about some of the decisions we need to make because of his profligacy whilst in government. *(Time expired)*

**Vocational Education and Training**

Senator BERNARDI (South Australia) (14:48): My question is to the Minister for Veterans Affairs, Senator Ronaldson, representing the Minister for Industry. Will the minister inform the Senate how the government, in partnership with the Australian Skills Quality Authority, is ensuring good quality training outcomes in Australia while at the same time cutting red tape for high-performing registered training organisations?

Senator RONALDSON (Victoria—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC and Special Minister of State) (14:49): I thank Senator Bernardi for this very important question.

Businesses across Australia are looking for employees with the higher skills needed to meet industry's changing needs in a competitive world. Our nation's most valuable asset going forward will be access to a skilled and productive workforce—a jobs-ready workforce with the skills necessary to take advantage of new opportunities will be crucial to our ongoing economic development. That is why the government is determined to press ahead with its industry focused reforms in the skills and training sector.

Part and parcel of the government's plans for greater productivity and competitiveness is taking action to ensure that Australia's vocational education and training system is focused squarely on outcomes, not just training for training's sake. Accordingly, the government's VET reform package will give industry a greater say in the type of training that is delivered so that training is better linked to job outcomes. Aside from a renewed focus on quality we have
taken action to reduce the regulatory burden and cost pressures on training providers. We want providers to be able to focus on their core business of training, not on excessive regulatory compliance and paperwork.

From 1 July 2014, providers no longer have to apply and pay a fee to the training regulator to update their scope of registration for a new qualification deemed equivalent to one already on scope. The Australian Skills Quality Authority has already removed the requirement for all existing providers to be subject to a financial viability assessment as part of their re-registration process.

The Abbott government wants ASQA to be a regulator, not a bookkeeper. Providers will now be rewarded for upholding the standards as part of a move towards an earned autonomous regulatory system—(Time expired)

Senator BERNARDI (South Australia) (14:51): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Would the minister be kind enough to advise the Senate how the government and the Australian Skills Quality Authority are addressing the issue of training brokers who make misleading representations?

Senator Kim Carr: That's right! How are you going to stop the rorts?

Senator RONALDSON (Victoria—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC and Special Minister of State) (14:51): I thank Senator Bernardi again, and he who squeaks the loudest over there did absolutely nothing when he had the opportunity to do so.

This government is deeply concerned about reports of unscrupulous behaviour by brokers, such as students being lured into expensive, unsuitable training courses. That is why we are beefing up the ability of ASQA to maintain the highest standards in the skills and training sector.

ASQA will ensure that new national provider standards, recently signed into law, will be upheld. We have committed more than $68 million to bolster ASQA's capacity to implement the new standards and provide a risk based approach to regulation—the ability to crack down on serious breaches and to ensure that high-quality training providers have the autonomy to spend more time skilling the workers of the future. This is in absolutely stark contrast to the previous government, which bequeathed to ASQA a so-called cost-recovery model but which, in effect, left it without the funding required to carry out its functions—another failure. (Time expired)

Senator BERNARDI (South Australia) (14:52): Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. Would the minister inform the Senate what powers the Australian Skills Quality Authority has to take action against a registered training organisation that uses a training broker who breaches national vocation regulation standards?

Senator RONALDSON (Victoria—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC and Special Minister of State) (14:53): I thank Senator Bernardi for another excellent question. ASQA now has the power to take regulatory action against an RTO using a broker. If the broker is breaching the national vocation regulation standards—for example, standards which require RTOs to inform clients about services to be provided and about their rights and obligations—ASQA now has the power to
take firm action against RTOs, bringing on compliance under the new standards that we have announced. Any broker will be held to account if they are not following the standards.

The Minister for Industry has raised, potentially, legislative changes in the new year to capture those dodgy brokers not directly associated with an RTO. This will give the regulator even greater power to clean up those on the edge, those who are undermining the great work of the majority in the training system. Make no mistake: if we have to introduce legislation to stamp this out, we will. This unscrupulous behaviour cannot go ahead. The former government sat on its hands again. (Time expired)

**Defence Personnel**

Senator PERIS (Northern Territory) (14:54): My question is to the Minister for Defence, Senator Johnston. I refer to the Prime Minister telling the RSL National Conference in 2012:

> A "fair go" is the least a grateful nation can offer to serving and former military personnel.

How is the government's decision to cut the real pay and conditions of ADF service men and women, including Christmas leave entitlements, in any way fair?

Senator JOHNSTON (Western Australia—Minister for Defence) (14:54): The new Australian Defence Force pay arrangements in no way reflect the value that the government places on ADF personnel and the vital and good work that they do. The pay decision is entirely the product of the economic legacy that has been bequeathed to us by the most profligate and incompetent government in our history. We are desperate to do the right thing in terms of national security—

*Honourable senators interjecting—*

The PRESIDENT: Pause the clock. Ministers and leader—order!

Senator JOHNSTON: We are desperate to do the right thing by our country in terms of national security and by our Defence Force members. But we must find $1 billion every month to pay the interest on the borrowings that were left to us by the previous government. It is simply not feasible for us to borrow even more for higher wages for directly employed Commonwealth public servants or Defence personnel. No responsible government would do that. We are a responsible government. That is the sort of thing that they did.

Labor turned more than $50 billion in the bank into a projected net debt well over $200 billion—the fastest deterioration in our debt position in dollar terms as a share of GDP in Australia's modern history. When you are in a situation of a $50 billion deficit you cannot be as generous as you would want to be. This is the reality.

*Opposition senators interjecting—*

The PRESIDENT: Pause the clock. Order!

Senator Cameron interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Senator Cameron!

Senator JOHNSTON: Obviously the senator does not know that Labor approved two years in a row of below-inflation wage increases to ADF personnel. (Time expired)

Senator PERIS (Northern Territory) (14:57): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. I again refer to the Prime Minister's speech to the RSL National Conference, where he also said that savings 'should not come at the expense of Defence personnel'. Why are our
ADF personnel being forced to pay the price for yet another Abbott government broken promise?

**Senator JOHNSTON** (Western Australia—Minister for Defence) (14:57): The simple answer is that when we assumed government we found that the situation was ever much worse than they had suggested. The shipbuilding program in South Australia was several hundred million dollars over budget—

*Opposition senators interjecting—*

**The PRESIDENT:** Pause the clock.

**Senator JOHNSTON:** without a word of acknowledgement or contrition. This is what we inherited. Can I say that of course the $16 billion that was ripped from the Defence portfolio was relevant to a whole host of areas. Not the least was force protection. There are 42 programs that had to be deferred by Defence. Many of those were relevant to our men and women on the front line. Labor was prepared to take money out—

*Opposition senators interjecting—*

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Minister, you have four seconds. Have you concluded your answer?

**Senator JOHNSTON:** I have concluded my answer.

**Senator PERIS** (Northern Territory) (14:59): Mr President, I ask a final supplementary question. When will the Minister for Defence stand up for our Australian Defence Force members and ask the Prime Minister to consider this disgraceful, unfair pay deal?

**Senator JOHNSTON** (Western Australia—Minister for Defence) (14:59): Where were Labor senators when $16 billion was taken out of this portfolio? Where were Labor senators when no submarine project was forthcoming? Where were Labor senators when the air warfare destroyer build program was several hundred million dollars over budget and two years late?

We want to and will support Australian Defence personnel, but we are cleaning up an enormous mess in this portfolio. We have taken Defence's share of the budget, in GDP terms, from 1.56 per cent—it was last there in 1938—to 1.8 per cent of GDP in just one budget. This is a good thing for ADF personnel.

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

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: ADDITIONAL ANSWERS**

**National ICT Australia**

**Senator ABETZ** (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (15:00): I have an additional answer to the question asked of me by Senator Carr today in relation to NICTA. The government will maintain $84.9 million worth of funding over two years, to 30 June 2016, for the ICT centre of excellence program delivered by NICTA.

The Howard government established NICTA in 2002 to increase the scale and quality of Australia's ICT research and development. It was always envisaged that, over time, funding from the private sector would play an increasingly important role in supporting NICTA's operations. NICTA's rapid recent growth in commercial revenue through its partnerships with...
domestic and overseas firms demonstrates its growing capacity to draw funding from a wider range of sources. Hopefully, the ministers accompanying the German Chancellor would have encouraged German investment.

In recognition of NICTA's maturity and current stage of development, the government considers that the time is approaching for NICTA to stand on its own feet. The government is committed to working with NICTA to help it secure its ongoing operational viability from 1 July 2016.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS**

**Answers to Questions**

**Senator KIM CARR (Victoria) (15:01):** I move:

That the Senate take note of the answers given by the Minister for Employment (Senator Abetz) and the Minister for Defence (Senator Johnston) to questions without notice asked by opposition senators today.

I am fascinated by Minister Abetz's additional answer on NICTA! He confirmed the government is abandoning NICTA by a reduction of their funding to no government support after 2016. He then went on to suggest the private sector will fill the gap and—the most ironic of all his statements—appealed to the German government to fund NICTA. That seems to be the implication of what he said today.

The Prime Minister's efforts at the G20 to boost Australia's international reputation have fallen on deaf ears. The government was severely embarrassed by the contradictions in its policy. It was embarrassed by President Obama's speech, which implicitly chided the government for its inaction on climate change. It was embarrassed by its stubborn refusal of the invitation to join other G20 members in creating the Green Climate Fund. Of course, it has been profoundly embarrassed by the visit today of the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, to Australia's internationally respected information technology research agency, NICTA.

Germany is the largest economy in Europe and the fifth largest economy in the world. Germany is a prominent exporter. It has built its prosperity on the capacity to export machinery, motor vehicles, chemicals and household goods, and it is a longstanding exponent of advanced manufacturing because it takes seriously the advances in the skills of a highly trained, high-wage workforce—by government investment in those things. The German government has invested heavily in education, including in higher education. In fact, Germany has recently restored free university education. It is somewhat bizarre, therefore, that the Prime Minister lectured the Chancellor and other G20 heads about the government's education agenda.

German governments, both Left and Right, have also invested heavily in industrial innovation to commercialise the fruits of research. They understand that there is a need for and how important it is that there be a longstanding commitment from governments to undertake that. That is why Germany built the Fraunhofer institute and Max Planck Institutes so effectively within the German innovation system. The real irony here is that Dr Merkel chose to visit NICTA because of its partnerships with the German Fraunhofer and the Max Planck institutes, and NICTA's relationship with German global transport logistics firms Hamburg Sud, DB Schenker and SAP. Given Dr Merkel's doctorate is in physics, she understands the importance of research scientists to the innovation system. I am certain she
would have closely questioned those scientists and she also would have been seeking some
advice from the ministers for industry and communications—because how can this
government have chosen to abandon NICTA, given how important NICTA is to the
development of ICT industries in this country?

At NICTA there are 300 PhD students. I understand that probably half our PhD students in
ICT are trained through NICTA. We know that this is an agency of immense international
importance. While I am sure Dr Merkel would have refrained from embarrassing her hosts, it
is hard to imagine that she did not at least want to know why it was that the Abbott
government was turning its back on NICTA, cutting it adrift and ending its funding in June
2016, when NICTA has been a powerhouse of Australian talent and Australian knowledge. Dr
Merkel would have wanted to know why the investments in NICTA's German partners are
being given such short shrift by this government. How ironic it is that Minister Abetz now
says he is talking to the German chancellor about her investment in our public institutions.
Surely Dr Merkel has wondered why the Abbott government has chosen not to include this
crucial area of ICT amongst the growth centres that have been established under the so-called
competitiveness agenda.

How embarrassing it is that such appalling statements by the government have come thick
and fast over the last three days. Is it any wonder that this government is known for its
hypocrisy? Its complete lack of vision has been exposed for the world to see. (Time expired)

Senator BERNARDI (South Australia) (15:07): Following Senator Carr, I cannot help
but reflect that if he were an educated man and had a PhD of his own, he would be a doctor of
negativity because all he can do is criticise and carp and whine. He is critical of the free
trade agreements that this government has finalised, which the previous government failed to do.
He is critical of the G20. He is just down on Australia. It is the most appalling indictment of a
former minister of the Crown. Now, he is critical of the National ICT Australia initiative—an
initiative, might I point out, that was introduced by the Howard government in 2002. This
government is committed to funding that with $85 million over the next two years.

It was always intended to be one of those significant points of difference between those
who support free enterprise and industry and those who support government welfare and
dependency on the other side. NICTA, when it was started, was an incubator. It was starting
an embryonic thing that was funded by government until it could stand alone. Standing alone
means having investment in it, not just government and taxpayer funds but private investment
from domestic and international organisations. And that is precisely the conversation that the
minister is having with the Chancellor of Germany. It is about getting private funding from
German companies interested in investing in Australia. Somehow that is an abandonment of a
great initiative of the Howard government. It is nonsense.

The problem we have with Senator Carr is: as an industry minister, he presided over the
demise and the closure of the motor vehicle manufacturing facilities in this country. He was
the guy whose great incentive, whose great mission to embrace new technology was to send
SMSSs into outer space in case the aliens would come along and respond to them. How could
anyone take that seriously? Have you had any responses yet, Senator Carr? Has any alien got
back to you yet and said, 'Hello, thanks for your kind message'?

Senator Kim Carr interjecting—
The PRESIDENT: Order!

Senator BERNARDI: Senator Carr is a bellicose former minister who failed so dreadfully in his portfolio. Now the only thing he can do is carp and moan and whine and complain. It is a bit rich to have a lecture from a former government minister who presided over $50-billion deficits, who racked up hundreds of billions of dollars of debt in his brief time in office. His was the most discredited government in the history of this country, worse than the Whitlam government. And those opposite are such sanctimonious hypocrites for defending their sandbagging.

Senator Lines: Hold the mirror up. You are the most discredited.

Senator BERNARDI: Senator Lines's interjecting reminds me of one of my favourite bands from the early eighties, A Flock of Seagulls, because that is what it sounds like when she is interjecting in the parliament. Senator Lines, show some courtesy. Stop chirping away and just respond to the issue before the chair.

The PRESIDENT: Through the chair.

Senator BERNARDI: We have a circumstance where the sanctimonious hypocrites on the other side of the chamber dare to get up and criticise—

The PRESIDENT: Senator Bernardi, you might need to withdraw that.

Senator BERNARDI: I withdraw the term 'hypocrite'. The sanctimonious and pious people whose words have never matched their own actions are standing up and criticising budgetary measures that are necessary to ensure our sustainability.

I cannot help but reflect on the fact that some people stand up here and question our investment in our Defence Force when the other side cut billions and billions of dollars from it. Our Defence Force capacity is probably at one of the lowest points it has been in many years. The reason for that is because they were treated like some sort of handy bank where they could withdraw the cash and stick it into these silly SMSs into outer space. It was ridiculous.

You know what? I do not want to take any lectures on the use of taxpayers' money from Senator Peris. I have got to say that. And I do not want to hear lectures on industry policy from Senator Carr. It is absolutely outrageous that they think they can stand up here and say to the Australian people: look at the great job we did and what a terrible job this mob is doing.

Those people on the other side are down on Australia. They are down on Australia. They want to see Australia get worse. They want to see their mismanagement multiplied again and again because they think it will make them look good somehow. It is not going to work like that. We have to fix the mess that was made and no amount of chirping and whining— (Time expired)

Senator BILYK (Tasmania—Deputy Opposition Whip in the Senate) (15:12): Once again we hear from the other side: play the person, play the man, play the woman but do not get down to the tin tacks of the day. We have heard Senator Bernardi have a go at Senator Carr, have a go at Senator Lines, have a go at everyone on this side. But they are the ones who have had to come in here and defend a government and defend a Prime Minister who are so out of touch that it is unbelievable. In fact, even in my electorate office, I have people coming in and
saying to me constantly now: 'We voted Liberal for a long time but we are not doing that next time. They are so out of touch with the real world.'

Those on the other side came in during question time and defended Mr Abbott's failure to act as a world leader on the world stage.

_Senator Seselja interjecting—_

**The PRESIDENT:** Order on my right.

_Senator BILYK:_ I could bleat like Senator Bernardi about interjections from the other side but I can keep talking. As you know, Senator Seselja, I worked in the childcare industry. You can keep going. It does not actually make me draw breath. So go for your life, mate, but you have got a long way to go to make me draw breath on that.

_Senator Seselja interjecting—_

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! On my right and to the chair.

_Senator BILYK:_ The G20 communique said that taking action on climate change supports growth and calls for member states to take strong action. But what did we get? We got Mr Abbott's comments to the G20, which could not have been more poorly judged. He could not have judged the mood of that conference more poorly if he had tried.

Mr Abbott has always said that Australia should move on climate change when the world moves. Well guess what? The world has moved and it has moved away from Mr Abbott. The two biggest carbon polluters, China and the US, have announced to the world they are acting to reduce carbon emissions significantly. This is the global action that Mr Abbott wanted to see from other nations. How did he respond? He responded by making, frankly, a very embarrassing speech complaining—because that is what those on the other side do so well—that Australians do not want a GP tax and gloating about removing real action on climate change. It might have been a big stage but I can tell you I do not think Mr Abbott looked all that big. In fact, I think he made himself look quite small and like a sooky little boy.

US President Obama declared that his nation would double its pace of reductions and seek to cut its emissions by 25 to 28 per cent less carbon on 2005 levels by 2025. Obviously the President of the United States is aware of the devastating impact that climate change can have on Australia. He referred to it, as I mentioned in my question to you, Senator Abetz, in regard to longer droughts and more wildfires. But why can't Mr Abbott see it? China announced a cap on carbon emissions for the first time, so we have them acting, pledging to peak emissions by 2030.

_Senator Abetz:_ What year?

_Senator BILYK:_ They have still made a move and they have still made a commitment, Senator Abetz. They have pledged to increase the amount of clean energy they use to 20 per cent by then. You can laugh about that, Senator Abetz, but it is quite a significant move—

**The PRESIDENT:** Senator Bilyk, address your remarks through the chair.

_Senator BILYK:_ Through you, Mr President, it is significant global action. Climate change was clearly an issue on the agenda of the largest economies, yet Mr Abbott tried to ignore the issue and keep it off the agenda. He could have been a leader and he could have sought to use the G20 to galvanise agreements amongst the other G20 nations, but he did not. Poor old Senator Abetz—I felt quite sorry for you today, Senator Abetz, having to come into
this place and defend Mr Abbott and the Treasurer's lack of backbone. Once again, you had to defend the Marxist style Direct Action intervention into the economy.

I agree with Senator Abetz that Australia has done well to be on track to meet its five per cent goal, but let us remember that this is due to the strong action taken by Labor, not your Direct Action waste of money. It was due to Labor. Through you, Mr President, Senator Abetz has confirmed that, despite global action by major countries, Australia will not make a contribution to the Green Climate Fund. That is despite the US, Germany, France and Japan being involved. Through you, Mr President, I have to ask Senator Abetz: how much more of an agreement from the world does your side need before you will move forward on this issue? Climate change is obviously an issue for the Chinese—(Time expired)

Senator SESELJA (Australian Capital Territory) (15:17): I am very pleased that Senator Bilyk, having criticised people for attacking the person, spent all of her time attacking the person! She spent all of her time attacking the person, can I say, falsely. I want to go through a couple of the issues that Senator Bilyk touched on, including the G20, and the free trade agreement—though not in any detail. Both Fairfax and News Ltd publications have been praising what has come out of the G20. Let's read Mark Kenny's take on the G20:

Leaders from the world's 20 largest economies have committed to historic levels of cooperation and transparency in a bid to dramatically raise growth, lift millions of people out of poverty, and propel up to 100 million women into the worldwide workforce for the first time.

Brisbane's G20 summit concluded ... with agreements to close tax loopholes used by multinationals, improve trade, encourage the setting of early emissions reduction targets, strengthen banks, reform energy markets including gas, and coordinate a stronger response to the Ebola epidemic.

In one of the most conclusive G20 summits held, leaders adopted the Brisbane Action Plan which contains over 800 firm economic reforms to be undertaken domestically by member states in the hope of turbo-charging economic growth.

That is not a bad outcome by a G20 led by Australia. Instead of the Labor Party bagging Australia and bagging the leadership, they should acknowledge what most people would see as absolute fact—that this was a highly successful G20 summit, ably led by our Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, ably led by the Australian government.

We have heard questions on the free trade agreement between Australia and China. Again, both Fairfax and News Ltd are praising what we are about to see in that free trade agreement. I think this will be a historic moment. Unfortunately, those on the other side simply could not get it done, so they seek to bag it. We can again quote from Mark Kenny:

... the first termer's—

referring to Prime Minister Abbott—

record on trade is unprecedented. Before even reaching the half-way mark of his first stint, Abbott has crashed through the wall of inertia and the tangle of befuddling technical difference that has stopped many before him, to conclude crucial free trade agreements with our most important partners.

This year alone, he has signed landmark bilateral trade agreements with Japan and Korea, ending years of deadlock negotiations. Ably assisted by ... Trade Minister Andrew Robb, whose commitment to staying the course is admired in trade circles world-wide, Abbott has succeeded where those before him failed to make ground. The secret ingredient is no secret at all: purpose.

Debate interrupted.

Sitting suspended from 15:20 to 17:00
Senator SESELJA: As I was saying before the break, I think there is much to celebrate in the outcomes of the G20, including—and this is something I did not get to mention before the break—the new global infrastructure hub. I think this is a fantastic initiative and I think it is fantastic that it is through Australia's leadership that it has been established and that it will be based in Sydney. That is another win.

I will briefly touch on the free trade agreement. It was great to hear President Xi speaking about this in the other place, speaking about the very important ties between our two nations. I thought there was much we could take from that speech, as well as from Prime Minister Tony Abbott's speech. I have to say that I think the partisan note in the opposition leader's speech was unfortunate and unhelpful. I do not think it is appropriate, when we are hosting a major world leader, to get that kind of partisan speech from Bill Shorten.

The opportunities arising out of the free trade agreement are endless. I thought Paul Kelly's piece on the weekend highlighted what a major breakthrough this would be—not just for our agricultural and mining sectors but particularly for services. Given the growth we are seeing in the Chinese middle class, the services sector is where massive opportunities lie. The middle class is already there, it is already massive, it is already prosperous and it is only going to grow. As a result, we will see opportunities in education and financial services. I see opportunities for our nation and I see opportunities for Canberra, for my home city—a place that is excellent at delivering services. We already have many exporters in this space. I commend the government for this free trade agreement. I think it will help to create great opportunities for our nation. (Time expired)

Senator LINES (Western Australia) (17:02): Labor does of course support free trade agreements. We recognise that China is a major trading partner and that a good free trade agreement can bring us many benefits. But, as Senator Wong said in this place earlier today, we have seen a lot of secrecy—way too much secrecy—around this free trade agreement. Indeed, we have seen nothing but orchestrated leaks from the government about what may and may not be in the free trade agreement. We have seen it talked up and we have seen it talked down. The more it remains in the dark, the more concerns Labor and the Australian public have. I have had a significant number of emails from Western Australians who want to see the detail of this free trade agreement. The Abbott government's track record is one of saying one thing and doing another. We all know the long list of broken promises. We certainly do not want to see Australia signing a blank cheque at the expense of our national interest.

A particular issue of concern to me is protecting the rights of workers. We want a good trade agreement but not one that reduces the rights of Australian workers. We are not against skilled migration—Labor has a strong record in that regard—but we are against the abusive systems that exploit migrant workers, that hurt the entire Australian workforce by driving down wages and conditions, and that undercut businesses that play by the rules. We need to see the detail of this agreement. We have heard a lot about it, but we do need to see that detail. Currently in Australia there are more than a million people on some form of temporary visa, which is equivalent to 11 per cent of our workforce. If we are going to add to that, it cannot be at the expense of the Australian workforce and it cannot be at the expense of the benefits that Australian workers and Australian unions have fought for over a very long period of time.
Not only has Labor said that the government needs to be transparent about this but so has the Productivity Commission, who have said that there should be transparency at all stages of the negotiations—not glossy pamphlets or brochures, not leaks to certain journalists, but real transparency—so that all Australians can see the detail and can express an opinion, through their elected representatives in this place, about areas of concern. The Abbott government, which we know to be a government of broken promises, says one thing and then negotiates quite the opposite—so the Australian community has very good reason to be concerned.

Hopefully we will see some detail today. We certainly think the Australian parliament and the Australian people are entitled to that. The Labor Party will be looking at how this free trade agreement benefits Australians, how it creates growth in our economy and how that growth will flow to all. The Abbott government appears to think that the benefits of growth just trickle down, but of course they do not. We need to see how this free trade agreement creates wealth and prosperity for all Australians, not just for a favoured few, and we need to see how the rights of the Australian workforce are protected in all of this. I am not yet convinced that Mr Abbott has got the message on jobs. Free trade agreements should be about creating jobs—but not just jobs for the sake of jobs. They should be jobs that protect workers' rights, that give people a fair day's pay for a fair day's work and that do not undermine Australia's long and proud history as a fair go country.

Question agreed to.

Clean Energy Finance Corporation

Senator MILNE (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (17:07): I move:

That the Senate take note of the answer given by the Minister for Employment (Senator Abetz) to a question without notice asked by Senator Milne today relating to climate change policy.

Most Australians are aware that our Prime Minister, Mr Abbott, met with Germany's Chancellor, Angela Merkel, in Sydney after the G20. It is very well-known that Germany takes a lead in addressing global warming. Germany has already made a target of an 80 per cent reduction in their greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and the Europeans have set a target of 40 per cent over 1990 levels by 2030. Germany was one of the first countries to put money into the Green Climate Fund. That was the $1 billion that started it. Since then, we have had the United States pledge $3 billion, France pledged $1 billion dollars and Japan pledged $1.5 billion. Today, even the Prime Minister's best friend in the fossil fuel crowd—the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper—has said that Canada is going to put money into the Green Climate Fund. But it is not so for our Prime Minister. Australia continues to humiliate itself on the global stage by refusing to contribute to the Green Climate Fund.

The German Chancellor clearly took this up with our Prime Minister, who told the German Chancellor that we were directly funding climate change programs. One of the things he cited was the Clean Energy Finance Corporation: the $10 billion dollar fund for renewable energy that was set up by the Greens, working with the Labor Party, in the clean energy package in the last government. He actually had the hide to cite that to the German Chancellor as an excuse for not putting money into the climate fund, without telling her that he has an abolition bill for the Clean Energy Finance Corporation before this parliament.

What sort of duplicitous talk is that to another world leader? The German Chancellor is here for the G20 and the Prime Minister sits down with Angela Merkel and tells her: 'Yes, we
are funding climate programs. We have got the Clean Energy Finance Corporation.' Then he
does not tell her that he intends to abolish it. We know that the government intends to abolish
it. We had Senator Cormann tell us that three times in a debate on direct action—that is, that
he intended in the new year to abolish the Clean Energy Finance Corporation. How can other
world leaders take our Prime Minister at his word when he sits down and has a meeting like
that: citing three things the government is spending money on on climate and one of them he
intends to abolish. He has condemned it from the start, wants to get rid of it and then goes and
tells other world leaders, 'I can justify the money we are spending on the climate.'

He then went on, in the same conversation, to cite money that was being spent on overseas
aid. He talked about money that was being spent particularly on climate programs in the
Pacific, but he did not tell the German Chancellor that he has cut overseas aid, he has cut
climate programs from the Pacific and he has destroyed and abolished the climate change
department in the federal government. In fact, people who had climate change written on their
business cards were virtually removed across the government. Yet he sits down with the
German Chancellor and tells her about the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and foreign aid.

I will have to write to the German Chancellor and say: 'At the time that our Prime Minister
met you and told you that, he failed to tell you that he intended to abolish it and he failed to
tell you that he slashed foreign aid and climate programs in the Pacific. In fact, he should
have been honest with other world leaders.' This is becoming a pattern. It is not only about
what the impact is in terms of what other governments are going to think of us and other
people around the world are going to think of Australia in the climate context but also about
whether Australia can be taken at its word. In global dialogue, all we hear is about developing
relationships and developing trust with other countries. Here we have our Prime Minister
having told the German Chancellor something that was at best a half-truth, in the sense that he
refused to acknowledge or did not tell her that this is something he intended to abolish and
that he had already cut our foreign aid programs.

We have a situation now where the rest of the world is moving on climate finance and we
are not. The fact is that we will not get a global agreement in Paris next year unless developed
countries step up and put money into the Green Climate Fund. It is why other countries are
now stepping up. Australia is going to be so conspicuous by its absence, because it says, 'A
rich country—the highest per capita emitter of the world—is too selfish and greedy to put
money up, particularly for Pacific Islands and small island states that are already suffering
from global warming.' It is actually a shame that the Prime Minister has brought on our
country.

Question agreed to.

NOTICES

Presentation

Senator Di Natale to move:

That the Senate—

(a) notes that:

(i) a report commissioned by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) into the
awarding of 2018 and 2022 World Cups casts doubt on the integrity of Australia’s bid to host the 2022
World Cup,
the report concludes that Australia’s bid included funding soccer development projects around the world, creating the appearance benefits were conferred in exchange for a vote,

(iii) the report also concludes that Australia’s bid involved redirecting funds that the Australian Government had committed to existing development projects in Africa toward initiatives in countries with ties to FIFA Executive Committee members, and

(iv) more than $45 million of taxpayers’ money was spent on the Australian 2022 World Cup bid; and

(b) calls on the Government to establish an independent investigation into allegations of corruption into Australia’s bid for the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Senators Leyonhjelm, Madigan, Day, Xenophon and Back to move:

(1) That a select committee, to be known as the Select Committee on Wind Turbines be established to inquire into and report on the application of regulatory governance and economic impact of wind turbines by 24 June 2015, with particular reference to:

(a) the effect on household power prices, particularly households which receive no benefit from rooftop solar panels, and the merits of consumer subsidies for operators;

(b) how effective the Clean Energy Regulator is in performing its legislative responsibilities and whether there is a need to broaden those responsibilities;

(c) the role and capacity of the National Health and Medical Research Council in providing guidance to state and territory authorities;

(d) the implementation of planning processes in relation to wind farms, including the level of information available to prospective wind farm hosts;

(e) the adequacy of monitoring and compliance governance of wind farms;

(f) the application and integrity of national wind farm guidelines;

(g) the effect that wind towers have on fauna and aerial operations around turbines, including firefighting and crop management;

(h) the energy and emission input and output equations from whole-of-life operation of wind turbines; and

(i) any related matter.

(2) That the committee consist of 6 senators, 1 to be nominated by the Leader of the Government in the Senate, 1 to be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, 1 to be nominated by the Leader of the Australian Greens in the Senate, and 3 to be nominated by other parties and independent senators.

(3) That:

(a) participating members may be appointed to the committee on the nomination of the Leader of the Government in the Senate, the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate or any minority party or independent senator;

(b) participating members may participate in hearings of evidence and deliberations of the committee, and have all the rights of members of the committee, but may not vote on any questions before the committee ;and

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

(4) That 3 members of the committee constitute a quorum of the committee.

(5) That the committee may proceed to the dispatch of business notwithstanding that all members have not been duly nominated and appointed and notwithstanding any vacancy.
(6) That the committee elect as chair and deputy chair a member nominated by the minority parties and independent senators.

(7) That the deputy chair shall act as chair when the chair is absent from a meeting of the committee or the position of chair is temporarily vacant.

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

(9) That, in the event of an equality of voting, the chair, or the deputy chair when acting as chair, has a casting vote.

(10) That the committee have power to appoint subcommittees consisting of 3 or more of its members, and to refer to any such subcommittee any of the matters which the committee is empowered to examine.

(11) That the committee and any subcommittee have power to send for and examine persons and documents, to move from place to place, to sit in public or in private, notwithstanding any prorogation of the Parliament or dissolution of the House of Representatives, and have leave to report from time to time its proceedings, the evidence taken and such interim recommendations as it may deem fit.

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

(13) That the committee be empowered to print from day to day such documents and evidence as may be ordered by it, and a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings as take place in public.

Senator Wong to move:

That the Senate commends the outstanding contribution of officials and volunteers to the staging of the G20 Leaders’ Summit and other G20 events in Australia in 2014.

Senators Wright and Di Natale to move:

That the Senate—

(a) notes that four out of five Victorians believe mental health must be a top priority in the upcoming state election and that almost 92 per cent say regional mental health services need to be extended;

(b) recognises that mental illness in 12 to 25-year-olds is costing Australia an estimated $10 billion each year and people do not have access to the services they need; and

(c) calls on the Federal Government to fund the mental health system commensurate to the significant burden of disease associated with mental illness and to work with states in addressing chronic underfunding of the mental health system.

Senator Waters to move:

That the Senate—

(a) notes that:

(i) the Queensland Premier, Mr Campbell Newman, has announced that he will use public money from the sale of public assets to build a coal railway for mining magnates,

(ii) Premier Newman has already announced that public money will be used to pay for dredging in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and dumping on the nationally-significant Caley Valley wetlands near Abbot Point, and

(iii) Queensland’s existing industries, our safety, our environment, including the Great Barrier Reef, and our very way of life are at risk from climate change which is driven by burning fossil fuels; and
(b) calls on the Federal Government to rule out allowing federal public funds to be used to pay for coal mines or coal ports associated with the Galilee Basin.

Senator Siewert and Moore to move:
That the Senate—
(a) acknowledges:
(i) the 5th anniversary of the National Apology to the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants on 16 December 2014,
(ii) that over 500 000 Australians experienced care in an orphanage, or other form of out-of-home care during the past century and many of these experienced distress, neglect, abuse and assault, and
(iii) that the child migration scheme during the 20th Century is now universally recognised as having been fundamentally flawed with tragic consequences;
(b) notes:
(i) the 16 recommendations of the Community Affairs References Committee’s report, Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited: Report on the progress with the implementation of the recommendations of the lost innocents and forgotten Australians reports (the report), and
(ii) the current Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse but that there are a range of issues identified by the Senate inquiries that are beyond the issues covered by Commission; and
(c) calls on leadership from governments and former providers to work towards the implementation of the remaining recommendations of the report, including the sensitive issues of redress, identity documentation and the need for responsive support for health and housing.

BUSINESS

Leave of Absence

Senator Bilyk (Tasmania—Deputy Opposition Whip in the Senate) (17:13): by leave—
I move:
That leave of absence be granted to Senators Marshall and Gallacher for parliamentary duties and Senator McLucas for personal reasons for 17 November to 19 November 2014; and to Senator Conroy for personal reasons and Senator Singh for parliamentary duties for today, 17 November 2014.
Question agreed to.

NOTICES

Postponement

The following items of business were postponed:
General business notice of motion no. 499 standing in the name of Senator Rice for today, relating to high speed rail, postponed till 24 November 2014.
General business notice of motion no. 501 standing in the name of Senator O’Sullivan for today, relating to the benefits of resource projects, postponed till 18 November 2014.

BILLS

Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Caring for Single Parents) Bill 2014
First Reading

Senator Siewert (Western Australia—Australian Greens Whip) (17:14): I move:

Question agreed to.

Senator SIEWERT: It is with great pleasure that I present the bill and move:
That this bill may proceed without formalities and be now read a first time.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Senator SIEWERT (Western Australia—Australian Greens Whip) (17:15): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to table an explanatory memorandum relating to the bill.

Leave granted.

Senator SIEWERT: I table an explanatory memorandum and I seek leave to have the second reading speech incorporated into Hansard.

Leave granted.

The speech read as follows—

It is nearly six months since this government announced its cruel budget cuts. Since that time I have received letters, email and calls from people in distress about how they were going to manage under the Government's harsh proposals. Single parents are particularly concerned.

Single parents have been consistently attacked since then Prime Minister Howard brought in so called Welfare to Work measures that undermined and demonised single parents. The changes cut single parents' income support by dumping them onto the lower payment of Newstart when their youngest child turned 8. The Gillard Government continued this attack when they dumped onto Newstart those grandfathered from the Howard Government changes.

Economic modelling has shown that the 2014-2015 budget targets the most disadvantaged in the Australian community. Single parent families, whose payments have been reduced over the last 8 years will be further unfairly impacted by this budget, making a mockery of the Government's claim that everyone will be doing the heavy lifting.

Analysis by ACOSS shows that cuts focused on low and middle income earners make up 52% of budget savings of the next four years. Cuts to family payments, changes to indexation of the parenting payment, removal of the Pensioner Education Supplement as well as the increased costs of medication and visits to the doctor will all have a substantial impact on families.

ACOSS have found that single parent households on low incomes will be $50 per week worse off as a result of cuts to family payments alone, and NATSEM suggest some single parent families will lose more than 14% of their disposable income as a result of budget measures.

Cutting the Pensioner Education Supplement which helps more than 17,000 single parents around the country is an especially callous decision from a government with a so-called commitment to 'earn or learn'.

Cutting income support for single parents will make it harder for them to afford the absolute essentials like rent and food, let alone child care and the other costs associated with looking for work, studying and training. Pushing single parent families further into poverty greatly increases the risk of them and their children experiencing long term disadvantage and poverty.
This is why this Bill is so important. The Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Caring for Single Parents) Bill 2014 reverses the changes made by both the Howard and Gillard Governments that dump single parents onto Newstart.

This will mean that single parents remain eligible for parenting payments until their youngest child turns 16, rather than the current age of 8, which was imposed by the Howard Government's Welfare to Work regime in 2006.

In the previous Parliament, I introduced a Bill to restore income support to single parents on Newstart to the equivalent of the parenting payment. The feedback from single parents was that they did not want to be on Newstart and that they felt diminished as parents by the payment. I have taken this into account in this new Bill. This Bill reverses the changes that dump single parents onto Newstart. That means that single parents will remain on Parenting Payments while they raise their children.

The Welfare to Work approach has always been about punishing single parents and saving money off the backs of vulnerable people. Forcing single parents onto Newstart does nothing to help them into work. It exposes them and their children to poverty and makes it harder to find work. More than half of those parents affected by last year's payment cuts were already in paid work.

To help people into work we need to ensure they have access to education and training opportunities, child care and other support services, many of which are out of reach when you're living beneath the poverty line on Newstart.

Significant numbers of single parents on the Newstart Allowance experience multiple deprivations, going without items that are vital for an adequate standard of living — for example, medical treatment, warm clothes, a decent and secure home, and school books for children. Newstart puts adequate food, safe accommodation and basic household expenses out of reach.

Our legislation will provide stronger support for single parents to raise their families, while they're raising their children, working or studying. It will help keep families out of poverty and give children a better start in life.

Our Bill also ensures employees who are carers have the right to request flexible working arrangements. Carers do vital work across the community and without them, the cost to government and the not-for-profit sector would be considerably higher. They need to be supported to combine employment with their caring responsibilities.

I am deeply concerned that the challenges faced by single parents will be compounded by other budget measures proposed by the Government. The Welfare to Work changes of the Howard Government, along with Labor's changes to parenting payments dumping more single parents onto Newstart put them at significantly increased risk of poverty. This policy needs to be reversed, so single parents are not forced to raise their family on Newstart.

The Greens are committed to helping people trapped in poverty, and to begin this process, we also have a Bill before the Senate to increase the base rate of Newstart by $50 per week and ensure the payment is properly indexed to reflect the increasing cost of living.

Helping single parents and lifting Newstart are two important steps towards reducing poverty.

I commend the Bill to the Senate.

Senator SIEWERT: I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

MOTIONS

Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

Senator SIEWERT (Western Australia—Australian Greens Whip) (17:15): I move:
That the Senate—

(a) notes:

(i) the tragic death in custody of Ms Julieka Dhu on 4 August 2014,
(ii) the National Day of Action held on 23 October 2014 - Justice for Julieka,
(iii) the alarming number of Aboriginal people who have died in custody since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody,
(iv) the unacceptably high rates of incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and
(v) the majority of the 339 recommendations by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody have not been implemented; and

(b) calls on governments to:

(i) show leadership in the implementation of the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, and
(ii) develop programs that address the unacceptably high incarceration rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including justice reinvestment.

Notice of motion altered on 29 October 2014 pursuant to standing order 77.

Question agreed to.

**Mining**

Senator O’SULLIVAN (Queensland—Nationals Whip in the Senate) (17:16): I move:

That the Senate acknowledges the fact:

That the Australian resources sector contributes about 10 per cent of our gross domestic product, directly employs around 270 000 people and supports the work and incomes of another 800 000.

Question agreed to.

**DOCUMENTS**

**Parliamentarians' Entitlements**

Order for the Production of Documents

Senator MOORE (Queensland) (17:16): I move:

That there be laid on the table by the Minister representing the Prime Minister (Senator Abetz), by 3.30 pm on Monday, 24 November 2014, any correspondence between the Prime Minister's Office and other ministers, or their offices, concerning approval of international travel by members of the executive, since 7 September 2013.

Question agreed to.

**Biosecurity**

Order for the Production of Documents

Senator MOORE (Queensland) (17:17): I move:

That there be laid on the table by the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture (Senator Abetz), by 3.30 pm on Monday, 24 November 2014, copies of any documents, including correspondence to and from other members of the Executive, prepared since 7 September 2013, concerning: (a) arrangements; and (b) changes in biosecurity functions within the department and any other department or agency under current administrative arrangements or proposed administrative arrangements.

Question agreed to.
MOTIONS

Independent National Security Legislation Monitor

Senator BILYK (Tasmania—Deputy Opposition Whip in the Senate) (17:18): At the request of Senator Wong, I move:

That the Senate—

(a) notes:

(i) the role of the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor is essential in reviewing the operation, effectiveness and implications of Australia's counter terrorism and national security legislation on an ongoing basis, including considering whether Australia's national security laws contain appropriate safeguards for protecting the rights of Australians, and remain necessary and proportionate to any threat of terrorism or threat to national security,

(ii) the Government has announced an intention to reverse its decision, announced earlier in 2014, to abolish the role of the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor; and

(iii) the position of Independent National Security Legislation Monitor has been vacant since 20 April 2014; and

(b) calls on the Attorney-General to immediately take steps to ensure the appointment, as a matter of priority, of a suitably qualified and experienced person to the role of Independent National Security Legislation Monitor.

Senator BRANDIS (Queensland—Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate, Vice-President of the Executive Council, Minister for Arts and Attorney-General) (17:18): I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is granted for one minute.

Senator BRANDIS: The government does not support this motion, because it is entirely unnecessary. I should remind honourable senators that the history of the INSLM began with the coalition when a proposal, promoted by the former member for Kooyong, Mr Georgiou, and former Victorian Liberal senator, Senator Troeth, was moved as a private member's bill here and in the other place and defeated by the then Labor government. Eventually, the Labor government came to its senses and agreed with the coalition's proposal to create an office of Independent National Security Legislation Monitor—a position that was confirmed by the government this year. The vacant position is currently under consideration by the government, and I have settled upon two names between whom a choice will shortly be made by the Prime Minister. The motion is entirely moot.

Question agreed to.

DOCUMENTS

Ebola

Order for the Production of Documents

Senator DI NATALE (Victoria) (17:19): I move:

That there be laid on the table by the Assistant Minister for Health, no later than 3 pm on 26 November 2014, a copy of the advice which has informed the Minister for Health's decision to not send Australian personnel to West Africa in response to the Ebola epidemic.

Question agreed to.
MOTIONS

Share Ownership

Senator RHIANNON (New South Wales) (17:20): I move:

That the Senate—

(a) notes that:

(i) many Australians consider universities to be important institutions that provide a significant social, cultural and economic good,

(ii) Australian universities collectively hold investments worth billions of dollars,

(iii) the University of Glasgow, Stanford and 12 other universities in the United States have divested from fossil fuels, and the Australian National University has divested itself from a range of social and environmentally damaging companies, including fossil fuel companies, and

(iv) more than 120 academics and eminent alumni of the University of New South Wales (UNSW) have written an open letter calling on UNSW to divest from fossil fuels;

(b) congratulates the students and staff across Australia who have led inspiring campaigns and organised referenda calling on their universities to divest from fossil fuels; and

(c) calls on all Australian universities to divest themselves from fossil fuels and prioritise the research, development and financing of renewable energy technologies to help shift Australia to a clean energy future.

Senator O'SULLIVAN (Queensland—Nationals Whip in the Senate) (17:20): I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is granted for one minute.

Senator O'SULLIVAN: This debate goes to the heart of the philosophical difference between the government and the opposition, with its long-term allies the Greens. This government believes in getting economic fundamentals right for business. It does not believe in interfering at the heart of business. Universities and businesses should be free to make their own investment decisions without the heavy hand of government being involved. Let's remember: the Australian resources sector contributes about 10 per cent of our GDP, directly employs 270,000 people and supports another 800,000 in the workforce. Over the last 12 months, over $50 billion worth of resource projects have been finalised across the nation, with increases in production including over 200 million tonnes of iron ore, 40 million tonnes of coal and more than 1,000 petajoules of gas, creating jobs and boosting the economy. Let's be clear: this motion is driven by the extreme Greens' aversion to the resources industry and, in particular, to oil, gas and coal—the sources of energy that not only drive our economy but also continue to bring billions of people out of poverty through economic growth and access to electricity. (Time expired)

Senator MOORE (Queensland) (17:22): Mr President, I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is granted for one minute.

Senator MOORE: Labor believes in institutional autonomy for universities. Senator Rhiannon's motion refers to how universities invest their own funds. We supported a motion calling on the government to reverse its cuts to research funding and to prioritise funding for clean technologies. We made these investments when we were in government. It is Labor's
programs that the Abbott government has cut, but we do not believe it is the job of this place to direct universities one way or another as to how they determine their own investment strategies.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion moved by Senator Rhiannon be agreed to.

The Senate divided. [17:22]

(The President—Senator Parry)

Ayes .................9
Noes ..................38
Majority..............29

AYES

Di Natale, R
Milne, C
Rice, J
Waters, LJ
Wright, PL

NOES

Back, CJ
Brandis, GH
Bullock, J.W.
Cameron, DN
Carr, KJ
Colbeck, R
Day, R.J.
Fierravanti-Wells, C
Ketter, CR
Lines, S
Madigan, JJ
McGrath, J
Moore, CM
O'Neill, DM
Parry, S
Polley, H
Seselja, Z
Sterle, G
Williams, JR

Ludlam, S
Rhiannon, L
Siewert, R (teller)
Whish-Wilson, PS

Bilyk, CL (teller)
Brown, CL
Bushby, DC
Canavan, M.J.
Cash, MC
Collins, JMA
Fawcett, DJ
Fifield, MP
Leyonhjelm, DE
Ludwig, JW
McEwen, A
McKenzie, B
Muir, R
O'Sullivan, B
Peris, N
Ruston, A
Smith, D
Wang, Z
Xenophon, N

Question negatived.

DOCUMENTS

Defence Procurement

Order for the Production of Documents

Senator XENOPHON (South Australia) (17:29): I seek leave to amend general business notice of motion No. 496 standing in my name relating to an order for the production of
documents concerning the SEA1000 submarine project, before asking that it be taken as formal.

Leave granted.

Senator XENOPHON: I move the motion as amended:

That there be laid on the table by the Minister for Defence, no later than 4 pm on the next day of sitting, any documents produced by Macroeconomics.com.au Pty Ltd as a result of tender reference DMOCIP/RFT 0315/2012, including economic modelling and other examination of the potential economic impact of the SEA1000 submarine project on the Australian economy, among other subjects.

Question agreed to.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Climate Change

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Lines) (17:31): A letter has been received from Senator Siewert:

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

"The embarrassment caused to Australia on the global stage resulting from the Prime Minister Abbott's climate denial and refusal to commit funds to the UN Green Climate Fund, to assist poor nations combat climate change."

Is the proposal supported?

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

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

Senator MILNE (Tasmania—Leader of the Australian Greens) (17:32): How embarrassed are most Australians when they pick up, after the G20 finishes, the Los Angeles Times, or The New York Times and see the Australian Prime Minister being referred to as ‘the great blunder from down under’! That is how he is being referred to throughout the world. And it is not surprising. He was humiliated by his complete ignorance and failure to recognise that all his talk of climate denial is so ideologically driven. His denial of the science and his continual chanting of his three-word slogans is so out of touch with the rest of the world.

Suddenly the Prime Minister got a wake-up check. Basically, the other countries in the G20 said to our Australian Prime Minister, ‘We want to discuss climate change at the G20, because climate change is an economic issue.’ Climate change will have a major impact on food security and physical security, because there will be food shortages and displacement of people. There are extreme weather events occurring all of the time around the world now. People are recognising we live in a climate emergency, and the major world economies recognise that unless they change and decouple economic growth from the use of fossil fuels and the use of non-renewable resources we will not have a liveable planet. That is the fundamental basis on which the energy and the whole economic system needs to be restructured.
Everyone gets it except Australia. Even Prime Minister Abbott's very best friend in the fossil fuel stakes, Prime Minister Stephen Harper from Canada, has today come out and said that the Canadians will pledge money to the Green Climate Fund—but not so our Prime Minister. What must the small island states and developing countries think about a rich country like Australia refusing to stump up the money to put into a fund to assist them not only to mitigate against things getting worse but to adapt to what they are already suffering—salt-water incursion into their fresh-water systems, loss of land, inability to irrigate their crops.

Whole island states are now in fear that they will have to move. Kiribati has bought land in Fiji to try to prepare to relocate their people. In Tuvalu people are pleading with Australia and other countries to help them, as they live in fear of the next storm surge—but not so our Prime Minister. No, he determined that he was going to somehow stare down other countries and claim that because he was the host of the G20 he could get away with stopping the world talking about what the world wanted to talk about—that is, the overwhelming challenge of our time: global warming. So he was upstaged, blind-sided, rolled straight over the top of, as China and the United States announced, ahead of the G20, their climate deal.

Their climate deal is very significant. It is significant because it is the first time you have had a developing country commit to a binding target. China did that by saying that it would ensure that its emissions peaked by 2030. The United States committed to a 26 to 28 per cent reduction by 2025 on 2005 levels. It is significant because the big thing that had not been able to be gotten through in Copenhagen was the fact that the developing countries were saying that they would not commit to binding targets until developed countries did so. This was a significant breakthrough.

What was the Prime Minister's response? It was pretty typical of a climate denier—of someone who does not realise how out of his depth he is in a global conversation. He said that he was not going to talk about the China deal because it is what might happen in 16 years time. Wrong, Prime Minister. If you had read the small print you would have seen this amazing figure from the Chinese. They intend to double their level of renewable energy between now and 2030—double it so that 20 per cent of energy in China is from renewable sources. They intend to build 1,000 gigawatts of energy by 2030.

That is the equivalent, if you want to compare it with nuclear industries around the world, of a large nuclear power station every week. That is the kind of scale they are talking about, rolling out renewable energy to 2030. They are also saying in their 12th five-year plan, which ends in 2016—so we will be going into their 13th five-year plan—that they have identified seven strategic industries for China, including electric vehicles, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Is it starting to click, in Australia, where this is going? This means that the United States, the European Union and China are going to be signed up for the biggest and best investment around the world in renewable energy, in the best and brightest minds that we have on the planet, to get there and recruit them and build industries and jobs and sustainability into the future. What do we have in Australia? We have a Prime Minister who says, 'I'm not even going to think about that, because it's not for 16 years.' In order to get where the Chinese need to get during these 16 years, they will roll out a megaplan. More particularly, the Chinese are fairly conservative in what they are saying. They said they want their emissions to peak by...
2030. In fact, if they get underway in the manner they are talking about, they are likely to peak a lot sooner than that. They are saying they want their coal emissions to peak by 2020, and that is very bad news.

Here in Australia we have the utter and absolutely blind stupidity of the Premier of Queensland, Campbell Newman, saying today that he is prepared to sell off assets in Queensland and subsidise the building of coal infrastructure in Queensland, which will be stranded assets. You cannot believe the ideological stupidity we are seeing in this country. The private sector will not fund it. Why won't Campbell Newman answer the question? If the private sector does not think there is a future in coal infrastructure, why would you waste money? Why would you sell public assets to give the private sector a leg-up in an industry that is failing? It is a decaying industry. It is beyond belief that this is happening.

We also have a situation where the Europeans are very strongly committing to the Green Climate Fund. It is Tony Abbott, our Prime Minister, who blocked the Green Climate Fund being in the communique from the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. He is so isolated. Our country is now totally isolated on the global stage when it comes to addressing global warming. That means we are isolated on the global stage in terms of where economic business and stimulation and excitement are going to be. We are the rust bucket. We will be the quarry. Only that—the best brains will have gone to recognising that this is the century in which we get the low-carbon economy. This is the century in which we roll out electric vehicles. This is the century in which we have fantastic public transport systems to give great amenity to our cities. This is the century where we develop new building materials, where we have energy-efficient buildings, where we have renewable energy rolling out jobs and investment throughout Australia, as we are already seeing.

That is why we have to keep not only carbon pricing but also clean energy investment and the Renewable Energy Agency, yet here we have our Prime Minister standing up in front of the world and bragging about getting rid of the carbon price—unbelievable—when everybody else sitting around the table is working out how to introduce one. He is looking at what Australia did with our clean energy package and is not recognising it is template legislation, that the International Energy Agency saw it as template legislation, for what developed countries need to do.

Our Prime Minister is so out of touch that he thought it was a bragging point to go with his 'axe the tax'. He looked around the table and suddenly found no-one thought that was a good idea. Then he reverted to talking about his $7 co-payment that he cannot get through the Senate. As The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times said, he looked like an adolescent. He looked like a pimple faced adolescent on the global stage. How embarrassing for our country. How embarrassing for Australians. We all want to think that when our Prime Minister gets up— (Time expired)

Senator RUSTON (South Australia—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (17:42): After listening to the contribution of Senator Milne you would have thought that the only subject for discussion at the G20 was climate change. Sadly, as important an issue as it may well be, there were a whole heap of other things that happened at the G20, and we should get this into some relative perspective.

There is no doubt that the Australian government welcomed a number of things raised at the G20 in relation to climate. The fact that the USA and China both agreed to make a major
contribution to climate change should not come as any surprise to anybody given that both the United States and China are significantly large emitters. A lot of the changes the USA and China are proposing to make, in terms of how they emit, are things the Greens would probably find quite abhorrent. America is proposing that some of the cuts to its emissions will come from fracking.

I have a little trouble with the hypocrisy of those at the other end of the chamber coming in here and singing the praises of the wonderful comments made over the weekend, by both the Chinese and the Americans, on climate change. We obviously all support the world going forward to achieve a better, cleaner and greener outcome for our children. To turn around and make it sound like the Australian government is completely out of step with the rest of the world when the Americans intend to use fracking as one of the methods by which they will achieve their emissions reductions is just the height of hypocrisy. In the case of the Chinese, it is very commendable that they are proposing to look towards a greener future for their country, but they are proposing to use nuclear power as one of the ways that they will reduce their emissions. I am quite sure that those at the other end of the chamber are not going to stand up and say that that is a fabulous way to deal with this. When we come into this place and try to put an argument forward, we need to make sure that we deal entirely in the facts and not just choose the bits and pieces that suit our argument.

A lot of things happened at the G20 summit that are really good for Australia and Australia's role in the world economy. This was the first time that the G20 leaders had a session entirely dedicated to global energy issues. It is now embedded in the G20's agenda that global energy issues will be a very important part of the discussions for the foreseeable future. Using energy more efficiently is the outcome that I believe every one of the nations that attended the G20 summit would have been seeking to achieve.

The G20 brings together the world's greatest producers and the world's No. 1 consumers of energy. It is all well and good for countries that have had the luxury of readily accessible energy for a very long time to pass judgement, but we have to remember that the one thing that will bring the rest of the world up to the standard of the countries that form the G20 will be a regular supply of affordable energy. We do need to have a balance with affordable energy and to make sure we do not stand in judgement of those that are perhaps less fortunate and start making all sorts of wonderful demands like we hear from the other end of the chamber without realising that the global economy exists outside of just Australia, China and the US.

One of the things that I was particularly pleased to see come out of the G20 was the agreement by the leaders to reduce the gender employment gap. I am sure that you, Madam Acting Deputy President Lines, would have been very pleased to see the decision by the G20 to seek to reduce the gender employment gap by 25 per cent by 2025. Whilst it is an admirable goal, the economic and social benefits and outcomes that could come from actually achieving such a goal will be absolutely massive. Delivering on this commitment will bring more than 100 million additional women into the workforce just across the G20 nations. Consider the impact that that could have on global growth, on reducing poverty and on the inequalities that exist within nations—and we are only talking about G20 nations with that statistic.
The OECD have estimated that a boost to women's participation of this scale would actually increase the G20 GDP by between 1.2 per cent and 1.6 per cent by 2025. That will be more than $1 trillion to the global economy which is quite phenomenal when you realise that that sort of growth and that sort of benefit can be achieved by merely empowering a resource that you already have to become more productive. I am sure that for everyone in Australia it was fantastic to see the G20 thought that empowering women and increasing women's participation in the workforce was something that they considered as a priority. I think we should all be absolutely delighted.

Another thing that happened at the G20, outside the climate change hysteria that we hear from those at the other end of the chamber, was the decision to ensure that the world economy will be more resilient going into the future so that we do not see a repeat of the terrible consequences of the global financial crisis of a few years ago. Certainly Australia has been focused and we all commend those opposite when they were in government for putting in place some things that have ensured Australia is better prepared and better placed to deal with the impact should another global crisis occur.

Strengthening our financial institutions and making sure that we have all the things in place in our regulatory environment so our financial institutions can withstand the onslaught from international financial markets and protecting taxpayers from the necessity to bail out these organisations are very important. The adage 'too big to fail' should not be something financial institution should be allowed to hide behind when they run themselves into major difficulties. Addressing shadow banking risks and making derivative markets safer are further important components of the broad suite of activities that the Australian government along with its colleagues at the G20 seek to put in place.

These important reforms mean that the global financial system is now far more resilient than it has ever been, particularly at the time of the last global financial crisis. I think we can be very happy that our banks are now of a much higher quality and that capital and derivative markets are more transparent. We have reduced the risks that the Australian public will face and obviously the other members of the G20 and their respective places.

Another thing that occurred just a few minutes ago that was a very positive outcome of the G20 summit was the off-site engagement and discussions that occurred between the leaders of our countries. This afternoon we have seen the signing of a memorandum of understanding in relation to the free trade agreement that is being pursued between Australia and China. Only those involved in trade in this country will realise the extraordinary significance of having an arrangement where we have better, cheaper, freer and more equitable access to a market the size of China.

The one thing that Australia is never going to be able to do is sell all its product to itself. We are an exporting nation, and so it is very, very important that we put a priority on pursuing trade arrangements with markets that we can export to. Australia is never going to get rich selling to itself, as I have said time and time again. Having a market like China available to us in a much more easy and equitable way will have a major impact on all of our manufacturers but particularly on our farmers. In a state like South Australia, where agriculture is such an incredibly important part of our economy, we do not have the luxury of some of the other states—it would be nice to think that we could get our mining industry up and running, but that is a story for another day—but this is extraordinarily important. I commend the
government, and Minister Robb particularly, for having achieved this magnificent free trade arrangement. *(Time expired)*

**Senator McEwen** (South Australia—Opposition Whip in the Senate) (17:53): I am pleased to contribute to the matter of public importance before the Senate chamber today about Prime Minister Abbott’s climate change denial and his behaviour at the G20. I intend to talk to the matter of public importance and not to the free trade agreement that seemed to occupy most of Senator Ruston’s speech.

On the weekend just past, Australians were yet again embarrassed by their Prime Minister, this time in front of an international audience at the G20 forum. World leaders had gathered in Brisbane, Australia, to talk about a number of issues of world importance—things like international security, epidemics, economic growth and climate change—but our Prime Minister, Mr Abbott, could only bring himself to prattle on about his own domestic troubles. While China and the United States joined together to strike a significant deal to combat climate change into the future, Mr Abbott used the weekend as an opportunity to do nothing but bizarrely push his own parochial politics onto some of the world’s most powerful leaders. You have to ask: is the Prime Minister really the person we want representing Australia on the global stage?

As if it were not humiliating enough that Australia is now led by a man who has already repealed domestic climate legislation, on the world stage the Prime Minister tried his best to ignore the topic of climate change completely. While President Obama from the United States and China’s President Xi jointly outlined ambitious and dramatic goals for carbon reduction last week, our Prime Minister refused to even acknowledge that climate change was worthy of being an agenda item for the G20. In fact, it seemed the Prime Minister of Australia was the only person at the G20 who did not want to talk about action on climate change.

We have President Obama from America to thank for the fact that climate change was even up for discussion at all, after he all but forced it onto the agenda with his announcement on Saturday, prior to the G20, that the United States would be contributing US$3 billion to help developing countries cope with the effects of climate change. President Obama’s announcement was followed closely by Mr Shinzo Abe, the Prime Minister of Japan, who pledged a further US$1.5 billion to the Green Climate Fund. In making these pledges, the United States and Japan have recognised the importance of the Green Climate Fund.

The fund will help developing countries in their bids to tackle climate change. It is a major part of a plan agreed to in 2009 to raise income streams to help developing nations address climate change and reduce carbon emissions. Income for the fund comes from both public and private sources. It is intended to raise US$100 billion by the year 2020. The fund will promote the shift towards low emissions and climate resilient development by providing support to developing countries to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the impacts of climate change. It will also take into account the particular needs of the developing countries, especially those that have a high propensity to be adversely affected by climate change.

While the fund has now received pledges from 13 nations totalling US$7.5 billion and looks closer to achieving its target, our Prime Minister wants nothing to do with it. He downplayed the importance of the fund, and he has pledged nothing. He tried to cover up his lack of climate credentials by saying that Australia was contributing to its own Clean Energy
Finance Corporation and was contributing to overseas development aid. The trouble with that is that the Clean Energy Finance Corporation is slotted for demolition by this government. Currently, the third iteration of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (Abolition) Bill is in this parliament. Thankfully, the first and second iterations of the bill were defeated. We know that the current government has already cut the overseas development aid budget by $7.6 billion, from this year's budget. So you have to ask: did Prime Minister Abbott mislead world leaders when he said that Australia was already contributing to climate change funds when in fact we know he has reduced funding to the overseas development aid budget and is hell-bent on destroying the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, which is doing such a great amount of work.

Australians expect more from their Prime Minister and they deserve more from him. In this case, developing countries deserve more from Mr Abbott as well. But, at the end of the day, would we really expect anything except dissembling from a man who once described climate change as 'absolute crap'? Some of the most powerful leaders in the world are shocked at Mr Abbott's actions. President Obama said over the weekend:

No nation is immune and every nation has a responsibility to do its part.

Even Mr Abbott's ally and apparent friend UK Prime Minister David Cameron encouraged our Prime Minister to do more, saying:

Countries that have so far done the least have to think about what more they can do. I've had good and friendly discussions with Prime Minister Abbott about that.

Mr Cameron added:

Even if you don't believe in the nature of this [climate change] threat, isn't it better to insure against it?

That is from another conservative Prime Minister.

Begrudgingly for Tony Abbott, climate change did appear on the agenda for the G20. Of course it became one of the most talked about items from the weekend because it is one of the most significant issues, if not the most significant issue, facing the world today. Australia, as one of the world's largest emitters per capita, should be doing more to tackle the effects of climate change at home as well as helping developing nations.

Senators on the other side of this chamber seem content with patting themselves on their backs for their direct action policy—that is, when they can bring themselves to talk about climate change. They are content to settle for a second-rate policy that is not about behavioural change; it is just a one-off deal which rewards polluters with no incentives for long-term change. Everyone knows direct action is a dud, with major loopholes and the pitiful aim of a measly five per cent reduction of emissions on 2000 levels by 2020. We are yet to see how on earth direct action is even going to achieve that modest target.

Comparatively, the United States-China agreement has seen China pledge to cap its rapidly growing carbon emissions by 2030 or earlier if possible, and increasing its share of non-fossil fuels to 20 per cent of the country's energy mix by 2030. The United States has lifted its target to cut US emissions to between 26 per cent and 28 per cent below 2005 levels by 2025. Clearly, the coalition's direct action nonsense cannot and will not compete globally against those significant targets. The Prime Minister has again overlooked the importance and significance of climate change and has made Australia look weak and insignificant on the
global stage. The Prime Minister's stubborn isolationism is not only costing Australia our economic competitiveness but also our international reputation.

A brief scan of the international media from the G20 came up with a cracker from the *Los Angeles Times*, where Australia was referred to as 'the adolescent country, the bit player, the shrimp of the schoolyard'. How embarrassing! *LA Times* reporter Robyn Dixon went on to detail Abbott's embarrassing moments from the G20, including this:

And then he throws in a boast that his government repealed the country's carbon tax, standing out among Western nations as the one willing to reverse progress on global warming—just days after the United States and China reached a landmark climate change deal.

That is embarrassing? To be recognised in international media as a nation led by a Prime Minister who is proud to be repealing progressive policies is humiliating. Even Western Australian Liberal Premier, Colin Barnett, seemed to distance himself from Prime Minister Abbott, publically announcing over the weekend that Australia 'can be bolder' in our action against climate change. We can indeed be bolder. It is ironic that yesterday, the final day of the G20 summit, also proved to be the second hottest ever November day in Brisbane. World leaders were sweltering, but for Mr Tony Abbott, the international heat on Australia's lack of progressive climate change action is just starting to rise.

**Senator LAZARUS** (Queensland—Leader of the Palmer United Party in the Senate) (18:03): I rise to speak briefly on this matter of public importance as climate change is an issue of critical importance for Australia and indeed for all countries across the world. The Abbott government must stop jeopardising the health and welfare of this planet by denying that climate change exists. Climate change is real and weather across the planet is changing. While economic growth targets are nice to talk about at international forums, the reality is that economic targets will become useless if there is no planet on which to undertake economic activity. Economic growth targets are useless if there are no humans left on the planet to undertake any activity, let alone economic growth.

Palmer United is committed to retaining the RET and let me make it crystal clear: our commitment includes keeping the current 41,000 gigawatt hour target for 2020. Palmer United is committed to continued investment in renewable, clean energy. The renewable energy sector is a thriving, growing industry which provides business opportunities, jobs and clean energy solutions for our great nation. In my home state of Queensland, we are one of the greatest adopters of solar energy in the world. The Abbott government needs to stop embarrassing Australia and to start showing leadership by retaining the RET, adopting the Palmer United emissions trading scheme, incorporating climate change solutions into more government activities and programs, and by committing greater resources to the renewable energy sector.

**Senator McGrath** (Queensland) (18:04): I must confess, I am embarrassed, but I am embarrassed for the Greens, who once again have demonstrated their complete contempt for the will of the Australian people by proposing this matter of public importance today. People at home have listened to the Greens, as have the people in the gallery, be more concerned about readers of newspapers overseas and that says something. We have a Green party here who are more concerned about the *Los Angeles Times* than the *South Burnett Times*. We have a party who are more concerned about the readers of the *Washington Post* rather than those who read the Cairns Post. We have a party here who are more concerned about what hipsters
living in lofts in Brooklyn think, rather than families living on the breadline in Hervey Bay, Townsville or Nambour. So I am embarrassed for the Greens who continue to espouse their environmental socialism in the face of the clear mandate delivered to this government at last year’s election—a mandate to abolish the carbon tax, to lower the cost of living for Australians and to implement practical solutions to deal with climate change.

Let us not talk about what the Los Angeles Times says—I am sure it is an august publication. Let us talk about what the government is doing with climate change. I am embarrassed that the Greens have not heeded the concerns of the Australian people who delivered this government a very big mandate and have not listened to the concerns of the Australian people over the debt and deficit disaster left to us by the former Labor-Greens government.

I am embarrassed that the Greens are advocating that we borrow more money. Our interest bill alone is $1 billion a month at the moment and they want to borrow more money from overseas, to put more money on the government credit card, which will be paid off by our children and our grandchildren, and then send it off to an unelected international body which is unaccountable to the people of Australia.

Despite the opposition of the Greens and the Labor Party, this government has delivered on its promise to abolish the Labor-Greens carbon tax, the world’s largest carbon tax, saving the average household around $550 a year, including $200 on the average household electricity bill and $70 on the average gas bill. So for the families living in Nambour, near where I live, Hervey Bay, Townsville or wherever, getting rid of the carbon tax has meant real differences in their wallets and purses.

I was up in Karumba a few weeks ago with Senator Canavan and we heard from some fishermen and fisherwomen about the impact of the carbon tax on refrigeration and how much their costs have gone down since the abolition of the carbon tax. In my home state of Queensland, electricity prices are 9.4 per cent lower than they would have been if Labor and the Greens had had their way.

This government is already delivering on Australia’s commitment to reduce emissions by five per cent on 2000 levels by 2020 without a carbon tax. This government’s approach is to provide positive local environmental outcomes that reduce emissions in Australia, rather than imposing an economy-wide tax that drives up power prices and sends taxpayer dollars overseas—the position advocated by the Greens.

The government’s $2.55 billion Emissions Reduction Fund will help businesses and communities across Australia enjoy the benefits of a cleaner environment and help us to meet our 2020 emissions reduction target. The Emissions Reduction Fund is a buyback model based on activities that actually reduce emissions. This is the basis of the largest and arguably the most effective system in the world, the United Nations Clean Development Mechanism, which to date has generated approximately 1.4 billion tonnes of emissions reductions—something the Greens surely would have no objection to. Competitive auctions will be held, and the government will enter into contracts to buy emissions reductions from successful bidders at the lowest cost, and payment for abatement will only be made when emissions reductions are actually delivered.
Our community-led Green Army projects will also support practical, grassroots environment and heritage conservation activities, which will make a real difference to the environment and local communities, while providing meaningful training and skills to young people. The opposition of Labor and the Greens to these practical solutions only highlights their hypocrisy when it comes to climate change.

The government has always said that it would take into account the action taken by the world's major emitters and our trading partners when considering Australia's post-2020 emissions reductions targets before next year's Paris climate conference, given that we only account for 1.3 per cent of global emissions. As such, it is on the record that the government has welcomed the announcement by the United States and China to reduce or cap emissions, with those countries accounting for 15 and 24 per cent of global emissions, respectively. It is a positive step in the right direction but it must be met with firm action.

I note that, in discussing the US-China agreement, US President Barack Obama expressed concern for the Great Barrier Reef—a natural wonder and a source of tourism jobs in my home state of Queensland. However, instead of high-minded rhetoric—and President Obama is well known for his rhetoric rather than delivering what he talks about—we have got to look at how we get to this, and it has taken Obama over six years to reach this agreement with China on reducing emissions.

In contrast, in addition to our Direct Action Plan, our government has made tangible commitments to securing the future of the Great Barrier Reef rather than just talking about it. The federal coalition government and the Queensland LNP government—led by Campbell Newman and Andrew Powell, my local state member—are developing the Reef 2050 Plan to guide sustainability and management of the Great Barrier Reef over the next 36 years.

It is the federal coalition government and the Queensland LNP government that is investing in the Reef Trust with a $40 million initial investment from this government to help improve water quality and coastal habitat along the Great Barrier Reef; control crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks—and they have been responsible for 42 per cent of coral loss since 1985; and protect threatened and migratory species, particularly dugong and turtles. These are practical steps to ensure the reef's future for years to come, not words and platitudes from a visiting head of state.

It is important to remember that we cannot deal with the challenges posed by climate change or any other problem unless we have a strong economy and a healthy budget position—and this is what the G20 was all about. Instead of the Greens or Labor being all embarrassed like spotty teenagers going out with their parents, we should very proud of what the G20 did on the weekend.

It highlighted Brisbane—I am very proud to say this as a Queenslander—as being one of the world's great cities. It also shone the light on Queensland—and Australia—and our beautiful climate, and that we are open for business. That is the real story that has come out of the G20, not climate change—it is what the world's economies are doing to push economic growth and create jobs, and what the Prime Minister of India, the President of China and the Prime Minister of the UK have been talking about. It is about jobs for people. It is about creating economic growth. The work that the Queensland government, the Brisbane City Council and the Australian government did on the G20, I think, is fantastic.
As G20 President, Australia has led with the development of an agreed Brisbane Action Plan of over 1,000 measures to boost the world economy by an additional 2.1 per cent over the coming five years—that is an extra $2 trillion into the world economy and millions of new jobs. By strengthening the world economy, we support job creation at home and drive the economic gains that will help to repair the budget.

Graham Quirk, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, has estimated that the G20 pumped $100 million into the local economy of Brisbane—and that is not counting all the people watching CNN or listening to the BBC World Service thinking: 'I might go to Australia for a holiday' or 'I might move to Australia and start a business there'.

For the time being, with Labor's red ink still running through the books, Australia will not make a contribution to the Green Climate Fund at this time but will instead continue to prioritise climate mitigation assistance through our aid development program. Through direct action locally, international engagement and our aid program, Australia is playing its part in an effective international response to climate change.

The Greens are embarrassed about what happened on the weekend; I am not. I am very proud about what happened. I think our Prime Minister did a fantastic job. I think all the people involved with the G20 did a fantastic job. Instead of talking and moving pointless motions like this, perhaps the Greens could work with the government and act like adults to make sure we have practical environmental protection in this country but not at the expense of growing our economy.

Senator URQUHART (Tasmania—Deputy Opposition Whip in the Senate) (18:14): Last week, the United States and China joined to announce a landmark commitment to curbing carbon emissions. Side by side, these two world superpowers declared that climate change is 'one of the greatest threats facing humanity'. They recognised unequivocally that 'human activity is already changing the world's climate system'. They also acknowledged the serious effects of climate change, including increased temperatures, rising sea levels and more droughts, bushfires and severe storms.

These two countries, which represent more than one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions, put forward an ambitious set of commitments. China agreed that it would set a new target to move towards 20 per cent non-fossil fuels by 2030, while the United States pledged to cut emissions by 26 per cent to 28 per cent below the 2005 levels by 2025. Together, they put the world—especially Australia—on notice that countries would be expected to follow suit and put forward ambitious targets at next year's Paris climate summit.

The President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, reiterated the importance of this joint US-China climate change and clean energy agreement in his address at the University of Queensland in Brisbane on Saturday. He said:

In a historic step China made its own commitment for the first time, agreeing to slow, peak and then reverse the course of China's emissions …

He went on to say:

And if China and the US can agree on this, then the world can agree on this, we can get this done and it is necessary for us to get it done.

In the same address, Mr Obama also pointed out that no country is more at risk to the impacts of climate change than Australia when he said:
Nobody has more at stake when it comes to thinking about and then acting on climate change.
Here a climate that increases in temperature will mean more extreme and frequent storms, more flooding, rising seas that submerge Pacific Islands.
Here in Australia it means longer droughts, more wildfires.
The incredible natural glory of the Great Barrier Reef is threatened.
Against this backdrop of the world leaders facing up to one of the world's greatest economic challenges, what did our Prime Minister do? That's right; he took this big opportunity to tell the most powerful people in the world about how hard it is for him to get legislation through to make Australians pay an extra $7 to go to the doctor.

Don't get me wrong: I think this is a very serious issue, and the $7 co-payment would have terrible impacts on Australian health outcomes and place a greater burden on the health budget for decades to come. But I believe this choice of subject matter is a clear indication of the petulance of our Prime Minister and of how incapable he is of putting domestic politics aside to act in the national and global interest. This was reinforced when Prime Minister Abbott used the same speech to brag to the G20 about how he is taking Australia backwards in our climate change response by repealing the carbon tax.

The Prime Minister might not want to admit it, but the reality is that, if we fail to act now, it will not be long before the impacts of climate change will send shockwaves through all vital sectors of our economy. While no sector will be unscathed, there will be particularly serious impacts for agriculture, tourism and health. World leaders understand this, economists understand this and scientists have been telling us this for decades. So why doesn't our Prime Minister understand? How can Prime Minister Abbott remain so determinedly out of step with the rest of the world? How can he so belligerently refuse to step up and ensure that Australia does our share as a responsible global citizen to reduce carbon emissions? How can he so blithely betray the future of our economy and our environment?

Across the world, experts have agreed that the most cost-effective means of reducing carbon is through an economy-wide pricing mechanism. Yet the government persist with Direct Action, their multibillion dollar slush fund for polluters that experts say has no hope of meeting emission reduction targets. If there was ever proof that this government are intent on propping up the fossil fuel industry at the expense of billions of dollars of investment and our international reputation, the shameful events of the G20 on the weekend tell the sorry tale. While key world leaders were uniting on the importance of developing ambitious measures to address climate change, this government were busy using every sneaky means they had at their disposal to shut down climate talks wherever possible.

But we should not be surprised. It has been an all-out war on the environment since those opposite secured the keys to the ministerial wing. They abolished the carbon tax, making Australia the only country to be moving backwards on our responsibility as a global citizen to address climate change. They have shut down the Climate Commission. They attempted to abolish the Clean Energy Finance Corporation—a particularly senseless act when you consider that the CEFC actually returns a healthy profit to government coffers. They hope to close the doors at the Renewable Energy Agency and they tried to axe the Climate Change Authority. They called on a climate sceptic to undertake an inquiry to discredit the renewable energy target, but he failed to do that. Despite this, they are now trying to reduce the RET by 40 per cent. They tried to delist 74,000 hectares of World Heritage forest in Tasmania, despite
offering no evidence to support their outrageous request. They commissioned an inquiry into emissions trading schemes—which they have already promised they will do nothing about, regardless of the findings.

The Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, has been telling the world that 'coal is good for humanity', while accusing a senior UN official of, and I quote, 'talking through her hat' on climate change. Prime Minister Abbott also refused to attend the international climate change negotiations in Warsaw. He was also a no-show at the International Climate Summit in New York, despite the fact he was due to attend a UN Security Council meeting in New York the very next day. And the Prime Minister's sidekick, Treasurer Joe Hockey, has been doing his bit for the anti-environment cause by bemoaning that he thinks wind farms are 'utterly offensive'.

Behind the scenes at the G20, the Abbott government were doing everything they could to keep climate change off the agenda. When this failed, they desperately tried—and failed again—to scuttle the push from world leaders to include climate change statements in the final G20 communiqué. And, now, Mr Abbott is refusing to contribute towards the UN's Green Climate Fund. Yesterday Mr Hockey was out and about again peddling disinformation by saying that climate change is not a major impediment to global growth, in direct contradiction to the views of G20 participants. So it is clear that this government is a repeat offender in this area. They are steadfastly opposed to renewables and intent on shackling Australia to the industries of decades gone by. Meanwhile, the rest of the world is embracing the transition to a low-carbon future and the economic opportunities it will offer.

What is truly galling about the Abbott government's stance on climate policy is that it is not only environmentally and diplomatically reckless, but it is economically irresponsible, too. By actively pulling apart the mechanisms Australia has in place to address climate change, this government is actively destroying investment opportunities and jobs. By shutting down initiatives that encourage a greater use of renewables, this government is sentencing households and industry to more expensive bills for decades to come. And soon Australian companies that are paying sky-high prices for fossil-fuel based energy will have to compete with international companies that have turned to renewables.

The American President and the Chinese understood this when they outlined in last week's historic declaration of the landmark deal:

... [that] smart action on climate change now can drive innovation, strengthen economic growth and bring broad benefits—from sustainable development to increased energy security, improved public health and a better quality of life. Tackling climate change will also strengthen national and international security.

Today, we have heard nothing but whining from those opposite that we cannot possibly afford to do our share in addressing climate change. Of course, we know that stoking up fear and hysteria over debt is one of the government's tried and true strategies, but that does not make what they are saying true. The fact is that Australia is one of only 10 nations on the planet with a AAA credit rating from all three ratings agencies. And the truth is that our debt is about one-fifth of the average debt of other industrial economies. I would put it to those on the other side that the exact opposite is the case—we simply cannot afford not to act on climate change.
On the weekend, what an embarrassing way we saw to perform on the world stage. What an appallingly regressive, selfish and ill-considered response to one of the greatest challenges facing our planet.

Senator WATERS (Queensland) (18:24): I rise to speak on this matter of public importance about our Prime Minister's continued denial of the reality of climate change and his continued mealy-mouthed approach to meeting our global responsibilities to assist countries that will suffer from our profligate use of fossil fuels. I am from Queensland, where it has been obvious to all both observing and protesting against the Prime Minister's refusal to put climate change on the G20 agenda that he was totally out of step with the world and out of step with community expectations. Of course, when China and the US reached agreement on emissions targets the Prime Minister was totally gazumped and shown for the laggard and the spoiler that he is.

The Greens welcome this acknowledgement and this step forward, although this important commitment does not absolve President Obama from needing to refuse approval for the Keystone tar sands oil pipeline from Canada, and for deeper and binding cuts to emissions. That said, the Greens warmly welcome the announcement of a fund to assist with climate adaptation for less wealthy nations, which stand to suffer unfairly from the impacts of climate change.

But Australia, the highest per capita emitter in the world, is too greedy and self-interested to stump up and contribute to this fund. Mr Tony Abbott's excuse? Apparently we are already doing enough. This is, of course, after this government has axed more than $7 billion from foreign aid, which includes some climate programs. To add insult to injury, Tony Abbott is trying to count the $10 billion Clean Energy Finance Corporation funding, which his government has a bill in the parliament to abolish. Also, Mr Tony Abbott wants to count his big polluters' slush fund as a meaningful contribution. This slush fund for big polluters, with its pathetic five per cent target, is just more subsidies for fossil fuels.

Today we see that in Queensland our premier will bankroll the building of a 500-kilometre railway for Indian coal company Adani, to open up the Galilee Basin—the mega coal basin that would see coal exports through the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area more than double. Why is it that the Queensland government has to kick in the dough? It is because nobody else will. No investment bank will touch this poor investment. This is a bad investment for Queensland, and Premier Newman is simply propping up a dying industry that the world increasingly does not want a part of. Perhaps the worst part of this is the audacity of Premier Newman's decision to fund this propping up of fossil fuels by selling Queensland's public assets. Flogging off Queensland's public assets to give more free money to the coal industry is not going to go down well with Queenslanders. Queenslanders do not want privatisation in any event, and we certainly do not want free money going to coal barons to trash the reef and the climate. Of course, we are told that the coal is to help bring Indians out of poverty—it is a public service—except for the fact the coal will be too expensive for them to afford, the fact that they do not have an electricity grid in many of those areas and the fact that air quality from coal pollution is killing more than 85,000 Indians per year. Fossil fuel subsidies are not new. Recently, a report found that federally Australia gives more than $4 billion in fossil fuel subsidies. In fact, we are the second highest in the G20 when it comes to propping up the fossil fuel sector.
We know that climate change is real. It is affecting us already with extreme weather events. The irony of a November heat wave on the G20 weekend just gone was not lost on anyone, except perhaps our Prime Minister. Climate change is affecting our industries that rely on a healthy climate, like agriculture, and of course tourism. I hope people are familiar with the fact that the Great Barrier Reef has already lost 50 per cent of its coral cover in the last 27 years. That is due to extreme weather events, to coral bleaching and also to the crown-of-thorns starfish. All of those threats, plus the new one of the dredging and dumping bonanza for more coal ports in the reef, are either being driven or worsened by climate change. Our reef is the largest living organism that can be seen from space and in climate change it faces the biggest threat it has even seen. We must safeguard this natural wonder, this economic generator of $6 billion and this employer of 63,000 people. Even President Obama, in his very well received talk at the University of Queensland at the weekend, lauded the beauty of the Great Barrier Reef. He said he wants his daughters and grandchildren to come to see it, and I share those sentiments. Instead, Premier Newman wants to put new and expanded coal ports in the reef, with all the associated dredging and dumping and climate impacts.

Unfortunately, they are still treating the reef like a rubbish tip. Minister Hunt's commitment to stop offshore dumping comes with so many holes it is meaningless. The dumping cannot happen in a marine park, but never mind about the rest of the World Heritage area. It is only a ban on capital dredging, but never mind about maintenance dredging. Also, it is only future projects, so never mind all of the projects that are currently on foot.

The solution is clear, and it is shining down on us every day. Concentrated solar thermal power, solar photovoltaics, wind, wave, tidal and geothermal energy. Renewable energy is job rich and can fill our energy needs cleanly. Globally, there is an unstoppable momentum towards clean renewable energy, and not even Mr Abbott can stop that. Australians love clean energy. Indeed, in Queensland we have the highest proportion of solar PV on our roofs, with more than one in five households being part of the solution.

Our government is wrecking that attempt to a sustainable future by axing the carbon price, the mining tax, attacking the renewable energy target, defunding ARENA, saying it will abolish the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, and by driving the expansion of dangerous unconventional gas fracking, which is ruining our land and water, for export corporate greed. This government has a tin ear to science and to the community and that is why the Australian people will confine them to the dust bin of history at the next election.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The time for consideration of the matter of public importance has expired.

Sitting suspended from 18:31 to 19:30

COMMITTEES

Economics References Committee

Report

Senator DASTYARI (New South Wales) (19:30): I present the report of the Economics References Committee on the future of Australia's naval shipbuilding industry.

Ordered that the report be printed.
DOCUMENTS
Consideration

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

[Documents presented since the last sitting of the Senate, pursuant to standing order 166, were authorised for publication on the dates indicated]

ASC Pty Ltd—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
Auditing and Assurance Standards Board—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
Auditor-General—Audit reports for 2014-15—
  No. 3—Performance audit—Fraud control arrangements: Across entities.
  No. 3—Performance audit—Fraud control arrangements: Across entities—Corrigendum. [Received 5 November 2014]
  No. 4—Performance audit—Second follow-up audit into the Australian Electoral Commission’s preparation for and conduct of federal elections: Australian Electoral Commission. [Received 5 November 2014]
  No. 4—Performance audit—Second follow-up audit into the Australian Electoral Commission’s preparation for and conduct of federal elections: Australian Electoral Commission—Corrigendum. [Received 10 November 2014]
  No. 5—Performance audit—Annual compliance arrangements with large corporate taxpayers: Australian Taxation Office. [Received 6 November 2014]
  No. 6—Performance audit—Business continuity management: Civil Aviation Safety Authority; Department of Finance; Department of Social Services. [Received 6 November 2014]
  Australian Accounting Standards Board—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
  Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
  Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)—Report for 2013-14.
  Australian Fisheries Management Authority—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
  Australian Government Solicitor (AGS)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 10 November 2014]
  Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited (AITSL)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
  Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies (AIATSIS)—Report for 2013-14.
  Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
Cancer Australia—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
Climate Change Authority—Report for 2013-14. [Received 14 November 2014]
Defence Housing Australia (DHA)—Report for 2013-14.
Department of Defence—Report for 2013-14 (2 volumes), including report of the Defence Materiel Organisation. [Received 31 October 2014]
Department of Education—Report for 2013-14, including the report of Tuition Protection Service.
Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development—Report for 2013-14.
Department of Parliamentary Services—Report for 2013-14.
Department of the Environment—Report for 2013-14, including reports on the operation of Acts administered by the department and financial statements for the National Heritage Trust of Australia.
Department of the Treasury—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
Director of National Parks—Report for 2013-14. [Received 5 November 2014]
Education—Schools funding—Letter to the President of the Senate from the Minister for Education (Mr Pyne), dated 11 November 2014, responding to the resolution of the Senate of 24 September 2014.
Executive Director of Township Leasing—Report for 2013-14.
Financial Reporting Council—Report for 2013-14 on auditor independence. [Received 31 October 2014]
Foreign affairs—Middle East—Humanitarian assistance—Letter to the President of the Senate from the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Ms Bishop), dated 4 November 2014, responding to the resolution of the Senate of 24 September 2014.
Indexed lists of departmental and agency files for the period 1 January to 30 June 2014—Statements of compliance, pursuant to the order of the Senate of 30 May 1996, as amended—
Comcare. [Received 14 November 2014]
Fair Work Ombudsman. [Received 14 November 2014]
Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Authority (Seacare Authority). [Received 14 November 2014]
Indigenous Business Australia (IBA)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 4 November 2014]
Indigenous Land Corporation—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse—Royal Commission—Report of case study no. 7—Child sexual abuse at the Parramatta Training School for Girls and the Institution for Girls in Hay, dated October 2014. [Received 10 November 2014]

National Australia Day Council Limited—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

National Health Funding Body—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
National Health Funding Pool—Report for 2013-14, including financial statements for state and territory State Pool Accounts. [Received 31 October 2014]
National Mental Health Commission—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

Parliamentary Service Commissioner—Report for 2013-14, including report of the Parliamentary Service Merit Protection Commissioner. [Received 31 October 2014]


Repatriation Commission, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs—Reports for 2013-14, including financial statements of the Defence Service Homes Insurance Scheme.
Royal Australian Mint—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission and Comcare—Reports for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Authority (Seacare Authority)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]


Social issues—Suicide prevention—Letter to the President of the Senate from the Minister for Health (Mr Dutton), dated 27 October 2014, responding to the resolution of the Senate of 27 August 2014.
Special Broadcasting Service Corporation (SBS)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
Sydney Harbour Federation Trust—Report for 2013-14. [Received 4 November 2014]
Takeovers Panel—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 4 November 2014]
BILLS
Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 4) Bill 2014
Explanatory Memorandum
Senator NASH (New South Wales—Deputy Leader of The Nationals in the Senate and Assistant Minister for Health) (19:33): I table an addendum to the explanatory memorandum for this bill. The addendum responds to concerns raised by the Scrutiny of Bills Committee.

DOCUMENTS
Broadband
Order for the Production of Documents
Documents were tabled pursuant to the order of the Senate of 28 October 2014 for the production of documents relating to the NBN Co corporate plan for 2014-17.

COMMITTEES
Membership
The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator O'Neill) (19:33): Order! The President has received letters from party leaders requesting changes in the membership of various committees.

Senator NASH (New South Wales—Deputy Leader of The Nationals in the Senate and Assistant Minister for Health) (19:34): by leave—I move:

That senators be discharged from and appointed to committees in accordance with the document circulated in the chamber.

Certain Aspects of Queensland Government Administration related to Commonwealth Government Affairs—Select Committee—

Environment and Communications Legislation Committee—
Appointed—Substitute member: Senator Dastyari to replace Senator Singh on Thursday, 20 November 2014

Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee—
Appointed—Substitute member: Senator Ludwig to replace Senator Faulkner on Thursday, 20 November 2014

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee—
Appointed—
Substitute members:

Senator Hanson-Young to replace Senator Wright for the committee's inquiries into the provisions of the Australian Citizenship and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 and into the provisions of the Migration Amendment (Character and General Visa Cancellation) Bill 2014

Senator Rhiannon to replace Senator Wright for the committee's inquiry into the provisions of the Freedom of Information Amendment (New Arrangements) Bill 2014

Participating member: Senator Wright.
Question agreed to.

BILLS

Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Foreign Fighters) Bill 2014

Returned from the House of Representatives

Message received from the House of Representatives returning the bills without amendment.

Dental Benefits Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Foreign Fighters) Bill 2014

Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation (Abolition) Bill 2014

Assent

Messages from the Governor-General reported informing the Senate of assent to the bills.

REGULATIONS AND DETERMINATIONS

Fair Entitlements Guarantee Amendment Regulation 2014 (No.1)

Disallowance

Senator CAMERON (New South Wales) (19:35): I move:

That the Fair Entitlements Guarantee Amendment Regulation 2014 (No. 1), as contained in Select Legislative Instrument 2014 No. 147 and made under the Fair Entitlements Guarantee Act 2012, be disallowed.

This disallowance motion goes to the question of fairness, it goes to the question of the government's ideology and it goes to the continuing theme of austerity programs hitting ordinary Australians. In my view, this regulation epitomises the problems with this government. It is another example of its mean and tricky approach. This is a regulation that sets about trying to bypass the proper procedures of the Senate. The Fair Entitlements Guarantee Amendment Bill is still on the Senate Notice Paper, and yet what we have is this Fair Entitlements Guarantee Regulation being brought in to reduce the terms and conditions that apply to ordinary Australians who just happen to be in a position where their company is either bankrupt or closes down through no fault of the employee.

The Fair Entitlements Guarantee Act provides financial assistance, called an advance, to cover certain unpaid entitlements for eligible employees who lose their job due to the liquidation or bankruptcy of their employer. This includes assistance for up to 13 weeks of unpaid wages, unpaid annual and long service leave, up to five weeks payment in lieu of notice and redundancy pay which is currently capped at four weeks pay per full year of service. That is what existed under the previous Labor government. It was brought about to ensure that ordinary Australians who end up losing their jobs through no fault of their own, where a company goes into liquidation or bankruptcy, have some capacity to rebuild their lives.

The 2012 regulation was made under section 50 of the act to extend financial assistance to contract outworkers in the textile, clothing and footwear industry. Textile, clothing and footwear contract outworkers were not otherwise eligible to receive an advance under the act as they do not have an employment relationship with the person engaging them to perform the work. The 2012 regulation brought textile, clothing and footwear contract outworkers under
the Fair Entitlements Guarantee scheme by modifying the application of certain sections of the act to reflect the contractual arrangements under which TCF contract outworkers are engaged.

As part of the 2014-15 budget—the budget that has been condemned on the basis of lack of fairness; the budget that has been condemned on the basis of the ideology of this government—it was announced that the maximum redundancy pay entitlement under the act would be aligned with the maximum set by the National Employment Standards in the Fair Work Act 2009. The new maximum redundancy pay entitlement will be the equivalent of 16 weeks pay—far less than workers would receive under Labor's standard. The Fair Entitlements Guarantee Amendment Bill 2014 gives effect to this budget measure, and Labor will oppose the bill. The bill has not been passed by the Senate and this regulation is an attempt to bypass that approach.

The amendment provides that the scheme created by the 2012 regulation continues to apply to TCF contract outworkers but will align with the 2014-15 budget measure reflected in the bill by providing that the new maximum redundancy pay entitlement that is payable to TCF contract outworkers will be the equivalent of 16 weeks pay, even if a contract outworker's actual entitlement exceeds that amount. The amending regulation also implements some technical amendments to reflect the changes that have been made by the bill. These technical amendments clarify that where a TCF contract outworker is eligible for an advance under the regulation, the claimant's initial entitlement will be calculated without reference to any amount required to be withheld by law, such as pay as you go withholding. It will clarify that the death of a TCF contract outworker does not prevent that person from being eligible for an advance to enable the next of kin or the estate to pursue a claim. It will clarify that, when a debt owed by a TCF contract outworker to the specified person is greater than the entitlement to which it relates, it can be offset proportionally against any of the claimant's other entitlements that form their advance. It will remove the eligibility requirement for a TCF contract outworker who was owed debts prior to the insolvency event to have taken reasonable steps to be paid those debts and, instead, allow the secretary of the department to reduce a TCF contract outworker's entitlement by the amount of any debts that he or she did not take reasonable steps to be paid.

Outworkers in the TCF industry are workers who perform work usually in their home and are widely acknowledged to be a class of workers who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Outworkers are entitled to most of the same benefits of employment as other workers in the TCF industry and should also have access to all of the benefits available to other workers in the TCF industry if their employer becomes insolvent or bankrupt. According to the 2014-15 budget papers, the government will achieve savings of $87.7 million over four years by aligning redundancy payments under the Fair Entitlements Guarantee scheme to the National Employment Standards contained in the Fair Work Act 2009. This will include savings from minimising payments to contract outworkers in the TCF industry.

The government will say that contract outworkers will still be able to pursue redundancy entitlements they are owed in excess of 16 weeks through the normal processes available to creditors in insolvencies. While this is true in a technical sense, it is highly unlikely to result in contract outworkers recovering anywhere near the entitlements owed to them due to the
difficulties. This is because TCF outworkers are marginalised from traditional employment structures. There are language and cultural barriers. They have a lack of access to legal advice. They suffer financial constraints. Outworkers are contractors and are thus unsecured creditors with a lower priority than employees under insolvency law. The changes to the FEG originated from recommendation 47 of the infamous Commission of Audit report. The Commission of Audit recommended changes be made to the Fair Entitlements Guarantee Scheme to: (a) introduce a cap of a maximum redundancy payment equivalent to 16 weeks pay; and (b) limit the wage base for the scheme to the average weekly earnings.

In July last year, employment minister Eric Abetz had been assuring workers in a letter to workers. In that letter he said:

… you can be satisfied that there is no risk to your entitlements …

I would have to say this is one of the most disingenuous letters I have seen in this place. It would be worth just spending a few minutes on this letter. This letter was signed by Minister Abetz on 17 July 2013 and was to an employee and workers at Autodom in Monash Drive, Dandenong South. Obviously, these are workers who are very concerned that they would lose their jobs—as will many, many workers in the car component sector—as a result of this government's deliberate policy to chase the car industry out of this country. Senator Abetz, in this letter, goes on to say:

Dear Pierre
Thank you for your letter of 1th July, 2013.
It is a matter of regret that you have been somehow led to believe that the Coalition would abolish the 'entitlements guarantee' if elected.
You may recall that it was in fact the Coalition that introduced the GEER Scheme or a General Employees Entitlement Redundancy Scheme.
That was a scheme that was introduced when the brother of the past Prime Minister John Howard ran into some problems with his textile company in the Maitland area. Senator Abetz goes on to say:
This was the first time in Australian history that such a Scheme was developed to protect workers in a position such as your own, and that of your fellow workers.
It then goes on to say:
Given the pedigree and heritage, you can be assured that the Coalition would not seek to do anything that would water down these important protections for Australian workers.
That goes completely against what this government has done in this regulation. Let me just say that again:
Given that pedigree and heritage, you can be assured that the Coalition would not seek to do anything that would water down these important protections for Australian workers.
Some seven or so weeks ago, I released the Coalition's Workplace Relations policy with the Coalition leader, Mr Tony Abbott.
We were explicit in the policy that but for the changes proposed in that document we would not make any other changes. We have not flagged any changes to the slightly modified entitlements guarantee that currently exists.
Accordingly, you can be satisfied that there is no risk to your entitlements and I would invite you to pass a copy of this letter to all your fellow workers with a reminder that it was in fact the Coalition that
introduced this Scheme. It is noteworthy that not even the Hawke or Keating Governments considered such a Scheme and it was left for the Coalition to develop and implement.

It is always helpful when it is the Prime Minister's brother that runs into trouble and the scheme is introduced then! And it is signed: 'Yours sincerely, Eric Abetz, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate.'

I asked Senator Abetz questions in relation to this on Wednesday, 24 September in this place. Senator Abetz used the lawyer's trick of trying to redefine the question. When I quoted the position that the coalition 'have not flagged any changes to the slightly modified entitlements guarantee that currently exists and you can be satisfied there is no risk to your entitlements' and asked if this undertaking was true, Senator Abetz, on 24 September, replied, 'Yes.' But here we are now with a position where there are significant changes. The workers in Autodom were under the illusion—and it was certainly an illusion—that the coalition would protect their entitlements. If they are still there and this regulation is in place then they will be worse off. This letter means nothing. The only thing that the letter means is that a complete lack of honesty with the Australian public continues with the coalition government. They even put it in writing—they put it in writing to workers, and those workers will be worse off. When I asked Senator Abetz:

Why has the minister broken this personal promise to Mr Rault by reducing workers' entitlements under the fair entitlements guarantee?

Senator Abetz said:

There are two separate questions there.

This is the trickiness—you know, the nasty, tricky approach. He said:

The first question was whether or not there would be changes to the entitlements of the person with whom I corresponded. The simple fact is that in the event this parliament makes any changes, they will not be retrospective. As a result, that person's entitlements were at all times protected. That is why I was able to very clearly answer yes to Senator Cameron's ill-thought-out first question.

Well, it was not an ill-thought-out first question. It was simply trying to protect workers and understand what had happened to workers. Workers cannot trust the coalition government, they cannot trust the Prime Minister and they cannot trust Senator Abetz because it is clear that this mean, tricky, nasty approach from this coalition is based on ideology. Some austerity approach from this government is what dominates its thinking. It does not matter if you write to a worker and say, 'Tell all your workmates everything's going to be okay; we won't be reducing the entitlements'—because what happens? The entitlements are reduced. I do not know how you would describe that in any way but as a continuation of the coalition's lies to the Australian public. That is what it is.

This is a very serious issue. It is simply a cost-cutting measure. It is not about worrying whether workers get some financial support at a time when they lose their jobs—it is not about that. It is about an ideology that says individuals can be left on their own, and diminishing this entitlement is the first step to leaving them on their own. I am of the view that workers around the country should be very worried. When the coalition starts diminishing entitlements for workers, it is only the start. What we have to look at is what will be left behind. What will be the wreckage of protection for workers after a term of this government? My view is that it will say, 'We won't be making any of these changes; we will not be
reintroducing Work Choices.' I have to say to you: nobody can trust this government and nobody can trust this minister on anything they say.

This piece of correspondence just says it all. When faced with this correspondence, we get this tricky approach, with the government trying to use weasel words to get around the implications for the workers. The view of the workers at Autodom was, 'This government won't be taking my entitlements away.' Yet what happens? Senator Abetz comes in here, will not take the issue up for debate within the Senate but passes regulations to do exactly what he said he would not do in this correspondence. Workers cannot be reassured by this government.

We see at the moment that the mining industry is shedding jobs. The car industry is closing down. The components sector is under huge pressure and not being given any support to try to recalibrate its approach in manufacturing. You will see more and more jobs being lost, and those workers will be, in the first instance, left with entitlements that are lesser than the entitlements provided by the previous government. It is simply about an austerity approach, underpinned by ideology, to say: 'We will not support workers to give them a fair go when they lose their jobs.' It will not simply be this one step; there will be other steps, in my view, down the track.

There is absolutely no plan for jobs from this government. The member for Eden-Monaro, Mr Hendy, said that we need to create a desperately needed job plan. Even the coalition's own members are saying they need a job plan. While jobs are going, they are diminishing the entitlements that workers had under the previous government. They have deliberately set policy that means more jobs are going. This is a pincer approach by this mob. They are taking entitlements away from workers, and there will be some legal argument—some spin—that we will hear later tonight, but I have to say to you: this is not acceptable. (Time expired)

Senator RICE (Victoria) (19:56): Bullying is an act of cowardice. It is the bigger kid in the playground pushing the smaller kid around and kicking them when they are down. But, in the end, it just highlights the insecurities of the bully.

I speak today in support of the motion to disallow the government's proposed Fair Entitlements Guarantee Amendment Regulation 2014 (No. 1). The amended regulation is, in every sense of the word, bullying. People working in the textile, clothing and footwear sectors are already under pressure. Many of the Australian companies in this industry are facing huge challenges from international competition, not helped by reduced tariffs. We have seen many of these local businesses close down because they are no longer viable. The workers in the sector are predominantly women, working for low wages, and they will find it extremely difficult to find work elsewhere if not supported by the government in times of need.

The contract outworkers who are targeted by this regulation usually work from home and are more vulnerable to discrimination. While they are afforded many of the same employment benefits as others in the textile, clothing and footwear industry, this would severely disadvantage these outworkers if, through no fault of their own, their employer became insolvent or bankrupt. This regulation would cut the maximum payment they received from four weeks for every year of service to a maximum of 16 weeks, regardless of the number of years they have served. This is a significant blow to workers who are already some of the most disadvantaged in our community.
Trust is such an integral quality to Australian business, as Senator Cameron pointed out. Customers trust local companies to provide a quality product and employers trust their staff to deliver. Without this trust, the local textile, clothing and footwear industry simply could not compete with overseas rivals, who have much lower overheads. We would all agree that workers should be able to trust that their work will produce proper reward. But this proposal will hit those who have been working the longest and are well into their working lives. It could even be their last job. You would hope that, if you have been a loyal employee for a long period of time—if you are an older worker who might be looking towards retirement—there will be safeguards to ensure that, should your employer go under, through no fault of your own, you get the payout you are entitled to.

These workers are skilled through a wealth of experience, but would find it extremely difficult to retrain, and have been banking on their jobs to see them through to retirement. The current scheme says to workers, 'If you find yourself in a situation, tomorrow, where all of a sudden your employer has just gone under, you knew nothing about it and there is no money there, the government has got your back.' It says: 'It's not your fault that you were loyal to your employer and that you worked for them for a long time. It's not your fault that the company has gone under. It might have been bad management decisions; it might have been illegal activity; it might have been the consequences of a shifting economy. But it is not your fault.'

But this regulation tells these workers: 'If you find yourself in that situation, we're only going to pay you a portion of what you're entitled to. We don't care about your loyalty. If the money's not there, bad luck.' It tells them, 'We'll continue to give billions in subsidies to the likes of Gina Rinehart so that she and her buddies can buy cheap fuel, but when it comes to an actual jobs plan and transitioning this country to a clean energy economy, we're going to ignore it.'

Why is the government attacking these workers? There is absolutely no evidence that the scheme is being abused. The reality is that this is nothing more than an ideological policy—a policy that was never mentioned going into the last election. This is a punch in the guts to older workers, who should be entitled to think that their loyalty is worth something. They have earned their annual leave. They have earned their long service leave. And although they would rather keep working, they have earned their redundancy payment.

The Greens are very proud to stand by these workers. It is not their fault that they have been put in this difficult situation. They are dedicated workers, and we should be giving them what they deserve. Instead, the government wants to kick them while they are down. So I say to the government: go pick on someone your own size.

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (20:02): The government supports this regulation but is mindful of the fact that the numbers in this place are against it. Therefore, I can indicate at the outset, given the event that is taking place in the Great Hall, we will not be seeking to divide on this particular regulation.

Having said that, I want to put the case very strongly as to why the government is advocating for this regulation change. When the Howard government first introduced GEERS, it was designed to ensure that workers got part of their entitlements. So, with respect, I say to Senator Rice that in the coalition's GEERS and the Labor Party's FEG—which was
introduced in the dying days of that discredited government in a sop to certain individuals—the situation was very clear under both schemes that annual leave and long service leave were not covered. So, her suggestion that this has been taken from workers is simply wrong. It has never been covered by this scheme, so she might like to talk to whoever informed her about that and indicate that their research could potentially be enhanced.

This is a regulation that is based on the passage of the Fair Entitlements Guarantee Amendment Bill, and therefore we are debating a regulation that is specifically related to the textile, clothing and footwear sector. I indicate that this regulation would simply bring the TCF sector into the same category as other workers in the event that that amending legislation was carried. Not a single worker, to date, has benefited under this legislation in the textile, clothing and footwear sector. That is the reality. So of all these people whom Senator Rice and others have sought to talk about, nobody has made a claim in the two years since the Labor Party and the Greens forced this through the Senate. Having said that—

Senator Lines: Why change it?

Senator ABETZ: A very good point. Senator Lines interjects and asks why we are changing it. The reason we are changing it is that the nation regrettably faces a fiscal challenge courtesy of the reckless spending of Labor and the Greens, especially in the past three years of office.

Senator Lines: That tired old chestnut!

Senator ABETZ: Senator Rice and Senator Lines can shake their heads. They can use whatever language or demonstrative behaviour they like but the reality is, and the Australian people know, that today, as we speak, courtesy of Labor's legacy of deficit and debt, we are borrowing $1,000 million per month to pay the interest on existing loans. Guess who has got to pay that back with interest—the next generation.

As a government, we have our eyes to the next generation. We cannot look our children in the eyes and say that it is good management for our nation to borrow money from overseas to potentially enable extra funds to be paid. Let's make no mistake: government has no money. Government gets its money from taxpayers. So if you want to put some extra money into a fellow Australian's pocket you first have to sneak it out of somebody else's pocket. It is called equity; it is called what is reasonable.

Under Labor's own national employment standards, legislated in the Fair Work Act, the minimum on the redundancy is 16 weeks. That is what we are seeking to implement in the Fair Entitlements Guarantee and in the particular regulation of which we are speaking tonight. There is nothing radical here. There is nothing to be concerned about, albeit dramatised by Senator Cameron and others

I was interested to hear Senator Rice's contribution in relation to alleged fuel subsidies. I thought we as a coalition, Senator Fifield, were interested in passing a fuel tax—

Senator Fifield: Indeed!

Senator ABETZ: which the Greens are opposing. Consistency has never been a strong suit of the Australian Greens. With Senator Rice's entry into the Senate as a newly elected senator from Victoria, I had hoped—quite foolishly, it appears—that there might be some integrity and robustness added to the Greens in the contributions in this debate but, in a very short period of time, it is clear that Senator Rice has fallen into lock step with her Greens
colleagues of not being concerned about the integrity of their arguments. In relation to Senator Rice, this has been a policy implemented by Labor that has been around for about two years, implemented in the death throes of the previous government.

Her argument on cheap fuel, I have dealt with. I have also indicated that taxpayers' money—if you want to make money available to fellow Australians you first have to take it out of other Australians' pockets, unless you borrow it from overseas. The matters on which she opined in relation to annual leave and long service leave, in any event, are not covered by FEG.

I turn to Senator Cameron's contribution. My letter clearly indicated that we had no intention of abolishing the entitlements guarantee, and the person to whom I wrote clearly had that in mind when expressing their concern. One wonders where they would have got that concern from. Senator Cameron indicated that this is a cost-cutting measure. Yes, it is a budget measure. It is, regrettably, a measure that needs to be taken to make our budget balance. How else are we going to repay the huge debt that has been left us? Do we simply defer it and say, 'Look, we're going to have a great time and let the kids pay it off'? Absolutely irresponsible. We believe in intergenerational equity. We believe in intergenerational justice. We believe that this generation needs to take into account its financial responsibilities and not leave a legacy of deficit and debt as previous Labor governments have on such a regular basis.

You know when Labor are struggling. Paul Howes has belled the cat on that. Former ACTU president and former distinguished Labor minister Martin Ferguson has said it. You know Labor are losing a debate in the area of workplace relations when they mention the words Work Choices. Sure enough, Senator Cameron did exactly that. It is that which so many other Labor luminaries—genuine luminaries—have warned the Australian people about, that when Labor are losing an argument in this space they will always have recourse to chant 'workplace relations'.

Senator Cameron said that the government does not have a jobs plan. I say to the honourable senator that he is wrong. We got rid of the carbon tax—

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator O'Neill): I would ask you to direct your comments through the chair rather than at the senator.

Senator ABETZ: I thought I said the honourable senator'—that is, I would have thought, in accord with the standing orders, Madam Acting Deputy President. The honourable senator said that there was no jobs plan for the nation. The honourable senator is wrong because we do, in fact, have a plan. It was about abolishing the carbon tax. Labor and the Greens opposed it right up until the Senate changed, and then they still opposed it. We now know that people in the manufacturing sector—those who did survive the carbon tax—will have it foisted upon them in the event a Labor government is re-elected.

Similarly, there is the abolition of the mining tax. We got rid of the mining tax to assist workers remain in jobs. Indeed, the free trade agreements that we have been able to negotiate—things that Labor said could not be achieved—that will be jobs-rich and wealth-creating for our country have been ridiculed and were spoken of in negative terms in question time today by honourable senators opposite.
We have removed green and red tape. We are bringing the budget back into shape. Everybody with one ounce of economic sense and understanding knows that those measures are job-creating by their very nature. We do have a jobs plan. Indeed, it was my pleasure to host a meeting of the L20, a component of the G20, of labour and employment ministers in Melbourne, in September of this year, and then address the L20 in Brisbane, on Thursday last week. We put out a jobs plan. Australia's leadership on the international scene has been so very important in ensuring that we have real economic growth, because we know that with real economic growth you achieve employment growth.

Please do not come into this place and assert that somehow this is a government without a jobs plan. We went to the last election and indicated what our jobs plan was and the methodology by which we would achieve it. Regrettably, the Australian Labor Party and the Greens used the first nine months—indeed, the first quarter—of this government's term in seeking to stop every single measure that we had sought to introduce to create jobs and wealth. Thanks to the crossbenchers, we are now making progress. We are seeing the abolition of things such as the carbon and mining taxes, we are seeing the reduction of green and red tape and we look forward to the benefits that the free trade agreements will produce.

I note that my colleague Minister Hunt, the Minister for the Environment, in the first 12 months of office has been able to approve $1 trillion worth of projects—what a huge figure. Why has he been able to do it? The Labor-Greens government could not bring themselves to do that which they should have done during their last term of government—namely, approve a whole lot of projects that were backlogged and which have now been relieved through the proper decision making of my colleague the Minister for the Environment. Will all the projects go ahead? That I do not know, but what I do know is that they should not have been stifled by the Labor-Greens government that was paralysed from decision making for fear that they might lose a particular vote, putting their own political future ahead of Australian jobs. Our record in the first 12 months of government is a record of seeking to kick every possible goal for job creation in this country. Regrettably, for the first nine months, we were absolutely frustrated by the Labor-Greens senators in this place.

To sum up, it is pretty easy. To date, there have been no claims made under the Fair Entitlements Guarantee by workers in the textile, clothing and footwear industry. All this regulation will do is ensure that this particular sector is in lock step with all other sectors in the economy in the event that if, and it is a big 'if' and I accept that, the Fair Entitlements Guarantee Amendment Bill 2014 passes through parliament. So good, sensible bookkeeping and good, sensible administration would ensure that you would keep the two in lock step. We now have the possibility, given that I have raised the white flag on behalf of the government, understanding the numbers in this place, that benefits accruing to one sector may well be taken away from other sectors in the event that the Fair Entitlements Guarantee Amendment Bill is in fact carried in this place.

Therefore, I simply say to the Senate: I can understand the arguments that have been raised, but those arguments should be raised during the discussion of the Fair Entitlements Guarantee Bill not under this particular regulation, which simply seeks to marry all sectors of the workforce into the one regime. I understand the numbers in this place are against us, but I simply say that the time to make that statement, to actually make that vote, should be under the Fair Entitlements Guarantee Bill when it is presented to the Senate. I conclude my
remarks by saying that the government fully supports the regulation but understands the numbers in this place.

**Senator CAMERON** (New South Wales) (20:18): First of all, I appreciate Senator Abetz's position of not forcing this to the inevitability of defeat in a division. I also indicate that I must respond on this issue of jobs. There is absolutely no doubt that this government has treated employment and employment in the manufacturing sector in a completely cavalier manner. If we want to talk about future generations and leaving costs for future generations, then what is going on with the coalition and climate change? Why would they leave the cost of climate change to future generations? It just does not make sense. One of the biggest economic challenges in the world is climate change, yet this is a government that did not want it on the agenda of the G20. This is a government that continues to try to argue it is not an economic issue. But if they were really keen to do something on future employment, they would be creating the jobs of the future. They would be creating the clean energy jobs. They would be decarbonising the economy for the future. That is what they would be doing. They would not be ripping away entitlements. They would not be ripping away support for some of the poorest and most exposed workers in the economy—textile clothing and footwear outworkers. They would not be doing that.

If this is a government, as Senator Abetz said, that is kicking every goal on jobs, I do not want to see it in action when it is missing the goal. I do not want to see these goals getting missed because it will be a horrible sight and it will have terrible repercussions for jobs in this country. This is a government that is cavalier when it comes to jobs. This is a government that is forcing this country more and more to be a quarry, a farm and a tourist destination. This is a government that does not understand the needs for a strong manufacturing sector and a strong engineering sector in this country. This is simply about cost cutting. This is about meanness. This is about being tricky. This is a government that cannot be trusted. This is a government that the public are looking at with abject horror. That is reflected when you are out in the street talking to people about this government and its broken promises—broken promise after broken promise. That is what this government is about. That letter from Senator Abetz epitomises the broken promises, the meanness and the nastinesses of this government.

Question agreed to.

**BUSINESS**

**Rearrangement**

**Senator FIFIELD** (Victoria—Manager of Government Business in the Senate and Assistant Minister for Social Services) (20:21): I move:

That intervening business be postponed till after consideration of government business order of the day No. 3 (Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014).

Question agreed to.

**BILLS**

**Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014**

**Second Reading**

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.
Senator POLLEY (Tasmania) (20:22): I rise to speak on the Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014. If the government had kept its promise to honour the Gonski agreements, there would be no need to consider many parts of this bill. If the government had simply kept its promise to deliver the full disability loading in 2015, we would not need amendments relating to funding for independent special schools. If this government had a clear vision for schools policy, if it actually cared what happened in classrooms, Labor would not need to defend the Gonski reforms, stand up for students with disabilities and argue for transparency and accountability in school funding.

This bill will ensure that funding reaches Indigenous students in boarding schools and independent special schools, which is of utmost importance. The opposition supports clauses in the bill that allow funding to flow to Indigenous students at boarding schools and clauses that will prevent funding cuts to students with disabilities in some independent schools.

While not opposing the delay of the implementation of school improvement plans, the opposition has serious concerns about what this move might be a harbinger for: a watering down of accountability to the Commonwealth brought in as a part of the Gonski reforms, perhaps? These are reforms that the Minister for Education has botched; these are reforms that the minister has, as with other elements of his portfolio, clearly said one thing about before the election and said—in this case many, many—different things about after the election.

School improvement plans, at their very heart, are about making sure that the money invested in schools by the federal government actually reaches classrooms and actually improves students’ results. They are ways of ensuring that bureaucracies, state government and independent schools actually spend money on students. On the one hand, the government claims that money alone will not improve our schools, but on the other it is trying to sneakily undo reforms backed by experts that will improve student results. School improvement plans are not onerous. They were designed to make sure that money reaches those students that need it the most and that the extra Gonski investment that Labor made in our schools actually makes a difference in classrooms. This is about accountability.

The independent Australian Council for Educational Research has developed the guide for the school improvement plans, and it has been signed off by the states—Liberal and Labor. We need an appropriate level of reporting to make sure that these reforms do what they are supposed to do: help every child in every school to improve their results. Schools already make improvement plans and track their progress. The vast majority of schools will have to do absolutely nothing more in order to satisfy the requirements.

If I can turn to Victorian school funding, the government has been caught out again with absolutely no idea when it comes to schools. A year after breaking its promise to honour the Gonski agreements, then having a different position on schools every day and then being shamed into humiliating double backflips, it is still chasing its tail. We have seen this, for instance, in Victoria, where the Napthine government refuses to be accountable for money it has received under the Gonski reforms; where it has refused to tell Victorian schools and their principals how the Gonski funding will flow to schools; where school communities have no guarantees that this funding will be delivered on the ground and not squirrelled away for election bribes; and where there continues to be doubt about how much money Victoria will receive, with the Napthine government saying that no final decisions have been reached, but with the Commonwealth and Minister Pyne claiming that funding is settled.
Education funding in Victoria is a mess, with a government who cut TAFE funding while youth unemployment went up; a government which abolished the Education Maintenance Allowance; a government which has no real commitment to schools or to the welfare of students; a government which, like those opposite, sees education policy as a proxy for some great cultural war, a war which is a waste of time, of interest only to crazed right-wing obsessives; and a Commonwealth minister who clearly cannot work out what his policy is. Hopefully, in less than two weeks time, Victoria will have a new government to fix up this morass, a government that will fight this government's plan to rip $30 billion from Victorian schools and their students.

Elements of this bill, and the ideology that drives it, foreshadow the federal government's deep desire to walk away from funding state schools, leaving state and territory systems to wither on the vine. The bill exposes the government's plan not to unite and improve all Australian schools but to pit parent against parent, school against school and state against state in a fight for a pool of Commonwealth funding. This will, in real terms, dwindle that funding.

The government has again locked in behind the concept of CPI indexation for schools funding from 2018. This is a real commitment to this government's $80 billion in cuts to schools and hospitals—cuts that will leave every school an average of $3.2 million worse off, which is the same as sacking one in seven teachers and which will mean $1,000 less support for every student every year. This is a very significant cut in real terms, with the education price index currently running at 5.1 per cent.

We know that behind closed doors the education minister has been telling schools that the CPI indexation rate announced in the budget will be renegotiated, but the government response to the recent Senate report Equity and excellence in Australian schools blows that out of the water. It is crystal clear about the fact that funding will be going down in real terms: … school education funding from 2018 will increase based on student enrolment growth and the government-wide indexation rate of the Consumer Price Index.

I further quote:

The distribution of the funding envelope from 2018 will be subject to formal negotiations with all states and territories and non-government education providers …

This is a divide and conquer strategy that will mean our schools will never reach the student resource standard and will entrench and amplify inequality. It will be a handbrake on the economy. According to PISA 2012, there is up to three years difference in the results between the most advantaged and most disadvantaged students. This gap will never be closed if the government continues down the path of breaking its promises on school funding and the Gonski reforms.

The government has cut all additional funding for the fifth and sixth years of the Gonski reforms; cut $80 billion from schools and hospitals over the next decade—the biggest ever cut; cut the $100 million a year more support for students with disabilities program and failed in its promise for more funding from 2015. It has let state governments off the hook by promising not to enforce their funding obligations under the Gonski agreements.

Senator McKenzie: That is not true. Stop lying to the Australian people.
Senator POLLEY: You may not like to hear them but these are the facts, Senator McKenzie. They have locked school funding to CPI from 2018, with the budget papers assuming CPI will be just 2.5 per cent and the ABS Education Price Index currently 5.1 per cent. This is a huge cut in real terms. They have also blamed Australian voters for the broken promises on schools and completely trashed their 'unity ticket' on schools. Before the election—those opposite might want to recall this—Mr Abbott promised on 4 August 2013 at a press conference:

Kevin Rudd and I are on an absolute unity ticket when it comes to school funding.

Leave the Senate chamber, Senator McKenzie. You do not like to hear the facts. On 29 August, Mr Pyne said:

You can vote Liberal or Labor and you'll get exactly the same amount of funding for your school.

Before the election, Mr Pyne was also crystal clear about the coalition's commitment to the Gonski model and to needs-based funding, telling voters:

We have agreed to the government's school funding model.

Mr Pyne also said on Radio National Breakfast on 30 August 2013:

We are committed to the student resource standard, of course we are. We are committed to this new school funding model.

And finally as Australians entered polling booths on election day, they were faced with signs that read, 'Liberals will match Labor's school funding dollar for dollar.' This is not the case. The government has claimed most recently in a Senate report on equity and excellence in schools:

The Government has met its election commitment and is clear in its support for students with disability and their families and carers.

This is patently not true. Ask any disability organisation, ask any stakeholder, ask any student, parent or teacher who was misled before the election because before the election the government promised:

If elected to Government the Coalition will continue the data collection work that has commenced, which will be used to deliver more funding for people with disability through the 'disability loading' in 2015.

That was also Mr Pyne in his media release on 23 August 2013. The full implementation of the loading for students with disability, however, was scheduled for 2015. This was to allow time for data collection and further collaboration with the states and schools systems to ensure the final disability loading would give students the resources they needed.

Definitions of the disabilities that attract extra support vary significantly between states—and so does the average level of support, which ranges from $4,000 in South Australia to $40,000 in Tasmania. Labor funded the $100 million per year More Support for Students with Disability program to make sure those students who need the most assistance got the assistance they needed, while work continued to finalise the full Gonski disability loading in 2015. Before the election, this process, just like the Gonski school funding reforms, had bipartisan support. The government's promise was clear and straightforward. However, students with disability, along with their parents and carers, have been utterly betrayed by this government. In this year's budget, the government cut the $100 million More Support for Students with Disability program and failed to replace it with the promised additional funds.
At the same time, stakeholders are reporting that the government has dropped the ball on the finalisation of the full Gonski loading.

There has been almost no consultation, and when consultation has occurred, it has been rushed and secretive. This means that neither the promised additional funding, nor the promised full Gonski loading for students with disability will be implemented next year. And students with disability will have $100 million in support cut next year. Today's amendments to funding for independent special schools would not be necessary if the government had kept their commitment to introduce the full Gonski disability loading in 2015 and invest the extra money they promised.

This government has been absolutely shameless in pretending black is white, in rewriting history and sliding away from its clear commitment to our schools. However, the most heartless of all broken promises in education is undoubtedly the broken promise to fund the full Gonski disability loading from 2015. The government made promises to get elected and then cut support for students with disability in the budget. It stands condemned for this heartless break of faith.

Senator WRIGHT (South Australia) (20:37): I rise to speak on the Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014. As Australian Greens national spokesperson on schools and education, I welcome every opportunity to talk about the absolute necessity of school education and our duty to provide a great school for every child in Australia. I also welcome the opportunity on behalf of the Australian Greens to stand up against this government's agenda to undermine the principles of the Gonski school funding reforms. Unfortunately, many of the measures in this bill would not be necessary if the Abbott government had kept their election commitments.

Most particularly, this bill reflects a broken promise to every student with a disability, every teacher who has a disabled student in their class and every parent who looked forward to a better education for their child with a disability and believed the coalition when they said they would deliver a disability loading in 2015. Let me remind you of Christopher Pyne's words before the election. He promised:

… the Coalition will continue the data collection work that has commenced, which will be used to deliver more funding for people with disability through the ‘disability loading’ in 2015.¹

It is a pretty unequivocal promise, but—as this bill demonstrates—a broken one.

The Australian Greens will support this bill because it will prevent funding cuts to students with a disability that would otherwise occur as a result of the government's mismanagement. In saying this, I acknowledge the complexity around the process of establishing the disability loadings. In my role as the Deputy Chair of the Senate Select Committee on School Funding, it was very clear to me how imperative it was to get these loadings right. As a committee, however, we concluded:

… the uncertainty around continuing funding for students with a disability is a particularly urgent example of the negative effect of the change in funding arrangements.

Likewise, the committee noted that other disadvantaged groups could also be acutely affected:

The confusion around the interaction between the disability loading and the NDIS is also of concern to the committee.

As a result, the committee recommended the federal government expedite the data collection process to move as a matter of urgency to a disability loading based on actual student need.
By failing to honour its promise to fund the full disability loading from 2015, this government has heartlessly walked away from some of the students who need its help the most.

This bill also allows the payment of additional funding to schools with a large number of Indigenous boarding students from remote areas. The Australian Greens are absolutely committed to closing the gap in educational achievements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. We understand the challenges faced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians growing up in remote areas to access a first-class education. We are therefore pleased to support this measure, although we strongly believe boarding schools must not be the only measure to tackle the inequality of opportunity for students in remote Australia.

The Australian Greens believe every school should be a great one and every child should have the chance to reach their potential no matter who they are, where they live or how wealthy or poor their parents are. This is exactly what the Gonski reforms were designed to achieve and why specific loadings were recommended for small and remote schools and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The area of this bill the Australian Greens have the most concern with is the delaying of the implementation of school improvement plans. These plans were required to ensure that Commonwealth money actually reaches the students who need it most. It was an underpinning of the Gonski school recommendations. School improvement plans were designed to ensure that the money was being spent wisely in ways that would make a demonstrable difference to student achievement.

The coalition government is fond of saying that this is not about money. It is not about throwing buckets of money, and we wholeheartedly agree with that. We agree: you do not throw buckets of money at school systems and hope for the best. What the Gonski recommendations said very, very clearly was that we need to have well-targeted investment where it will do the most good: at those very students who need the most support to increase their achievements and which will increase the achievements overall in education in Australia.

School improvement plans had reporting requirements that would have guaranteed transparency in how public funds are distributed within all of the educational systems. Those who have followed this debate closely would know the Australian Greens sought to enshrine these accountability measures in legislation rather than regulation at the time that these reforms were being debated in the last parliament. This was to avoid the very circumstance we now find ourselves in where the Abbott government is undermining the principle and practice of transparency in schools funding.

It is a continuing disappointment that the previous government would not accept our very sensible amendments in this regard and that these school improvement plans were not legislated for. We did not want taxpayer money frittered away or consumed by state bureaucracies. We wanted the money to get past the school gate into the classrooms where it is needed most. We did not want to leave accountability and transparency in the hands of the current Prime Minister and his education minister, because we knew we could not trust them with our schools, and this has been borne out time and time again since the election.
Fundamentally, we knew we could not trust them because the coalition government has still not acknowledged the fundamental finding of the Gonski review of school funding—that is, there are inequities across Australian schools that need to be rectified. Such an acknowledgement would be a compelling motivation to fix an unjust system—one that currently fosters and entrenches privilege. But it has never been forthcoming from this education minister nor this Prime Minister who presides over a government that governs for the privileged and wealthy in Australia. We also know that this government's commitment to accountability for Commonwealth expenditure in independent schools is flimsy. What this government calls 'command and control', we call sensible public transparency measures to ensure that money going to non-government schools is properly accounted for.

With the government's review into these measures, though, we know changes are on the horizon. We understand the unnecessary work created for schools when federal governments unpick and drastically alter recent reforms. However, we are unabashedly committed to the need for strong reporting requirements, because we want to safeguard the objectives of the Gonski school funding reforms and ensure that they are being achieved.

The no-strings approach this government is taking shows a fundamental lack of concern for ensuring money gets to where it is most needed and most makes a difference. Without these strings being attached we will not see the changes that we need to address the vast inequality of opportunity presented to Australian students in 2014. It is these very strings—in this case, the school improvement plans—which ensure that needs-based funding exists across the country and every child has the resources, the support and the school quality they need to succeed.

I want to conclude by restating the Australian Greens commitment to the Gonski school funding reforms and reiterating my unhappiness with the Abbott government, with its coalition of Liberal and National Party members, for its broken promises and refusal to meet education inequality head-on—whether that is education inequality in low-socioeconomic schools, whether it is education inequality in schools where there are predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students or whether it is education inequality in remote or country schools or in small schools—and ensure that, no matter where a child lives in Australia and no matter what their background, they can be guaranteed an excellent education by going to a neighbourhood local government school.

Since coming to government, the coalition have done nothing to address the staggering education inequality in Australia. If they continue on this path, the Abbott government's legacy will be the further entrenchment of privilege in our schools—just like the Howard government before them. Achievement based on merit, on ability and on effort will be increasingly replaced by outcomes dependent on the roll of a dice in a child's life—where they were born, who their parents were and which school they went to. It was not always thus. Australia has had a proud and pioneering tradition of quality public education which really took off in the 1870s and 1880s—education available for all irrespective of background. Our move away from this tradition has been occurring over decades now, and the Gonski review highlighted the consequences. It gave us an opportunity to transform the system—and we are now going backward again at a rate of knots as this coalition government abandon those fundamental Gonski principles.
As I have said many times in this place before, the Prime Minister and his education minister have been remarkably consistent in their opposition to genuine needs-based funding. It is not hard to find the ideological rationale for the coalition's scepticism. After all, a needs-based funding system would do away with the sector against sector war. It would put kid's first, not lobbyists or school systems. In the words of panel member Ken Boston:

Gonski is a truly needs-based system. It's a fundamental re-imagining of Australian education.

That is pretty threatening to entrenched privilege and entrenched power. As Boston said:

If school performance is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by parental income, ethnic background, religion, school size and location, or whether a student attends an independent, Catholic or public school, success at school will be determined essentially by the student's ability, application and hard work.

What a change that would be! If we reduce disadvantage, we also reduce privilege—and the Abbott government are frightened of a future where privilege is challenged.

Instead of locking in disadvantage, the Australian Greens want to see it addressed. We want to live in a country where every single kid can achieve their potential no matter where they live and whatever their background. I again want to state that there is more than a social justice imperative to provide quality public education—although that should, arguably, be the principle that wins the day—there is also clearly an economic argument. The OECD says directing extra resources to the most disadvantaged students raises educational outcomes for the whole country, providing a return on investment twice as high as the outlay. An analysis by PricewaterhouseCoopers showed that investing substantially in what is required to lift our schools' performance and that of the most disadvantaged students would generate $3.6 trillion in GDP in the life of a child being educated today.

I want to assure everyone listening to this speech—every teacher, every parent and every student—that the Australian Greens are committed to a well-resourced public schooling system with genuine needs-based funding. We are watching this government closely and we will fight to preserve the hard-won Gonski reforms.

Senator McKENZIE (Victoria) (20:50): Here we are re-prosecuting the rhetoric once again, with the Labor Party and the Greens trotting out their familiar lines. The coalition believes that every child in this nation is entitled to a great education no matter which school they go to or where they live, which is exactly why the Minister for Education has chosen the policy settings he has and why this bill, the Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014, needs to be amended. In the rush and the haste to politicise education in this country, and in the context of the last federal election campaign, this bill was rushed through, and it is riddled with mistakes that we are now coming to address. This bill amends the Australian Education Act 2013, which commenced in January 2014. As a result, in 2014 around $14 billion will be paid to government and non-government school authorities under the act. This funding is disbursed across state and territory governments through funding from the Commonwealth government.

The legislation had gaping holes in it that needed to be addressed. But where were the Greens complaining about the haste with which that bill was constructed? They were nowhere. They were absolutely silent, as Labor and the Greens slogged it out for the hearts and minds of the AEU in the context of the last federal election campaign. I think Labor won, though, Penny.
What we propose to do is amend the bill to ensure there is adequate administration and that all students, especially Indigenous and disadvantaged students, are able to receive a high-quality education. Specifically, the bill allows payment of additional funding, in 2014, to schools with large numbers of Indigenous boarding students from remote areas. It sounds like a good idea.

The Liberal-National government's Indigenous boarding initiative was announced in this year's budget. It provides $6.8 million in additional funding for eligible schools. Increased funding will be available to schools that currently have more than 50 Indigenous boarding students from remote or very remote Australia, or where more than 50 per cent of their boarders are Indigenous and from remote or very remote Australia.

The bill also prevents funding cuts to students with disabilities in some independent special schools and special assistance schools, from 1 January 2015. The bill also amends the Australian Education (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Act to extend the start of school improvement plans under the act in response to feedback from principals and schools. In short, the bill is important legislation from the government's perspective, because we need to make good on our budget initiative to provide additional funding for Indigenous boarding students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. We are not altering the substance of the initial act. We are not altering the needs based funding models. We are not walking away from the commitments we made prior to the election.

Senator Wright interjecting—

Senator McKenzie: Your saying it is so does not make it so, Senator. The fact remains that the focus of the Australian Education Act on a needs based funding model that is funded through the forward estimates—

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Please resume your seat, Senator McKenzie. Senator Scullion.

Senator Scullion: We listened in respectful silence to some pretty ordinary contributions from the other side. If you could ask the Greens to provide the same respect it would be useful.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I will take that on board, Senator Scullion. Senator McKenzie has the call.

Senator Wright: She was heckling the whole time.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Wright, Senator McKenzie has the call. Will you refrain from interjecting, please.

Senator Cameron: You know she wants to join the Liberal Party. She wants to join the Libs.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, Senator Cameron. The chamber will come to order. Senator McKenzie has the call.

Senator McKenzie: So the needs based funding model exists. It is completely funded over the forward estimates. It actually has additional money going towards its implementation than that provided by the previous government. Yet they stand here and complain and make up realities that simply did not exist.
We have listened to an independent review and to the schools that have come to the government pleading for extra funds. The result is an initiative that provides high-quality education to young Indigenous people from remote and very remote areas around Australia. We are being responsive to the feedback from the sector, with measures that make a real difference in young people's lives, and in the lives of their families, so that they may have a positive and successful future.

This bill is close to the heart of those of us who care about education, and it should be supported by everybody in this chamber for the very reason that Indigenous boarding students from regional and remote Australia are clearly quite disadvantaged. I would like to acknowledge the work of the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Nigel Scullion, for his focus on tangible, practical measures to close the gap with respect to educational outcomes for our Indigenous youth. These students are at the crux of this reform for ensuring that we have a sustainable and well-considered education bill. Hence, we did not expect the bill to be controversial. But that is what happens when Angelo wakes up and works out that Labor in the other place has actually supported this bill going through. The AEU wakes up and sees it and it is in the Bundaberg news the next day, slamming the bill. And what do we have? Backflips left, right and centre from the Labor Party on whether or not to support the bill.

Going to the schedules of the bill, schedule 1 outlines the reforms and amendments that come into place. They will apply retrospectively from 1 January 2014 to double-check that payments and calculations for this year are correct and schools are receiving the adequate funding they are entitled to. The new mechanism under schedule 1 will be created to make payments to schools in recommended circumstances where parliament and the minister will be able to review eligibility and calculation of funding. It will become known as the Australian Government Indigenous Boarding Initiative. It was announced in our budget, and as I have outlined it has specific criteria around the number of young Indigenous Australians in those schools and where they are actually from. It allows the government to meet budgetary constraints while still providing high-quality education to those who need it.

With schedule 2 we are actually trying to correct errors that have become apparent since 1 January 2014, when this act was implemented. There are a number of errors that the Labor Party or the Greens did not pay attention to when finalising this legislation. This has created confusion for different authorities and schools, and we are actually aiming to provide certainty for them. Currently there are gaps in the system concerning schools in a transitional process, moving between approved authorities. Different authorities will provide different levels of funding and the bill seeks to address this problem and have a Commonwealth starting point for funding entitlement under that authority.

We also seek to clarify the accessibility remoteness index of Australia, ensuring that there is proper acknowledgement of inner regional locations. As it stands, the act could also see some school authorities in a position to receive funding as a whole from the Commonwealth government, rather than the Commonwealth share of that amount. This is a significant error that could see the Commonwealth and the notional state share being paid to one authority. It is just ridiculous that that sort of error can occur. Not supporting it being fixed shows the level to which the Labor Party are beholden to the AEU in this matter.

The bill will seek the wide consultation that the current act ignores. We will amend the Australian Education (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Act to extend to 1 January
2016, or a later date determined by the minister, the commencement of school improvement planning requirements under the act. We want to work with stakeholders to consider possible adjustments to this requirement. Extending the time frame provides us with the opportunity to consult. Since when did consulting with people we are seeking to impose a regulatory burden upon become a bad thing? Yet, if you listen to those opposite, it is.

We need to get it right. We need to provide schools with certainty. One of the biggest criticisms, when the original bill was before the last parliament, was that there was a severe lack of certainty for school systems and for school principals about what their funding allocation would be, what were they going to be able to do with staffing et cetera. We seek to provide certainty so that they can get on and do what we want them to do, which is provide high-quality education to young Australians.

We are also ensuring that funding for special schools and special assistance schools remains at the forefront of education reforms. That is what we want to do. It is one of the key pillars of our 'students first' policy—ensuring that students with a disability are catered for and supported within our system. We have to get it right. In its current form, the safety net currently in place for these schools will disappear in 2015. Funding will be reduced to the schooling resource standard. This is purely because the current work with the states and territories to develop nationally consistent data is missing. We knew this. We knew that this was going to be an issue. Anybody that worked on the Australian Education Act through the Senate Education and Employment Committee inquiry process in the last parliament knew that this was going to be a problem. Yet we stand here today as if this has become an issue because of some Machiavellian action by the current government. We all knew, when the bill went through the last parliament, that this was going to become a problem.

We propose that $2.4 million be spent next year to assist these schools to adjust to the schooling resource standard, aiming to provide some certainty to these schools, schools which the current legislation ignores. We want to work with disadvantaged students, their families and their communities—and indeed the schools that care for them—to provide them with the best education possible. What we care about is putting students first, putting student outcomes at the heart of our education policy. That is why we are focused on teacher quality. It is why we are focused on measures to increase parental engagement. It is why a key focus of this government, particularly of Minister Pyne, is on those aspects of our policy that support students with a disability. It is about ensuring our national curriculum is relevant and responsive and that our young people will graduate from our schools not only literate and numerate but fabulous young citizens ready, willing and able to take on the challenges of the 21st century. We also believe that school principals should have a little autonomy in deciding what goes on within the school grounds. It is not a bad thing to make students the focus of education policy. What a change!

There are other errors in the current legislation that this bill addresses. One is final amounts for block grant authorities, providing a base for future capital funding. Another is giving greater flexibility and more options for managing any noncompliance that occurred under the previous legislation. The bill also seeks to clarify the operation of reviewable decisions and will correct errors in the current act relating to who can apply for a review of a decision under the act.
This bill seeks to tie up loose ends forgotten in the former government's rush to politicise education in the context of the last federal election campaign. The Gonski report was handed down in December 2010, yet we were scrambling to get the signature of premiers on bits of paper in September 2013. It was a joke. What we ended up with was an almighty mess which this bill seeks to address and fix. I support this bill; I support our government's intention to put students first, to put students back at the heart of education policy; and I support our commitment to a needs based funding model fully funded over the forward estimates, in line with the commitment we made before the last election.

Senator LINES (Western Australia) (21:04): Being in the chamber tonight has been quite illuminating. It has shown us that the Abbott government can put a spin on anything. I said earlier today that I think they are living in a parallel universe, and tonight they have clearly demonstrated that they are. You would think that these reforms proposed by the Abbott government to our education system were revolutionary when they are not. They are practical amendments that need to be made because of the appalling way the Abbott government has handled education.

Let us just remind ourselves of some of the massive mistakes the Abbott government has made in relation to the education of our youngest Australians. This bill is before the Senate tonight because of the Abbott government's broken promises. Those broken promises are the only reason it is here. One of the Abbott government's biggest broken promises was in the area of education. Remember Gonski? Remember those commitments? 'We are on a unity ticket with Labor on the Gonski reforms.' Do you remember when the Prime Minister said, 'It does not matter who you vote for, Labor or Liberal, because we will implement the full Gonski reforms'? Of course it matters who you vote for. Every single time it matters. It mattered at the last election and it will matter at the next election.

The Abbott government simply cannot be trusted on education despite their promises, the apparently cast iron guarantees that the Liberals and their coalition partners, the Nationals, gave us before the last election. So desperate were they to get into government that they lied to Australian voters. The Abbott government lied about their commitment to Gonski. Those reforms, like many other Abbott government commitments, are well and truly gone—make no mistake. That is why this bill is before the Senate. It is because the government did not keep their promise to honour the Gonski amendments.

We now need to consider specific parts of this bill. If the government had simply kept their promise to deliver the full disability loading in 2015, it would not need amendments relating to funding for independent special schools. Where is the government's vision for schools? I have heard members of the Abbott government say, 'We don't run schools.' Does that mean the Abbott government is abrogating any responsibility it has for ensuring that Australian students have the highest quality education and that their postcode does not determine their school results?

Gonski identified falling standards and a growing gap in achievements, and that growing gap is between well-off students and those from low socioeconomic areas. What has the Abbott government done about this? Absolutely nothing. It is worth repeating some of the unfortunate standout features Gonski found. He found that one in seven 15-year-olds do not have basic literacy skills. How will these young people compete for jobs in the future when at every turn their poor literacy skills are going to prevent them from being successful?
will these students fare under the harsh new regime that the Abbott government wants to introduce for young job seekers of a six-month compulsory period without any funds to support themselves? With poor literacy skills, what education do they enrol in? What jobs will they be able to secure? These young people have been thrown on the scrap heap by the Abbott government—discarded before they have even had a real chance at life, at attaining a decent job at a decent rate of pay. These kids will not get a helping hand if the Abbott government's harsh dole amendments get through the Senate. If this government had a clear vision for school policies for these kids and many others, if they cared about what happened in our classrooms, I would not need to be standing here today defending the Gonski reforms, standing up for students with disability, standing up for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids, and arguing for transparency and accountability in school funding.

In relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boarders in particular, the bill establishes a mechanism which enables the minister to make payments to schools for a reason prescribed by regulation. The government says this will facilitate the payment of around $6.8 million in support for boarding schools for 2014 and 2015, but—and it is a big but—at this stage it has not provided any funding beyond that. This is a move not unique to education—it is typical of how the Abbott government is funding a range of critical support areas for states. We have seen the same funding deal—or no deal—in the area of homelessness funding to the states. The government has chopped about $45 million out of the funding for homeless people, taking all the capital money out. Why? Because it believes it is a state responsibility to provide housing for those who become homeless. The papers on Federation I am sure will spell out that education, health, affordable housing and a raft of other measures are all the responsibility of state governments, who do not have adequate funds to address these very critical areas. That is why the government has not ticked over funding on an ongoing basis—that is why it has just ticked it over for one year. Boarding schools, in the eyes of the Abbott government, are obviously no different from anything else.

I go back to the move to establish a mechanism to enable the minister to direct payments to schools. It will assist schools with more than 50 Aboriginal boarders from remote communities or where more than 50 per cent of boarders are Aboriginal and come from remote communities. Of course Labor supports this—not as a panacea but as one of the many steps, not the only step, that the government must take to close the gap in school education. It is just a tiny step. It is Labor's position that the first focus of government should be to make sure that every school is a great school—not too much of an ask; it is the right of a child to expect that—and that every child should have the resources and support necessary to achieve their best no matter where they live, no matter what their postcode is or what school they attend. That was the central plank of the Gonski reforms and it absolutely applies to schools in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Supporting boarding schools cannot be used as an argument to leave schools in communities behind. In Western Australia, the Barnett government have an appalling record on education—they have ripped millions out of the school system. They have taken away programs that specifically target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and they have specifically targeted programs for kids with learning disability and slashed and burned those programs. Now, in response to the cut in funding from the Abbott government, the Premier of Western Australia is going to look at closing communities in Western Australia. I wonder
whether the Minister for Indigenous Affairs is aware of that? Schools will be closed. Warren Mundine, their own man, has called it an infrastructure apartheid. That is what their own man has called it. And what are they doing? Nothing. So goodness knows what is going to happen in Western Australia if Premier Barnett gets his way and starts closing communities. Those kids might be in a boarding school and suddenly find they have no home to go back to. That is what Premier Barnett has in store for kids from remote communities in Western Australia. Of course it is a big secret about which ones. Make no mistake, the Premier has put that right at the feet of the Abbott government and their own Mr Warren Mundine has called it infrastructure apartheid. Let us see what the Abbott government's response to that is.

Closing the gap in the educational attainment of Aboriginal Australians requires a focus not just on boarding schools but on every single bush school and every classroom in every remote area. Right now the attention needs to be on what Premier Barnett is doing with those communities in Western Australia—he has made it very clear that he intends to close some because of the actions of the Abbott government. Of course, Labor supports those students and those communities that want to use boarding schools, but boarding schools are only a very tiny part of the solution. Labor remains absolutely committed to closing the gap.

Let's have a look at what the bill intends to do in relation to students with disability. This bill also changes the funding transition rules for independent special schools so that their funding is indexed by at least three per cent a year—the guaranteed level of indexation under the Gonski reforms. It is not something that is new or fixed up by the Abbott government but what was clearly in the Gonski reforms. It is nothing new. It was already there, part of Labor's plans. It is a change that would not need to be brought to the parliament if the government had kept its promise to fully implement the full Gonski disability loading for 2015 and allocate the additional resources. There are six additional loadings under the Gonski reforms—for small schools, for remote schools, for Aboriginal schools, for students with low English, for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and for students with disability. These loadings, with the exception of the loadings for students with disability, were fully defined—despite the parallel universe language we see from the Abbott government—when the Australian Education Act was introduced. Of course, the Abbott government knew that. Remember their commitment leading up to the election? 'We are on a unity ticket with Labor on the Gonski reforms.' But, obviously, that was never true, because it has not been true since the election.

The full implementation of the loading for students with disability was scheduled for 2015, and there was a reason for that. This was to allow time for data collection and for further work with the states and the school systems to make the final disability loading work to give students the resources they need to achieve their best. We have heard over and over again from those opposite, from the Abbott government, that they want to give principals more say. Labor's plan was to consult, collect the information and speak not just to principals but to school communities. So, again, empty rhetoric is all we hear from those on the other side. This was Labor's plan all along. But they cannot bear to actually say Labor's Gonski reforms were successful; they have to invent their own reasons as to why they need to do something different—give it a new name and say something else about it. But no-one is fooled. Those loadings were there and they were plain for everyone to see.

Definitions of the disabilities that attract extra support vary significantly between states, and so do the average levels of support, which range from around $4,000 in South Australia to

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$40,000 in Tasmania. While that investigative work continued, Labor funded the $100 million per year More Support for Students with Disability program to make sure those students who need the most assistance got the assistance they needed. We ensured that was happening while we continued to finalise the full Gonski disability loading in 2015.

Remember that unity ticket? It does not go away. Just because you say something different now, it does not mean you did not say it. You said it in the media and you said it over and over. Before the election, this process—just like the Gonski school funding reforms—had bipartisan support. But we know now that anything bipartisan, according to the Abbott government, is a dirty word. They are trying to erase that concept of 'bipartisan' from their vocabulary, because they just try to trash and burn everything that went before them and invent it—even if it is just giving a new name—to somehow claim that what they are doing is better or different when, in fact, it is not. The education minister promised:

If elected to government, the Coalition will continue the data collection work that has commenced, which will be used to deliver more funding for people with disability through the 'disability loading' in 2015.

That came from Minister Pyne on his own media release dated 23 August 2013. That promise was clear and straightforward, as was the promise of a unity ticket on Gonski.

However, despite it being a clear commitment, students with disability, along with their parents and carers, have been utterly betrayed by this government. In this year's budget, the government cut the $100 million More Support for Students with Disability program—the program we had put in place to make sure students with disability continued to be supported while we worked out the new loading. It was a safety net, if you like—that is what we put in place for students with disability. But, no, the Abbott government slashed and burned that—'Let's just cut that; it's just money for nothing'—despite that clear commitment. Not only did they cut that but they failed to replace it with the promised additional funds. There was just nothing left in its wake.

At the same time, stakeholders are reporting the government has dropped the ball on the finalisation of the full Gonski loading. And, in the typical fashion of the Abbott government, there has been almost no consultation, because that is not the way they drive their agenda. Consultation leads to transparency, and they do not want to be transparent around what they have done to disability loadings. They want to try and sneak it through, but nobody is fooled. Where they have done consultation, again, in typical Abbott government fashion, it has been rushed and, of course, secretive. That is the style of this government—no transparency and everything done in secret. This means that neither the promised additional funding nor the promised full Gonski loading for students with disability will be implemented next year. They just will not be; they will be missing in action. On top of that, students with disability will have $100 million in support cut next year.

The Abbott government have been absolutely shameless in pretending black is white, in rewriting history and in sliding away from their very clear commitments to our schools. However, the most heartless of all the broken promises in education is undoubtedly the broken promise to fund the full Gonski disability loading from 2015—and absolutely nothing has been left in its place. Parents of children with disability fought really hard to make sure their kids got a fair go. Kids with disability do need additional support and in some instances they need significant support. They need that helping hand to ensure that the education they
receive is of the same high quality that children without a disability receive. All of us who are fair-minded would agree that that is the just and proper thing to do. But the government—the Liberals and the Nationals—simply made those now broken promises, promises they had absolutely no intention of implementing, to get elected and then cut the support for those students with disability in the budget.

Again, Labor will not stand in the way of ensuring funding flows to independent special schools from next year, but we are going to make sure that the Australian community knows exactly what is going on here. There must be no more hoodwinking like when the government cut the additional funding that Labor put in place and then reneged on the commitments it made around disability loading. We will absolutely continue to take the Abbott government to task on its broken promises to students with disability.

Senator BACK (Western Australia) (21:24): I wonder, as people in the chamber and people listening this evening would be wondering: what are we doing here? This is an amendment which actually received support from the Labor Party in the other place through the spokesperson, Ms King. In the other place, the Greens political party made no comment at all and, therefore, I cannot see why there would be any occasion on which that party would oppose these amendments. So I am asking myself: why are we here having this spirited debate in which the Labor Party, from what I understand from Senator Lines and others, are opposing this measure? The Greens' position was not clear from Senator Wright's contribution, although, with my knowledge of Senator Wright's deep interest in this area, I would be extremely surprised and disappointed if Senator Wright was actually recommending to her colleagues that they should oppose these amendments.

Senator Sterle: Come on, Chris, let's go home.

Senator BACK: I think I hear Senator Sterle agreeing with me that, should it go to a vote now, we will actually have support from the other side. If we do not, it would have to be the greatest act of hypocrisy that we have seen in recent times in this place.

I sat here in stunned silence, I must say, listening to Senator Lines's contribution, some of which I will seek to dispel in a few minutes, but what is this bill all about? It is a usual theme: it will correct a significant error of the last government—we had that all the time through the numbers of years that Mr Rudd, followed by Ms Gillard, followed by Mr Rudd, led an incompetent and disparate government—that would see, for some school authorities, the Commonwealth liable to pay the entire amount, both the Commonwealth and the notional state share, calculated for an authority. It goes to questions associated with additional funding for Indigenous boarding students. It speaks of transition arrangements for special schools and special assistance schools. It extends the commencement of school improvement planning requirements, ensures schools moving between approved authorities will be financially neither advantaged nor disadvantaged and ensures the Commonwealth, as I just said, pays only its share of the total public funding arrangement. All it speaks to is ill-conceived drafting in the first place and a failure of rushed legislation.

So what are we talking about? We have just heard a rant from Senator Lines about Gonski. Let us be very, very clear. For the period of the out years, the current four-year funding period within this parliament, there is no change. Let me repeat that for those who are slow of listening: there is no change, no decrease at all, in the funding to the schools sector. The only change is an increase, would you believe it? You would not have known that listening to the
previous speaker. There is an increase of $1.2 billion for the three states that resisted the bullying of Ms Gillard to sign up to the ill-conceived Gonski provisions. They actually were not the Gonski provisions, as, indeed, Mr Gonski and his co-authors rushed to say. The Labor Party, as usual, cherry-picked those bits that they thought were most politically expedient. Of course, my own state of Western Australia, amongst others, stood by and said it was not going to accept the domination by the then federal Labor government to take over control of its schools for the paltry amount that was offered to the Western Australian state. When we came to government, and Mr Abbott became the Prime Minister and Mr Pyne became the education minister, far from removing funds we actually put $1.2 billion more into the system. So let me dispel that myth from the word go.

I am pleased that Senator Lines said that she supports Aboriginal education, particularly in relation to boarding, because, if she did not, that would be a great travesty for all of us in this chamber. Let me speak, if I may, for a few moments about a program that has been running for some years, coordinated by the independent schools in Western Australia, called Future Footprints. It takes students from remote Aboriginal communities in Western Australia and parts of the Northern Territory and down they come to some 17 metropolitan independent and Catholic boarding schools in Perth. It receives limited funding from government sources, particularly, in this case, the Commonwealth. There has been very generous funding from the schools and those who support them.

But at the moment there are some 330 students in this program. I have followed it over the last few years and I have seen the excellence of the outcomes of the program for these young Aboriginal students from remote Indigenous communities. They come down to schools in Perth. They have gone on. Their completion rate to year 12 has been exceptionally high. The number of those who have gone on to post-secondary studies is enviable. I have had the privilege of meeting some of the young people, who have set up their careers for the future, as a result of this wonderful opportunity that has been created for them. They have come from their homes in remote areas to schools in Perth. The program has been absolutely exemplary. Any program that encourages these young people to take the opportunity to study at boarding schools around Australia must be accepted and those who participate in it must be congratulated and encouraged. The programs for these young people from years 10 to 12 are designed to increase retention rates—to increase the levels of completions. It is pleasing to record the success rates that are occurring as a result of these programs.

The young people are mentored. There is a liaison officer who ensures that these young people, on a weekend for example, have the opportunity to gather together, to meet and to discuss what is going on. I remember being told that when a school function is taking place the liaison officer would take the young girls into town and make sure that they had appropriate clothing et cetera so that when they attended the function they felt comfortable in themselves. We should encourage these sorts of activities.

I will go, now, to the question of disability. Let me explain to those who might be interested what will happen if these amendments before us this evening are not passed. There are some eight Northern Territory colleges, which I am absolutely sure my colleague Senator Scullion will be familiar with, which will be disadvantaged under the Indigenous Boarding Initiative if these amendments are not passed. In Queensland there are six colleges that will be disadvantaged. In my home state of Western Australia there are also six, including the
Christian Aboriginal Parent-directed School; the Clontarf Aboriginal College, which has been a national leader over some period of time now in terms of their education programs for young men and young women; La Salle College, with which I have some familiarity; and the Wongutha Christian Aboriginal Parent-directed School. These are schools that will be disadvantaged if these amendments do not pass.

When I speak about the question of disability I will mention, for example, the Aspect schools in New South Wales. These are schools which focus on the needs of autistic children. They include Aspect Hunter School, Aspect Vern Barnett School, Aspect Central Coast School, Aspect Western Sydney School, Aspect South Coast School, and Giant Steps Sydney. All of them will be financially disadvantaged if these amendments do not pass. In Queensland, the Autism Queensland Education and Therapy Centre will be disadvantaged to the tune of almost half of the funding that is available to them currently. The same applies in my home state of Western Australia, where the Telethon Speech and Hearing establishment will be disadvantaged.

Here in the ACT—in your home patch, Acting Deputy President Seselja—the Galilee school will forsake almost 50 per cent of its funding. Where it would have been expecting $16,000 its funding will go down to $8,900—a loss of $7,000. It will be similar again in New South Wales and in Queensland.

I cannot let this occasion go past without making a comment on some of the discussion advanced by Senator Lines with regard to Western Australia—particularly the actions of the Barnett government. Senator Lines ridiculed the Barnett government about, to paraphrase her, its very poor contribution to education et cetera in this country. Be aware that the highest per capita funding for students in state schools in this nation is in Western Australia as a result of the Barnett state government. The highest paid teachers in this nation are the Western Australian state government teachers. So I will not sit here this evening and listen to Senator Lines—a Western Australian senator—malign the Barnett government. The man was an outstanding Minister for Education. His parliamentary secretary, the honourable Barbara Scott, was responsible for the education of preschool children. That program has found its way throughout this nation.

Senator Lines drew the comparison between the decision of the Barnett government to close some remote Aboriginal communities with its decision to close schools. That indicates one of two things—either she is loose with the truth or she is totally ignorant of remote Aboriginal communities in this state. It is a shame that Senator Sterle is not here, because he is a person who is well versed in the remote Aboriginal communities of Western Australia. As one who actually had an association with the Kimberley in past years, I have taken a keen interest in what has been made public, and I have heard nothing stating that the Barnett government is closing schools in remote Aboriginal communities. So this debate is not the place nor time to be making the sorts of spurious and false statements and allegations that we have heard in connection with the Barnett government. It is exemplary when it comes to the provision of primary, secondary and pre-primary education in this nation.

I conclude that all senators should want to pass the amendment to the Australian Education Act 2013. It will ensure additional funding for Indigenous boarding students. It will ensure that transition arrangements are in place for special schools and special-assistant schools and it will add to the facilities and funding for transitional and disabled students in that...
circumstance. When it comes to funding for the period of this government, for the period under consideration, that is guaranteed. Any statement to the contrary is simply one that we all know to be incorrect. I urge my colleagues on all sides of the chamber to pass this legislation.

Senator MOORE (Queensland) (21:38): I had this funny idea that the role of the Senate was to allow senators to look at legislation, to consider it and then have the chance to make statements in this chamber about it. I am sorry if people on the other side think that is something which should be restricted to only those who agree with them. In terms of the interest people have in this place about education, there can be no question that there is a genuine interest. There is a genuine interest in ensuring that all children, all people who are seeking education across our nation, have effective options, real choice and well-resourced and accessible education at every level.

What we have before us is a bill that had to be brought in. Promises were made by the government, before the election, to the community, to people seeking education—to all of us—that there would not be a sliver of difference between the Gonski process supported by the then government and that of then opposition. There were outpourings of commitment all over the place. It was knee-deep in commitment to ensure that the changes, the improvements and the funding arrangements would be taken forward. That is what people were told, and many people believed it. They believed that the commitments made before the election would be maintained into the post-election period.

We have a bill that has come before us because those commitments have not been made. There is no doubt that senators on this side of the chamber will be supporting the changes in this bill. I am sure that will allay the concern put forward so forcibly by Senator Back that there would be an attempt from people on this side of the chamber to knock off the amendments in this bill—that are there because the promises made before the election have not been brought forward.

We know what the key elements of this bill are because we have heard a range of speakers on this topic. There is support for Indigenous students in boarding schools—as if there is anyone in this chamber who does not support effective funding around a range of options for education, particularly for Indigenous students. In this case, we are being asked through this amendment to ensure that funding flows to boarding schools, for Indigenous students, that have over 50 students.

Every one of us who has had the honour, the privilege, of visiting some of the Indigenous communities in our country will of course be supporting it. I am a Queenslander and I have had the privilege of visiting a number of schools across Queensland that focus on offering education to young people in a boarding facility, to allow them and their parents to make that choice. The reason we are here is because the funding that was supposed to be going through there did not flow in the original act, which came through from this government after it came to office.

Naturally, on this side of the chamber we will be bringing that to the attention of the people who are now sitting on government benches. We will be bringing it to the attention of people in the wider community. But we will not be blocking any funding that ensures young people in Indigenous communities who believe their best option for the future is to have a boarding option should have that facility provided effectively by their government. That is what we are
supporting in this bill. We need to ensure that the funding announced in the budget will flow and that they will facilitate the payment of $6.8 million in 2014-15 to non-government boarding schools with more than 50 Indigenous borders or more than 50 per cent of boarders who are Indigenous. We will be supporting that part of the bill.

We will also be talking about the need for a commitment and trust that Indigenous communities will have options, that they can consider the best way for their children to be educated and know that the facilities will be there. This ensures that discussions continue between providers of education and Indigenous communities and that children are not forced to seek a certain path. We must ensure that every child has the option of effective schooling where they are. For some people, that will be schooling in their own communities. For others, it will be the option of boarding. We have seen this work so well. The previous government was responsible for providing boarding colleges and housing so that young people would have safe and accessible housing close to where they receive their education.

The other change that has to be talked about in this place, because the funding did not come through originally, is the issue of transitional fees for independent special schools so that funding is indexed by at least three per cent a year, the guaranteed level that was under the Gonski reforms. It is a change that would not have been brought to the parliament if the government had kept its original promise to fully implement the Gonski disability loading for 2015 and allocate additional resources. It is very straightforward.

There were six additional funding loadings under the Gonski reforms. They were talked about throughout the community. There were special sessions to ensure that people understood how the loading system would work. The loadings were for small schools, remote schools, Indigenous students, students with poor English, students from a disadvantaged background and students with disabilities.

These were the needs that were expressed to us, to all of us. This is not a party issue. These were the needs that were being expressed by the community about the children, the students, who needed extra support. This was negotiated at length with the independent schools, with Catholic ed, with public schools and with the appropriate unions to ensure that people understood how it would work and how the benefits would flow through to the schools so that the kids with these needs and these backgrounds would have the support they needed—again, effective options so that every child would have the opportunity for an effective, responsible and very much a personal education.

The loadings, with the exception of the loading for students with disabilities, were fully defined in the original act. The full implementation for the loading for students with disabilities was scheduled for 2015. This was to allow time for effective data collection and further work with the states and school systems to make the final disability loading work to give students the resources they needed to achieve their best—understandable because this is a contested area as to the best way to provide this support. So the decision in the original act was to ensure that this funding would be delayed until 2015, the full rollout, so that that further data could be collected, information shared and that consultation and dialogue maintained.

Definitions of the disabilities that attract extra support vary significantly between states and so does, as a result, the average levels of support, which range from the current situation from $4,000 in South Australia to $40,000 in Tasmania—an enormous scope and reflective of the
need for more consultation and discussion. While the work continued because there is an
acknowledgement that this work would need to continue, Labor funded the $100 million per
year More Support for Students With Disabilities program to make sure that those students
who needed the most assistance got the assistance they needed while work continued to
finalise the full Gonski disability loading. The expectation and the promise was that this was
going to be introduced in 2015.

Before the election, this process, just like the Gonski overall process, had full support
across the board. But, as I said, as a result of the election that support has waned. I am not
going to go through all the quotations which people know and I am not going through all that
argument. But what we do know is that that funding did not flow. So the funding in this bill
will change the transitional rules so that their funding is indexed. I think Senator Back was
talking about the people and the schools who would miss out if somehow this side of the
chamber actually rejected this legislation. Well, we are not and the schools will not, because
we actually believe that there must be this understanding and support for students, for
teachers, for educators and for communities to ensure that they have the special needs that
they must have to ensure that they have their education options.

Again, all of us share a commitment to ensure that there is an effective education process.
We can talk about the teachers we have met, the students we have met and the schools we
have attended. I would think most senators would be able to share those experiences. But
there is a clear expectation that this will be fulfilled and the disability loading or process will
happen. So this part of the bill we are supporting.

Another element of the bill is delaying the implementation of the school improvement
plans by one year. For me, this is just so frustrating because there was so much work done in
developing agreements around the school improvement plans. We talked with teachers
because they actually had raised concerns about whether this was going to be a large impost
on them and their workloads. We talked with families about how they would operate.
We talked with state education departments, who already had systems in place that demanded
teachers write individual plans for students. That work was done. The process was in place.
No process receives absolute joyous acceptance in its first rollout. But the absolute need to
have this relationship and this clear, defined school improvement plan presented by teachers
working with their students was agreed. So that was the process that was rolling out, that was
going to be part of the introduction.

What we have here is a delay by one year. That is to facilitate further changes to the school
improvement plans as a consequence of the minister's review of command and control
requirements of the school funding system.

Debate interrupted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Seselja)** (21:50): Order! I propose the
question:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

**McEwen, Rt Hon. Sir John, GCMG, CH**

**Senator CANAVAN** (Queensland) (21:50): It is a great honour to rise tonight on a day
where some history has been made in this place with the historic signing of the trade
agreement between Australia and China. Tonight I too want to talk about history, the history of the National Party, or the Country Party as it was called. This year, 2014, marks 80 years since Black Jack McEwen, or John McEwen, was first elected to parliament. He was first elected as the member for Echuca on 15 September 1934. I want to speak of him tonight not just because of that anniversary but also because the Page Research Centre, the National Party's think tank, has republished John McEwen's autobiography, which was originally published in 1980.

At the time only around 200 copies were printed. I think that was quite a shame. I remember buying one of these books at a Lifeline book fair in Canberra for $2. Apparently, I got it at a bargain price because of the limited number of copies published. I thought it was a disgrace to have that out of circulation, something as important as an autobiography of a former Prime Minister. For a long time, I felt that we needed to do something about it. I did nothing for a long time until around Christmas last year, when my wife and I retyped it and put it in an e-book. Finally, we were able to convince the Page Research Centre to help republish it. It is great that it is out now and hopefully will remain in our nation's records.

McEwen was an amazing person. He served in the other place here for more than 36 years as a member for three different federal seats. He was a minister for around a third of the first 70 years of this nation as a Federation and had a remarkable influence on the development of that nation. He was Prime Minister for a very short period—22 days—after the death of Harold Holt, but he was Acting Prime Minister for 550 days over his career—almost a year and a half.

I think that that record means that it is very important that we have a written record of what he did and achieved. The fact that only 200 copies were originally printed has contributed, I think, to something of a distortion of John McEwen's record and legacy. His name has been variously used to promote or detract from certain policies, particularly protectionist policies, and he is no longer viewed as a man or someone of different hues and colours; he has become just a symbol for a set of ideas—for protectionist ideas.

When you look at McEwen's record and legacy and what he said, he is not just a two-dimensional figure of protectionism. Indeed, in John McEwen's first speech to parliament, in 1934, he said that our export industries:

… have to regain the overseas markets which they have lost largely as a result of the national policy of protection. I admit that the people of Australia have always supported a protective policy, and that, while we are entitled to disagree with that policy to a certain extent, we must submit to a decision reached by an overwhelming majority of the people.

So, very clearly, from the start McEwen only adopted protectionist policies because other parties in this parliament adopted them and there was no way of changing them. Indeed, the second-oldest party that still remains in this parliament, the Nationals or Country Party, is the only party that was formed for the ideas of freer trade. In 1920—the very first year of the Country Party—the trade minister at the time, Walter Massy-Greene, proposed substantial increases in tariffs. It was the Country Party who stood against those increases, unsuccessfully.

In 1934, the Country Party made a condition of forming a coalition government with the United Australia Party that tariffs be removed on 465 items of machinery. That was to help farmers reduce their costs and avoid the increased costs of protection that often fall on our
agricultural and mining sectors. Overall the Country Party at the time had more losses on free trade than victories, so it adopted the maxim, 'If you can't beat them, join them,' and thus was protection all-round given birth to.

It was not just the Country Party or the Liberal Party—or rather the predecessor to the Liberal Party—or the Labor Party that were supportive of protectionist policies at the time; people now forget that most Australian economists had that view too. Indeed, probably Australia's most famous economist, Colin Clark, bemoaned that fact in 1962 when he said that economists had taught:

… the current of popular protectionist sentiment and have avoided the unpleasant task of having to educate public opinion out of its prejudices …

So, in my view, we should be very careful not to condemn John McEwen for tactics that he used on the battle ground that he found himself on, especially when he did not choose that battle ground. He did not choose to be fighting specifically for protection; what he did do, though, was choose to support and protect what he called the wealth-producing industries of our nation. He spends quite a bit of time in his autobiography talking of those: in his view, the agriculture, mining and manufacturing industries, which export goods and produce wealth in this nation to allow us to buy other things and also buy public services. That was his ultimate goal. That was the end for which he wanted to achieve things. We should judge him on his success in achieving those objectives, not on the specific tactics that he had to use to do so at the time. He was very much a product of his times, as we all are.

He was quite successful in meeting those goals and objectives. Today, we have signed a historic agreement with another nation to our north. He showed incredible courage and foresight to drive the push for a trade agreement with Japan in 1957. That agreement was struck just 12 years after the end of World War II and just 12 years after Australia saw fully the impact of the great abuse of Australian prisoners of war during that war by the then Japanese imperial government. Just a decade after that, McEwen was driving an agreement with that nation within cabinet—often a sole battle without the wider support of the RSL and definitely without the support of the Labor Party. That agreement has served this country well in the 50-odd years since it was signed, and we would not be the same nation today if it were not for that.

Some people say that, because of his protectionist policies, McEwen blackmailed the cabinet or he blackmailed the Liberal Party to support coalition policies. That is not true either. It was the policy of all major parties to support protectionism. Indeed, John McEwen was a coalitionist first and foremost. People forget that in the 1930s he was kicked out of the Victorian Country Party for forming and joining a federal coalition government, but he felt that a coalition government was the best way to achieve things.

He once described the Liberal Party as the Country Party's 'political blood brothers'. He went on to say:

There seems to be a view in some quarters that all we have to do is sit on the cross benches and tell the government what to do. That is ludicrous. It doesn't work that way.

That is advice that we could all still use today: it does not work that way. We have seen in the last few years how government to the highest bidder works and how disastrous it can be for our nation. We have always had the most successful governments in this country where there
are people willing to work together towards common goals, not trying to buy each other off based on who can offer the greatest price at the time.

I said earlier that John McEwen was very much a product of his times. As history recedes, the other thing that we forget is that the generation of leaders in the 1950s and 1960s went through the crucible of the Second World War. John McEwen was right there at the forefront of that. He was a member of the War Cabinet for part of the war, and also a member of the wider Advisory War Council in the Curtin government. He saw firsthand that Australia really only could put up a token defence of its nation, particularly early on in the war. People also forget that he played a crucial role in capturing New Caledonia from the Vichy French government of the time, which was very important for the defence of this nation. Because he had seen that firsthand, he wanted to make sure that we could defend ourselves going forward. That was another reason why he supported building up a strong manufacturing base in this country: he wanted to avoid another existential threat.

All of this detail is often lost now. It is often lost 80-odd years since McEwen started his career. It is lost because the people who are writing about John McEwen now often did not know him or certainly do not read firsthand accounts. Hopefully, this new edition of John McEwen's autobiography can play a small role in helping to correct that. It is 80 years since his election. I think it is certainly time that his story is told in his own words.

**Carers Week**

**Senator O'NEILL** (New South Wales) (22:00): I rise to make some remarks about Carers Week, which passed not too long ago. I wanted to take the opportunity before the year's end to acknowledge the wonderful work that carers do right across Australia 24/7. Sadly, I must say to these people that in the future, under the vision of the Abbott government, there will be little to celebrate. To highlight the plight of carers in New South Wales and around the nation, I would like to put on record here tonight the case of Lismore locals Cathy and Andy Ridd. In September, the Senate Select Committee on Health held a hearing in Lismore. There are about 2,300 registered recipients of the carers payment in the electorate of Page and Cathy Ridd is one of them. Cathy cares for her husband Andy, who has motor neurone disease or MND, a significant and disabling disease which most often hits the fit and well. Andy is in the later stages of motor neurone disease. In a moving submission to the committee, Cathy said:

Andy is a courageous and gracious man, but he is sometimes overwhelmed with fear that he will die in pain and in hospital, rather than peacefully at home because the right services aren't available. As Andy's condition deteriorates, he is in need of more palliative care services to give him and Cathy the best possible quality of life. There is a community-based palliative care nursing team in Lismore, but it has only one palliative care specialist who, due to a lack of funding, can work only part time. Pain management is key to palliative care in MND cases and Andy's pain management requirements change on almost a weekly basis. Due to the specialist's limited working hours, it can be difficult to arrange regular appointments, certainly not weekly, and the palliative care often falls to a GP. Palliative care pain management is not really a GP's job. They often do not understand the unique requirements of an MND patient and, as Cathy said:

We are constantly running to try to keep up. We are all exhausted from battling the health service to get what we need when we need it.
She told the committee that the system of prioritising people's needs does not take into account conditions that degenerate rapidly. And that is not just Cathy's opinion. She has heard it from health professionals and from funding bodies themselves. She went on to say:

Without funding, we have carers selling their assets to pay for services or trying to do it all themselves and then burning out. The consequence is that their loved one with MND is more likely to end up occupying a bed in the public hospital system, simply because the carer has no other option.

Keeping people out of hospital: is that not what a health system should strive for? The system we have is failing people like Cathy and Andy Ridd and Tony Abbott's GP tax will only exacerbate that problem. Hospitals expect to be inundated by people who will not be able to afford the $7 GP co-payment and choose to visit a hospital to avoid it or end up having to visit the hospital because they did not get to their GP in a timely fashion.

The NSW government's own briefing paper prepared in early May for the Premier stated clearly that emergency departments in the state can expect attendances to increase by 500,000 a year, blowing out waiting times at emergency departments at a cost of an extra $80 million annually. You can put carers in that choked hospital queue, but how will they be celebrating Carers Week under that system? Instead of acknowledging the fantastic, unpaid work that these people contribute to our nation day in, day out, there will be little for these selfless people to rejoice about in Carers Week under the Abbott regime. Carers Week will stand as a stark reminder to the rest of the community of Tony Abbott's insensitive attitude to the tireless efforts of our carers under the legislation he proposes to this parliament.

Carers themselves will not have to be reminded; they will live under the hardship of the policy day in, day out. This heartless coalition government has introduced legislation to facilitate the Prime Minister's manufactured budget bottom line. It will slash indexation arrangements for pensions, including the vital carer payment. These cruel cuts will reduce the real value of income support for those providing in-home care, real, loving care which cannot possibly be compared with that available in a hospital ward, in an emergency ward or in the corridor as they wait for a bed. Carers are partners, carers are relatives, carers are friends who give up their time and often their working careers to provide more than $40 billion in unpaid care annually. They are not asking for that much but this government will not give them what they basically need. The $40 billion is an expense that would otherwise need to be met by our health sector, the aged care and community services sector and ultimately by the taxpayer.

Under Tony Abbott's leadership 2,800 carers in my area on the Central Coast in the seats of Dobell and Robertson face having the value of their carer payment cut by up to $4,000 per year within 10 years. That startling figure comes from a very reliable source, the Australian Council of Social Services. The carer payment went some way to compensating volunteers but Tony Abbott sees fit to treat their work as a monetary unit, an annoying expense to the government which can be pared back to meet a false budget emergency that no-one in Australia believes any more. The Abbott government should be boosting support for carers, not casting them adrift.

The work I do as part of the Senate select health committee has given me great opportunity to hear firsthand from healthcare providers and the public alike. The depth of concern out there at the very grass roots about where Tony Abbott is taking the country's health system is a very real and pressing concern. Our Prime Minister intends to cash in on the community, to milk the public, especially the sick and the elderly, for their last $7. Witness after witness at
inquiries right across the country have made it clear that the GP tax will be a disaster for families. It will turn people away from seeing a doctor and drive them to overstretch public hospital emergency departments. These changes will see more and more people avoiding health services and not accessing them until their conditions become chronic and require much more extensive, acute hospital treatment. It is hardly a healthy approach to health care.

The health committee has also been told of more hidden in the Abbott budget. Pathology and diagnostic imaging consultations are also going to cost more. Cancer and other chronic disease sufferers will be hit with significant advanced costs for medical imaging and other pathology testing. The abolition of the bulk-billing incentive for X-rays, MRIs, cat scans and ultrasounds will increase the cost for healthcare professionals, who will have no choice but to pass these on to their clients.

The rebate reduction from 95 to 85 per cent will result in cancer patients having to fork out thousands of dollars for their care and diagnostics upfront—if they have it. But what if they do not have it? Evidence to the committee from the Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association reveals that patients will be forced to pay $95 upfront for every X-ray, $380 for every CAT scan, up to $160 for every mammogram and $190 for every ultrasound. What does that do to a person with chronic illness and the person caring for them?

In my area, Dr Rod Beckwith is a medical director of the Reliance GP Superclinic at West Gosford—and he sees trouble ahead. He says:

When the rebates drop next year, the gap payments that patients will have to make will be out of reach for many Australians.

Worse still, it is often the sickest patients who will pay the highest gaps, because they require the most complex and clinically intensive services. With the safety net ripped away, these extra costs have the potential to bankrupt Australians with complex issues.

They have the potential to bankrupt those who are the most ill, those who are chronically ill in our community. Is that really the place where this government wants to take this nation? It is another one of the hidden traps in the Abbott budget—and it only came to light in the committee's public hearings exactly how dangerous this ill-thought out policy is.

We know the truth. Tony Abbott's GP tax is not just for a visit to the doctor; it is a pathology tax, a diagnostic imaging tax and an MRI tax. He promised no cuts to health. That was a lie. It was a lie to the elderly and to the unemployed—to whom he promised no tax increases. The list of broken promises to the Australian people will only get longer and longer—indeed, sadly, longer than the—(Time expired)

**Multiculturalism**

**Senator RICE** (Victoria) (22:10): I want to speak tonight in support of our incredible multicultural and multi-faith communities and, in particular, in support of and in solidarity with Muslim women. I have been extremely upset by the racist attacks on our Australian Muslim community, which have increased with the brutality being experienced in Iraq at the hands of ISIS.

I do not want to focus tonight on our government's reaction to this—increasing ASIO powers, cracking down on people visiting Syria and Iraq in order to stop foreign fighters, and following the US into an unwinnable war in the Middle East. What I want to discuss is the
importance of keeping Australians safe at home in this climate of fear and terror by bringing us together and building cohesion in our community.

I am not Muslim—in fact, I am not at all religious. I was brought up as a Christian but I now oscillate between describing myself as agnostic or atheist. But I will vigorously defend the rights of people to practise their religion, whether Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindi or whatever. I see our vibrant multifaith community as a strength of our Australian society.

I live in Footscray in Melbourne. I used to work in Broadmeadows. My office is now in Coburg. My Melbourne, my Australia, is one of people of all backgrounds, all races, all faiths working and living harmoniously together—our diversity making us a stronger, better, more resilient, more interesting and vibrant Australia. So the recent racist attacks on our Muslim community distressed me. When I heard of Muslim women being abused on the streets of Melbourne, having their headscarves ripped off, being attacked on public transport, I had to act. I decided that at the very least I could express my solidarity with Muslim women in Victoria. I organised a morning tea to be held at a community centre in Fawkner, in the northern suburbs of Melbourne where many Muslim families live.

I thought maybe 15 to 20 women would come. But the community centre put the word out well. When we arrived, the community house was already crowded, and women and children kept arriving. We estimated 150 women crammed into the small venue and took the opportunity to talk to us about what they were experiencing. That 150 women made the effort to come tells a story in itself. These women feel under threat.

I would like to thank Meredith Lawrence at Fawkner Community House who organised the event with us; Moreland City Councillors Lenka Thompson and Sue Bolton; and Tasneen Chopra from the Muslim Women's Council for Human Rights who also attended.

I want to quote extensively tonight from a letter that was presented to me by one of the women who attended the morning tea, Nasrin. Her words reflect the feelings of so many in the room. Nasrin describes herself as a mother of three children and IT professional working for a large financial institution. She says:

I am humbled by the opportunity to express concerns about the violence and physical attacks happening towards Muslims and in particular Muslim women wearing headscarves.

It is a great honour for me to be here, at the same time, it is also a shame that I need to stand up for my basic right, that is—freedom to practice my religion without being fearful of racism in 21st Century Australia.

The fear of racial attacks is so widespread in the community that a number of my well wishers advised me 'speak softly, be careful, choose your words carefully'—this is due to their genuine concern that after writing this letter, I might have to face personal attacks and home invasion by unwelcomed guests.

However, given what is happening recently, we cannot be just silent.

We need to realise that the recent attacks on Muslim women are actually a symptom of a major underlying issue—that is 'Racism in Australia.' We need to analyse the root cause of this issue to understand what has led us into this situation before we can stop it and prevent it from happening in the future.

Women at the morning tea told their stories of missing medical appointments because they were afraid to catch public transport, of being abused from car windows, of having head scarves ripped off. This is a shocking indictment on our society. We had a representative of the Victoria Police attend the morning tea, who talked about actions women could take to help
them stay safe and encouraged them to report any racist and violent actions. We distributed a sheet giving phone numbers and details of who to contact if they were attacked.

This was important information and was appreciated, but it should not be necessary. What and who are flaming these racist attacks? As Nasrin said in her letter:

Our politicians are dividing communities by targeting Muslims based on association of faith in the name of 'National security'. I would like to ask the question why are we linking the overseas political issues with the local Muslim Community—is it due to guilt of association by faith?

It is time to admit that there are exaggerations of the reality to spread fear and taking out of proportion actions to single out a community and religious groups without solid evidence. This doesn’t really seem to be consistent with the democracy and liberty that we preach. All these issues are definitely destroying our trust and causing unhealthy division.

The sense that the attacks on them began 'at the top' was shared by most of the women attending the morning tea. Nasrin continues:

The recent home invasions prove that we have lost the safety and security not only on the streets but also the privacy of our own homes. Muslim women are seeing their children, husbands, fathers, brothers and close relatives being taken away in custody without being charged and purely based on 'suspicions'.

The media is assisting these fear mongering acts by misrepresenting facts, for example, describing a plastic toy sword, that was found during one of these home raids, as sharp like a razor that can kill someone when in reality it cannot even cut a cucumber.

The violence towards Muslim women is a consequence of the Islamophobic attitude of some politicians. The media further sensationalises their exaggerated fears. These in turn have contributed to the radicalisation of certain groups who are now attacking Muslim women.

These are the consequences of what is said here in our parliament. These are the consequences of last month’s ill thought out and offensive proposed bans on burqas and niqabs in the public galleries here at Parliament House. Nasrin outlines five ways forward. They are:

Firstly, introduce tougher anti racism laws to bring the offenders to justice.

Secondly, educate the politicians and media reporters by providing mandatory compliance training about unconscious bias. They need to learn how to promote cohesion in the community.

We may even need to consider providing professional counselling services to those politicians who are suffering from excessive fear and anxiety.

Thirdly, outlaw and ban any racist person, groups or organisations that are promoting hatred based on race, religion or culture and bring them to justice.

Fourthly, provide more resources to our police force to implement justice effectively. Currently, many of us are not reporting the racial or physical attacks, as they believe that nothing will be done about it.

Finally, raise more community awareness to stop racism.

Those are Nasrin's suggestions. I support these calls and call upon my fellow parliamentarians to join me in supporting them.

I want to finish by sharing another event organised by a non-Muslim woman who had attended the morning tea. She was a parent at Pascoe Vale North Primary School and, after hearing the stories at the morning tea, decided to organise a lunch at her school to bring non-Muslim and Muslim mothers together. This event too was a great success, involving 30 or so women. Some of the comments that were made at this lunch included: ‘We should get together more often as a school, as a community, as mothers. We have a lot more in common.
than we think we do,' and 'We should keep doing this, to break down the barriers and make more of an effort to get involved and be part of our school community.' I salute parents, Angela and Susan, and Betty, the school principal for organising such a positive event, leading the way in building community rather than being confronted by difference. I will let Nasrin's words finish my speech:

At the end, we need to think positive and be positive. It is true that the majority of us are decent Australians who show great respect to each other. For example, last night as I was returning from work, in the train a man approached me and he said, 'I support you wearing headscarf. I am sorry to see all these attacks happening'.

We shall overcome this era and work together to build a great nation for our children where we care for and respect each other.

Queensland

Senator O'SULLIVAN (Queensland—Nationals Whip in the Senate) (22:20): I rise tonight to give a short report on a recent trip that I undertook across some 1,500 kilometres of an area that represents about 20 per cent of the landmass of my state of Queensland—commencing in Boulia Shire to the north-west and transgressing the Barcoo, Diamantina, Quilpie, Paroo and Balonne shires. These areas are home to some iconic names and descriptions well recognised by many Australians. They are at the start of the Birdsville Track or the end of the Birdsville Track, depending on which side of the Simpson Desert you started or finish. They reside above probably our greatest natural gift—the Artesian Basin. The birthplace of the Flying Doctor is a couple of hundred kilometres to the north. It has the great Cooper Basin and the great Diamantina River—which, in effect, on the south-eastern end, represents the headwaters of the great Murray-Darling Basin. It is this area where about 40 or 50 per cent of the production of beef cattle in my state is grown, where our state produces some 66 per cent of the national herd and so lifts its share, and someone else's, in terms of the contribution that makes to the national economy in agriculture, and particularly in the grass-fed beef sector.

This area is very seriously impacted by the worst drought in, some say, over 100 years. In well over 95 per cent of the area that I travelled through there was absolutely no pasture. It is not just drought affected; it is totally drought stricken. With regard to the challenges of the drought, I have spoken about that in this place on many occasions. I want to acknowledge that our government is responding, I think, in a fair and measured way to the drought packages. I particularly want to congratulate the agriculture minister on recent adjustments to the package he has taken forward. I think they will close the gap for some who might have found the earlier packages too difficult to access. I think that in time that measure will be seen as the one that saved many hundreds, if not thousands, of producers, assuming that we get a decent break in the weather some time soon.

The other thing that struck me was the state of communications in this part of our great state and nation. I am embarrassed, and I have said so publicly, about the state of communications in some of those communities. For example, in Boulia you cannot use a mobile phone, landlines are intermittent, as is access to the internet. Also, the Australia Post office there was going broke and had to be purchased by the shire. The shire now subsidises the operation of the post office to the tune of $100,000 a year. Imagine if some of us in this place or the other place went back to our electorates and told the good citizens of those
electorates that they all needed to put their hands into their pockets, additionally, to subsidise such services that the rest of Australia takes for granted.

The introduction of internet services with the NBN in the Boulia and Diamantina shires is going to be subsidised at the cost of $13,600 per ratepayer. Whilst we move around the cafes of Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and so many other centres around the country accessing free wi-fi, if you happen to be in Bedourie or Stonehenge or Jundah, or any of the hub communities within those two major and great shires, you are about to sign off on putting in $13,600 per ratepayer for the privilege to access the most basic and fundamental internet services that are available. Each of us as a test should doorknock a street somewhere near us in eastern Australia or in the bigger capital cities and ask the punters there how they would feel about putting $13,000-plus per ratepayer towards providing the services that we take for granted.

The impact of this on the lives of these people is enormous. It has an impact on their ability to conduct business and on their ability to deliver basic education services to their children. In fact, in a case reported to me at Birdsville, a mother and her four children have had to move into town because they can no longer efficiently access School of the Air. It is gone. The intermittent service they get from the bandwidth prevents the children from being able to complete lessons on so many days that they can no longer persist with the issue.

The medical centres I attended out there have some state of the art equipment, funded in this case by the state, and I am sure that is true for most of the state, only they cannot use it. This is lifesaving equipment, with people there who are qualified to operate the equipment, but the bandwidth is not there for them to be able to upload some of the data imagery to go off to a physician in Adelaide or Brisbane so that they can guide them through the treatments that are required. In some cases it is life-saving treatment. Again, these are issues that I think we should all be considering. I am not here to lay this on the previous government or on this government. I think the more we expose it the more pressure there will be from a bipartisan point of view for us to rectify this.

These people cannot even conduct their businesses. We have businesses that talk about properties there that export meat, some of the best meat in the world—grass-fed meat from the Cooper—onto the plates in New York, yet they can go three or four days before they can enact business off their property, because they cannot access a fundamental platform with respect to the use of the internet. Sometimes, even their fixed telephone lines are intermittent. Even these intermittent services disappear in periods when we have wet seasons, where some of the infrastructure is affected. They can go for weeks and weeks without technicians being able to get to some of those isolated areas to restore this base service.

This is affecting families. I am not a Facebook person myself, but these people are prevented from interacting with their larger family when they have children away at boarding schools. They are now having to come away for grade 7 and not even waiting until grade 8. It has a massive impact on some families. Where they have four children who all have to board, over a lifetime there is another $80,000 on top of the $13,600, on top of the subsidisation of the post office and the like.

So I ask everybody to take a very conscious and measured approach to this. We cannot leave these Australians behind. They have made this nation, even if some might argue their contribution in contemporary times is not what it was 30 to 60 years ago. Anyone who does
not understand the story of this nation, and anyone who does understand it, will understand what contribution the people who live in these isolated areas have made to the wealth of our nation.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight. I know that this is a matter that will attract the empathy and support of the opposition. I would expect it of all members of this place. I think we need to have a conversation over the coming weeks, and hopefully not much more than the coming months, until we come up with a solution that will provide these people with the fundamental dignity of being able to communicate with the rest of the world.

The PRESIDENT: I remind senators they have been invited to attend a parliamentary address by Mr Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, in the House of Representatives tomorrow at 10.15 am.

Senate adjourned at 22:31

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.]


Australian Prudential Regulation Authority Act 1998—Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (confidentiality) determination—No. 15 of 2014 [F2014L01428].


Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011—Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) ( Destruction of Methane from Piggeries using Engineered Biodigesters) Methodology Determination Variation 2014 (No. 1) [F2014L01503].


Civil Aviation Regulations 1988—
Direction — number of cabin attendants for Fokker F70 and Fokker F100 aircraft (Alliance Airlines)—CASA 264/14 [F2014L01481].

Repeal of instrument CASA 61/12 — minimum runway width for aeroplanes—CASA 266/14 [F2014L01504].

Civil Aviation Regulations 1988 and Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998—
Civil Aviation Order 82.6 Amendment Instrument 2014 (No. 2) [F2014L01502].

Civil Aviation Order (Flight Crew Licensing) Repeal and Amendment Instrument 2014 (No. 1) [F2014L01177]—Revised explanatory statement.

Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998—
Exemption — aerial application proficiency check and operator proficiency check (head of flight operations) — aeroplanes—CASA EX148/14 [F2014L01496].

Exemption — crew member proficiency for emergency procedures (Virgin Australia International Airlines)—CASA EX139/14 [F2014L01480].

Exemption — flight examiner rating for holders of CAO 82.0 check pilot approvals—CASA EX140/14 [F2014L01457].

Exemption — take-offs from Lady Elliot Island aerodrome—CASA EX77/14 [F2014L01055]—Revised explanatory statement.


Manual of Standards Part 139 Amendment Instrument 2014 (No. 1) [F2014L01506].

Prescribed type ratings for CASR Part 142 flight training Instrument 2014—CASA 265/14 [F2014L01478].

Repeal of CASA EX126/12 — minimum runway width—CASA EX146/14 [F2014L01505].


Commissioner of Taxation—Public Rulings—
Class Ruling CR 2014/90.

Taxation Ruling—Addendum—TR 2005/7.

Competition and Consumer Act 2010—


Copyright Act 1968—Declarations under section 10A—25 September 2014 [3].


Corporations Act 2001—
ASIC Class Orders—
CO 14/977 [F2014L01442].
CO 14/978 [F2014L01449].
CO 14/1000 [F2014L01450].
CO 14/1001 [F2014L01444].
CO 14/1106 [F2014L01483].
CO 14/1118 [F2014L01484].


Customs Act 1901—


Defence Act 1903—
Section 58B—
Deployment allowance and international campaign allowance – amendment—
Defence Determination 2014/53.
Defence Determination 2014/54.


Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999—


Amendment of List of Exempt Native Specimens – Spencer Gulf Prawn Fishery, Gulf St Vincent Prawn Fishery and West Coast Prawn Fishery (28 October 2014)—EPBC303DC/SFS/2014/42 [F2014L01445].

Amendment of List of Exempt Native Specimens – Western Australian South Coast Crustacean Fishery, Western Australian Mackerel Fishery, Western Australian South Coast Salmon Managed Fishery and Western Australian South West Coast Salmon Managed Fishery (4 November 2014)—EPBC303DC/SFS/2014/43 [F2014L01499].

Amendment to the list of threatened species under sections 178, 181 and 183 (166) (30 October 2014) [F2014L01490].

Amendment to the lists of threatened species, threatened ecological communities and key threatening processes under sections 178, 181 and 183 (165) (20 October 2014) [F2014L01489].
Amendment to the lists of threatened species, threatened ecological communities and key threatening processes under sections 178, 181 and 183 (168) (27 October 2014) [F2014L01488].


Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery Actual Live Weight Value of a Statutory Fishing Right (Amendment) Determination 2014 [F2014L01487].
Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery Australia’s National Catch Allocation (Amendment) Determination 2014 [F2014L01482].


Health Insurance Act 1973—
Health Insurance (Allied Health Services) Amendment Determination 2014 (No. 2) [F2014L01447].
Health Insurance (Cone Beam Computed Tomography) Revocation Determination 2014 [F2014L01435].
Health Insurance (General Medical Services Table) Amendment (Chronic Disease Management) Regulation 2014—Select Legislative Instrument 2014 No. 158 [F2014L01453].
Health Insurance (Gippsland, Rockhampton and Gladstone Mobile MRI Service) Amendment Determination 2014 [F2014L01454].
Health Insurance (HbA1c Test for Diagnosis of Diabetes) Determination 2014 [F2014L01441].
Health Insurance (Pathologist-determinable Services) Amendment Determination 2014 (No. 2) [F2014L01437].

Higher Education Support Act 2003—
Higher Education Provider Approval—No. 4 of 2014 [F2014L01493].

VET Provider Approvals—
No. 35 of 2014 [F2014L01456].
No. 61 of 2014 [F2014L01451].
No. 63 of 2014 [F2014L01492].
No. 64 of 2014 [F2014L01479].

Migration Act 1958—
Migration Amendment (Subclass 050 Visas) Regulation 2014—Select Legislative Instrument 2014 No. 162 [F2014L01460].
Migration Regulations 1994—Arrangements for Work and Holiday Visa Applicants from Argentina, Bangladesh, Chile, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, United States of America and Uruguay—IMMI 14/098 [F2014L01498].

Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004—Military Rehabilitation and Compensation (Warlike Service) Determination 2014 (No. 4) [F2014L01430].


National Health Act 1953—
National Health (Botulinum Toxin Program) Special Arrangement Amendment Instrument 2014 (No. 2)—PB 87 of 2014 [F2014L01429].

National Health (Efficient Funding of Chemotherapy) Special Arrangement Amendment Instrument 2014 (No. 10)—PB 86 of 2014 [F2014L01439].

National Health (Listed drugs on F1 or F2) Amendment Determination 2014 (No. 10)—PB 85 of 2014 [F2014L01440].


Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989—
Grant of exemptions under section 40—
Gulf Aircraft Pty Ltd—No. S40E93094131.
Marjen NSW Pty Ltd as the trustee for The Scott Family Trust—No. S40E84596483.


Private Health Insurance Act 2007—Private Health Insurance (Benefit Requirements) Amendment Rules 2014 (No. 5) [F2014L01434].

Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013—Commonwealth becoming a member of International Age Rating Coalition Incorporated (IARC)—29 October 2014.

Public Service Act 1999—Australian Public Service Commissioner’s Amendment (Notification of Decisions and Other Measures) Direction 2014 [F2014L01426].


Tabling

The following documents were tabled out of sitting:

Documents certified by the president

37. Parliamentary Service Commissioner—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

Committee Reports

38. Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee—Processes to support victims of abuse in Defence—Report, dated October 2014, Hansard record of proceedings, documents presented to the committee, additional information and submissions. [Received 31 October 2014]

39. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee—Exposure draft of the Medical Services (Dying with Dignity) Bill 2014—Report, dated November 2014 including Hansard record of proceedings, additional information and submissions. [Received 10 November 2014]

40. Human Rights—Joint Statutory Committee—15th report of 44th Parliament—Examination of legislation in accordance with the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011—Bills introduced 20 to 30 October 2014 and legislative instruments received 20 September to 10 October 2014, dated November 2014. [Received 14 November 2014]

Senate Standing Order 166

Government Documents

41. ASC Pty Ltd—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

42. Auditing and Assurance Standards Board—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

43. Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

44. Australian Accounting Standards Board—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

45. Australian Fisheries Management Authority—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

46. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited (AITSL)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

47. Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

48. Cancer Australia—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

49. Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

50. Department of Defence—Report for 2013-14 (2 volumes), including report of the Defence Materiel Organisation. [Received 31 October 2014]

51. Department of the Treasury—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

52. Financial Reporting Council—Report for 2013-14 on auditor independence. [Received 31 October 2014]

53. Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]


55. National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

56. National Health Funding Body—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]

57. National Health Funding Pool—Report for 2013-14, including financial statements for state and territory State Pool Accounts. [Received 31 October 2014]


59. Royal Australian Mint—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
60. Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission and Comcare—Reports for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
61. Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Authority (Seacare)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
62. Special Broadcasting Service Corporation (SBS)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
63. Takeovers Panel—Report for 2013-14. [Received 31 October 2014]
64. Indigenous Business Australia (IBA)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 4 November 2014]
65. Sydney Harbour Federation Trust—Report for 2013-14. [Received 4 November 2014]
66. Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 4 November 2014]
67. Director of National Parks—Report for 2013-14. [Received 5 November 2014]
68. Australian Government Solicitor (AGS)—Report for 2013-14. [Received 10 November 2014]
70. Climate Change Authority—Report for 2013-14. [Received 14 November 2014]

**Reports of the Auditor-General**

71. Report no. 3 of 2014-15—Performance audit—Fraud control arrangements: Across entities—Corrigendum. [Received 5 November 2014]
73. Report no. 5 of 2014-15—Performance audit—Annual compliance arrangements with large corporate taxpayers: Australian Taxation Office. [Received 6 November 2014]
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76. Indexed lists of departmental and agency files (continuing order of the Senate of 30 May 1996, as amended on 3 December 1998)
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77. Auditor-General—Audit report no. 3 of 2014-15—Performance audit—Fraud control arrangements: across entities

**Responses to Senate Resolutions**

78. Minister for Health (Mr Dutton) responding to a resolution of the Senate of 27 August 2014 concerning suicide prevention
79. Minister for Education (Mr Pyne) responding to a resolution of the Senate of 24 September 2014 concerning schools funding
80. Minister for Foreign Affairs (Ms Bishop) responding to a resolution of the Senate of 24 September 2014 concerning humanitarian assistance in the Middle East

**Document by President**

81. Department of Parliamentary Services—Report for 2013-14