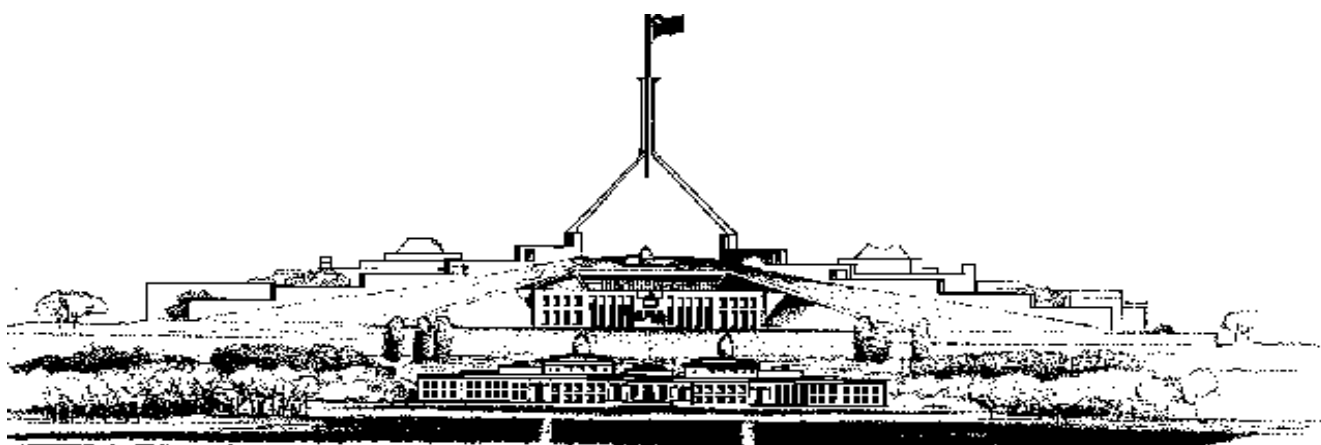




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



House of Representatives

Official Hansard

Tuesday, 19 February 2019

FORTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—EIGHTH PERIOD

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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SITTING DAYS—2019

Month	Date
February	12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21
April	2, 3, 4, 15, 16, 17, 18
May	13, 14, 15, 16, 27, 28, 29, 30
June	3, 4, 5, 6, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27
August	12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22
September	9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19
October	14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24
November	25, 26, 27, 28
December	2, 3, 4, 5

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**FORTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—EIGHTH PERIOD**

Governor-General

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

House of Representatives Office Holders

Speaker—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith MP

Deputy Speaker—Mr Kevin John Hogan MP

Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP

Members of the Speaker's Panel—

Hon. Kevin James Andrews MP, Hon. Sharon Leah Bird MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mr Andrew William Hastie MP, Mr Luke Ronald Howarth MP, Hon. Craig Arthur Samuel Laundry MP, Hon. Dr John Joseph McVeigh MP, Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP, Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP and Mrs Lucy Elizabeth Wicks MP

Leader of the House—Hon. Christopher Pyne MP

Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Darren Chester MP

Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Anthony Stephen Burke MP

Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP

Party Leaders and Whips

Liberal Party of Australia

Leader—Hon. Scott John Morrison MP

Deputy Leader—Hon. Joshua Anthony Frydenberg MP

Chief Government Whip—Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP

Government Whips—Mr Albertus Johannes van Manen MP and Mr Rowan Eric Ramsey MP

The Nationals

Leader—Hon. Michael Francis McCormack MP

Deputy Leader—Senator Hon. Bridget McKenzie

Chief Whip—Hon Damian Kevin Drum MP

Deputy Whip—Mr Kenneth Desmond O'Dowd MP

Australian Labor Party

Leader—Hon. William Richard Shorten MP

Deputy Leader—Hon. Tanya Joan Plibersek MP

Chief Opposition Whip—Mr Christopher Patrick Hayes MP

Opposition Whips—Ms Joanne Catherine Ryan MP and Mr Graham Douglas Perrett MP

Printed by authority of the House of Representatives

Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
Abbott, Hon. Anthony John	Warringah, NSW	LP
Albanese, Hon. Anthony Norman	Grayndler, NSW	ALP
Alexander, Mr John Gilbert, OAM	Bennelong, NSW	LP
Aly, Dr Anne	Cowan, WA	ALP
Andrews, Hon. Karen Lesley	McPherson, QLD	LP
Andrews, Hon. Kevin James	Menzies, VIC	LP
Bandt, Mr Adam Paul	Melbourne, VIC	AG
Banks, Ms Julia Helen	Chisholm, VIC	IND
Bird, Hon. Sharon Leah	Cunningham, NSW	ALP
Bishop, Hon. Julie Isabel	Curtin, WA	LP
Bowen, Hon. Christopher Eyles	McMahon, NSW	ALP
Broad, Hon. Andrew John	Mallee, VIC	NATS
Broadbent, Mr Russell Evan	McMillan, VIC	LP
Brodthmann, Ms Gai Marie	Canberra, ACT	ALP
Buchholz, Hon. Scott Andrew	Wright, QLD	LP
Burke, Hon. Anthony Stephen	Watson, NSW	ALP
Burney, Ms Linda Jean	Barton, NSW	ALP
Butler, Hon. Mark Christopher	Port Adelaide, SA	ALP
Butler, Ms Terri Megan	Griffith, QLD	ALP
Byrne, Hon. Anthony Michael	Holt, VIC	ALP
Chalmers, Dr James Edward	Rankin, QLD	ALP
Champion, Mr Nicholas David	Wakefield, SA	ALP
Chester, Hon. Darren Jeffrey	Gippsland, VIC	NATS
Chesters, Ms Lisa Marie	Bendigo, VIC	ALP
Christensen, Mr George Robert	Dawson, QLD	NATS
Ciobo, Hon. Steven Michele	Moncrieff, QLD	LP
Clare, Hon. Jason Dean	Blaxland, NSW	ALP
Claydon, Ms Sharon Catherine	Newcastle, NSW	ALP
Coleman, Mr David Bernard	Banks, NSW	LP
Collins, Hon. Julie Maree	Franklin, TAS	ALP
Conroy, Mr Patrick Martin	Shortland, NSW	ALP
Coulton, Hon. Mark Maclean	Parkes, NSW	NATS
Crewther, Mr Christopher John	Dunkley, VIC	LP
Danby, Hon. Michael David	Melbourne Ports, VIC	ALP
Dick, Mr Dugald Milton	Oxley, QLD	ALP
Dreyfus, Hon. Mark Alfred, QC	Isaacs, VIC	ALP
Drum, Hon. Damian Kevin	Murray, VIC	NATS
Dutton, Hon. Peter Craig	Dickson, QLD	LP
Elliot, Hon. Maria Justine	Richmond, NSW	ALP
Ellis, Hon. Katherine Margaret	Adelaide, SA	ALP
Entsch, Hon. Warren George	Leichhardt, QLD	LP
Evans, Mr Trevor Mark	Brisbane, QLD	LNP
Falinski, Mr Jason George	Mackellar, NSW	LP
Fitzgibbon, Hon. Joel Andrew	Hunter, NSW	ALP
Fletcher, Hon. Paul William	Bradfield, NSW	LP
Flint, Ms Nicolle Jane	Boothby, SA	LP
Freeland, Mr Michael Randolph	Macarthur, NSW	ALP
Frydenberg, Hon. Joshua Anthony	Kooyong, VIC	LP
Gee, Mr Andrew Robert	Calare, NSW	NATS
Georganas, Mr Steven	Hindmarsh, SA	ALP

Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
Giles, Mr Andrew James	Scullin, VIC	ALP
Gillespie, Hon. Dr David Arthur	Lyne, NSW	NATS
Goodenough, Mr Ian Reginald	Moore, WA	LP
Gorman, Mr Patrick	Perth, WA	ALP
Gosling, Mr Luke John	Solomon, NT	ALP
Hart, Mr Ross Anthony	Bass, TAS	ALP
Hartsuyker, Hon. Luke	Cowper, NSW	NATS
Hastie, Mr Andrew William	Canning, WA	LP
Hawke, Hon. Alexander George	Mitchell, NSW	LP
Hayes, Mr Christopher Patrick	Fowler, NSW	ALP
Henderson, Hon. Sarah Moya	Corangamite, VIC	LP
Hill, Mr Julian Christopher	Bruce, VIC	ALP
Hogan, Mr Kevin John	Page, NSW	NATS
Howarth, Mr Luke Ronald	Petrie, QLD	LP
Hunt, Hon. Gregory Andrew	Flinders, VIC	LP
Husar, Ms Emma	Lindsay, NSW	ALP
Husic, Hon. Edham Nurredin	Chifley, NSW	ALP
Irons, Hon. Stephen James	Swan, WA	LP
Jones, Mr Stephen Patrick	Whitlam, NSW	ALP
Joyce, Hon. Barnaby Thomas Gerard	New England, NSW	NATS
Katter, Hon. Robert Carl	Kennedy, QLD	KAP
Kearney, Ms Ged	Batman, VIC	ALP
Keay, Ms Justine Terri	Braddon, TAS	ALP
Keenan, Hon. Michael Fayat	Stirling, WA	LP
Kelly, Mr Craig	Hughes, NSW	LP
Kelly, Mr Michael Joseph	Eden-Monaro	ALP
Keogh, Mr Matthew James	Burt, WA	ALP
Khalil, Mr Peter	Wills, VIC	ALP
King, Hon. Catherine Fiona	Ballarat, VIC	ALP
King, Ms Madeleine Mary Harvie	Brand, WA	ALP
Lamb, Ms Susan	Longman, QLD	ALP
Laming, Mr Andrew Charles	Bowman, QLD	LP
Landry, Hon. Michelle Leanne	Capricornia, QLD	NATS
Laundy, Hon. Craig Arthur Samuel	Reid, NSW	LP
Leeser, Mr Julian Martin	Berowra, NSW	LP
Leigh, Hon. Dr Andrew Keith	Fraser, ACT	ALP
Ley, Hon. Sussan Penelope	Farrer, NSW	LP
Littleproud, Hon. David Kelly	Maranoa, QLD	LNP
Macklin, Hon. Jennifer Louise	Jagajaga, VIC	ALP
Marino, Ms Nola Bethwyn	Forrest, WA	LP
Marles, Hon. Richard Donald	Corio, VIC	ALP
McBride, Ms Emma Margaret	Dobell, NSW	ALP
McCormack, Hon. Michael Francis	Riverina, NSW	NATS
McGowan, Ms Catherine, AO	Indi, VIC	IND
McVeigh, Hon. Dr John Joseph	Groom, QLD	LNP
Mitchell, Mr Brian Keith	Lyons, TAS	ALP
Mitchell, Mr Robert George	McEwen, VIC	ALP
Morrison, Hon. Scott John	Cook, NSW	LP
Morton, Mr Ben	Tangney, WA	LP
Neumann, Hon. Shayne Kenneth	Blair, QLD	ALP

Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
O'Brien, Mr Llewellyn Stephen	Wide Bay, QLD	LNP
O'Brien, Mr Ted Lynam	Fairfax, QLD	LNP
O'Connor, Hon. Brendan Patrick John	Gorton, VIC	ALP
O'Dowd, Mr Kenneth Desmond	Flynn, QLD	NATS
O'Dwyer, Hon. Ms Kelly Megan	Higgins, VIC	LP
O'Neil, Ms Clare Ellen	Hotham, VIC	ALP
O'Toole, Ms Catherine Elizabeth	Herbert, QLD	ALP
Owens, Ms Julie Ann	Parramatta, NSW	ALP
Pasin, Mr Antony	Barker, SA	LP
Perrett, Mr Graham Douglas	Moreton, QLD	ALP
Phelps, Dr Kerry Lyndel	Wentworth, NSW	IND
Pitt, Hon. Keith John	Hinkler, QLD	NATS
Plibersek, Hon. Tanya Joan	Sydney, NSW	ALP
Porter, Hon. Charles Christian	Pearce, WA	LP
Prentice, Hon. Jane	Ryan, QLD	LP
Price, Hon Melissa Lee	Durack, WA	LP
Pyne, Hon. Christopher Maurice	Sturt, SA	LP
Ramsey, Mr Rowan Eric	Grey, SA	LP
Rishworth, Hon. Amanda Louise	Kingston, SA	ALP
Robert, Hon. Stuart Rowland	Fadden, QLD	LP
Rowland, Ms Michelle Anne	Greenway, NSW	ALP
Ryan, Ms Joanne Catherine	Lalor, VIC	ALP
Sharkie, Ms Rebekha Carina Che	Mayo, SA	CA
Shorten, Hon. William Richard	Maribyrnong, VIC	ALP
Smith, Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn	Casey, VIC	LP
Snowdon, Hon. Warren Edward	Lingiari, NT	ALP
Stanley, Ms Anne Maree	Werriwa, NSW	ALP
Sudmalis, Ms Ann Elizabeth	Gilmore, NSW	LP
Sukkar, Mr Michael Sven	Deakin, VIC	LP
Swan, Hon. Wayne Maxwell	Lilley, QLD	ALP
Swanson, Ms Meryl Jane	Paterson, NSW	ALP
Taylor, Hon. Angus James	Hume, NSW	LP
Tehan, Hon. Daniel Thomas	Wannon, VIC	LP
Templeman, Ms Susan Raye	Macquarie, NSW	ALP
Thistlethwaite, Hon. Matthew James	Kingsford Smith, NSW	ALP
Tudge, Hon. Alan Edward	Aston, VIC	LP
Vamvakinou, Ms Maria	Calwell, VIC	ALP
van Manen, Mr Albertus Johannes	Forde, QLD	LP
Vasta, Mr Ross Xavier	Bonner, QLD	LP
Wallace, Mr Andrew Bruce	Fisher, QLD	LNP
Watts, Mr Timothy Graham	Gellibrand, VIC	ALP
Wicks, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth	Robertson, NSW	LP
Wilkie, Mr Andrew Damien	Denison, TAS	IND
Wilson, Mr Joshua Hamilton	Fremantle, WA	ALP
Wilson, Mr Richard James	O'Connor, WA	LP
Wilson, Mr Timothy Robert	Goldstein, VIC	LP
Wood, Mr Jason Peter	La Trobe, VIC	LP
Wyatt, Hon. Kenneth George, AM	Hasluck, WA	LP
Zappia, Mr Antonio	Makin, SA	ALP
Zimmerman, Mr Trent Moir	North Sydney, NSW	LP

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

AG—Australian Greens; ALP—Australian Labor Party; CA—Centre Alliance;
IND—Independent; KAP—Katter's Australia Party; LNP—Liberal National Party;
LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals;

Heads of Parliamentary Departments

Clerk of the Senate—R Pye

Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder

Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic

Parliamentary Budget Officer—J Wilkinson

MORRISON MINISTRY

Title	Minister
Prime Minister	Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Minister for Indigenous Affairs	Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion
Minister for Women	Hon. Kelly O'Dwyer MP
<i>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</i>	<i>Hon. Steve Irons MP</i>
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development	Hon. Michael McCormack MP
Minister for Regional Services, Sport, Local Government and Decentralisation	Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie
Minister for Cities, Urban Infrastructure and Population	Hon. Alan Tudge MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories</i>	<i>Hon. Sussan Ley MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Roads and Transport</i>	<i>Hon. Scott Buchholz MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</i>	<i>Hon. Andrew Gee MP</i>
Treasurer	Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP
Assistant Treasurer	Hon. Stuart Robert MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Treasury and Finance</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja</i>
Minister for Finance and the Public Service (Vice-President of the Executive Council) (Leader of the Government in the Senate)	Senator the Hon. Mathias Cormann
Special Minister of State	Hon. Alex Hawke MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Treasury and Finance</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja</i>
Minister for Defence (Leader of the House)	Hon. Christopher Pyne MP
Minister for Defence Industry	Hon. Steven Ciobo MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs	Hon. Darren Chester MP
Minister for Defence Personnel (Deputy Leader of the House)	Hon. Darren Chester MP
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC	Hon. Darren Chester MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Defence</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. David Fawcett</i>
Minister for Foreign Affairs	Senator the Hon. Marise Payne
Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment (Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate)	Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham
<i>Assistant Minister for International Development and the Pacific</i>	Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston
<i>Assistant Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment</i>	<i>Hon. Mark Coulton MP</i>
Attorney-General	Hon. Christian Porter MP
Minister for Home Affairs	Hon. Peter Dutton MP
Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs	Hon. David Coleman MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Home Affairs</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Linda Reynolds CSC</i>
Minister for Communications and the Arts (Manager of Government Business in the Senate)	Senator the Hon. Mitch Fifield
Minister for Jobs and Industrial Relations	Hon. Kelly O'Dwyer MP
Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education	Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash
Minister for Resources and Northern Australia	Senator the Hon. Matthew Canavan
Minister for Industry, Science and Technology	Hon. Karen Andrews MP
Minister for Education	Hon. Dan Tehan MP

Title	Minister
Minister for Health	Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care	Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP
Minister for Indigenous Health	Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP
Minister for Families and Social Services	Hon. Paul Fletcher MP
Minister for Human Services and Digital Transformation	Hon. Michael Keenan MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services</i>	<i>Hon. Sarah Henderson MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Children and Families</i>	<i>Hon. Michelle Landry MP</i>
Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources	Hon. David Littleproud MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck</i>
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Drought Preparation and Response	Hon. David Littleproud MP
Minister for the Environment	Hon. Melissa Price MP
Minister for Energy	Hon. Angus Taylor MP

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. Assistant Ministers in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the *Ministers of State Act 1952*.

SHADOW MINISTRY

Title	Shadow Minister
Leader of the Opposition	Hon. Bill Shorten MP
Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	Hon. Bill Shorten MP
Shadow Minister for Young Australians and Youth Affairs	Terri Butler MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders</i>	<i>Senator Patrick Dodson</i>
<i>Shadow Cabinet Secretary and Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Jacinta Collins</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister to the Leader (Tasmania)</i>	<i>Senator Helen Polley</i>
Deputy Leader of the Opposition	Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
Shadow Minister for Education and Training	Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
Shadow Minister for Women	Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
Shadow Minister for Preventing Family Violence	Hon. Linda Burney MP
Shadow Minister for Skills, TAFE and Apprenticeships	Senator the Hon. Doug Cameron
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Schools</i>	<i>Andrew Giles MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Universities</i>	<i>Senator Louise Pratt</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Equality</i>	<i>Senator Louise Pratt</i>
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate	Senator the Hon. Penny Wong
Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs	Senator the Hon. Penny Wong
Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific	Senator Claire Moore
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate	Senator the Hon. Don Farrell
Shadow Special Minister of State	Senator the Hon. Don Farrell
Shadow Minister for Sport	Senator the Hon. Don Farrell
Shadow Treasurer	Hon. Chris Bowen MP
Shadow Minister for Small Business	Hon. Chris Bowen MP
Shadow Assistant Treasurer	Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP
Shadow Minister for Competition and Productivity	Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP
Shadow Minister for Charities and Not-for-profits	Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP
Shadow Minister for the Digital Economy	Hon. Ed Husic MP
Shadow Minister for Financial Services	Clare O'Neil MP
Shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs	Madeleine King MP
Shadow Minister Assisting for Small Business	Madeleine King MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Treasury</i>	<i>Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Small Business</i>	<i>Julie Owens MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Environment and Water	Hon. Tony Burke MP
Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Australia	Hon. Tony Burke MP
Shadow Minister for the Arts	Hon. Tony Burke MP
Manager of Opposition Business in the House of Representatives	Hon. Tony Burke MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Australia</i>	<i>Julie Owens MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Families and Social Services	Hon. Linda Burney MP
Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness	Senator the Hon. Doug Cameron
Shadow Minister for Human Services	Ed Husic MP
Shadow Minister for Disability and Carers	Senator Carol Brown
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Families and Communities</i>	<i>Senator Jenny McAllister</i>
Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development	Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Shadow Minister for Tourism	Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Shadow Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local	Stephen Jones MP

Title	Shadow Minister
Government	
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Infrastructure</i>	<i>Pat Conroy MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for External Territories</i>	<i>Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Road Safety</i>	<i>Senator Glenn Sterle</i>
Shadow Attorney-General	Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP
Shadow Minister for National Security	Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House of Representatives	Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP
Shadow Minister for Justice	Clare O'Neil MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for an Australian Head of State</i>	<i>Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations	Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP
Shadow Minister for Employment Services, Workforce Participation and Future of Work	Terri Butler MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Workplace Relations</i>	<i>Lisa Chesters MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy	Hon. Mark Butler MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy</i>	<i>Pat Conroy MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Defence	Hon. Richard Marles MP
Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs	Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP
Shadow Minister for Defence Personnel	Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</i>	<i>Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Cyber Security and Defence</i>	<i>Gai Brodtmann MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence Industry and Support</i>	<i>Hon. Mike Kelly AM MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research	Senator the Hon. Kim Carr
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Manufacturing and Science</i>	<i>Hon. Nick Champion MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Innovation and Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate</i>	<i>Senator Deborah O'Neill</i>
Shadow Minister for Health and Medicare	Hon. Catherine King MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Medicare</i>	<i>Tony Zappia MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health</i>	<i>Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP
Shadow Minister for Rural and Regional Australia	Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Australia</i>	<i>Lisa Chesters MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Resources and Northern Australia	Hon. Jason Clare MP
Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment	Hon. Jason Clare MP
Shadow Minister for Trade in Services	Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP
Shadow Minister Assisting for Resources	Madeleine King MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Northern Australia</i>	<i>Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Protection	Hon. Shayne Neumann MP
Shadow Minister for Finance	Dr Jim Chalmers MP
Shadow Minister for Communications	Hon. Michelle Rowland MP
Shadow Minister for Regional Communications	Stephen Jones MP
Shadow Minister for Ageing and Mental Health⁽²⁾	Hon. Julie Collins MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Ageing</i>	<i>Senator Helen Polley</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health</i>	<i>Senator Deborah O'Neill</i>
Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education and Development⁽¹⁾	Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP

Each box represents a portfolio except for ⁽¹⁾ which is in the Education portfolio and ⁽²⁾ which is in the Health portfolio. **Shadow Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.**

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Tuesday, 19 February 2019

The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 12:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE

Australia-Israel Relationship: 70th Anniversary

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister) (12:01): On indulgence, I rise to acknowledge the 70th anniversary of Australia's formal diplomatic relationship with the State of Israel and affirm our deep friendship with the people of Israel—and, in doing that, I welcome the ambassador here with us in the chamber today.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr MORRISON: In any long friendship there are moments that matter and moments never forgotten. For Australia and Israel it was in 1947 and it was in the United Nations. There was at that point no nation of Israel. Instead, there were broken and scarred Jewish people scattered around the world in places like Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau and Buchenwald. Though they no longer existed as state-sponsored machines of death, they seemed more real than a permanent home for the Jewish people at that time. It was as if darkness and hopelessness had covered the Jewish people as the true extent of the Holocaust became known. Maybe it was for such times that the Book of Joel spoke of young men seeing visions and old men dreaming dreams—and the age-old dream, in the words of David Ben-Gurion, was 'the redemption of Israel'.

It was in this setting that Australia chaired the 1947 UN committee that voted in favour of dividing the territory of mandate Palestine. On 29 November 1947 at the United Nations General Assembly, Australia joined 32 other nations in successfully voting for the partition plan. Looking back across seven decades it might seem that that was a simple thing to do and an obvious choice to make, but it was neither of those things. Australia made, in the words of Doc Evatt, who was instrumental in this recognition, 'an inevitable and just choice to stand with the Jewish people of the world and their vision for a Jewish state and a place of sanctuary where they would never again, and should never again, face persecution'.

Australia extended official recognition to the State of Israel in January 1949. In May of that same year Australia was proud to preside over the vote which formally admitted Israel as a member of the United Nations. As that new nation formed, the Jewish people arrived, in the words of David Ben-Gurion, 'with the dew of dreams still moist in our hearts'. Our small part, Australia's part, is a legacy of which we are proud and one we hold dear today as we mark this anniversary. In the words of our then Prime Minister: 'The new nation of Israel will be a force of special value in the world community, and its recognition was fair and just'—and so it has proved to be.

Today Israel's light is now a beacon of democracy in the Middle East. Ours is a 70-year-long friendship between two peoples which share a commitment to democracy and the rule of law, have a multicultural character and are committed to science and research, to a free press, to prosperity for our people and to innovation to overcome the challenges of our often hostile natural environments.

My government has resolved to ensure our commitment to Israel remains as firm today and in the future as it indeed was 70 years ago for Australia. That is why our government has acted for Australia to now recognise West Jerusalem, the seat of the Knesset and many institutions of government, as the capital of the State of Israel. We look forward moving our embassy to West Jerusalem when practical in support of and after the final status determination of a two-state solution. And, in the spirit of a two-state solution, we acknowledge the aspirations of the Palestinian people for a future state with its capital in East Jerusalem.

My government is also currently establishing a trade and defence office in West Jerusalem to enhance and support our deepening collaboration on trade, defence industries, investment and innovation. Just as it was 70 years ago, it remains in our national interests to see Israel continue to flourish as a liberal, participatory democracy in the Middle East. And, now as then, Australia continues to strongly support Israel's right to exist within secure and internationally recognised borders.

But my government won't just proclaim these words and sentiments; we will continue to act on them and not step back from or shrink from our commitments. This includes standing by Israel in the face of biased and unfair targeting of Israel in the UN General Assembly. The UN General Assembly is now the place where Israel is bullied and where anti-Semitism is cloaked in the language of human rights. Think about it: a nation of immigrants, with a free press and parliamentary democracy, which is financially prosperous, the source of innovation in the world and a refuge from persecution and genocide, is somehow now the centre of cruelty in the world, according to some in the UN. That is intellectual fraud. Last year, there were 17 UN General Assembly resolutions critical of Israel. This compared with a total of five covering all other countries, including Myanmar, the Syrian Arab Republic, Russia's actions in Crimea and the Ukraine, Iran and North Korea. This year the Human Rights Council passed six motions condemning Israel compared to a total of 14 across the rest of the world.

Last year, at my direction, Australia opposed six resolutions that attacked Israel in the UN General Assembly. These included the Jerusalem resolution, which contains biased and one-sided language attacking Israel and denies its historical connection to the city, and the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine resolution, which confers on the Palestinian Authority a status it does not have. In the past, we'd abstained on these resolutions—not anymore and not on my watch.

My government will not turn a blind eye to an anti-Semitic agenda masquerading as defence of human rights in the UN. This is also extended to calling out those who would seek to wipe Israel from the map. Again at my direction, last year, Australia supported a UN General Assembly resolution to condemn the egregious and ongoing violent acts of the terrorist organisation Hamas. Hamas are violent extremists, terrorists who use the Israel-Palestine conflict as an excuse to inflict terror. They should have no friends at the UN. The failure of that resolution to pass with the requisite majority was an indictment, I think, of the UN. Australia condemns Hamas's activities in the strongest possible terms.

Of course, our partnership has always been underpinned by the peoples of our nations. Australia's Jewish community began with those who arrived on the First Fleet. Though they were persecuted in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, Australia has been, to quote the words

of the member for Berowra, a land, 'almost uniquely in human history, good to the Jewish people'. Though numbering about one-hundredth of our population, Australians of Jewish heritage have made a remarkable contribution to our national life and our story. We are the nation of John Monash, Isaac Isaacs, Sir Zelman Cowen, Governor Linda Dessau, Frank Lowy, Harry Triguboff, Joan Rosanove and thousands more who, in their own way, have all sought to be the light unto the nations, performing the mitzvot, or good deeds, according to the law of Moses.

Australia has been a steadfast and loyal friend to Israel since its very creation, and I can assure this House, the people of Australia and our friends in Israel that the Liberal and National parties will never walk back or shrink from the recognition that Australia now affords Israel and the commitments and support for the State of Israel, whether in the General Assembly of the United Nations or elsewhere.

We know this is about Israel. They are a steadfast and loyal friend. Seventy years on, this parliament restates our commitment to Israel, to its people and to the deep friendship between our nations. We are friends who have always stood with each other, and may that always be the case.

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (12:10): I thank the Prime Minister for his words and I acknowledge the many members in this House, on both sides, who share a special appreciation of this significant anniversary. And I'd like to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency, the Ambassador of Israel.

In 1949, Prime Minister Ben Chifley said that the new State of Israel would be 'a force of special value in the world community'. Seventy years later, as we celebrate the free and prosperous democracy that Israel has become, Chifley's words still ring true for me, for our party, for our country and for the world community. Chloe and I have had the privilege and pleasure of visiting Israel on a number of occasions. We've walked the ancient streets and marvelled at the modern research and innovation. And we've been touched every time by the kindness and generosity of the hospitality.

Australians always receive a warm welcome in Israel, particularly because the story of modern Israel contains so many great Australian moments. In 1947, the brilliant Labor internationalist HV Evatt saw Australia cast the first vote in favour of the new Jewish state in the earliest days of the United Nations. The added significance of this moment was that it represented the first time that Australia voted as an independent nation—our first break from the slavish adherence to British foreign policy. As President of the United Nations, Evatt campaigned tirelessly for Israel's standing and independence, marshalling the conscience of the global community. Fittingly, formal diplomatic recognition and Israel's inclusion in the ranks of the United Nations came in the final week of Evatt's presidency. So today's anniversary, among other things, is a reminder of Australia's capacity to be a constructive, effective international citizen.

But, of course, the sheer history we celebrate today reaches further back than the United Nations. I think of 31 October 1917, when the 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade broke the lines at Beersheba—a famous victory and a famous cavalry charge: stockmen, ringers and jackaroos on their own horses from home. And there were 100 or so skilled and brave Aboriginal horsemen riding on the frontline. But this stunning victory was built not just on the courage of Australians but on the intelligence provided by a network of Jewish settlers in the

then Palestine, led by a remarkable botanist and agronomist, a young Romanian migrant called Aaron Aaronson. These collaborators convinced the Allied command that, rather than sending our Light Horse along the sea to charge the entrenched positions at Gaza, they could use a network of unmapped oases to come through the desert and outflank the Ottomans. Just three days after that storied Australian cavalry charge, Britain issued the Balfour Declaration, an international turning point in the creation of modern Israel.

I mentioned before the personal connection that members of this House and, indeed, many Australians, share with the people and the nation of Israel. In particular, I acknowledge the members of the Jewish diaspora who fled the persecution, tyranny and atrocities of Shoah and built a new life here in Australia. Our nation has been enriched and enlarged beyond calculation by their intellect, their culture, their hard work, their generosity, their philanthropy, their faith and their love of family.

How fortunate is it that, in the midst of the evil of Europe, we had people who survived the very worst of humanity, who came face to face with unimaginable atrocity, yet what they gave to Australia wasn't a legacy of trauma or fear but a gift of hope for the future. How fortunate was it that the wisdom of the then Australian governments was to admit refugees from war-torn areas to help contribute to the Australian story. I know their children and grandchildren hold the memory of their ancestors' courage high, and so do we.

Anniversaries are always an important time for reflection. The hard truth is that, 70 years after Israel's recognition, peace and security still elude the region. All of us in this place should support the right of the people of Israel to live safely within secure borders. And, as a true friend of Israel, my party supports strongly a two-state solution. We expect the Palestinian leadership and their supporters throughout the Middle East to recognise Israel's legitimate right to security. At the same time, we recognise the people of Palestine's legitimate aspiration for a state of their own. This will take leadership from both sides to deal with the roadblocks to peace, from settlements, to land swaps, to fundamental provisions such as security and borders—difficulties which we in Australia find hard to imagine, protected as we are by being a nation occupying a continent surrounded by ocean.

Modern Israel came about, in part, because of the success of negotiation; because nations found the capacity to sit at the table, to find common ground and to reach agreement. We need to hold onto that hope and that determination and look forward to, in the years and decades ahead, a just, secure and lasting peace for all the peoples of the Middle East.

Reference to Federation Chamber

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Minister for Defence and Leader of the House) (12:17): by leave—I move:

That further statements in relation to the 70th anniversary of Australia's formal diplomatic relationship with the State of Israel be permitted in the Federation Chamber.

Question agreed to.

BILLS

Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Bill 2018

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms SWANSON (Paterson) (12:17): I rise to speak on the Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Bill 2018. Imagine working for an organisation that you know is doing the wrong thing by its customers. Imagine that, whether it's legally or morally wrong, you know that what you're seeing or taking part in is not in the interest of the people that the organisation should serve. You finally get the courage to tell people who have the ability to do something about it, but they won't guarantee you protection or discretion unless you follow a long list of criteria, including who you are, what you know and how you report it. So you decide not to report this behaviour out of fear of what it may do to you, your family or your reputation.

Now, stop imagining—because this isn't a hypothetical situation. This is the kind of behaviour that was uncovered during the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry. It's hard to believe that some of the heartbreaking stories uncovered could have been prevented if we, the lawmakers in this building, had offered the right people the right incentives and the right supports to uncover disgusting, unlawful behaviour.

The Australian Securities and Investments Commission define a whistleblower as:

... an insider within an organisation, who reports misconduct or dishonest or illegal activity that has occurred within that same organisation.

When our major institutions and organisations are failing us, whistleblowers are the people we rely on to uphold a moral compass and uncover the wrongdoings of the people who think that they can get away with it—and they do get away with it. Whistleblowers are an important part of stopping bad conduct.

Australia's whistleblowing regime, as it currently stands, is very complex. It's inconsistent, and it's split across a range of legislation, making it hard for whistleblowers to navigate. The website outlines five things that people need to do to be recognised and protected as a whistleblower: whistleblowers must be a current employee; they must report the information they know to the company they are exposing; they must provide their name when making the report; they must have proof of what they know; and the information they provide must be honest and genuine. In a nutshell, whistleblowers must report illegal or dishonest activity to the organisation committing the act and sign off at the bottom of the page.

It's no wonder we need an incentive to rectify this. Labor wants to encourage whistleblowers to come forward so that this culture of cover-up is stamped out. Sadly, those opposite seem to think that this amendment would encourage false accusations or employees blatantly lying about their organisation's practices for financial gain. Well, I say to them: have you ever spoken to a whistleblower? Who in their right mind would subject themselves to what whistleblowers go through—the ridicule, the doubt, the embarrassment and the humiliation—all for just having the gall and the gumption to stand up and do the right thing?

The royal commission exposed whistleblowers who paid, in many instances, a very big price for their bravery, and they've been vindicated in the shocking evidence presented through the royal commission. I'm proud to stand with a Shorten Labor government who will protect and, where it's deemed appropriate, reward brave Australians who blow the whistle on crime and corruption in their workplaces, including in the banking and financial sector. A Shorten Labor government will set up a whistleblower rewards scheme, establish a

whistleblower protection authority, overhaul our whistleblowing laws with a single whistleblowing act, and fund a special prosecutor to bring corporate criminals to justice. We on this side of the chamber understand the sacrifices people have had to make to simply do the right thing. We want to say to them: we have your back.

The banking royal commission has highlighted appalling and criminal misconduct in the banking sector. That was only possible because brave whistleblowers and bank victims came forward and Labor listened. Labor will provide \$3.2 million to immediately set up the whistleblower protection authority within the office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman. It would house five full-time positions dedicated to assisting whistleblowers through the disclosure process. These positions would help whistleblowers navigate the current disclosure process, assist them with finding the right agency to report it to, provide them with advice on their rights and options for redress, and help to promote broad awareness in the community about Australia's whistleblowing regime. This will help people trying to do the right thing.

I speak on this with some personal experience. I had a friend who was a whistleblower a number of years ago now. During what that person went through, not only on a professional level but also on a personal level, that person would often speak to me and say: 'I haven't slept for weeks. I'm wondering where it's up to and what's going to happen.' It impacted on that person's marriage, employment prospects, finances and mental health—it was truly a terrible thing to witness. It was well before I came to this place, but I often thought: 'Why would you do it? Why would you put yourself in that position?' Well, that friend of mine wanted to do it because what they saw was wrong, and they wanted to shine a light on that. I'm inspired by that friend of mine as I make this speech, thinking back to all those years ago. That person didn't receive any assistance, really, whatsoever. In fact, that person was almost ostracised professionally. But that person did the right thing. I want more people like my friend to feel that they can stand up for what they see to be wrong and speak out without being labelled a dobber, without being labelled as someone who just wants to cause a bit of trouble. We are seeing time and time again the power imbalance in these situations. So I say to whistleblowers: thank you for being brave; thank you for often putting your own personal progress on the line.

Sometimes I am actually asked this question myself about politics. People say: 'Why would you do it? Why would you subject yourself to that nonsense that goes on in parliament? Why would you want to be a politician?' Well, we want to be politicians in this place because we want to make a difference. We want Australia to be a better place. I say to people who are prepared to call out illegal, corrupt and immoral behaviour in our businesses and corporations, in our schools and in any of our public institutions across this country: good on you. Thank you for being brave. Thank you for having the moral fibre and the correct compass. Labor stands with you. Not only do we stand with you, but we want to help you navigate the process. We think it should be fairer.

At the end of the day, those illegal and immoral practices pull us all down. They don't make our country more prosperous. They don't make it a better place for our children, our elderly or our most vulnerable people. They make our country a lesser place. We must stand by those people who want more and who want a better standard. Labor will do this. I implore the government to stand up and blow the whistle on their behaviour, which really hasn't been up to par in these last few weeks. We looked to that banking royal commission to make a

difference, and the Australian people are looking to us to implement those banking royal commission recommendations. It is time to learn from our mistakes and fix the mess.

I call on the Prime Minister to act in a prime ministerial fashion and back in what we have said. Please, you can't obfuscate and can't delay for any longer. We must have action. The people of Australia are calling on us to do that. It's with that that I really speak from the heart on this. I say to the whistleblowers: thank you for doing it, and Labor has your back.

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (12:26): I also rise to speak on the Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Bill 2018. As the member for Paterson just said, we need to do better. The government needs to do a lot better. The bill is welcome, but it doesn't go far enough. I will outline some of that.

Firstly, I just wanted to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition, the shadow Attorney-General and the member for Hotham for their work. The member for Hotham, in some of her comments, also pointed to someone else who needs acknowledgement. That was Jeff Morris. She said:

... we probably wouldn't have a banking royal commission if we didn't have whistleblowers like Jeff Morris who were willing to make disclosures under a regime that didn't provide proper protections.

I also want to acknowledge Jeff Morris's courage. It's also a credit to the member for Hotham that she acknowledged the improvement of this bill through the amendments that were negotiated by the Centre Alliance. Well done to the Centre Alliance MP, the member for Mayo. I listened to what the member for Mayo had to say yesterday. She also acknowledged the significant role of Jeff Morris.

For me, I think Jeff Morris was an Australian of the Year in many ways. Of course, I want to acknowledge the courage and the marvellous work of the two Australians, the cave divers, for their courage. Also, I want to acknowledge the NT Australian of the Year, my friend Michael Long, for his enormous courage. But I think it's worth noting that Jeff Morris also showed significant courage.

I think that whistleblowers were the unsung heroes of the recent Hayne royal commission. Too often, whistleblowers bear the personal cost of making public interest disclosures. The tragedy of their predicament lies in the fact that whistleblowers should never have been required to take such risks in the first place. Ideally, organisations and corporations should embrace those who identify and name the discontinuities between the espoused and the lived values and principles that lie at the very heart of all ethical failures. But, alas, we do not live in an ideal world; thus our need, as legislators, to now protect those who have the courage to declare that the emperor has no clothes. We need to do that. This bill goes towards doing that, but there's a lot more that needs to be done that Labor has committed to.

When the emperor has no clothes and there is a need to speak truth to power, when someone observes that what is happening in an organisation or corporation is not right, then they need to speak up. We need to be able to protect them, because a problem was found—it was already known by many—through the banking royal commission, a royal commission that was voted against by those opposite 26 times in this place. That was the protection racket that those opposite were responsible for. Twenty-six times they wanted to continue to cover up. Keep in mind, please, also that for three years those opposite fought to give a handout of \$17 billion to the banks that have now been proven to have been engaging in conduct most

uncommon. It was not all the banks, not all the executives, but certainly it is a big issue. These are big organisations with a lot of power, so it makes Jeff Morris's courage even more outstanding.

The problem is that we have, as other speakers have said, a complex whistleblowing regime. It's split across a range of legislation and it provides inadequate support for whistleblowers. There was a need for this bill because the threat of reprisals against people like Jeff Morris is high. Many whistleblowers lose their jobs, and it has been very difficult for many whistleblowers to get adequate compensation. Labor has committed \$3.2 million over the forward estimates to immediately set up the whistleblower protection authority within the office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman. It would house five full-time positions dedicated to assisting whistleblowers through the disclosure process. These positions would help whistleblowers navigate the current disclosure process, assist them with finding the right agency to report to, provide them with the right advice on their rights and options for redress, and help to promote broad awareness in the community about Australia's whistleblowing regime.

We also recognise that there is a need to have some sort of reward system for whistleblowers, and that's why, again—if and when elected—Labor would establish a rewards scheme. Following the imposition of a penalty against a wrongdoer by a court or other body that may impose such a penalty, the relevant investigative agency or prescribed law enforcement agency would be able to give a reward to any relevant whistleblower. The relevant agencies would have discretion to determine the reward within a legislated range of percentages of the penalty imposed against the wrongdoer. The relevant agencies would consider a range of factors, including the degree to which a whistleblower's information led to the imposition of the penalty on the wrongdoer, the timeliness with which the disclosure was made, the context of the disclosure and any reprisals and any involvement by the whistleblower in the conduct for which the penalty was imposed. The range of percentages of the penalties will be determined during the detailed design phase in government if—when—in the future we're elected.

As I said, this bill does go some way, but we need to do more. We need to do better. My friend the member for Fenner writes some truly excellent op-eds, and I was reading one recently that was in *The Sydney Morning Herald* entitled 'The Golden Whistle'. He made the observation about the need for rewards systems and the benefits of reward systems when it comes to whistleblower schemes:

A recent study of Israel's tax whistleblowing scheme concluded that it significantly increased the amount of tax paid; particularly in industries that are more prone to tax evasion. The scheme had a powerful deterrent effect on tax dodging. Once firms knew that there was an incentive for employees to report wrongdoing, they were more inclined to pay what they owed. Tax revenue increased by more than one-quarter.

I acknowledge that today we've been acknowledging the 70th anniversary of our relationship with Israel. In that country, where similar incentive schemes for whistleblowers have been enacted, there has been a one-quarter increase in tax revenue. Imagine what we could do as a nation for Australians if we had the tax that isn't being paid because of people who are wrongly evading paying tax. We could do an incredible amount. We could do an absolutely

incredible amount, like supporting pensioners. When Labor were last in government, we increased the pension by a record margin. Those opposite recently—

An honourable member interjecting—

Mr GOSLING: I take the interjection—have been cutting supplements pensioners received. I digress. I just wanted to acknowledge that good work by the shadow Assistant Treasurer, the member for Fenner, who is always looking to bring more clarity and more evidence from around the world to the issues that this House deals with. This area of whistleblowing is something on which he continues to do that.

I think what some of the other members, including some of the members opposite—I was here in the House yesterday listening to this debate when the member for Forde made some great comments, I thought. He made some honest comments, and what struck me when these comments were made was the lack of trust in government, the lack of trust in lawmakers and the despicable behaviour by people that was uncovered through the banking royal commission. So I acknowledge the comments that that member of the government made and also those of the member for Parramatta, who I listened to as she relayed feedback from her constituents as she got around on the doors.

From Parramatta to Darwin and the people that I represent in this place, it's the same. People believe that some of our most important institutions are lacking credibility, but I assure them, at least in speaking for those on this side, that we are intent on rebuilding the ethical infrastructure of our country. What we will do in this space goes to exactly that. Whilst this bill is good, it doesn't go far enough. We support it, but it doesn't go far enough. We will go further in order to send a strong message to those who feel a dilemma because they know that something's going wrong and they want to report it. Those people we will protect. But we also want to send a message to those who seek not to pay their fair share that that won't be tolerated.

In the time that is remaining, I just want to acknowledge that there are a whole lot of people—some may even be listening to this. Or some listening to this may be trying to mentor or help someone through a difficult situation at their workplace. What I want to do in the time remaining is relay a good experience that I've had that has helped me work through a moral dilemma, a difficult ethical situation. It was an initiative that was started by the St James Ethics Centre. It's no longer run by them directly. It's an independent initiative, which has been going for about 20 years, called Ethi-call.

Ethi-call is a free, independent, national helpline, available to all Australians, which provides expert and impartial guidance to help you make your way through life's tough challenges. As I understand it, it is the only service of its kind in the world. Whether you are facing an ethical issue that is of a personal nature or a professional nature, it is a free service that is there not to give you legal advice but to help you work through the dilemma that you're facing. It's available day and night, seven days a week, by appointment. The laws that we are passing are designed to provide more protection to whistleblowers. But I wanted to let those listening know that, if they are facing a very difficult situation, they are not alone. Go to www.ethics.org.au and, with someone, you can work through that dilemma you may be facing.

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (12:41): Edmund Burke once said, 'The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.' In order for us to ensure that wrongdoing—evil, if you like—is made transparent, disclosed and acted upon, men and women must be empowered so they can speak up. That goes to the heart of what the Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Bill 2018 is all about.

Often, in any culture, whether it be corporate, organisational or even family, it comes down to strong leadership to set the right example, for a group's strategy, policies or plans do not matter; what influences a group's culture more than anything is leadership. Now, where whistleblowers often come in is in situations where they work within a culture that either quietly or openly condones activity that is not compliant—that is, at times, unlawful. Unfortunately, good people aren't always the ones in leadership positions. Good people aren't always the ones who have access to the levers that one can pull to influence the culture of an organisation. That is why, through this bill, we seek to ensure that we use our leadership, as a government, to empower those people who themselves lack it—those people who have the moral courage to take a stand and call out wrongdoing where they see it. It's vitally important that those people who display such moral courage are protected under the law.

Indeed, whistleblowing plays a critical role in uncovering corporate and tax misconduct. However, as it stands currently, there are no specific protections for tax whistleblowers, and the range of secrecy and privacy provisions relied upon are often incapable of guaranteeing the protection that one would rightly require. That is why, in the 2016-17 budget, the government announced greater protections for those who disclose information about tax misconduct to the ATO—the Australian Taxation Office. This is all about improving the strength and integrity of Australia's tax system.

And so this bill delivers on the government's 2016-17 budget commitment to protect individuals who blow the whistle on tax avoidance behaviour—tax evasion and tax misconduct. We need to make sure that we continue to deliver on our Open Government National Action Plan. This was the government's commitment, released in December 2016, and this government has a proven track record that when it makes such commitments it follows through with teeth. This bill, indeed, provides such teeth for that commitment to open governance within Australia.

The Open Government National Action Plan was developed collaboratively by government and civil society. The plan consists of a package of 15 commitments that aim to advance transparency, accountability, public participation and technological innovation in Australia. It shouldn't go unnoticed that the national action plan was not just created by government alone. It wasn't created by bureaucracy. Indeed, it wasn't created in this bubble here of parliament. Rather, it was done collaboratively with leaders who are not just in business but in community, because only when we have individuals within civil society also taking responsibility and taking the lead to ensure that organisations have cultures that do not condone noncompliance and unlawful behaviour will we ensure that we have the governance right across our society that the Australian people expect.

Stronger whistleblowing protection is the first commitment of the plan. It's designed to support the objective of enhancing Australia's strong reputation for responsible, transparent and accountable business practices. Indeed, as somebody who spent much of his 20-plus professional years before entering this parliament in business, and particularly in overseas

markets, I am very cognisant of Australia's reputation for being transparent. Australian businesses and Australian businesspeople are recognised as people who speak straightforward common sense and whose word you can trust. That only develops over time, but we need to ensure that we have laws in place that hold all Australians true to that reputation.

And so the government's amendments in this bill will improve access to compensation for whistleblowers who suffer victimisation. I noticed that, when the minister spoke to this bill in the House, the example was given that whistleblowers will be able to make a claim for compensation when a body corporate breaches a duty it owes to the whistleblower to prevent a third person engaging in detrimental conduct towards them. Duties may include, for example, those that arise under employment law or state and territory law. Also, the amendments require a court to consider the period a person is likely to be without employment in circumstances where the detrimental conduct involved termination of employment. To ensure the corporate regime operates as it is intended, disclosures solely about personal employment related matters are to be excluded from protection—a wise and prudent measure, I would suggest. The emergency disclosure provisions that allow for disclosures to parliamentarians and journalists have been amended to better align with those equivalent provisions in the public sector as appropriate for the corporate context.

Furthermore, the definition of 'journalist' is revised to ensure eligible disclosures to journalists employed by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation or the Special Broadcasting Service are protected. Again, I see here where the consultation with civil society is getting the balance right to ensure that we are protecting whistleblowers but we are also ensuring that there are adequate protections and definitions so that there is not overreach or confusion.

This bill requires that a statutory review be undertaken of the operation of the protections within both the Corporations Act and the taxation act five years after the commencement date of the amendments. Amendments will also be made to support the Treasury Laws Amendment (Strengthening Corporate and Financial Sector Penalties) Bill 2018 and have the effect of increasing financial penalties for offences under the whistleblower regime in the Corporations Act and the taxation act. The amendments seek to increase consistency, where practical, with other Commonwealth whistleblower legislation. The Legislative and Governance Forum for Corporations was consulted in relation to the bill and subsequent amendments and has approved them as required under the Corporations Agreement 2002.

Of course, this bill hasn't been created in isolation from a series of other measures, nor has it been created without giving due consideration to the need for alignment. Indeed, what we see in the broader context of the amendments before the House is that the protections have formed part of the Corporations Act since 2004 but have been consistently perceived as inadequate. But here's how the bill aligns with other measures. The whistleblower bill provides protections for current and former employees and officers as well as anonymous disclosures. This brings it into alignment with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013 and the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009. Further, the whistleblower bill repeals and substitutes the 'good faith' test with an objective test requiring that a whistleblower have reasonable grounds to suspect the relevant disclosable conduct, again an area of alignment—in this case, alignment with the Public Interest Disclosure Act and the Fair Work act.

As with the Public Interest Disclosure Act, qualifying disclosures entitle whistleblowers to protection from exposure of their identities and immunity from civil, criminal and

administrative liabilities for making the disclosure. Protections are available for whistleblowers who make emergency or public interest disclosures where certain preconditions are satisfied. This closely follows the Public Interest Disclosure Act, with adjustment for the corporate context.

The whistleblower bill provides protections for those who suffer threats or actual reprisals, consistent with the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009. To be clear, protections are available where a threat or reprisal is taken against a person because the offender believes or suspects that that person or any other person may have made, proposes to make or could make a protected disclosure. All regimes allow a whistleblower to seek a range of civil remedies through a court, including an apology, injunction, reinstatement order, compensation for loss or damage and costs. The reforms of the whistleblower bill also provide a definition of 'detriment' that closely follows the Fair Work Act 2009. A whistleblower may claim compensation or other remedies on the basis that they have suffered detriment because a company breached a duty to them. This is to align with the protections in the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009—again, an alignment with other legislation to ensure that the integrity of the overall system is strengthened.

I pay tribute to those whistleblowers who have had the moral courage to stand for what is right and what is good, and I commend this bill to the House.

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (12:57): As I stand to speak on the Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Bill 2018, I think it's important to ask the question: what is a whistleblower? What drives them to blow the whistle on an organisation that they work for? And, of course, it comes down to a sense of deep ethics and fairness. Many people simply cannot live with the fact that what they are seeing before them is wrongdoing. Even though it's easier and certainly a smoother path in life just to put up with it, just to go with the flow, not to cause any ripples, they are compelled by a deep sense of honesty and ethics to what we have come to call blow the whistle.

It's not a new phenomenon; it's been going on for years. One of the most famous whistleblowers that many of us would be familiar with is Deep Throat, who exposed the Nixon Watergate scandal. That person's identity was kept secret for decades, and it was only in recent years that we've come to know that this person was a senior member of the FBI. Anybody who knows law enforcement officials knows how deeply they hold to their ethics and their sense of loyalty to their organisation and what it must have taken that person to go to journalists and say, 'What is going on in my organisation, what is going on at the heart of the administration, is not right and it needs to be exposed.'

In the decades since, Western democracies have come a long way in ensuring that people can come forward, but we can and we must do better. Frankly, it's easy to stand here in this place and say that we value these people and what they do. But out there, when they're faced with managers and departmental heads who are desperate to keep information inside the organisation, is where the rubber hits the road. That's where people face career-limiting options. That's where people are told, 'If you speak out you'll be sacked or you'll face sanction or you'll face financial penalties.' That's why the laws need to be robust. That's why I'm very proud to say that, if Labor are elected, we will protect whistleblowers with a whistleblowing act, with a single piece of legislation that sets out very clearly that whistleblowers will be protected. We'll set up a whistleblower rewards scheme, which will go in some way to help

redress the financial implications that can accompany being a whistleblower in Australia. People face great financial hardship when they decide to blow the whistle. Even if they think their identity's going to be protected, they can face great financial hardship. There are legal costs and—even though it shouldn't happen—they can lose their job or lose prospects for promotion. A whistleblower rewards scheme will see people get some fraction of the proceeds that the government may peel back from fraudulent activity. It doesn't tell the whole story, but it helps people in some regard.

Labor will establish a whistleblower protection authority—again, an important signal to people that we are on their side—and we'll fund a special prosecutor to bring corporate criminals to justice. This is of particular importance right now. We've just gone through a banking royal commission that highlighted appalling and criminal misconduct in the banking sector, and that royal commission came about only because of a whistleblower in the banking sector, who put his life and his career on the line to expose wrongdoing. He came forward; he spoke to journalists; journalists blew it wide open, and then in we came and said: we need a royal commission into this sector. What did we see? We saw absolute mayhem in the banking and financial services sector. Those institutions once held the trust of the people of this country, and we saw absolute mayhem across that sector. Those opposite voted 26 times against that royal commission, and they'll hang their heads in shame forever for it. They voted 26 times against a banking royal commission that we now know was incredibly necessary for the future health and wellbeing of the banking and financial sector in this country. It was a whistleblower who brought all that to light. If he hadn't come forward, maybe people would still be getting ripped off. The events of all those terrible stories we heard during the royal commission would still be occurring, and we'd be none the wiser. Those opposite did everything they could to stop that commission going ahead. I say to them: shame on you!

Right now, blowing the whistle on crime and misconduct is incredibly difficult. It's hard financially and it's hard to decide that you want to go down that road. It takes a lot of courage to do it. Imagine: you're in your job, enjoying your job and going about your business, and you come across information that makes you think: 'This isn't quite right. What do I do?' There are American studies that show sometimes as many as 45 per cent of people in a workplace come across information that they think needs to be exposed. Sixty-four per cent of those people will do something about it. Most people have an innate sense that they need to do the right thing. But it's a hard thing, when you just want to get on with your life—go to your job, earn your money, look after your family—to be faced with information that is perhaps going to single you out, see you exposed, see you in the gun of sometimes very powerful employers and institutions. It's a very difficult thing to contemplate. I'll echo the sentiments of the member for Fairfax in saying I take my hat off to any Australian who comes across information so egregious that they decide it needs to be exposed and who is willing to put themselves in the gun for that. We need to be here for them. As a parliament, we need to stand up for those people.

For many Australians who see wrongdoing and want it to stop, blowing the whistle isn't worth the risk at the moment. It's hard and it's just not worth the risk. But that shouldn't be the case, and Labor wants to make sure it doesn't stay the case. We want to make sure that people can do the right thing and not have their lives ruined as a result. As I said, if elected we will establish a whistleblower rewards scheme that makes it easier for people to come forward.

Whistleblowers will receive a percentage of the penalties arising out of the wrongdoing that they reveal. Once a crook—a thief or a fraudster—is hit with a financial penalty as a result of whistleblowing, the whistleblower rewards scheme will kick into gear to allow a proportion of that penalty to be given as a reward to the whistleblower.

Let's be frank: that's not usually the motivation for whistleblowing. The motivation for whistleblowing is to do the right thing for the right reasons. But if people know that maybe there's some light at the end of the tunnel—that their finances won't be too badly impacted and that maybe there will be some financial reward as a result of what they're whistleblowing on—that will only help. I think I've seen figures from the US that whistleblowing can recoup as much as US\$4.7 billion through false claims. So people whistleblow for all sorts of reasons.

People don't like to see other people getting away with dishonest acts. We used to call it 'dobbing' in Australia—you'd dob somebody in for doing something wrong. We should end that. It's not dobbing. It's not dobbing to tell somebody about somebody else doing something wrong, especially when it is a fraud against other taxpayers. The whistleblower rewards scheme will be funded entirely by the penalties collected by the government.

Labor will also strengthen protections for whistleblowers through the establishment of a whistleblower protection authority. It's a one-stop shop to support and protect whistleblowers. It will have dedicated staff to advise whistleblowers on their rights. This is incredibly important. People will know that they can go to this authority and get information on what whistleblowing entails, what risks they're up for and what rewards they might be up for. It will assist them through the disclosure process and help them access compensation if they face reprisals from employers and managers.

Labor believes all whistleblowers should be treated the same, regardless of the type of workplace they're in. Whistleblowing is about exposing fraudulent, unethical, dishonest behaviour. Fraudulent, unethical, dishonest behaviour deserves no protection from this parliament, and that's why whistleblowers should be encouraged to expose these things. Right now our whistleblower laws are far too opaque and inconsistent, so a Labor government will create a single Australian whistleblowing act. It will consolidate all mainstream whistleblowing legislation into one location so whistleblowers can readily understand how they are protected. So there will be a whistleblowing authority under a whistleblowing act—we're going to make it simple for whistleblowers to do the right thing.

This will be a major shake-up of Australia's fairly fractured and opaque whistleblowing regime. At the moment, whistleblowers don't know what their rights are or what they're up for. We will make it simple and clear that whistleblowing is a protected activity under a Labor government. We will undertake detailed design work to make sure that the new laws, the proposed reward scheme and the protection authority are powerful and effective. We'll make it clear, if elected to government, that departmental heads cannot hide behind opacity—that they will be expected to live not just within the letter of the law but within the spirit of the law. For departmental heads who try to live off the old days of hiding information, building empires and trying to stop their employees from doing the right thing, the message will be made very clearly to them that whistleblowing is a protected activity and should be encouraged—although one would hope that it's not even necessary—amongst employees to expose unethical, dishonest, fraudulent behaviour.

Labor is committed to cracking down on misconduct and corruption in the banking and financial services sector. As I say, we've just had a royal commission with 76 recommendations coming out of it that we've committed to in principle, and we saw those opposite vote 26 times against this royal commission. We will keep saying it: those opposite voted against a banking royal commission 26 times, a banking royal commission that has exposed reams and reams and reams of misconduct and fraudulent behaviour within the banking and financial services sector—fraudulent, unethical behaviour that those opposite were prepared to see continue in this country, because they voted 26 times against even holding that banking royal commission, and they should hang their heads in shame for it.

These announcements build on our commitment for a banking royal commission implementation task force and to deliver an extra \$25 million over the next two years for the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions to tackle corporate crime. We're serious about this. We called for the royal commission, and the royal commission happened only because Labor stuck to the government and made sure it happened. Now that the royal commission has happened, we will make sure—because those opposite won't—that the crooks are brought to book, and we'll be putting the resources in place to ensure that prosecutions happen. As part of this funding, Labor will appoint a special prosecutor to crack down on corporate criminals. The days of white-collar criminals having an easy ride will be over under a Labor government. We'll crack down on them, we'll fine them, we'll prosecute them and we'll put them in jail, where they belong. The choice is clear. While Labor fought for the banking royal commission—and we will crack down on white-collar crime—those opposite voted 26 times against that commission. We all remember that they wanted to give the same banks that have been exposed in that commission a nice, big, fat tax handout.

Labor will give a fair go to all Australians, including the whistleblowers of this country. I take my hat off to the whistleblowers for the courage that they show. I can't imagine how hard it must be to go to work, to come across this sort of information and then to say, 'I need to do something about this, because what I see before me is just so egregious it needs to be exposed.' And then, rather than just getting on with your life and having an easy life, you put yourself and your family's financial future in the gun when you put your hand up and say, 'I'm going to expose this.' That's an incredibly courageous thing to do, and I think people who are willing to take that risk deserve every protection from this parliament. That's why Labor, if elected to government, will create an Australian whistleblowing act and a whistleblowing authority to protect whistleblowers in this country.

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Assistant Treasurer) (13:11): I thank all those members who've contributed to the debate. The Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Bill 2018 amends the Corporations Act 2001 and the Taxation Administration Act 1953 to strengthen Australia's corporate and tax whistleblower protections. Strengthening the protections to allow whistleblowers to come forward will assist the regulators to receive information earlier, investigate contraventions, take appropriate enforcement action and limit the risk of loss to investors. Importantly, these changes will help to ensure public trust and confidence in the integrity of the financial system.

Corporate crime is estimated to cost Australia more than \$8½ billion a year and accounts for approximately 40 per cent of the total cost of crime in Australia. Whistleblowing plays a critical role in uncovering misconduct and criminal activity. It may also improve poor

compliance cultures by ensuring that companies, officers and staff know that the risk of misconduct being reported is far higher. In December 2016 the government announced, as part of the Open Government National Action Plan, that it would ensure that appropriate protections are in place for people who report corruption, fraud, tax evasion or avoidance, and misconduct in the corporate sector. The commitment in the Open Government National Action Plan also reaffirmed the government's 2016-17 budget announcement that it would introduce new arrangements to better protect individuals who disclose information to the Australian tax office on tax avoidance behaviour and other tax issues to further strengthen the integrity of Australia's tax system. This bill delivers on those commitments.

Part 1 of the bill will strengthen protection for corporate whistleblowers by expanding protections to a broader class of persons; expand disclosures that can be protected; extend protections to cover emergency and public interest disclosures, subject to preconditions; exclude from protection disclosures of purely personal or work related grievances; improve access to compensation for whistleblowers, including improvements in civil remedies for whistleblowers; and create new civil penalties to make enforcement action easier. The bill introduces a whistleblower policy requirement for all large companies.

A statutory review of the operation of the whistleblower protections within both the Corporations Act and the Taxation Administration Act will be required five years after the commencement date of the bill.

The bill amalgamates protections across several acts into the Corporations Act. The consolidation will cover the Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001, the Banking Act 1959, the Insurance Act 1973, the Life Insurance Act 1995 and the Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993 as well as adding protections for conduct that contravenes the National Consumer Credit Protection Act 2009 and the Financial Sector (Collection of Data) Act 2001, which were not covered under the existing law.

Part 2 of the bill will introduce new protections for whistleblowers under the taxation law. These protections are broadly consistent with the enhanced protections under the Corporations Act and facilitate disclosures about tax misconduct.

Together these reforms will help protect whistleblowers who may expose themselves to significant personal and financial risk in return for their critical role in the early detection and prosecution of misconduct in businesses and avoidance or evasion of tax liabilities. Benefits will also be derived by the Australian business community, as the reforms will encourage improved corporate governance and integrity through the whistleblower policy prescription for large companies and increase the likelihood of misconduct being reported. The measures contained in the bill have been extensively consulted upon and have the strong support of a number of peak bodies and regulators, including the AFP, ATO and ASIC. I commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Assistant Treasurer) (13:15): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2018-2019

Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2018-2019

Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 2) 2018-2019

Second Reading

Cognate debate.

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (13:16): In many ways the Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2018-2019, the Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2018-2019 and the Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 2) 2018-2019 are routine bills. They make provisions and appropriations for the ordinary functions of government for the rest of this financial year. They facilitate a number of measures in the midyear update, and the numbers themselves are already incorporated into the budget bottom line of that MYEFO which was handed down in December last year. Obviously, as always, Labor won't be standing in the way of supply.

We do take the opportunity to make some broader points about this government's management, or mismanagement, of the nation's finances. I had to replay it and listen to it again; I thought my ears were deceiving me last week when I heard the Prime Minister at the Press Club say that nobody can say the Liberals have mismanaged the finances or mismanaged the budget or the economy, because the hard, cold facts, in black and white in the government's own budgets and midyear updates, tell a very different story to that story being told by the Prime Minister and the Treasurer.

Just consider a few of these numbers. On the Liberals' watch our net debt has more than doubled. It's now at an all-time record of \$360 billion. Those opposite inherited \$175 billion worth of net debt. It's now \$360 billion. It's more than doubled in the five or so years that they've been in office. Similarly, gross debt has now crashed through half a trillion dollars for the first time ever in the history of this country. It's well over half a trillion dollars. It's now \$543.3 billion and growing. It's almost double the \$280 billion in gross debt that those opposite inherited from the former government. Since the member for Cook has become the latest Prime Minister in the Liberals' game of musical chairs, gross debt has actually grown by almost \$11 billion. That means that, since the member for Cook has been Prime Minister, he's piled on \$64 million a day in debt, and that's a far cry from the so-called responsible budget management that he likes to bang on about.

I think what's more surprising to many people than the amount of debt, the quantum of debt, that those opposite have racked up is just how quickly they've done it. Inevitably, those opposite will say, 'The government beforehand racked up some debt too.' And during the global financial crisis we did take responsible action to deal with that big substantial threat, the sharpest synchronised downturn in the global economy since the Great Depression 80 years earlier, and, yes, that meant public debt.

Mr Rick Wilson: Best terms of trade in a century!

Dr CHALMERS: But what those opposite, including those interjecting, don't understand is that debt is actually being accumulated at a faster rate now than it was under the former

government, which had that global financial crisis to deal with, and despite the fact that the last five years have seen very rosy global conditions.

So let's think about these numbers. Those opposite have racked up gross debt \$831 million a month quicker than their predecessors, \$185 million a week quicker and \$26 million a day quicker. That's gross debt. On net debt, they've racked it up \$132 million a month quicker, \$29 million a week quicker and \$4 million a day quicker. They're racking up debt faster than their predecessors, despite rosy global economic conditions. They have not been able to point to any reasonable global factors which have contributed to the mess that they've made of the budget.

In his National Press Club speech earlier this month, the Governor of the Reserve Bank, Philip Lowe, noted that there had been a shift in momentum in the global economy. But he was also quick to emphasise:

It is worth recalling that 2018 was a good year for the world economy. Growth in the advanced economies was above trend in the first half of the year, unemployment rates reached their lowest levels in many decades, inflation was low and financial systems were stable ...

Others—the IMF and other respected international bodies—have talked about how strong the global economy has been in recent years, and that should have been a positive influence on the budget. We've seen some tens of billions of dollars returned to the budget, but still we have this record debt; we have a gross debt of more than half a trillion dollars and net debt which has doubled on the government's watch. They on that side have nobody but themselves to blame for that record debt and that growing debt.

And it's more serious now because, as the RBA governor pointed out, there are storm clouds on the horizon of the global economy. All we've had from those opposite after the last five years of rosy global conditions are the cuts, the chaos, the division and the dysfunction. That's all we have to show for these rosy global conditions. And now that things may be taking a turn for the worse we don't have those budget buffers that we need in case things get substantially worse in the global economy and impact here on the Australian economy as well.

The other reason for those numbers that I read out—pretty stark numbers, really, about record debt under those opposite—is the warped priorities that they've attempted to impose on the Australian population. We're familiar with all the cuts and we're familiar with all the handouts for the top end of town. But something that I think has come to light recently in the Australian community—certainly in my community and around the country in places that I've been in the last little while—is the thing that makes people really angry: to learn that, while we have this record debt, those opposite are spending \$200 million of taxpayer money on political ads to distract from their cuts, chaos, division and dysfunction. That's making people very angry.

And then, on top of that, consider that the government currently spends \$100 million every single week on cash refunds for excess franking credits. Now, in anybody's language \$100 million, borrowed, to give a tax refund for tax not paid is an unsustainable loophole, especially when you consider that 96 per cent of Australians don't even access that particular loophole. We can see the warped priorities right throughout the budget of those opposite.

We see those warped priorities as well in their two big economic policies of the last five years. One of them they've implemented and the other one, thankfully, they've been unable to.

They are two big economic policies: pay people less to work on the weekend and shower tens of billions of dollars on the big banks and foreign multinationals in the form of tax cuts.

Now, the budget is a mess because of the government's twisted priorities, including those unsustainable tax loopholes and including spraying around hundreds of millions of dollars on political ads—all of these sorts of things—and it's a mess because of their obsession with the top end of town, their obsession with cracking down on the people who work and struggle in this country and with showering their largesse on those who need it least.

But I think that today, in particular, we've seen that there's another reason for why the budget is a mess under the Liberal government. Amidst all of the division and all of the dysfunction, this dumpster fire of personal recrimination and leadership turnstiles on that side of the House in the last little while, in the time that we've had three Prime Ministers and three Treasurers, we have only had one finance minister. The only pillar of stability in this dumpster fire that is the Liberal government has been the finance minister. The finance minister has been at the scene of the crime for all of the budget atrocities, all of the cuts and chaos, all of the record debt that I've described today. In fact, no finance minister in the history of this country has overseen more debt than Senator Cormann oversees today. No finance minister has ever had to admit, as he did, that he can't count to 43 votes in the party room. We have a finance minister who can't count to 43, a finance minister who said he was convinced that there were 43 votes in that week where he was supporting Malcolm Turnbull on the Wednesday, the member for Dickson on the Thursday and the member for Cook by the Friday. This is the record of the finance minister over the last five years or so.

And no finance minister, I think it's fair to say, certainly in the modern history of that position, has been in more strife than the current finance minister finds himself in today. No finance minister has been in more strife than Mathias Cormann is in today. He wants the Australian people to believe that he didn't notice when a \$3,000 travel bill was paid for by somebody else. This is a guy who handles the nation's credit card, and he doesn't notice when a \$3,000 bill that was supposed to come off his credit card was fixed up by somebody else. That's what he wants the Australian people to believe. He has serious questions to answer today, very serious questions, about free flights which were accepted around the time that a company run by the treasurer of the Liberal Party, a big donor to the Liberal Party, won a \$1 billion contract for travel services with the Commonwealth. These are incredibly serious matters that the finance minister has to give a better set of answers to than he has been able to give so far in Senate estimates around the corner and upstairs today.

In the alternative universe that the Liberal Party inhabit, they want us to believe that it is entirely normal, when you want to book a trip for your family, to ring the CEO of the company and get your travel booking done by the CEO of a large company in this country. He's in there in Senate estimates expressing shock, expressing surprise, that the rest of us don't do it that way. What, you don't ring the CEO of a company to get on the 3.30 flight out of Perth? It's absurd, and it just shows how horrendously out of touch those opposite have become when they think that is normal practice.

This is a very Liberal scandal. These are very serious issues, and this scandal won't go away anytime soon. The finance minister is in serious strife. He's been caught not declaring free flights; he's been caught trying to pretend that he didn't notice that somebody else paid a \$3,000 bill for him around the same time that a company run by the Liberal Party treasurer,

and a big donor to the Liberal Party, won a \$1 billion Commonwealth contract for travel services. I think the Australian people are right to be deeply sceptical, even angry, about the finance minister's inability to account for this and explain this, and I think the sooner that he does that, the better.

It's no wonder, with all of this going on, all of the scandal engulfing the finance minister, all of the cuts and chaos and all the division and dysfunction of three Prime Ministers and three Treasurers, all of this dumpster fire of personal recrimination, which is eating the government alive on that side of the House, that they've dropped the ball on the budget and also on the economy. It's true, I think, that the economy isn't delivering for ordinary people in this country. Everything is going up, except their wages. Wages growth is the slowest on record; childcare costs are up 24 per cent; power bills are up 15 per cent; private healthcare costs are up 30 per cent; 1.8 million Australians are underemployed, meaning they can't find enough hours at work; consumer confidence has weakened; business investment is falling; living standards are stagnating; household saving rates are falling and household debt is at record highs. And, while all this is going on, company profits—and we want our companies to be profitable—have been growing six times faster than wages in the last 12 months alone. That, for this side of the House, indicates that there is a problem with the way this economy—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43 but may be resumed at a later hour.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Broadband

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (13:30): Elliott's NBN saga part 2: Elliott tried to get an NBN connection. He has been trying since September last year and here's a summary of what he's been enduring since then—hold on, it's quite a ride! Between September and October, NBN Co wouldn't and couldn't accept that the equipment needed to connect his apartment complex to the NBN was already installed, so photos were sent to NBN Co to show the installed equipment. In November, Elliott and his body corporate couldn't get NBN Co to respond to them. Three weeks later, NBN Co emerged from its radio silence, once again requesting photos of the installed equipment, so the photos were resent. Now the NBN connection was finally turned on—great rejoicing, much excitement!

However, the excitement was short-lived. NBN Co cancelled the order and turned the service off. It beggars belief. Two weeks later and leading up to Christmas, an NBN technician arrived on site to install the service and was shocked that all the equipment was already installed. The service went live again, yet in January NBN told the ISP to turn off all connections because work is still being required by the developer. This is the same work that was completed months ago, the same work that was shown in the photos sent to NBN Co six times—count them: six times. This is absolutely farcical. *(Time expired)*

La Trobe Electorate: Roads

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (13:31): Last week I had a great week announcing road projects in La Trobe, in particular the on-off ramps needed on McGregor Road and funding for eight dangerous intersections along the Princes Highway between Officer, Beaconsfield and Pakenham. Today I want to speak about the urgent need to put funding into the intersection of Clyde Road and Kangan Drive, which is pretty much the education and health precinct of La

Trobe. What I'd like to see there is an urgent fix for the 4,000 cars which turn right each day from Kangan Drive going onto Clyde Road. I am now very focused on working on that congestion-busting project. Further up on that road, where it crosses the Monash Freeway, there actually needs to be an additional lane on Clyde Road there, allowing cyclists to have access.

Can I make the point, though, that back in 2007 to 2010 I made election commitments for the grade separation on Clyde Road. Unfortunately, we didn't win government. Labor came into power and, rather than doing a grade separation on Clyde Road, they just widened the road. The state Labor government has committed to building the grade separation on Clyde Road. Can I say: please, get on and deliver what you promised. We urgently need a grade separation on Clyde Road. *(Time expired)*

Murray-Darling Basin

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (13:33): Australians have been shocked by the environmental disaster that struck the Murray-Darling Basin over summer. The outbreaks of algae have killed up to a million fish, and seeing the Menindee Lakes choking with the sheer volume of dying fish is truly alarming. These rivers and water sources are precious resources and they're facing increasing pressure due to increasing temperatures and more extreme conditions such as drought.

Recently we saw the findings of the Murray Darling Basin Royal Commission, where the commissioner described what went on as 'gross maladministration' and 'negligence'. Yet the Liberals and Nationals have gone missing during this crisis. It's a common theme with this government on anything to do with the environment. Doing nothing is not a strategy. Government needs to govern. The Australian Academy of Science report into the causes of the mass fish kills in the Menindee area shows a solution is possible. Our rivers, creeks and wetlands have been neglected for too long. That's why only a Shorten Labor government will restore urban rivers with a \$200 million investment to ensure all Australians can benefit from our waterways. Only Labor is serious about protecting the environment. We're taking action on climate change, investing in the environment and maintaining Australia's status as the great outdoors.

North Sydney Electorate: Gore Hill Oval

Mr ZIMMERMAN (North Sydney) (13:34): For almost a century, Gore Hill Oval in my electorate has been one of our region's busiest playing fields. Across the years, it has seen its fair share of footy boots, spikes and bare feet. It has become a major home for cricket and AFL. It is, in fact, one of the busiest AFL training grounds in the country. Yet, like many of our local sporting facilities, it has struggled to keep up with demand. Many of its amenities are ageing, and the oval was prone to flooding. Its grass surface limited the hours it could be used. So I was pleased to have been able to work with Willoughby City Council to secure a \$9.5 million grant from the government to revamp the oval. In November 2017, Willoughby Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney and I turned the sod on this major project, and in a few weeks time the oval will be re-opened.

The upgrade of the oval includes a greatly improved drainage system and resurfacing of the oval with synthetic grass, ensuring we can maximise its use. New floodlighting has been installed, the old pavilion has been replaced with modern change rooms and a new

community room, and outdoor basketball and handball courts have also been constructed. The development has included a regional-scale playground and a new walking track for residents. Importantly, the oval has retained its distinctive picket fence. I congratulate all who have been involved with the project, which is a major boost for local sporting groups, and I encourage local residents to visit the facility at the re-opening day on 9 March, which should be a grand celebration of all that the council and federal government have achieved.

Bendigo Electorate: Employment

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (13:36): We are talking a lot about dairy and the dairy industry at the moment, which is one of the reasons why I stand today in this place to raise an issue about dairy processing. Workers came to see me from Pactum Dairy Group, which has a processing facility in Shepparton. They're very concerned about the treatment of some temporary workers who are here from the Philippines. First engaged on 457 visas and now engaged on 482 visas, there are about 30 to 40 of them working at this particular facility. They were all engaged as mechanical engineers and technicians. That's a lot of engineers for one dairy processing factory. When they started to talk to the workers, they discovered they're actually just doing process rolls. Shepparton is an area just north of Bendigo where there are countless people looking for work. When another dairy processor that prioritises employing locals advertised, there were 450 applications, the majority of whom had skills.

We know the dairy industry is going through some pressures. Some processors are cutting back the days that they are opening. There are workers out there looking to do this work. The union, NUW, and the affected workers have met with their local MP, whose slogan is 'putting locals first', but today he is not putting the local process workers in his electorate first. I call on the Nationals do to more— *(Time expired)*

Kashmir: Attacks

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (13:37): Last Thursday saw another terrorist attack in a region known for its instability, Kashmir. Forty-four Indian paramilitary police were killed when a suicide bomber rammed a car into a bus they were travelling in. This was the deadliest attack in the region for decades. Islamist militant group Jaish-e-Mohammed claimed responsibility for the attack. This attack has been rightly condemned around the world, including by our Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs. I would like to associate myself with comments made by our leaders. This was a horrific and senseless attack, and my deepest condolences go out to the victims, survivors and their families. We must all stand together to defeat terrorism, and our thoughts are with the Indian people at this time.

My electorate of Bennelong is one of the most multicultural in the country, and as such it has a very large Indian community. This community is particularly well connected, with their roots back to their mother country, and I know that events like this affect this community deeply. We're very lucky to have such a strong South Asian community contributing to the strength and vibrancy of our electorate. I thank them for all they do in our area and I would like to reassure everyone in Bennelong that this parliament stands united against terrorism and condemns this awful attack.

Infrastructure: Building Standards

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (13:39): There are hundreds of buildings around Melbourne, with thousands of residents, built with the dangerous flammable cladding that led to the fire

that killed 72 people in London's Grenfell Tower. This month cladding on the Neo200 building caught fire. Residents lost possessions and still can't go back to their homes, but, fortunately, nobody lost their life. It could easily have been so much worse.

This is the failure of deregulating everything and letting developers, who bankroll the big political parties with donations, call the shots. The big developers walk away with millions in profits and, when things go wrong because they cut corners, they get off scot-free. Instead, the Victorian government is saying to homeowners: 'You fix it.' It has been 20 months since I first raised this with the Victorian government, yet the dangerous cladding remains. Not a single one of the government's loans have been taken out to remove cladding, and even it admits it will take at least two more years to fix. The federal government has sat on its hands and has even refused the recommendation of a Senate inquiry to ban the import of dangerous flammable cladding.

This is not good enough. Leaving it to the private market doesn't work. It could kill people. I am furious that people in Melbourne are in danger because governments are failing to take direct action to remove the cladding. This is an emergency. Governments must act, and act now. Governments themselves must remove, or pay to remove, the cladding now and recoup the costs from those responsible later or they will share responsibility for any disasters that happen.

Menzies Electorate: Sport

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies) (13:40): I've been delighted to support applications for community sport infrastructure grants in my electorate of Menzies. I'm delighted that the Templestowe Sports Club will be in receipt of \$110,000 from this Commonwealth government to upgrade the lighting on their main oval. This is a vibrant sporting club in my electorate. It has many members who participate in activities on a very regular basis. This lighting upgrade will enable an increase in participation hours amongst members of the club. Of course, it will also maximise safety for those who are playing on the oval.

The East Doncaster Cricket Club, another very vibrant sporting organisation in the electorate of Menzies, will receive \$38,750, which will go towards the upgrading of existing playing surfaces. Again, this will increase the participation of people in the East Doncaster area—those who play cricket, in particular, and other sporting activities on the oval. It'll enable a juniors competition to be conducted on Friday evenings and a veterans sporting competition on Sunday. Indeed, the club estimates that participation will increase by about 200 per cent as a result of these upgrades.

These community infrastructure sporting grants are very important. It has been wonderful to be able to fight for them in my electorate and to be able to announce some of the results.

South Australia: Giant Pandas

Mr GEORGANAS (Hindmarsh) (13:42): It gave me great pleasure on Sunday to attend the Adelaide Zoo, together with Senator Penny Wong, and announce that a Shorten Labor government will keep the iconic pandas, Wang Wang and Fu Ni, in Adelaide, extending the agreement between the federal government and the zoo in South Australia for the next five years. Since these giant pandas were housed at the Adelaide Zoo in 2009 they've welcomed more than 3.8 million visitors, and we know from the economic analysis that having the pandas in South Australia has generated \$33.5 million in economic output since 2010. If you

add another nine years onto that, the real figure is around \$70 million in economic return to South Australia as a result of having these pandas at our zoo.

As one of just 22 zoos worldwide, and the only location in Australasia to host pandas, all South Australians have been proud of Wang Wang and Fu Ni, who have been calling Adelaide home for more than a decade. The love of the pandas is reflected by the more than 400,000 people who visited Adelaide Zoo to see the pandas just last year, the third-highest attendance figure in the zoo's 135 years. It's a great announcement that'll ensure another generation of children, including my grandchildren, will be able to visit the pandas.

Bombing of Darwin: 77th Anniversary

National Security

Mr BROAD (Mallee) (13:43): On 7 December 1941, with the bombing of Pearl Harbour, Japan entered the Second World War. On 15 February 1942, Singapore fell, with the capture of 80,000 troops. And on 19 February 1942, 77 years ago today, Darwin was bombed, with the loss of about 325 people and the wounding of 400. In 1942, in the House of Representatives in the Old Parliament House, they actually closed the *Hansard* and the parliament prayed for wisdom, such was the peril that Australia was under. They discussed drawing a line between Brisbane and Adelaide as the fallback position from which Australia would be defended. It was 10 weeks from when Japan entered the war in 1941 until when Australia was under attack.

We must have a strong standing defence system, and we must not fall into the trap of also being underprepared. It concerns me that we still have not addressed our fuel reserves. There is no point in having a standing military if we run out of fuel. We have relied on imported fuel. The loss of refining does leave us exposed. Let us learn the history from 77 years ago and be well prepared so that we can defend our nation if ever we have to again. This is a history we must learn from.

Herbert Electorate: Small Business

Ms O'TOOLE (Herbert) (13:45): I stand here today completely outraged by the LNP government and how they are letting down Townsville's small businesses after our worst natural disaster in history. The LNP government is excluding small business owners from the \$75,000 recovery grants. Townsville's small businesses are doing it very tough. Not only are some trying to rebuild their homes but they are also trying to rebuild their businesses. It is outrageous that the LNP would leave small business owners, in their time of need, to hang out to dry. The LNP government has made multiple unfair restrictions on Townsville people and small business owners. There should be one rule and one rule only. If it's flooded, you get federal relief funding. If your small business is flooded, you get federal assistance. It's that simple.

Because of the LNP's government's harsh restrictions to access vital funding, businesses like New Park Suit Hire and Menswear are excluded. The force of the floodwaters were so great that they knocked the doors off their building on Charters Towers Road. Mr McGinty has owned that store for 38 years, and he is now trying to prepare for a very big year ahead with Townsville weddings. He is booked out for this entire month, but he has lost all of his stock. He needs funding now to accommodate his clients for their special days. Mr McGinty should have access to the \$75,000 federal grant, but he is being denied this right by this LNP

government. I demand that the LNP government lift these harsh and stringent restrictions.
(Time expired)

McMillan Electorate: Infrastructure

Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (13:46): What did former Prime Minister Tony Abbott; the former leader of the Nationals in Victoria, Peter Ryan; Christian Stefani, a council officer; Darren Chester and myself have in common, along with Vern and Cheryl Suckling, Brian and Alma Mattingly, Paul Macphall, Eddy Fowler and Rocco Maruzza—who is deceased, sadly. It is the Long Jetty at Port Welshpool. Every one of those people had something to do with the creation of the Long Jetty at Port Welshpool. I was advised by a friend of mine the other day that it's shoulder to shoulder on the Port Welshpool pier at the moment.

This was an investment of \$4.9 million by the government, and it's an \$11 million development. You can't get into the fish-and-chip store, the local store is rocking, the pub is having a whale of a time and there's nowhere to park—the council have to put in more parking. There's nowhere to go to the toilet, because it's 600 metres away. The council are going to have to put in a new toilet. This is the greatest economic boost to this area we have ever had. That means they're going to keep their primary school and the kindergarten will stay open. These things are important to small communities.

This is one of the best things, in my political time in this House, that we have ever done. I reckon that you could see the Port Welshpool Long Jetty from the moon, but the best part of it is this: I always wanted disabled people to be able to get in their wheelchair, go down and have a fish, and that's exactly what they can do now if they can find a space to get in and have a fish. This is a great project. Thanks to the whole of this parliament.

Bombing of Darwin: 77th Anniversary

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (13:48): A strong Darwin means a more secure Australia. Today in Darwin we commemorated 77 years since the Bombing of Darwin. Air raid sirens sounded at the cenotaph in Darwin this morning. We remember those who were affected not only on 19 February 1942, when Darwin was bombed, but across the north during those difficult years in World War II. Among the attendees at the commemorations today was 99-year-old Brian Winspear. He was just 19 when he joined the Air Force and he was part of the squadrons of bombers in Darwin during the war.

Thousands of Territorians were forced to flee south when Darwin was bombed. Upon returning home, they found that their home had been devastated by war. The Darwin of today is a testament to the resilience of those Territorians who rebuilt our city and made it the modern and welcoming place that it is today. I acknowledge all of those who defended, those who fought, those who suffered and those who rebuilt Darwin, our home. A strong Darwin means a more secure Australia. Lest we forget.

Queensland: Mining

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson) (13:50): I'd like to stand with and congratulate the CFMEU's Queensland Mining and Energy Division for calling out Labor on its anti-coal and anti-mining agenda. *The Courier Mail*, earlier this year, said it clearly:

OPPOSITION Leader Bill Shorten has avoided committing Labor to supporting new thermal coal mines in Queensland.

I would like to congratulate the CFMEU on taking this stand, because year after year their support for Labor has been taken for granted and allowed Labor, at both state and federal levels, to be led by the nose by Greens anti-job activists into being against supporting the coal sector and coalmining.

I issued a statement yesterday that I would be keen to work with the CFMEU and its worker members, as I have a clear track record and position of support for coalmining and for mineworkers. I've stood up for the mining industry, not just for the multinational companies who run it but for the workers. I've stood up on the casualisation issue and changes that were before this parliament. I've stood up for workers impacted by ongoing lockouts.

Now, while there has been an ongoing alliance between the CFMEU and Labor in the past, I've always believed there is a role for National Party MPs to play in representing blue-collar regional workers, particularly coalminers. I note that on radio this morning the CFMEU leader, Stephen Smyth, while talking about Labor and their agenda, was also making negative comments about me. Old habits die hard! But, as I said, I extend the hand of friendship to the CFMEU: if you want to take on Labor for its anti-mining approach then I'm all ears. (*Time expired*)

Calwell Electorate: Dallas Neighbourhood House

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (13:51): I want to give a big shout out to the Dallas Neighbourhood House in Broadmeadows, which does a great job in helping those in need in our local community. I want to tell the House about their food parcel program, which I visited earlier this month. Whilst I was there helping them make the parcels and hand them out to my constituents, I got the opportunity to talk to those constituents about their financial difficulties and the challenges they're experiencing. They also expressed to me, especially, their deep appreciation for the food parcel program, which they and their families rely on on a weekly basis.

Since 2017, the Dallas Neighbourhood House has been helping my constituents who are struggling with the rising cost of living. Just to give an indication of how hard people are doing it in my electorate, last year the Dallas Neighbourhood House gave away over 3,000 food parcels to local Calwell families. The food parcels contained canned and frozen food, fresh food and vegetables, dairy and other daily necessities, and are donated by the Foodbank in Yarraville.

I want to thank Suzelle Allet, the manager of the Dallas Neighbourhood House, and her wonderful team of volunteers, managed by Fouzel Saboor Mohideen. Together, they sort out the bags and food items which make up the 65 parcels each week that are given out to help those who are doing it tough in my community. They do a great job, we're all indebted to them and I'm very grateful to be representing a community that cares so deeply about each other.

Dunkley Electorate: Mornington Peninsula Speak Up For Change Campaign

Mr CREWETHER (Dunkley) (13:53): I'd first like to acknowledge the Woodlands school students who are with us in the chamber here today, and I welcome them to Parliament House.

I'd also like to discuss a new initiative I'm supporting called the Mornington Peninsula Speak Up For Change Campaign. It was set up in my electorate by two inspiring people: Jesse

Cross, aged 32, and Hannah Swinnerton, aged 34. Together, they are raising awareness of the impacts of bullying, drug use and mental health by their own life experiences. They are speaking to youth groups and running community awareness and fundraising events.

Hannah is currently studying her certificate IV in youth work, and speaks regularly at local schools as part of the Youth Out Loud organisation. Jesse, who has a diploma in outdoor recreation, is also working at Frankston Hospital's mental health unit as a peer worker, a job he has thrived in for the past two years. They've shared with me some shocking statistics: one in seven Australians will experience depression in their lifetime, and by 2030 it's expected to be the leading illness burden. In 2017, 3,128 people took their own lives in Australia, which equates to eight people each day. And of the 380,000 young people who were cyberbullied in Australia last year, 162,000 turned to their parents for help but only 64,000 sought help from a mental health professional.

Jesse and Hannah are looking for further support to develop their campaign, including bringing awareness of domestic violence and LGBTIQ+ topics, expanding their events across the wider community and raising funds to start events for Youth Out Loud on the peninsula. *(Time expired)*

Morrison Government

Mr CONROY (Shortland) (13:54): I'm picking that, in about five minutes time and for the next hour we're going to hear a lot about national security. That seems to be the theme from the government at the moment. But it would be remiss of me not to remind the House and, hopefully, the people listening that those opposite are the party of Menzies, of Pig Iron Bob. Those opposite are the party of Prime Minister Menzies, who advocated appeasement nine days after Hitler invaded Poland. Nine days after Hitler invaded Poland, Menzies, their great cult hero, advocated a peace deal with Hitler.

Those opposite are the party that took us into Vietnam, where 521 Australians lost their lives, on a lie. This is the party that took us into the second Iraq war on a lie about weapons of mass destruction, leaving a whirlwind that's still being wreaked on the Middle East now.

This is the party of Peter Reith, of 'children overboard'. This is a party that will stoop to anything to use national security for petty political advantage. They love to be in uniform. We saw it recently up in Townsville, where a certain person had to ride in an LAV to get through the floods. They are a party that cloak themselves in patriotism, that hide behind the ADF at any opportunity and that leak intelligence briefings when they have the opportunity. But, in the end, so much from them is hypocrisy. They cheapen the words 'national security'. They cheapen patriotism. They actually undermine national security every single time they use it for petty political advantage. *(Time expired)*

Murray-Darling Basin

Mr DRUM (Murray—Nationals Whip) (13:56): The Murray-Darling Basin Plan is a plan to find the balance between the needs of irrigation communities and the need to return our rivers to health. Everybody wants a healthy river system, and the plan, while it may be far from perfect, is better than no plan at all.

Last week we had the Labor Party, with Tony Burke and Penny Wong, saying that if they get the opportunity they're going to reintroduce buybacks to return more water to the rivers. This proposal is being driven purely by pre-election politics, with no regard to the impact it

will have on basin communities. Removing the caps would be a shocking decision. We all know that inflows into our rivers are at all-time lows, but removing water from irrigation communities can cause incredible damage if it is done without careful planning. Even when it is done with careful planning it can be very problematic. Of all the ways in which a government can assist with returning water to the environment, the worst way, the dumbest way, is that of buybacks. Buybacks leave remaining farmers stranded. All of these assets through our irrigation communities can become stranded. Buybacks have been ridiculed by every water policy expert ever to draw breath, yet the federal Labor Party are now saying that if they win the election they will introduce the laziest, dumbest, worst possible policy, which is introducing water back to the river system through buybacks.

Minister for Finance and the Public Service

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (13:57): This morning, right across Australia, families have been rushing to book their next holiday with Helloworld, because it has a heck of a sale going on: pay nothing now, pay nothing later. Unfortunately, for all those kids dreaming of a free trip to Disneyland or couples looking forward to a holiday in Fiji, this was a limited offer—limited to the Liberal Minister for Finance and the Public Service, Senator Cormann, and only offered by the Liberal Party Treasurer, Andrew Burnes. It was a special deal from Liberal donors just for Liberal ministers.

The senator told estimates today that he'd asked to be charged for these flights. That was big of him! Here's some news for Senator Cormann: most people don't have to ask, and most customers don't have the company's CEO on speed dial. If there's an issue with their Facebook, they can't give Mark Zuckerberg a bell; if their flight's delayed, they can't just get Richard Branson on the blower; if their computer keeps crashing, they can't shoot Bill Gates a text and get a new one.

Mr Speaker, this wasn't just a day at Cottesloe Beach. Senator Cormann didn't forget to declare a free bucket and spade. This was multiple flights to Singapore! We all know the minister for finance has had problems counting the numbers in the past, but surely even he can tell the difference between 2,700 and zero? How is it okay for a Liberal minister to get free flights from a Liberal donor while the same donor is bidding for a multimillion-dollar contract from the department that this minister oversees? This stinks. It's not right. And it says everything about what is so wrong with this government. *(Time expired)*

Leichhardt Electorate: Far North Day Hospital

Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt) (13:59): Recently I had the pleasure of opening the first multispeciality day hospital to be opened in Cairns in more than 20 years. The \$5 million Far North Day Hospital includes two day-hospital operating theatres, and a third is planned for later this year. It offers urology; gynaecology; and dental, plastic and cosmetic surgical services, with endoscopy planned for later this year. It's expected to treat about 8,000 patients a year once the services come online.

The new facility is located in the heart of the CBD and will complement Cairns Day Surgery operating at Ramsay Health Care, which opened in 1996. This is a new state-of-the-art facility which will go a long way to easing the pressure and waiting times for our region. I want to give a big shout-out to Dr Garrath Evans, Dr Stefan Antoniou and Dr Philip Smith,

along with their dedicated team of health professionals. There's little doubt that patients attending the Far North Day Hospital will receive the best possible care.

The SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 43, the time for members' statements has concluded.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is to the Prime Minister. Today Labor has three bills ready to implement recommendations of the banking royal commission. When will the Prime Minister stop running a part-time parliament and schedule extra sitting days so Labor's bills can become law before the next election? Why is the Prime Minister putting the banks ahead of the people, just like he did when he voted against the banking royal commission 26 times?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister) (14:01): I'll ask the Treasurer to add further to this answer. What the government is not going to do is engage in reckless legislation. We will engage in responding to all 76 of the recommendations of the royal commission, and we're going to do it in a measured way, consulting to ensure there are no unintended consequences, because our government doesn't engage in reckless legislation. Our government doesn't do that.

What the Leader of the Labor Party did in this place last week was engage in reckless legislation to undermine Australia's border protection regime, and we're already seeing the unintended consequences. It's the Leader of the Labor Party who knows how to rush to failure when it comes to bringing legislation into this place. He didn't think about it when it was voted on in the Senate; he didn't think about it here. He demonstrated his weakness, and the leader of Labor Party cannot be trusted with Australia's future.

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:02): This is what a response to the royal commission looks like—not a doorstep with a couple of suggestions.

Ms O'Neil interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Hotham.

Mr FRYDENBERG: The member for McMahon and the Leader of the Opposition, knowing that there were 76 recommendations, held a doorstep and announced part responses to how many? Five—a mere six per cent. And the member for Hotham proudly went out on ABC Radio and said that the Labor Party would provide a comprehensive response within a week.

Ms O'Neil interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Hotham.

Mr FRYDENBERG: It's now two weeks later, and we have yet to see a response.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will pause. The member for Hotham is now warned. I just wanted the Treasurer to pause because she was interjecting so loudly, I wasn't confident she'd heard me already call her to order on two or three occasions. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr FRYDENBERG: Out of the 76 recommendations, 40 of those will require legislation. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, there's consultation papers, there's drafting instructions and there's the exposure draft of the legislation, and then it needs to be introduced. And none other than the Law Council of Australia said that we must take the time to get this right.

The Labor Party have taken two weeks to get it wrong! They've taken two weeks to get it wrong! In the meantime, we've passed legislation through the Senate implementing two of the Hayne recommendations around trustees in super and around inducing employers in super. We're also working with the Australian Financial Complaints Authority to ensure an expansion of their remit, and today I met with their CEO. The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources is working on a national debt mediation scheme that will help rural communities. The Minister for Families and Social Services is working on a review of financial counselling. We have announced that Graeme Samuel will chair an APRA capability review. We're getting on with it where the Labor Party are missing in action.

National Security

Ms FLINT (Boothby) (14:04): My question is to the Prime Minister. Would the Prime Minister update the House on how the government is building a stronger and more secure Australia? Is the Prime Minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister) (14:05): I thank the member for Boothby for her question. She's part of a strong team that is building a stronger Australia, a stronger economy—a stronger and safer Australia, where Australians can live in a secure nation, both today and into the future. We not only have the record of achieving that, whether it's the more than 1.2 million jobs or unemployment coming down to five per cent, or the very fact that over the last 4½ years there has not been a single successful venture by an illegal boat to Australia—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr MORRISON: we have the record—importantly, we have the plans to ensure that it stays that way.

But, if the leader of the Labor Party gets his way, he will change it all. The Labor Party will change it all if they get the opportunity to occupy the treasury benches—change it all when it comes to financial management, change it all when it comes to the strength of our economy, change it all when it comes to the safety and security of our nation. Under the leader of the Labor Party, they will make Australia weaker.

Under this government, under my government, we will continue to make Australia stronger, whether it's the economy or the essential services that Australians rely on. Record bulk-billing rates, record hospitals funding, record aged-care funding, record schools funding—all of these depend on the strong economy that our government have been presiding over now for the last 5½ years. Labor will change it all, with over \$200 billion in higher taxes over the next decade, which will suffocate our economy. It will hit retirees. It will hit home owners. It will hit renters. It will hit small and family businesses. It will hit wage earners. Labor will take \$144 billion of income tax legislated by this parliament and they will cut it in half. That is what they're proposing to do.

But it's not just that. As we know, as we saw, when it comes to the safety and security of our nation, the leader of the Labor Party has already demonstrated in this place that he will weaken Australia's border security regime and he will weaken Australia's national security regime. Now, this is a Labor leader who had the opportunity to come in here and stand up for stronger border protection, and he did the exact opposite. Don't take my word for it. Take the word of the Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs who said very clearly that what this means is the 'effective unravelling of regional processing. He said:

So, on a reasonable worst-case basis, you are looking at effectively the closure of regional processing and the transference of a thousand people en masse.

That is what the leader of the Labor Party knowingly signed his opposition to when he came into this place. He had the advice, he ignored the advice, and that's why the leader of the Labor Party cannot be trusted to protect our borders and keep Australia safe.

Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:08): My question is to the Prime Minister. Nalini, a single mother of two, told the royal commission that, after being knocked back for a car loan by eight different lenders, a car dealership offered her a loan despite her small income and big credit card debt. She was sold a lemon, fell behind in her payments, and Westpac found that she never should have been given the loan in the first place. Why won't the Prime Minister schedule more sitting weeks before the election so this parliament can legislate the recommendations of the banking royal commission?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:09): I thank the member for McMahon for his reference to Hayne recommendation 1.7, which is about removing the point-of-sale exemption for responsible lending obligations. And I can tell the member for McMahon that we agree with this recommendation in full. But we also recognise that this recommendation needs to be carefully implemented—

Ms O'Neil: Hey, Josh, this is how long a bill is!

Mr FRYDENBERG: because it will impact on thousands of Australian businesses.

Ms O'Neil: It's not hard!

Mr FRYDENBERG: So, after discussion—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will just pause. The member for Hotham will leave under standing order 94(a).

The member for Hotham then left the chamber.

Mr FRYDENBERG: After talking to the Treasury implementation taskforce about the various recommendations from the Hayne royal commission, this is one where we really need to carefully work through the implementation. It will require a consultation paper and discussion with key stakeholders.

It was interesting that when the Labor Party, at this doorstep earlier today, announced that they were going to provide part responses to just six per cent of the Hayne recommendations there was the conspicuous absence of any talk about Labor's position on mortgage brokers. That is because the member for Hotham, who's now left the chamber, went out publicly and said the Labor Party will implement every single recommendation of Hayne, and one of those

recommendations relates to the fee model for mortgage brokers. We on this side of the House have said that we stand with mortgage brokers; that there are 17,000—

Mr Bowen: What about the dodgy car loans? What are you going to do about dodgy car loans?

Mr FRYDENBERG: Oh! It's not about the Hayne recommendations!

Mr Sukkar interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat. The member for Deakin will cease interjecting.

Mr Bowen interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon! I think the Manager of Opposition Business is trying to make a point of order. I'd like to hear him.

Mr Burke: It's a point of order on direct relevance. The question goes specifically to the car loan aspect of the royal commission recommendations. There is no catch-all phrase in there at all.

The SPEAKER: My hearing of the question was that was certainly in the preamble, and there was a question there, but there was another part that asked why extra sitting weeks wouldn't be scheduled to legislate recommendations of the banking royal commission. I think that has opened it up a bit and the Treasurer is in order.

Mr FRYDENBERG: The reality is that there are 17,000 mortgage brokers in this country employing around 26,000 people, and 75 per cent of those mortgage brokers are sole traders. They work in all the regional communities and they are helping put together more than half of the mortgages across Australia in the residential mortgage market. The Labor Party have said they're going to implement every single recommendation. That means they're going to smash competition in the housing market. They're going to bring a sledgehammer to mortgage brokers, and that means they're ignoring the recommendations of the Productivity Commission and they're going to give a big free kick to the banks. All the mortgage brokers across Australia, and their employees and their families, know that the coalition is standing with them. But they know that the Labor Party is preparing to implement every single recommendation of Hayne, which will actually bring a sledgehammer to their business model. So only one side of the parliament stands with mortgage brokers, and it is the coalition.

National Security

Mr DRUM (Murray—Nationals Whip) (14:12): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development. Will the Deputy Prime Minister outline to the House how the government's strong and consistent approach to border protection enables increased investment in rural and regional Australia? What is the impact of a weaker approach to border protection for regional Australians?

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of The Nationals) (14:13): I thank the member for Murray for his question. In the Howard era there were no children in detention centres in Australia. When Kevin Rudd came to office, he promised to be a fiscal conservative. He promised—

Ms Chesters interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Bendigo will leave under 94(a). I'm sorry; it's just relentless.

The member for Bendigo then left the chamber.

Mr McCORMACK: No great loss! He also promised to be tough on border security but—do you know what?—he wasn't. He certainly wasn't. Under the former Labor government there were 8,000 children in Australian detention centres. Children do not belong in detention centres. They do not. Children do not belong in detention centres, and 8,000 of them were placed there under the shoddy, pathetic policies put forward by those opposite when they were in government. The Liberals and Nationals have removed every child from Nauru, or there is a clear pathway from Nauru. Labor opened detention centres.

Mr Brian Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lyons is now warned.

Mr McCORMACK: We closed them—19 of them. Labor spent money on children in detention centres; we spend money on children in public schools—record funding. In fact, in all schools in Australia—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left!

Mr McCORMACK: By closing Labor's detention centres, we are saving more than \$500 million—half a billion dollars.

In all, Labor's border mismanagement cost the taxpayers of this nation \$16 billion. Sixteen billion dollars, member for McEwen. Think about that. What would that be spent on other than the detention centres, other than pathetic border policies? It could be spent on such things as the Victorian rail revival. That has cost \$1.75 billion, and it's a game changer for regional Victoria, a game changer for the people of Murray. It's investing in communities throughout regional Victoria, including in Murray, giving them better regional rail services, better options for those commuters in regional Victoria. It's also investing \$235 million in the north-east rail line. That investment is big news for the north-east Victorian community. It will enable V/Line to introduce new, faster better trains—VLocity trains capable of speeds of up to 130 kilometres an hour—because that's what we're doing. We're investing in building a better Australia.

Infrastructure is not about detention centres. Infrastructure is about building better, safer roads. That's what we're doing in regional Victoria, right across regional Australia and right across Australia. We are busting through urban congestion problems, making sure that we've got the right measures in place. And we have. When it comes to border security, we certainly have the right measures in place—

Mr Rob Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McEwen will cease interjecting.

Mr McCORMACK: unlike those opposite. If this man ever becomes Prime Minister, we know what's going to happen: the boats are going to start again, the detention centres will be built again and it will be mayhem once more. *(Time expired)*

Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:16): My question is to the Prime Minister. Tracy, who works in an Aboriginal cooperative, told the royal commission that she was conned into paying more than \$10,000 in funeral insurance premiums for a policy that was only worth \$8,000, and the dodgy company that sold Tracy this insurance used misleading marketing to trick her into believing that it was backed by the Aboriginal community. Why won't the Prime Minister schedule extra sitting weeks before the election so this parliament can stop dodgy insurers ripping off Australians?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister) (14:17): It's a very serious issue and it requires a very serious response. That's what the government is doing in responding and taking action on all 76 recommendations of the royal commission, and we will do so in a way that follows the proper process of getting legislation right.

Now, the Labor Party have had 15 days to respond to the royal commission, and what they announced today sounds like they spent 15 minutes putting it together. The problem with the Labor Party is they never learn from their mistakes. The home insulation royal commission found and warned of 'rushed, ill-thought-through policies with catastrophic consequences'. The Labor Party have been down this path before. They get all rushed up with blood on politics and they come in here and thump their chests. But we know that when the Labor Party rushes legislation the consequences are catastrophic. We saw that in home insulation. We saw it last week when they rushed their bill in here and supported weaker border protection laws. The Labor Party cannot be trusted with these very sensitive matters. They demonstrated that last time when they were in government, and they would do so again if they were given the chance.

Climate Change

Ms BANKS (Chisholm) (14:18): My question is to the Minister for Health. Could the minister explain to the people in my electorate of Chisholm and to the people in his electorate of Flinders who are concerned about his role leading to environmental and climate change inaction—

Government members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Banks will resume her seat. Members on my right will cease interjecting—including the member for Bowman. The member for Chisholm will begin her question again.

Ms BANKS: My question is to the Minister for Health. Could the minister explain to the people in my electorate of Chisholm and to the people in his electorate of Flinders who are concerned about his role leading to environmental and climate change inaction what he has actually done to address environmental health issues when the *Medical Journal of Australia* and countless doctors and health professionals state that climate change inaction, in which he has played a significant role, threatens the lives and health of all Australians?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Health) (14:19): I could not be more delighted to receive this question from the member for Chisholm on this topic. The reason why is because, when we came into government, we were left with a gap of 750 million tonnes to close our 2020 target. We didn't just close that gap in terms of emissions; we are now 368 million

tonnes in surplus. In other words, we have turned around, from Labor's position, Australia's emissions profile for 2020 by 1.1 billion tonnes. But we also inherited a Great Barrier Reef that was on the World Heritage in danger watch list. Labor put it on, and we took it off. We hear the bleating from that side.

Mr Burke interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr HUNT: I simply take the Manager of the Opposition Business to the 2012 and 2013 World Heritage Committee statement, which damned Australia's management of the reef on his watch. But you know what? The World Heritage Committee in 2015 praised Australia as a global role model, only two years later, for our management of the reef and, at that moment, took Australia off that watchlist. That was a real achievement. In addition to that—

Mr Burke interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr HUNT: the Emissions Reduction Fund, which, I understand, the member has supported throughout her time in parliament, has seen Australia achieve our 2020 targets and has seen projects such as Indigenous savannah management, where Indigenous Australians are able to work in their environment to achieve emissions reduction, to have jobs for themselves and to achieve our targets. As the Prime Minister said at the Press Club, we are achieving our targets. Those targets were set by the people on the other side, the very targets—

The SPEAKER: The member for Chisholm on a point of order.

Ms Banks: On a question of relevance, Mr Speaker. My question went to the environmental health of Australians.

The SPEAKER: Yes, it did, and I listened to the question carefully to check that it was in order. I think that the member for Chisholm successfully linked health to environmental issues but, in doing so, she mentioned climate change very broadly so I don't feel that I should be curtailing the minister while he's on those subjects. The minister has the call.

Mr HUNT: The test of success is whether one is meeting their targets—the very thing that they said to the Australian people that they would do, the pledge that they made to their electors, the pledge that they made to the Australian people. We said we would meet and beat our targets. We are meeting and beating our '20 targets, and these are the targets that were set by the ALP. We are meeting them, we're beating them and we will achieve our 2030 targets in a canter.

Mr Burke: I'd ask the Minister for Health to table the watchlist he referred to given that it doesn't exist.

Mr Hunt interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. The Minister for Health will cease interjecting. The Manager of Opposition Business knows full well he can only request a document be tabled if—

Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House. Anyway, the Manager of Opposition Business well knows he can only—

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Shortland, just sort of try and be with the moment, can you? All right? You're about a sentence too late. Anyway. As the Manager of Opposition Business knows, a minister can only be asked to table a document they are referring to, and the minister had no documents in front of him.

National Security

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (14:23): My question is to the Minister for Home Affairs. Will the minister please update the House on the importance of strong and consistent border protection policies? And is the minister aware of any challenges to the integrity of Australia's borders?

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Home Affairs) (14:24): I thank the honourable member for Ryan for her question. Every Australian knows the disaster of border protection policy under the Labor Party. We've seen in the last fortnight attempts by Labor to introduce a new Labor border protection policy, which has been a complete disaster. What does it do? It allows people of bad character to come to our country and for the minister to be compelled to allow those people to come to Australia. It allows for people smugglers to get back into business, and it has the effect of closing offshore detention centres, which would completely undermine the border protection policies that any government has in place.

You have to ask yourself: who possibly could be the architect of such a bad policy? Would you learn from the lessons of the past or would you go back to the architects of the previous disaster? In the Labor Party's case it seems that, to come up with their latest policy on border protection, they've gone back to the architects under the Rudd-Gillard years. Not many Australians will realise this, but the person who aspires to be Treasurer in a Shorten government was the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship—this is the member for McMahon—when 398 boats arrived and 25,000 people were put into detention. Under his watch, 4,000 children were put into detention. And he opened six detention centres to cope with that dysfunction. He is a key architect of the current iteration of Labor's border protection policy. No wonder it's a disaster!

But he is not alone. One of the other masterminds of Labor's latest policy on border protection is also sitting on the frontbench. He aspires to be a minister in a Labor government in the future as well. That's the member for Watson. He was a relative underachiever compared to the member for McMahon, but, nonetheless, under his watch, 83 boats arrived, 6,600 people arrived and, to his eternal shame, 1,100 children went into detention. He only opened one detention centre as part of the 17 that Labor opened.

What this says to the Australian people is that the Labor Party have not learnt the lessons of the past. What they're proposing now is even worse than what was proposed in the Rudd-Gillard years. Allowing people to come to our country who have been refused entry or consideration by the Americans demonstrates to the Australian public that the Labor Party have not learnt one thing over the last six years.

Queensland: Floods

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:27): My question is to the Prime Minister. After the terrible, devastating floods recently in Townsville and, indeed, throughout North Queensland, thousands of Australians will be making insurance claims for damage to houses and livestock and for other losses. Why won't the Prime Minister schedule extra sitting days so this parliament can debate and pass laws to force insurance companies to treat their customers fairly?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister) (14:27): There's really nowhere you won't go to try to make political points, is there? There's really nowhere this leader of the Labor Party won't go. I mean, honestly! I'll tell you what we're doing when it comes to supporting people affected by floods in North Queensland. Last night, in northern Australia, a cabinet subcommittee met to continue to ensure that the government was providing support on the ground and relief, recovery and reconstruction for the people of North Queensland. Not only have we already ensured that somewhere in the vicinity of \$60 million of emergency payments were made and that the bureaucracy around those payments was removed so people could get access to those payments, and not only have we been on the ground talking directly to graziers and councils and providing a million dollars to every single council that has been effected by these disasters; we are now putting together the rebuilding plans so that these cattle graziers and other graziers can be in a position to rebuild such an important part of Australia in North Queensland. We're doing all of these things. This has been the most pressing issue that has been in front of the government since those floods hit.

But I'll tell you one thing that we've also had to deal with and have been distracted by, and that's this Leader of the Opposition coming in here and voting for a bill to weaken our border protection that will cost this country half a billion dollars in the next two years. I would have preferred to have put that money into supporting people in North Queensland. This leader of the Labor Party came in here and committed Australia to \$1.4 billion to reopen detention centres to clean up his mess.

Dividend Imputation

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (14:29): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the government is giving older Australians the opportunity to secure financial independence in retirement?

Mr Dreyfus: How are your shares going?

Mr TIM WILSON: And is the minister aware of any—

The SPEAKER: The member for Goldstein will resume his seat. The member for Isaacs will leave under 94(a). The member for Goldstein will begin his question again.

The member for Isaacs then left the chamber.

Mr TIM WILSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the government is giving older Australians the opportunity to secure financial independence in retirement? Is the minister aware of any higher-taxing approaches that would impact their secure retirement?

Mr Brian Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lyons has already been warned. He knows what to do.

The member for Lyons then left the chamber.

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:30): I thank the member for Goldstein for his question. I want to say what a fantastic job he has done chairing a parliamentary committee. What a fantastic job he has done. The member for Goldstein has given a voice to the deep concerns of the over one million Australians that the Labor Party want to silence with their great big retirees tax. It's a \$55 billion retirees tax. He is giving a voice and an opportunity to be heard to one million-plus Australians across the country and to the over 11,000 in his own electorate who will be affected.

Mr Speaker, when you read the stories and hear the stories of the people who are being affected by Labor's dreaded retirees tax it actually brings home how callous the Labor Party is and how the Labor Party is ignoring the concerns of hardworking Australians who have done nothing wrong except diligently plan and save for their own retirement. These are Australians like Adrian, who said the following: 'My wife and I are both retired teachers from the Victorian state government school system. We live in a regional Victorian city in a modest home. We are self-funded retirees. During our working lives we were both members of the Australian Education Union. The effect of not allowing us a cash refund of franking credits would result in approximately a one-third reduction of income from our Australian shares, effectively a combined \$8,000 per year loss of personal income. The ALP's proposal to remove a cash refund of franking credits from self-funded retirees is unfair.'

They're the words of former members of the Australian Education Union. They're the words of people of whom the member for McMahon said, 'If you don't like our policy, don't vote for us.' They're the words of people that the Labor Party is ignoring and dismissing and no longer caring about. These are hardworking Australians who have done nothing wrong except save for their own retirement. There's only one side of politics that stands on their side, and it's the coalition under this Prime Minister.

Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:33): My question is to the Prime Minister. Earlier in question time the Prime Minister called Labor's proposed laws to clean up the banks 'reckless', just like he called the very idea of a royal commission reckless as he was voting against it 26 times. When will the Prime Minister learn his lesson, apologise to the Australian people for voting against the royal commission 26 times and schedule extra sitting weeks to work with Labor to finally clean up the banks?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:34): There's only one side of politics that's provided a comprehensive response to the royal commission, and it's this side of politics. It's the Liberal-National government.

The member for McMahon is all chirpy today, not only because he just got a question but also because he's come up with part responses to six per cent of the Hayne royal commission recommendations. Conspicuously absent is their position on mortgage brokers—the 26,000 people who are employed with the 17,000 mortgage brokers across the country that the Labor Party are going to leave for dead. These are the people who the Labor Party wants to ruin the business model of. These are people who are small-business people. These are sole traders. They are in every regional community and every city community across this country, and they

know that the Liberal and National parties are standing with them. The member for McMahon has decided to leave the chamber. He's decided to leave the chamber because he doesn't like the answer. He doesn't like the answer, because the member for McMahon has been found wanting.

We on this side of the House have got on with responding to the Hayne royal commission. We've passed legislation through the Senate in relation to two of the specific recommendations. We're getting on with the national debt mediation scheme, we're getting on with the review of financial counselling, we're getting on with the direction to the Australian Financial Complaints Authority on setting up a compensation scheme of last resort, and we're getting on with taking action on all 76 recommendations. The Labor Party is being found wanting.

Dividend Imputation

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (14:36): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer outline for the House how the government is ensuring the economic security of all Australians who have saved for their retirement? Is the Treasurer aware of any other higher-taxing alternative approaches?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:36): I want to say to the member for Mackellar what a brilliant job he's done on the parliamentary committee, standing up for people who are going to be hurt by Labor's retiree tax. He's done a brilliant job, including standing up for over 10,000 people in his own electorate who are going to be hit by Labor's dreaded tax.

Imagine what those 10,000 plus people in Mackellar thought when they turned on 7.30 last night to see the smug member for McMahon dismiss the concerns of more than 1 million Australians by saying that the Labor Party won't change one jot—won't change one bit—of their dreaded retiree tax, which is a \$55 billion hit on Australian retirees who have done nothing wrong. These people have done nothing wrong, except diligently save and plan for their own retirement. Like Rose, whose story to the inquiry was told by a friend and colleague. She is a schoolteacher, aged 53, living alone in a one-bedroom unit, who, through her self-managed super fund is aiming to retire with savings that generate an income of \$50,000. Under the Labor Party's policy, she stands to lose over \$10,000 a year and is wondering whether she should change her asset allocation and go on the pension. In the words of one of her colleagues, 'Rose is distraught and she doesn't understand why Labor are going after the little people.' 'School teachers vote Labor,' her colleague said. But, come the federal election, there is no chance.

The Leader of the Opposition thought he would dig a bigger hole and stand beside the member for McMahon and say, like Margaret Thatcher, that he was not for turning—he was not for turning on this policy. But I tell you what, another quote of Margaret Thatcher's would have been more apt. Margaret Thatcher said, 'The problem with socialism is that at the end of the day you run out of other people's money.' The Labor Party is running out of hard-earned taxpayers money to spend, and now they're coming after more than one million retirees and their self-managed super funds. Only one side of politics will stand with retired Australians, and that's the Liberal-National government under this Prime Minister.

Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton) (14:39): My question is to the Prime Minister. Today in Senate estimates the Director of Public Prosecutions said that a factor preventing the prosecution of the leak of an AFP raid was the failure of people to provide witness statements. Will the Prime Minister order Minister Cash and the human services minister to provide witness statements to the police and fully cooperate with the police, so that whoever has broken the law can be brought to justice?

Government members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my right, the Prime Minister has the call.

Mr Pyne: What's the court case about?

The SPEAKER: Leader of the House, the Prime Minister is trying to commence the answer.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister) (14:40): I can say I am advised that ministers were invited on a voluntary basis to assist the AFP in their investigation. I'm advised that both ministers did, in fact, cooperate with that investigation on a voluntary basis. I'm advised that neither minister received any further request for information after they responded to the AFP's initial invitation to provide information. The ministers have cooperated with the AFP investigation.

Government members interjecting—

Mr MORRISON: There are interjections from behind me that are encouragingly asking me to advise the House on what this matter is actually into. The matter is into the AWU's providing of member fees to GetUp! and, indeed, the Leader of the Labor Party. That's what it is. The questioner has asked me if there are people who are responsible for things and if they should be exposed. They should, so why won't leader of the Labor Party come clean and provide the evidence that shows—allegedly, he believes that it does—that this didn't happen? The biggest obstacle to this investigation is the Leader of the Opposition, who refuses to come clean on the very serious allegations that the union that he was running and involved with directed members fees to GetUp! and, indeed, his own campaigns. Why doesn't he come clean?

Dividend Imputation

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (14:41): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the government is backing older Australians who have followed the rules and made provisions for their retirement? How would a change to the current system impact these retirees?

Mr Frydenberg: I don't think the microphone was on. It was hard to hear.

The SPEAKER: I don't think the microphone was on.

Mr CRAIG KELLY: I did ask my question to the Treasurer, but the microphone was not on at the time.

The SPEAKER: Did the Treasurer hear it? Tell you what, let's just do it again and start it again. Without being rude, I can always hear the member for Hughes without a microphone! But for those who can't, we will put it on.

Mr CRAIG KELLY: My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the government is backing older Australians who have followed the rules and made provisions for their retirement? How would a change to the current system impact these retirees?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:42): I want to thank the member for Hughes for his question and I want to congratulate him for the outstanding role he has done on the parliamentary inquiry. Like the member for Mackellar, like the member for Goldstein and the member for Brisbane, the member for Hughes is giving a voice to over one million Australians. These are people who feel that the Labor Party is coming after their hard-earned savings, and they know it. There are people like Margaret, a 77-year-old widow. This is what she told the parliamentary inquiry:

I am a 77 year old widow who has worked hard all my life in order to be financially independent and not a burden on the taxpayer or government. I also believe that there are people less fortunate who deserve the pension offered.

Currently I derive my income from superannuation and share dividends. Should Labor win the next federal election and implement this policy it will have a considerable impact on my retirement income.

I rely heavily on my imputation credits to supplement my allocated super pension. With the changes being foreshadowed I will lose approximately \$6000.00 annually. Currently this amount allows me to contribute among other things, to my private health insurance which I will have to cancel thus becoming a burden on the public health system. Since my income in total keeps me only slightly above the asset test ultimately the policy has the potential of forcing me on to the pension system.

These are real-life stories of people that the Labor Party are coming after, people that the Leader of the Opposition describes as getting welfare for the wealthy. This is not welfare and these people are not wealthy. But last night on 7.30 the member for McMahon that he would arrogantly dismiss their concerns and, if they didn't like the policy, they could vote against Labor. The member for McMahon told the Australian people that the Labor Party wouldn't change their policy at all.

Only one side of politics is going to stand with the million-plus Australian retirees, individuals with self-managed super funds, who are hurt by this policy, and only one side of politics, the Labor Party, is coming after their hard-earned savings.

Energy

Mr BUTLER (Port Adelaide) (14:45): My question is to the Prime Minister. Labor has repeatedly called on the Prime Minister to schedule extra sitting weeks so that recommendations of the banking royal commission can be implemented before the election. Today it's reported that the Minister for Agriculture said that the government couldn't legislate its so-called big-stick energy laws because it had run out of sitting days. If the big stick is really so critical, why won't the Prime Minister schedule extra sitting days? Is it because the Prime Minister has lost control of the parliament or, because after 11 failed attempts in three years, this government can't agree on energy policy? (*Time expired*)

Mr Hill interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Bruce is warned!

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister) (14:46): Our government's policy is to hold the big energy companies to account. We will stand with the Australian people to ensure that they

get the best possible deal from the energy companies. I invite the Minister for Energy, in particular, to set out very clearly the very important change that took place yesterday which demonstrates how our government is working to relieve the burden on Australians when it comes to their electricity bills.

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy) (14:46): I thank the Prime Minister. Yesterday, we put a rule change on the AEMC which will hold the big energy companies to account. For years now, we have seen the big energy companies charging customers sneaky late premiums because they pay an hour late or a day late. This is absolutely unacceptable behaviour, and we will not stand for it. We've seen customers paying as much as \$1,000 a year extra because of these dodgy practices from the big energy companies. We're passing through a whole series of changes to keep the big energy companies to account.

Those opposite have voted against legislation to hold the big energy companies to account. They voted against them 11 times. We on this side of the House sit on the side of the hardworking small businesses and the hardworking households of Australia. Those opposite sit on the side of the big energy companies.

Dividend Imputation

Mr EVANS (Brisbane) (14:48): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on how our government is protecting senior Australians who have worked hard to ensure their financial independence? What impact would changes to franking credit refunds have on independent senior Australians, including in my electorate of Brisbane?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:48): I want to thank the member for Brisbane and say what a fantastic job he has done on his parliamentary committee. He has done a fantastic job working with the member for Mackellar, the member for Goldstein and the member for Hughes in giving the more than one million Australians who are going to be hit by Labor's dreaded retirees tax an opportunity to be heard. These people are hardworking Australians who've done nothing wrong except diligently save for their retirement—like Kevin and Jan from Queensland, who told the committee:

We are fully self-funded retirees. We do not receive any government pensions. We have both worked hard and paid taxes from our late teens until we retired in 2013. We raised and educated three children. We are average, working-class people who have worked hard, lived frugally, no expensive homes, holidays or cars, and saved so we would not be reliant on the government in our retirement. We live in regional Queensland—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr FRYDENBERG: Those opposite say that they are. What a disgraceful slur on Kevin and Jan and more than one million Australians. What a shameful slur.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on both sides!

Mr FRYDENBERG: This was a policy that the Labor Party backed for two decades when it served their interest and now it's a policy they're abandoning because they're desperate for cash. Kevin and Jan live in regional Queensland, where their family home of 32 years is valued at \$300,000 at most, hardly in the wealthy class. They say:

The removal of the franking credit refund will reduce our income by a significant amount. We use this income to live off, maintain our home, to travel to see our children interstate and have a yearly camping

holiday, not in a large van but in a second-hand four-wheel drive in remote rural Australia where we spend in local communities. The loss of the franking credit refund will seriously affect the quality of our lives.

Opposition members: How much?

Mr FRYDENBERG: Those opposite scream out 'how much?' Well, let me tell you. On average, the 900,000 individuals will lose \$200,000 and up to 200,000 self-managed super funds will lose on average \$12,000. Now the Labor Party is coming after their hard-earned savings. The member for McMahon says that if you don't like the party, if you like the policy—you don't have to like the party—don't vote for the Labor Party. I can tell you that Kevin and Jan and Rose and all those other Australians who have gone to the parliamentary committee to have their voice heard are now making their concerns known about Labor's dreaded retiree tax. Only one side of politics, the Liberal and National parties in government, will stand with a million retired Australians. *(Time expired)*

Morrison Government

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (14:51): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can he assure the House that every one of his ministers, including Minister Cormann, and every minister sitting behind him has fully complied with the high standards required of ministers in his Statement of Ministerial Standards in all of their dealings with Andrew Burnes and his businesses?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister) (14:52): I'm advised there's nothing before me that could conflict with the question that the member just put to me.

National Security

Mr MORTON (Tangney) (14:52): My question is to the Attorney-General. Will the Attorney-General update the House on the effect weakened border protections will have on our justice system.

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General) (14:52): I thank the member for his question. There have been a procession of members opposite who have done their best to describe the changes that they made to border protection laws as no change, or only a codification of the existing practice. It is very sad that the shadow Attorney-General is absent, because perhaps the least impressive effort was from him this morning. He said, 'When it comes to border protection, there is no difference between Labor and Liberal, and that includes offshore processing, but there are many differences in terms of how you might choose to provide offshore processing.' When you think about that statement and you had to narrow it down to what is the major difference between the government's provision of offshore processing and the new Labor provision of offshore processing, you could see that the new Labor provision of offshore processing occurs onshore. With no discretion from the minister, the offshore processing now occurs onshore in Australia, which would seem to be, on this side of the House, rather a significant difference.

And what's very interesting is, having had the argument as to whether or not offshore processing should stay offshore, and having Labor fundamentally change the policy so that offshore processing is now onshore, the debate turned to where should the onshore processing by Labor happen? Where should Labor's offshore onshore processing happen? We suggested, for a variety of reasons, the option of Christmas Island, which will be the option. And how

was that option described yesterday by the shadow immigration minister? The member for Blair said the:

...ridiculous decision to open the Christmas Island detention centre is a hysterical and unhinged response from a desperate and dishonest Prime Minister.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left!

Mr PORTER: That is a very interesting description, because the description has changed very considerably in one day. Today we had the Leader of the Opposition saying this:

If the medical treatment is required and it's delivered on Christmas Island and it makes people well, well that's fine.

So, in one day we've gone from 'ridiculous' to 'fine', 'unhinged' to 'fine', 'hysterical' to 'fine'. 'Nyah! That's okay. Let's do it there.'

Labor's offshore-onshore processing has to happen at Christmas Island because they have removed the discretion on the part of the minister to determine who is processed onshore. So people who are charged with serious criminal offences, people for whom we have not had enough time to do the assessment, have to be processed in a secure facility at great expense, which is money that could be spent on better things. *(Time expired)*

Minister for Finance and the Public Service

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (14:55): My question is to the Prime Minister. On 16 August 2017, the Minister for Finance and the Public Service signed off on the brief I have here about awarding a multimillion-dollar whole-of-government contract to a subsidiary of Helloworld. Can the Prime Minister guarantee to this House that the awarding of this contract involved no conflicts?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister) (14:56): I refer the member to the minister for finance's statement to the Committee on Finance and Public Administration and its media release today, and I table that release, which goes to the issue that the member has raised. But I make this point: you always know when Labor's in trouble, because they go to the bottom of the chum bucket, as usual. They've got the drawer over there—the low drawer, the one right down the bottom. When this leader of the Labor Party is in trouble, when he's under pressure, whether it's because of his failed decision and his weakness on border protection or because of the fact that he wants to put \$200 million of higher taxes on Australians and he's been caught out by the excellent work of the Treasurer and the member for Goldstein and the other members of the House Committee on Economics, what do Labor do? They go to that bottom drawer and they start chucking the mud. You always know when Labor are in trouble when they start slinging the mud.

Australian Defence Force

National Security

Dr McVEIGH (Groom) (14:57): My question is to the Minister for Defence. Will the minister update the House on the role our Australian Defence Force is playing in operations in the Middle East? How might a different approach to border security impact on the ADF and Australia's national security?

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Minister for Defence and Leader of the House) (14:57): I thank the member for Groom for his question. One of the great privileges of being the Minister for Defence—or, for that matter, the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition or the shadow minister for defence—is the opportunity to visit the troops of the Australian Defence Force overseas in operations. Over the summer break and before Christmas, I managed to get to Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates and Iraq to visit our troops at bases like Taji and Camp Qargha to talk to them about the great work that they're doing.

Every Australian and every member of this House should be very proud of the work that our ADF are doing overseas in operations. Certainly, some members of this House have served in the military. We acknowledge their service, and we're very proud of that as well. The young men and women, and sometimes not so young men and women—from those who sustain and maintain aircraft right through to those who provide close personal protection and those who are doing the training, advising and assisting in Afghanistan and Iraq—are doing a great job for our country. The government asked them to put themselves in danger and they responded to the call. It hasn't been without cost, as everyone in this House knows. The role of the ADF in operations is a very important one, and it's one of the things that makes Australia an important and good ally to the United States. The United States knows it can call on Australia and we will respond, and we can respond. I'm proud of those young men and women, and I'm sure we all are.

I'm also asked by the member for Groom how changing our border security would impact on the operations of the ADF. It's a good question, because those of us who have been around the House for a long time remember that weak borders meant that the ADF was pulling dead bodies out of the water in northern Australia rather than serving in operations that their government had asked them to undertake—

Mr Champion interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield!

Mr PYNE: protecting liberty and freedom. Those of us who were in the parliament during the Rudd and Gillard period remember that Labor took a successful policy and changed it, and then we had 50,000 unauthorised arrivals on 800 boats and 1,200 deaths at sea, and Labor—

Mr Champion interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Member for Wakefield: that's it.

Mr PYNE: reopened 17 detention centres. That's what a failed border security policy looks like. And it was the ADF who had the very tragic responsibility, in many cases, of having to find those dead people and fish them out of the water. We, on this side of the House, don't want to return to those days. I am mystified that the Labor Party, for a cheap political win last week, would actually weaken our border security policies and put our service men and women of the ADF in the position where they might one day have to do the same thing again. Shame on the Labor Party and shame on those who supported them.

Government Procurement

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (15:00): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the Prime Minister's previous answer. Did the government use the same processes that it followed when it gave an almost half-a-billion-dollar contract to the secretive Paladin Group, that it followed when it gifted almost half a billion dollars to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation and

that it is following in the tender for the government's privatisation of visa processing, where one of the tenderers is a company run by a friend of the Prime Minister?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister) (15:01): The member for Rankin's got his hand so deep in that chum bucket now it will be smelling and smelling and smelling for weeks! I know the member for Rankin has been looking very, very cocky lately because the member for McMahon, the weakest link in the Labor Party, has been under siege. No-one's happier than the member for Rankin for the member for McMahon's failures when it comes to his taxation policies that the member for Goldstein and the committee and the Treasurer have been exposing. I refer the member to the comments by the Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs on the matters that he has raised. He can go and look that up for himself, and he should take his hand out the chum bucket.

National Security

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (15:02): My question is to the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs. Will the minister update the House on the government's successful border security policies? Is the minister aware of any alternative approaches that may threaten Australia's border sovereignty?

Mr COLEMAN (Banks—Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs) (15:02): I thank the member for his question. It's a very serious matter that the member has asked me to address, going as it does to Australia's border security and very substantial humanitarian matters. We know that under those opposite, tragically, 1,200 people lost their lives at sea, including children. We'll never know how many, but we know that children lost their lives. We know that 8,000 children were forcibly placed in detention by those opposite, and we know that 50,000 people arrived in that chaotic period in Australian public policy history. We know that our government has fixed the problem, and we know that those opposite now want to up-end the system of offshore processing which has been so fundamental to it.

But what I want to do today is go very, very carefully through what this law actually does in relation to who will be able to come to Australia under this law. And it's important to read section 198E(4)(b), which refers to the original person who's being recommended to come for a medical treatment or assessment. Then there are other people as well, and this is a very important point, because the law calls for any other person to come if that person is a member of the same family unit or if it is recommended by a medical practitioner. The question is: what are the limits on the medical practitioner recommending other people to come, and what happens if that occurs?

The first thing that happens is that the other people who are recommended must come unless they've breached the security definition under the ASIO Act or if they have a criminal record of 12 months or more. They must come; there is no discretion for the minister, the medical panel or anyone else in relation to those people, except for those two matters.

So then the question is: how many people could that one doctor recommend accompany the original person? Is there a limit of one? Two? Five or 10? There is no limit whatsoever. So if one doctor says that 10 people should accompany the original person then, in the absence of those people breaching the security act or having been to jail for 12 months, they're all coming to Australia and there is nothing the government can do to stop it. That is an absurd

and ridiculous piece of legislation, and it's what those opposite did. They didn't understand that that was what they did. *(Time expired)*

Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education

Minister for Human Services and Digital Transformation

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton) (15:05): My question is to the Prime Minister. Today the Prime Minister told the House that neither Minister Cash nor the human services minister received any further requests for information from the AFP. But yesterday, the AFP told Senate estimates that the ministers were asked twice to provide witness statements and they refused to do so. Who is right, Prime Minister? The Prime Minister or the Australian Federal Police?

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Home Affairs) (15:06): I thank the honourable member for his question. The reality is, as the deputy commissioner, Leanne Close, pointed out yesterday, that there was a request made to the respective ministers. They provided a statement to the AFP and that was it.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting. The vast majority of members and myself are trying to listen to the answer.

Mayo Electorate: Telecommunications

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (15:07): My question is to the Minister representing the Minister for Regional Communications. On 15 October last year the government called for applications for round 4 of the Mobile Black Spot Program. My community has more than 130 nominated blackspots and we nominated many for this round. The Department of Communications and the Arts website says the construction phase for round 4 will start early this year. Can the minister tell the House when the successful submissions for round 4 will be announced? And will the minister commit to a round 5?

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Families and Social Services) (15:07): I thank the member for her question and for her interest in the Mobile Black Spot Program, which, of course, has been one of the signature achievements of our Liberal-National government.

Regrettably, when we came to government we inherited a situation in which there had been continuous neglect of the public policy imperative of mobile communications for the entirety of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd years. The total amount of public money committed by the former Labor government to supporting mobile communications in regional and remote Australia was how much? It was zero! Zero—not one dollar was committed by our political opponents to support the provision of mobile communications around Australia.

I'm pleased to say that since we have come to government that situation has been turned around dramatically. We've had multiple rounds of the Mobile Black Spot Program and, as at 31 January this year, 667 base stations have been activated. And this is a very interesting statistic: across 292 Telstra base stations in operation for 12 to 24 months, there have been more than 17,200 triple 0 emergency calls. You could not find a more powerful demonstration of the importance of this investment we have made, which is saving lives in regional and remote Australia as well as, of course, underpinning the vibrant economic activity in regional

and remote Australia, where the communications infrastructure is such an important enabler. And what did Labor do about it for six years? They did nothing! They did absolutely nothing.

Our government has committed \$220 million in funding for the Mobile Black Spot Program. The first three rounds of the program are funding the delivery of 867 mobile base stations across Australia, and in October last year we released program guidelines for round 4, which provides a further \$25 million towards mobile coverage solutions in regional and remote Australia. So I say to the member: thank you for your interest; we are getting on with delivering solutions to mobile black spots around Australia.

Aged Care

Mr RAMSEY (Grey—Government Whip) (15:10): My question is to the Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care. Will the minister update the House on how the government is supporting ageing Australians and providing essential services upon which they rely, without increasing taxes? Is the minister aware of any different approaches that would hurt the savings of these retirees who have worked so hard to support themselves?

Mr Bowen: Are you going to apologise for your 'elder abuse' comment?

The SPEAKER: Member for McMahon!

Mr WYATT (Hasluck—Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health) (15:10): Let me just say to the member for McMahon: if you want a focus on just a narrow strand of need for senior Australians, then you are not doing your job of responding to the needs of constituents in your electorate who are senior Australians, who need to be looked after. That's why you turned your back on them.

We have provided an additional \$662 million to add to the work that we are doing for senior Australians, and just recently, in MYEFO, we announced \$552 million. Importantly, I want to refer to a comment made by the member for Franklin in the chamber last night about a \$2 billion cut. What's interesting is that ABC Fact Check challenged that and said it was wrong—that it was a false claim.

We are continuing to reform the aged-care sector to meet the needs of senior Australians. In addition, we are focusing on many other aspects of encouraging Australians living to 100 years old to have a quality of life—that is absolutely important—and we are looking after those people, who are our mothers and fathers, our uncles and aunts, who are in aged care who need this level of support and intervention.

What will be interesting about the royal commission is this: to find the truth, the scalpel of candour has to cut deep. That royal commission will look at the Productivity Commission report and look at the elements that were addressed and those that were ignored. It was a program of reform by the member for Port Adelaide, and there are many elements that were positive, but there are many aspects that go to the quality of life of senior Australians that were not addressed by the government of the day in that period. So we're doing the work that is required, because we have a strong economy and that strong economy gives us an opportunity to find the funding that is needed to provide for the needs of senior Australians. And we will continue to do that. The health checks that we are putting in place for healthy ageing will enable senior Australians to check their health and to look at their career pathway, and, if they wish to make a change, they can make that change. It'll also give them the

opportunity to look at their financial planning, their financial needs, for both retirement and aged care.

All of us in this chamber, including those on the other side, I know, are committed to looking after senior Australians. This is about a bipartisan approach to making sure that the people who gave us everything that we take for granted have the opportunity to enjoy their final years of living and spending time with their family.

Mr Morrison: I ask that further questions be placed on the *Notice Paper*.

The SPEAKER: Before members depart, I just want to address the House on a matter that you'll all be very much interested in. I can inform the House that the Clerk, David Elder, has advised me of his intention to retire in the not-too-distant future. He will be here for the rest of this parliament and for the first part of the next parliament, so we won't have any speeches today.

Depending on the timing of the election, he will retire in July or August, once the new parliament's set in. But I just wanted to announce that to the House. He's done that in good time so that I can begin the process of selecting a successor. He's served the House of Representatives for 38 years and five years as Clerk. At his request we're not doing speeches today, but I think a warm round of applause would be appropriate.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

DOCUMENTS

Presentation

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Minister for Defence and Leader of the House) (15:15): Documents are tabled in accordance with the list circulated to honourable members earlier today. Full details of the documents will be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: ADDITIONAL ANSWERS

Climate Change

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Health) (15:15): I wish to add to an answer I gave earlier today. I undertook to bring back the World Heritage Committee decisions officially placing Australia's World Heritage status on 'watch' and on 'danger'. I'm delighted to table and to repeat them. I go to the World Heritage Committee decision of 2012, decision 36COM 7B.8, entitled 'Great Barrier Reef (Australia) (N 154)', when the member for Watson was the Minister for the Environment. That decision states at paragraph 10:

Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2013**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property—

that is, the World Heritage Committee property, the Great Barrier Reef—

including on the implementation of actions outlined above and in the mission report, for consideration by the World Heritage Committee at its 37th session in 2013, **with a view to consider, in the absence of substantial progress, the possible inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger;**

It was then repeated the following year in the official documentation, placing Australia on watch in 2013, but with the removal of the word 'possible':

... in the absence of substantial progress, the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

I am delighted to table it. You seem to have forgotten that it happened on your watch.

QUESTIONS TO THE SPEAKER

Questions in Writing

Mr HILL (Bruce) (15:17): Mr Speaker, I was wondering whether under standing order 105(b) you could write to the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs asking why he has failed to answer questions on notice 1151, 1152, 1153, 1154, 1155, 1156, 1157, 1158, 1159, 1160, 1161, 1162, 1163, 1164, 1165, 1166, 1167, 1168, 1169, 1170, 1171, 1172, 1173 and 1174.

The SPEAKER (15:18): As the member for Bruce knows, I will certainly write today but I don't write and ask why. That's none of my business. He's done this enough times. I will certainly write on his behalf, pointing out that he's requesting an answer.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Early Childhood Education: Preschool Funding

The SPEAKER (15:18): I have received letters from the honourable members for Kingston, Kennedy and Petrie, proposing that definite matters of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion today. As required by standing order 46(d), I have selected the matter which, in my opinion, is the most urgent and important; that is, that proposed by the honourable member for Kingston, namely:

The government's failure to fund preschools.

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

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

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (15:19): I think this House is very well aware of the government's failures in so many different areas. In so many portfolios, we can see that the government cares more about playing politics than delivering good outcomes for our community. But, when it comes to early childhood and preschool, all we get now from the Morrison government is silence. We don't even get politics when it comes to early education; we just get deathly silence. They used to dabble in a bit of politics in this area, a bit of bashing the states and territories—talking down our early educators and criticising them for getting paid on public holidays. But now they can't even be bothered to do that. It is now just pure neglect.

We are in a shocking situation where we have less than 12 months of funding left for our national preschool program—for the year before school. Earlier this month, thousands of four-year-olds and their families began their preschool and kindy program in government, community preschools, kindies and early learning centres right across the country. This is a really exciting time for children and their families. I met some of them at Nakara Preschool in Darwin with the member for Solomon, at Goodstart at West Ryde with our candidate for Bennelong, Dr Brian Owler, and at the Cardinia Lakes Early Learning Centre, with our candidate for La Trobe, Simon Curtis. Today, it was great to visit the Campbell Street Children's Centre in Queanbeyan with the member for Eden-Monaro.

There are 350,000 children who are enjoying the benefits of a quality early preschool program, and that is thanks to Labor. Labor introduced the national preschool program in

2009. But this is the last cohort of children who have been funded by this government. And, even then, the Liberal-National government could barely summon the energy to lock this funding in. They were dragged, kicking and screaming, to the table, only sending out the funding agreement to lock in this year's funding in late September last year. That only gave the states and territories a couple of weeks to lock it in and make their plans for the year. But this had been the same old pathetic story under this government: stopgap funding for 12 months after public outcry, with no consideration to giving certainty to families, certainty to staff and certainty to providers.

But at least in the past the funding was in the budget, even if only for a year. This time, there is no money in the budget. The 2018-19 budget contains no funding for preschool after the \$440 million in 2019. There should have been \$440 million for next year, the year after and the year after that, but, instead, what appeared in the budget was zeros. The government had a chance to rectify this in MYEFO. We called on them to rectify this in MYEFO. It was a chance to show the community, the sector and families that they were committed to funding preschool ahead of the end of year. But, no, all we got was more zeros from this government—no money. The simple fact is that there is no money for preschools. It seems the government can find \$440 million for their big business buddies at the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, and they can do it in a flash. They can quickly find \$423 million for a company registered to a beach shack at Kangaroo Island. And, of course, they easily found \$85 billion for their big tax cuts to banks and multinationals. They can easily find all this money—they just lift up a cushion and find it under the couch—but they can't find the money for our nation's preschools, and it is a disgrace. It is a shameful display of their priorities. How can preschools, kindies and early learning centres plan for next year when there's no funding allocated?

When I visited Kardinia Lakes a few weeks ago, the centre director, Tamika Hicks, explained how hard it was for her to plan with this uncertainty. She said he couldn't offer her staff ongoing contracts; they had to be limited-time contracts. And she said, 'Unless this cut is reversed, every child under the age of four will miss out on preschool funding before school.' Tamika will have to lay off four early childhood teachers without this funding. \$440 million equates to \$1,263 for each of the 4-year-old programs.

Mr Laming interjecting—

Ms RISHWORTH: I hear the member for Bowman interjecting. We'll get to his great support of our program very soon. This cut will not only hurt centres; it will hurt families. Without this funding, early learning centres and preschools will have to cut places to fit their reduced budget, cut hours available to children or increase fees to cover the hole in their budgets. Families will have to choose between higher fees or missing out. Children will miss out on better education, social and health outcomes that flow from quality early education.

We on this side of the House know that investment in early education literally lays down the foundations for life. Labor gets it. We always have and we always will. That is why we have announced that a Shorten Labor government will introduce a new national preschool and kindy program. We will commit to ongoing permanent funding for the four-year-olds' program. There'll be no more going cap in hand to Canberra every year for our centres. Our teachers can get on with the job and our parents can plan with certainty. For the first time, we will extend the program to three-year-olds, giving Australian children access to 15 hours of

subsidised early learning in the two years before school so that they can get the best start to life.

We will also reinstate the \$20 million of funding each year cut by the Liberals from our national quality agenda. The Liberal Party and the National Party might not care about quality. We know that they see early education as merely babysitting. But Labor believes that early learning centres should be safe and should deliver high-quality service, and we have a role in delivering that. Around 700,000 Australian children will benefit each and every year from our preschool and kindy program. This is the biggest investment in early childhood education.

Now, we have seen some support come from unusual quarters. In fact, it was pleasing to see the member for Bowman calling for three-year-old preschool funding, and tweeting our policy, tweeting the article that endorsed our policy. That was really wonderful to see. What he should do to go to his caucus room, put up his hand and say: 'Could you please put four-year-old funding in the budget? Please put the money in the budget!' If he doesn't then he is being disingenuous to the people he's meeting in his local area; he's not telling them the truth about his advocacy here. He might want to go into his community and tell them one thing, but here in parliament he should stick his hand up and say, 'Come on, Prime Minister, at least fund four-year-old kindy.' But he hasn't done that, and we will soon see if he does that.

We have the Minister for Education, who's been a little silent on these issues. We know he's been very busy intruding on academic freedom in our universities and engaging in climate change culture wars in our schools. But I would like to remind the minister he does have a day job, and that is to secure the future of our preschool program. I know that the minister may not find it easy. He may pretend to care, but, if he really cared, he would make sure that his Treasurer put this money in the budget. Time is ticking. April's coming. The budget's coming. He failed to do it in MYEFO. He failed to get the funding commitment in MYEFO, but he has one last chance. I don't want to see—and I know those on this side of the House do not want to see—one year of funding in the budget, because that would be a cop-out. What we want to see and what we've committed to is permanent funding across the forward estimates. Anything less would show that this minister and government is no longer committed to the preschool program.

On this side of the House we see education as an investment. They see it as a cost. It is time that the minister and the government look at the evidence. The evidence is in. The community believes in this. It is time that the government finally stands up, puts our children in the centre and funds four-year-old and three-year-old kindy. Anything less is a betrayal of Australia's children.

Mr TEHAN (Wannon—Minister for Education) (15:29): Can I assure the shadow minister that the government does care and the government does understand how important it is that we invest in our children and that we invest in the education of our children. But where there is a big difference between this side and those opposite is in making sure that you get an educational return on that investment. We don't just throw money at things for money's sake. We want to make sure that when we invest we get the outcomes that we want to see.

It is absolutely vital, when it comes to investing in early childhood education, that you get those outcomes. That is why in our national partnership agreement, which we negotiated with every state and territory for this year, we focused not just on enrolment. We didn't hear any

mention of this from the shadow minister. I think and I hope that she will listen and learn from this. There was not one mention of it. But it is not just about the investment; it's about making sure you get the educational outcomes on that investment.

Let's have a look at what this government has delivered: in 2015, \$405 million; in 2016, \$415 million; in 2017, \$425 million; in 2018, \$428 million; and, in 2019, \$440 million. But what are we seeing? What we're seeing is that we're getting enrolment figures of around 90 per cent or a little above. But what the most current national data shows is that 30 per cent of children are not attending for the 15 hours on offer. We're saying to the states and territories: we want to work with you to lift this, because it is incredibly important that, if we're investing in early childhood education, we're getting the attendance flowing from that.

What happens when we look at vulnerable and disadvantaged children? Attendance declines even further. It's 35 per cent for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and up to 41 per cent for Indigenous children. And we see a similar figure when it comes to those from rural and remote areas. So, when we invest, we've got to make sure that we're investing so that all children right across this nation will see the benefit of this Commonwealth investment in early childhood education. That is what we want to see.

As I've demonstrated, the money has been there, but what we want to make sure is that not only is the money there but also our children are getting the benefits from it. Otherwise, what you see is that a gap starts to grow between those who are not only able to enrol but also able to attend for the full 600 hours versus those who are enrolling and not attending. When that gap is greatest—when it's dealing with those who are coming from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds, those from Indigenous backgrounds and those from rural and remote backgrounds—we have to make sure that we are fixing it, and that is what the Morrison government is intent on doing. We want to make sure that the benefits from this investment flow right across the nation.

I just want to delve into this—I've got the 2017 ABS figures for preschool attendance for 600 hours in dedicated preschools. This is the proportion of children enrolled in dedicated preschools for 600 hours per year and who attend for the full 600 hours. Let's start with New South Wales: all children, 76 per cent; Indigenous children, 69 per cent; vulnerable and disadvantaged children, 71 per cent. Victoria: all children, 73 per cent; Indigenous children, 63 per cent; vulnerable and disadvantaged children, 67 per cent. Queensland: all children, 75 per cent; Indigenous children, 72 per cent; vulnerable and disadvantaged children, 74 per cent. South Australia: all children, 57 per cent; Indigenous children, 38 per cent; vulnerable and disadvantaged children, 50 per cent. Western Australia: all children, 60 per cent; Indigenous children, 47 per cent; vulnerable and disadvantaged children, 55 per cent. Tasmania: 75 per cent for all children, Indigenous, 69 per cent and vulnerable and disadvantaged children, 71 per cent. Northern Territory: all children 59 per cent, Indigenous, 36 per cent and vulnerable and disadvantaged children is 33 per cent. ACT: 59 per cent, Indigenous 59 per cent and vulnerable and disadvantaged, 68 per cent.

The truth is that, while we're investing in this very important sector of our education sector, we have to ensure that we are getting the outcomes right across the board. I would ask the shadow minister to think long and hard about this, because it surprises me that in the 10 minutes that she had for this MPI she did not make reference to the need for us to make sure that this investment flows right across our nation.

Ms Rishworth: There's no money in the budget!

Mr TEHAN: There are interjections about money. Well, as I've said, we've invested in early childhood education every single year—in 2015 it was 405, in 2016 it was 415, in 2017 it was 425, in 2018 it was 428 and in 2019 it was 440. But there is an important difference. Our investment comes from being able to provide a strong economy. How are the Labor Party going to pay for their investment? With \$200 billion of new taxes. And what will that involve? I think it will involve taxing people like Adrian Sumner. He says: 'My wife and I are both retired teachers from the Victorian state government school system. We live in a regional Victorian city in a modest home. We are self-funded retirees and receive a combined Emergency Services and State Superannuation pension of approximately \$1,100 per week and believe we would be classed as middle-class in terms of income. Because of our superannuation income we are not entitled to the age pension, despite having contributed through the taxation system towards this throughout our working lives. I am a holder of a Commonwealth seniors health card. During our working lives we were both members of the Australian Education Union. Since 1980 we have had in place a long-term plan to supplement our income during our working lives and in retirement through investing in the Australian share market. The effect of not allowing us a cash refund of franking credits would result in an approximately one-third reduction in income from our Australian shares—effectively, a combined \$8,000 per annum loss of personal income. The Australian Labor Party's proposal to remove a cash refund from franking credits for self-funded retirees is unfair. A probable outcome would be the divestment of all our shares in Australian companies that provide franking credits. This will most likely trigger a capital gains tax event. We would then probably examine investing in global investments with a high capital growth and gradually sell down as the need for capital is required for expenses such as aged care et cetera'—

Dr Leigh interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Fenner is warned!

Mr TEHAN: So there are two points that I would like to make in this MPI. One is: not only are we investing in early childhood education but we're investing to make sure that all Australian children will benefit from that investment and, in particular, those from Indigenous backgrounds, those from low-socioeconomic backgrounds and those from rural and remote backgrounds.

The second point is that we are funding this through growing a strong economy. We are not funding this by trying to rip the life savings out of Australians who have worked tirelessly all their lives.

Dr MIKE KELLY (Eden-Monaro) (15:39): Wasn't that amazing? We had an education minister who exhausted his knowledge of education in 7½ minutes and then abandoned the subject! That was incredible. And, of course, what did we switch to? We switched to profits and his share portfolio. He is more interested in his share portfolio than he is in the education of the three- and four-year-olds of this country.

I'm proud and pleased to be able to speak in support of the member for Kingston, our excellent shadow minister, who knows this subject right at the coalface. She is a mother. She has built on a tradition of great Labor policy. In fact, she's one of the too few women in this parliament. Those women reside on this side of the House and are not much reflected on the

other side of the House. That's why the Labor Party understands these issues; it's because of the proportion of women we have in our caucus room. If those opposite had more women over there, maybe they would understand these things. If they visited preschools, maybe they would understand these things.

It was really a pleasure to be at a preschool this morning with the shadow minister and the shadow Treasurer. This is all about the funding. This is all about a national response to the urgent issue of boosting education. That proud tradition that I mentioned goes back to, as the shadow minister mentioned, the universal access to early childhood education program, which kicked off in 2009. We've had, from 2009 to 2019, a great track record of how well this program is working. There are no ifs, buts or maybes about whether it should continue to get funding. We should know that now. Those parents and those people working in the sector need that certainty now. We were out there this morning. They were saying, 'What's going to go on? What's going to go on for the 350,000 of these four-year-old kids nationwide, the 102,000 in New South Wales and the 2,047 in Eden-Monaro?' They want to know. They have already faced big challenges in getting places and getting into places. They said they are 200 places short in Queanbeyan at the moment. When we were in government, we were putting resources into getting those places—such as 50 new places in Queanbeyan—but it wasn't the only thing that we were doing there.

I was very pleased to be, in April 2011, at the KU Queanbeyan South Early Learning Centre in Karabar with the then Minister Peter Garrett. We were opening a wonderful new early childhood education facility, providing kids with a natural learning environment that is based on sustainable principles and to facilitate really excellent learning outcomes. That facility was one of the ones that was chosen by our Commonwealth government at the time and funded to design, construct and operate that new centre under our early learning and care initiative. We were putting real skin in the game to improve that early learning issue.

Why is that important? We know so much more now about the importance of early childhood learning. This is a critical issue. It's how we build the country of the future. If you want good innovators, good start-ups and the new economies of the future, it all starts at right at this pointy end of the education system, where we are building synapses, where we are building cognitive development and where we are building creativity and imagination. It starts from here. Studies and expertise have shown that learning outcomes are improved by investing in this. Via the shadow minister's great policy initiative today, which will extend this program to three-year-olds, we will make sure that they get the best start in life.

Tanya Latter and the crew at the Campbell Street Children's Centre understand that. We understand too that there are more than 3,700 three- and four-year-olds kids in Eden-Monaro who will benefit from this. I know that those parents are screaming out for this because they don't know whether or not they are going to have to pay higher fees for keeping their kids at these facilities or just keep them at home next year. This is really important for Eden-Monaro and important for the country.

I will say as well that what we are seeing is part of a Labor strategy across the education sphere. We have seen cuts to education by this government. They have done the strategy of taking four wheels off the car and then putting one back on and pretending that they have raised education funding. We know that the funding that is being applied now is less than the funding that would have flown under Labor's education program and with the full Gonski

scheme. Those opposite have cut the funding that would have flowed to our schools and the funding that was delivering great outcomes, like the national schools partnership to my schools in Bega and Eden. The bottom line is that Australians know, with a moral certainty, that it's only a Labor government that will commit to and deliver a future for our kids. (*Time expired*)

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia—Assistant Minister for Children and Families) (15:44): Here we go again: another day, another fake news moment from those opposite. The fact is that, when it comes to funding, those opposite speak with forked tongues. It doesn't matter whether we're talking about school funding, hospital funding, bulk-billing rates or, indeed, preschool funding—those opposite simply don't have a leg to stand on.

The truth is: preschool funding is higher than ever and only going one way. The current deal is delivering more money to my electorate of Capricornia and continues to allow our hardworking early childhood teachers to deliver the start in life our children need. Our preschools do a wonderful job, especially in our rural communities, where they act not just as an education shop but as a community hub for parents, grandparents, children and teachers alike. Whether it is kindergarten, preschool, child care or primary school, the education our children get in these foundational years is vital to unlocking opportunities later in life. The funding of these services is vitally important.

The scaremongering of those opposite really knows no bounds. They will scare the elderly by lying about the government potentially selling Medicare. The truth is: we haven't and we won't. They will scare families and teachers by lying about imaginary cuts to school funding. The truth is: funding is higher than ever and continues to increase. They will scare young parents by lying about funding for early childhood education. The government simply has not cut preschool funding. The coalition government will provide more than \$440 million to states and territories for preschool in 2019 under the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. The extension of the national partnership will ensure almost 350,000 Australian children will have access to 15 hours of quality education each week or 600 hours in the year before school. Every state and territory is now signed up to the extension of the national partnership, which will continue to deliver universal access to preschool throughout 2019. We can only deliver this funding because the Australian economy is strong, and Australians know who to trust when it comes to that.

Those opposite may not understand what I've said, so I will repeat it: we are increasing funding for services, and we can do so because the economy is strong and getting stronger. I know there'll be a conflicting idea from those opposite, because their version of events is to slap taxes on the back of business and families, crippling the economy and costing jobs. We are building a strong economy, and part of that is because we are not afraid to stand in this place and say a certain four-letter word, and that four-letter word is 'coal'. We know those opposite are conflicted on coal. While their union masters might be tapping on the shoulders of Queensland MPs and candidates to support the biggest employer in Central Queensland, they are being squeezed from the top, with ALP hierarchy telling them not to tell the world what they actually think. Who do we believe? What does Labor really think about coal? Do we believe the opposition leader—who must have nearly worn himself out hopping from one leg to another, saying one thing in Central Queensland and another in his home town, the almond latte capital of Australia, Melbourne—or do we believe the working-class union that

pulls the strings and pays the bills? For the record, I, for one, support the CFMMEU's demands on Labor MPs, and I am only too happy to say: 'Yes, I support coal; yes, I support the Galilee Basin; and, yes, I support the Adani Carmichael mine.' I support these things because they mean good jobs for Central Queenslanders and they mean more royalties and taxes for Queensland and Australia.

When the economy is strong, we as a government can deliver more for Australians, so I encourage every member opposite who wants the government to spend more money on preschools, hospitals and the unemployment queues to join me in supporting and standing up for the coalmining industry—to be brave and proudly utter the words: 'I support coal.'

Ms LAMB (Longman) (15:48): It is about time for a fair go for Australian kids. That's what it's time for. They've been ignored and neglected by this government for far too long. This is a government that sides with the top end of town far too often. Clearly, there just aren't enough CEO toddlers in this country for them.

I know just how important the first few years of a child's life are for their development. I've seen it firsthand. I'm a mum of four boys. I've watched them grow and develop from birth into curious and inquisitive toddlers. They devoured knowledge and information at a truly incredible rate. In fact, you could probably compare it to their appetite for food. Any parent of young boys knows their appetite for food. Well, they consume knowledge and information at exactly the same rate. But, of course, their learning continued through their schooling right through to where they are today: bright young men—four men I'm very proud of. But it was really during their toddler years that I saw this huge burst in personal development. That's the reason they're called the formative years after all, isn't it?

This is why the Liberals' devastating cuts to early childhood education defy any reasoning at all. Around 350,000 four-year-olds across Australia took their first big step into early learning this year, but, because the Liberals have refused to extend preschool funding for four-year-olds beyond this school year, it may be their last year that they get the opportunity to access preschool or kindergarten. This cut equates to regular Aussie families losing out on over \$1,200 of funding per child per year. I know that, for many battlers and working families in my community, this will just be devastating. This will mean that their children will miss out on an early childhood education; I ask you: where do you find an extra \$1,200 a year in your family's budget? Where do you find that so your child gets an early childhood education?

I've worked in the early childhood education sector before. I know how kids and families benefit from this funding. But you really have to ask: what sort of government invests in banks instead of brains? What sort of government invests there instead of investing in the brains of our children? What sort of government develops partnerships with travel agencies instead of teachers? What sort of government does that? But you also have got to ask: what sort of government values the egotistical, arrogant, argumentative behaviour that we have seen demonstrated in this House instead of investing in and valuing early childhood education of our children, the social and economic future of our country? What sort of government makes those decisions about where they invest, where they value, where they develop partnerships? They have just got this all wrong.

Early childhood education is important. It's vital. It's so we ensure our kids—kids like mine, kids like yours, kids all over this country—have access to a great education from an

early age. Labor is determined to provide this not only for every four-year-old in Australia but for every three-year-old. The sooner we get an early childhood education to these kids, the better off their start will be in life and the better off they will be. We've announced a national preschool and kindy program which will deliver the biggest ever investment in early education, expanding access to 15 hours a week of quality early learning for every three-year-old. And we'll also work with the states and territories and the sector itself to deliver 90 per cent enrolment of three-year-olds by 2023. This is a huge announcement.

While the Liberals are neglecting early learning in Australia, we are investing in it. While they neglect, we invest. This is really long-term forward thinking that we haven't seen displayed by this Liberal government, but it's something that Australians will get if a Shorten Labor government wins the next election. We know the educational, social, health and economic benefits of early learning. We know how powerful a weapon it is in the fight against inequality when you get a great start in life, when you get a great education from your early years.

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (15:53): It's an important debate that we are having today. The nation should be listening because it's such an important topic. The member for Longman and I chair the bipartisan friends of early education, and obviously you'd expect that strong bipartisan approach to education to fray slightly just months away from an election, so today is an important opportunity for us to cast the looking glass over the two party policies.

You can anticipate also that there's been a little bit of a struggle for Labor in the last few months as both health policy under Minister Greg Hunt and school policy under Minister Tehan slowly evaporated as far as the scare campaign goes. When you're scrounging around for that scare campaign, as Labor always does and always will before every federal election from opposition—the Labor party must come up with a scare campaign. They have to identify one because that is their only path to victory, so we suspect that it may well be early education. Already we are seeing them scurrying around, looking for that scare campaign, wandering into ununionised early education centres and trying to sign people up to United Voice. The best way to do that is a scare campaign.

Let's go through the details, knowing that, for a long time—in fact, for a generation—we have had a National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education that has been signed off. I know truth is painful, but, slowly but surely, what federal governments from both sides of the political fence have done is drag state governments into a focus on coverage of the population. This is fundamentally an area funded by state governments. When you hear people on the other side of this chamber lamenting that the Liberals don't do this and that, this is a state government responsibility for which, historically, the federal government has increased its contribution over time, but it was always a top-up. If you go to childcare centres, you won't hear the Labor Party MPs admitting that the federal contribution to the universal access national partnership agreement was a top-up and it topped up the hours from the traditional 10 a week to 12 and then to 15.

I don't mind having one foot on the sticking paper. Like history teaches us, the federal government will take more and more of a role in this area over time. There is no disagreement about that due to vertical fiscal inequity. But in reality we just need a modicum of honesty in this debate—that is, that the feds, both Liberal and Labor, have always tried to pull the state

governments into a broader approach, where the disadvantaged cohorts in our towns and cities go to childcare in first place.

There is no point increasing childcare access to the age of one month if the people who need to be in childcare don't go. And the great challenge in Australia is that the most disadvantaged populations aren't showing up and that's been a federal focus, not just for this side, not just for this colour—and I know you have got short memories—but for their government when those opposite were in power as well.

We know that 40 per cent of disadvantaged kids simply never show up to early education. We know that 45 per cent of Indigenous children don't get to child care at all. There's no point releasing the beast of three-year-old child care onto the nation without a plan for decent coverage. You have got to have coverage. And let's look for the evidence, because there are plenty of commentators out there. The Mitchell Institute said that preschool education adds to childhood education—there is no doubt about that—but, if the most disadvantaged children aren't attending, it simply can't happen.

I would like to table the OECD data which no-one over there has read. It shows that in nations like Germany, France and Belgium, there are significant benefits to a second year of child care and to adding in education at preschool level. The problem is it's not in Australia. Early education for three-year-olds doesn't appear in the PISA data. Have a look at the OECD data: it's a seven point benefit on PISA, based on the recollection of 15-year-olds, and adjusted for social economics. The benefit of a second year of early education—and you can see they are all stunned over there—is a humble one PISA point benefit. An Australian early education sits proudly with Ireland, Latvia, Brazil, Montenegro, Portugal, Switzerland and Turkey in demonstrating no benefit whatsoever to a second year of preschool. There reason is because those who have the greatest need don't attend. They don't show up because the states haven't found a way to get them there. It's easy in universal childcare, social welfare economies like northern Europe. Everyone routinely does it. But Australia has the highest rate of households that are intergenerationally welfare dependent that do not access child care. Until they do, you will not see the educational benefits that the Mitchell Institute trumpets.

Ms O'TOOLE (Herbert) (15:58): I'm currently a registered teacher in Queensland. My grandmother was a teacher. I have two siblings who are principals of high schools. I have two nieces and a sister-in-law who are teachers. I can assure you, I know the value of early childhood education, including preschool. A quality education starts with early childhood education and preschool for all children because the most formative years are from birth to five years of age. A quality education is a basic human right for Australia's future and it's absolutely essential that the preschoolers of today get a quality education because they are the leaders of our not-too-distant future.

I was studying education at the time my two eldest children commenced preschool and I was very impressed by their excellent teacher's ability to stimulate their curiosity in learning, especially through play and discovery. My experience with my children led me to believe that the best year of education is in fact preschool. As little minds are developed, curiosity and critical thinking are encouraged in the context of age-appropriate learning activities.

As a grandmother, I have watched my grandchildren in recent years flourish in their preschool education. In fact, my granddaughter could sign some words before she could even speak them, because she went to a kindy where they were immersed in sign language. The

quality of the curriculum was so very impressive, and their interest in reading was developed. All of my grandchildren are very imaginative and have very curious minds.

In Australia, there are approximately 350,000 four-year-olds who have begun their first steps of early learning this year either in kindergarten or at preschool. However, under this LNP government, this may very well be the last year that four-year-old kids get an opportunity to access to preschool or kindy, because this government is refusing to fund the program next year. This is just one step too far, especially after its childcare changes and the cuts to early education for some of Australia's most vulnerable people—our young children. This government has had every opportunity to provide ongoing funding but, in the usual form, it has refused to do so. There is no funding in the 2018-19 MYEFO to fund four-year-old preschool kindergarten after this year.

Labor introduced universal access to early education in 2009, but this LNP government has failed to commit to extending the funding beyond this school year. This LNP government has been true to form and, since being elected in 2013, it has begrudgingly only ever rolled over funding from one year to the next. Our children, our parents, and providers all rely on this critical funding. If the funding cut goes ahead, they will be unable to plan for the future, sign long-term leases, lock in employment contracts or prepare their budgets for 2020. For those families with three-year-olds who are planning to send their children to kindy or preschool next year, under the Liberals, they will lose more than \$1,200 per child. Under the Liberals, parents will have to choose between paying higher fees or keeping their kids at home from the next year.

It's interesting to note that this government sees education as a cost. I find that absolutely extraordinary. Education is an investment. It is an investment in the very future of this nation. Not only is this funding uncertainty terrible for families; it's also destructive for providers and their staff, who have no guarantee that they'll even have a job next year. In Queensland, this will affect nearly 70,000 children. In my electorate of Herbert, this will affect 2,484 children. It is outrageous that this LNP government views education as a cost, as I have said.

In contrast, Labor's national preschool and kindy program will see the biggest ever investment for children across Australia. It will deliver ongoing funding for four-year-olds and, for the very first time, extend this to three-year-olds. Only Labor will give every child the early education opportunities that they need for the best start in life. Labor's national preschool and kindy program will provide ongoing funding for four-year-old preschool and kindy, and this will be extended to include three-year-olds. Labor's commitment will help expand access to quality early learning for children. Labor's policy will provide subsidised access to 15 hours of preschool and kindy for three- and four-year-olds from 2020-21—again ensuring that every child has the opportunity to access those vital two years of learning before formal schooling starts.

Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (16:03): For those who are listening to this debate, and for those in the gallery, it behoves me to actually enter into the debate of what was said by the member for Longman and especially the member for Eden-Monaro. The member for Eden-Monaro stood up in this room and said that the Liberal and National parties have cut education funding. Since we were elected and since the former Labor government, funding to all of your schools has increased by 41 per cent. That's the truth—a 41 per cent increase.

I noticed a lot of hilarity on the Labor benches today. The member for Longman talked about 'battling working families' in her electorate. I want to say something to those of you who have been around a while, especially those of you who talk in this place about women's issues. It was the Labor Party that took families with single parents—mostly women—from parenting payment onto—

Ms Macklin: You voted for it.

Mr Rob Mitchell: You did it first.

Mr BROADBENT: I'm telling you who proposed it. You know who proposed it. You plunged those families into poverty, and we're still struggling with the issues today. They had three- or four-year-old kids who would go to early childhood education centres. And you know you regret doing that. We are now dealing with the consequences of that all this time later, down the years. Why wasn't the Labor Party protecting the women of Australia who were single parents then? Why is that? You didn't think about the women across this nation who were single parents and deserved a better go than you gave them when you were in government. Why did you take money off those single-parent families? They're the ones that are affected right now—in their education, in what they can spend. If those women were in a regional area, they were impacted even further than women living in an urban area.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr BROADBENT: I don't want a lecture from any of you. I know what you did. In the report on intergenerational welfare we're doing now, I'm working through the consequences of that, which your colleagues were very much a part of. It is a huge disappointment to me that I have been part of a parliament that actually treated a cohort of our community—those being single-parent families, the parent mostly being a woman—like that. Where were you in standing up for those women at that time? But I didn't get up to talk about that. I got up to talk about the early learning training centres—

Ms Rishworth: Funding the preschool—

Mr BROADBENT: I won't have a lecture from you, Member for Kingston. You're out of order, and you know you're out of order.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr BROADBENT: I am angry. I am angry. There are women in your electorate in South Australia that are struggling today because they're single parents. You may have a program going into the future that's visionary for kids and early education—and I think that's great because I too know that's good. I know it works. My grandchildren come home with all sorts of things from early childhood education that they don't get from home. You may accuse me of being angry, but we're dealing with the consequences today—a cohort of people who are poor—of decisions we made in this House.

Mr Dick: Cutting their penalty rates?

Mr BROADBENT: Mouths like that won't do you any good either. Today, those that have gone from parenting payment to Newstart are struggling in a way that they shouldn't be struggling in a nation like this, and the women of this parliament should understand that better than anybody else. We have a job to do for those families and we haven't done the right thing by them. If you want to talk about early childhood intervention, we've spent \$5,000 at the

children's centre at Korumburra and we've just turned the first sod for the Warragul centre, and they're going to be visionary places for kids to learn, into the future. And you know all the reasons why we're doing it—because the infrastructure in country areas has been a disgrace, and we're now spending money on that.

But I reiterate that we have a job to do for single-parent families. Whoever the government is after the next election, it needs to put some real effort—this whole parliament needs to put some real effort—into those families, who are doing it harder than any other families.

Mr GORMAN (Perth) (16:08): The government has failed to invest in early childhood education. The facts are simple. As a proportion of gross national income, Australia spends less than Brazil, less than the Russian Federation and less than Mexico; and our preschool guarantee currently is less than that of China, New Zealand or the Republic of Ireland. It's because this government sees early childhood education as a cost. As many speakers have highlighted, we on this side see it as an investment. Bill Shorten and Labor's \$1.75 billion plan is an investment in the future of Australia's children.

Investing in four-year-olds is so important. As you know, Deputy Speaker Hogan, I like to have a 'number fact' or two in the matter of public importance, and so here are some 'number facts' for the young people of Australia—the three- and four-year-olds. I think they'll enjoy these ones. Three is the number of people who have been to the absolute bottom of the ocean, and four is the percentage of people with an outie belly button.

But these developmental milestones that kids learn in those important years of three and four are really important life skills. Physically, they learn rhythm and movement. Socially, they learn how to enjoy playing with other children. They learn independence. They learn how to comfort someone when they're hurt. They learn how to recount a recent story. These are the sorts of things that young people learn through early childhood education in their third and fourth years.

Labor's guarantee will ensure two days of quality early education for every Australian three- and four-year-old. It will be the biggest investment in early childhood education in our nation's history. I've had the pleasure of visiting many early childhood centres in my electorate of Perth. We've seen some of the 3,191 children who will benefit from Labor's investment. With the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I visited the Leederville Early Childhood Centre. I commend the work that the centre director, Sally Whitaker, is doing in sharing her expertise with other educators in the Perth community. With the member for Kingston, I visited the Goodstart Early Learning centre in East Perth, where we saw children engaged in music based play, another way that educators make sure young people can learn those physical and auditory skills that help them have a great start in life.

It's an investment that's worth it; it's as simple as that. It's an investment that allows many parents, including me and my wife, to go to work. What we've seen from our son Leo going to early childhood education is that he's starting to learn how to identify colours. I know that doesn't sound very impressive for any of us, when we work in a building identified by which colour of carpet you're on, but learning colours at that age is very impressive. It's very exciting for us as parents. Just last week, I started singing 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' to him, and he had learned the hand signals that go along with 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star'. That shows you how important early childhood educators are to our future.

But we've got to admit that the people who work in early childhood education do it tough. My mum is a teacher who has taught in the early years. But, as a teacher, she was paid far more than the people educating children just three or four months younger in early childhood. As opposed to some of those opposite, I commend the work that United Voice do to advocate for a fair day's pay for a very important, physically demanding, intellectually demanding and emotionally demanding day's work. It is work that is so important for our economic future. The member for Adelaide spoke yesterday about the unfinished business of early childhood education. Labor's policy is part of that unfinished business. She outlined some of the achievements that she is so proud of in her time as a minister and as an advocate for early childhood education, and she said that we need to think of this as not a cost or just a service but as something that is like our school system: easily accessible and part of the education of young minds. I agree with her 100 per cent.

In closing, we are soon to hear from the member for Lilley. In his first budget, he proudly increased funding for early childhood education. It was a great Labor achievement. He took the childcare tax rebate from 30 to 50 per cent, easing the pressure on families and showing that his government cared about early childhood education. That was a major investment. It was a \$1.6 billion investment over four years. It was done because he valued the work of early childhood educators. He valued what it does for young people. He knew it was an investment in the future of this country.

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (16:13): You can see how important this MPI is by seeing all the people who have come to hear this final speech on this very important matter, and I thank the Labor Party for turning up. We want to put on the record the fact that the other side has been operating with a big lie about cuts to education funding. School funding during this government, since we've been given the responsibility, has gone up by 41 per cent per capita since 2013. Our childcare package has just added another \$2½ billion to it. In childcare, the people that need the most help get the most help and the people that are working harder also get, pro rata, more help. You don't have millionaires getting childcare subsidies. It's focused on the families who are doing it toughest and are working the most and on the children that need the most help. We are delivering for 15 hours a week of universal child care. The budget records demonstrate over the last three years we've increased, and the government and the department are still negotiating with the states for further increases.

Now, the best way to get more children to benefit is not to throw more money at it; it's to improve attendance rates. These figures don't lie. In some states, up to 40 per cent of the children don't even get to preschool. We are a top-up funder of preschool. The states run preschools; the federal government doesn't run preschools. We have got to get the states to stump up to their responsibility. We are not an ATM for lazy states that don't administer the areas that they're responsible for.

We all know that child care and early learning are critical to the development of children's brains. This side has many people that have been parents, too, and many people that have been in education. I spent two years of my whole life in early childhood development and child health. I know probably better than half the pontificators about how important it is. But the figures they are using to justify doing preschool for three-year-olds are based on countries in northern Europe, where kids don't start school until they're six or seven. So when some

countries are talking about preschool, they mean what we mean by the first year at school or in childcare. That's why there is this confusion about where the benefit is.

We have delivered \$2½ billion extra into child care, as well as extra funding into universal access to preschool. We understand that. We do care, we do deliver and we have not cut funding. What the other side is arguing, for those up there that don't appreciate it, is that their hypothetical increases—which they had no way of funding and which were pie-in-the-sky figures—were bigger than the actual 41 per cent increase. So what they're arguing is quite a semantic argument. A 'cut', to me, means less next year than there is this year. But there is 41 per cent more going into government schools around the states and territories of this nation than there was in 2013. That is a massive increase. It's the same in child care and the same in the universal access to a year of preschool.

The other side always tries to claim the moral high ground, but we know how to actually deliver the money. We have brought our budget into no longer being in deficit. We're going to be in a balanced budget situation. We've grown the economy. We've got more people in employment and fewer people depending on government support and welfare. That is one of the other big wins for parents: that they have their pride, they have employment, and they have the ability to work hard and get ahead because we're giving them tax cuts as well.

So we're delivering for families. We're delivering for children. I won't take it from the other side that we have cut anything. We have actually increased far more than any other government, whether it's in education, whether it's in health or whether it's in defence, and we've cut taxes. We have grown the economy, we've delivered in spades for the families of Australia and for Australia's future citizens, our children, our most precious asset.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): The time for this discussion has concluded.

PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION

Valedictory

Mr SWAN (Lilley) (16:18): Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek your indulgence to make some remarks. First of all, I want to thank all of the people who have travelled here today and, in particular, all of those who are listening to and viewing this broadcast. When I announced my impending retirement some time ago, there was a crusty old COMCAR driver who said to me as I was opening the door at the side entrance, 'I see you're getting out while you're still alive.' I thought at first he was referring to his driving, but I soon realised he was congratulating me on making a wise life decision. There was a time, when Australians didn't tend to live so long, that the only two ways out of this place were through the ballot box or in a wooden box. Thankfully I've survived long enough to make the decision all on my own.

I've been a member of this parliament almost continually since 1993, with a one-term 'holiday' at the suggestion of the voters between 1996 and 1998. So I've had eight wins and one loss. That loss in 1996 was a crushing defeat for the party and a gut-wrenching loss for our family—a family anxious about the future with three young children under 10. That was very uncomfortable, but it did make me a much better politician, so I was re-elected in 1998, and now I've attended 1,422 sitting days—that's just under four years of continuous parliament. Just imagine all that before you! In that time, there have been seven Treasurers and 11 Speakers. Had the Speaker been here, I would have said I regarded him as one of the best. I wasn't expecting to have that compliment returned!

The pace of political life is now absolutely brutal, particularly when it involves shadow ministerial responsibility or ministerial responsibility, and that was the case with myself—six budgets, three budget replies, stimulus packages, IGR, and trading schemes. The list is long, and it is for anyone who's serving in a very senior position. Three years in the House of Representatives in the early nineties would easily squeeze into two years today, perhaps even one, and that's only taken place in over a quarter of a century. Of course, we all know how much more demanding political life is because of modern technology. I certainly do regret, as a member, as a minister, as a shadow minister, that I didn't take enough time to refresh and recharge with my family.

On our 30th wedding anniversary, I told my wife, Kim, that we'd really only been married for 25 years, as five years had been spent away. And on reflection, that was probably a conservative estimate. I notice the Prime Minister's wife made a similar comment just recently. Yesterday was our 35th wedding anniversary, but today is even more special. Today marks the birth of our second grandchild, just two hours ago in Denver, Colorado—a sister for a toddler, Eala, and a daughter for John and Erinn. I also want to give a huge shout-out to nanna and great-nanna up there today. They are very, very happy.

Labor politicians have a 'great objective'. It's the light on the hill, and I am both proud and grateful to say that that light always shone in my home. My family has always believed in the very same Labor values the light illuminates, and we're very much aware of what it takes to pursue it. My work in this place and my electorate of Lilley was only ever possible because of my family—Kim, Erinn, Libbi and Matt. They believed in it, and they believed in me. Their love and support knew no bounds. No sacrifice was too much, because the Swans are Labor, and I owe them such a debt of gratitude for that and love them very much.

A political career, I think, is worthless if it's not grounded in the lives of the people that you represent—the people who get up in the morning, go to work, go home, cook the tea, put the kids to bed, get up and do it again the next day and never expect anything other than a fair day's pay for a fair day's work; people who understand we're all connected to each other and we have to reach out and look after those who are vulnerable and left behind.

I was reminded of this only just the other day in my electorate—but it happens continuously—when I attended a volunteer function for Charlie's Angels at the Prince Charles Hospital. There were over 40 volunteers who had between them hundreds of years of volunteering at the hospital. These are the people who ask for no reward more than the joy of helping others, and Australians like this inspire. They embody our nation at its compassionate best, and they inspire me just as much now as they did when I became the member.

I want to offer my deep thanks to the people of Lilley for their support and, in that same breath, also to my dedicated Labor Party members. I never took for granted my responsibility as a local representative, and their views were always the first I sought when trying to make difficult judgements about policy.

As Kate said yesterday in her fantastic speech, you cannot be an effective local member without dedicated electorate office staff. A good local member needs to listen, work hard, fight hard and get results—I wish Tanya wouldn't start crying—and, for that, you need an effective local team. I'm honoured to have served here with so many great Australians. Some of them are not household names, though they should be. They're the public servants and

advisers—some of them in the gallery today—who sacrifice so much to serve our democracy. All of us owe them an enormous debt.

After so long here I've worked alongside so many people that, in attempting to mention all, I will inadvertently leave others out. So, to avoid embarrassment, I'll be thanking them all personally. But there is one person that I particularly want to mention today, and that is Barb Pini. Barb Pini has served the Labor Party in this House over decades with exceptional dedication, and we are all very thankful for her service.

Others I've served alongside are well known—like Mick Young and Gough Whitlam, who joined together and launched my election campaign for the 1993 election. These are two people who instilled the values that inspire and sustain so many of us to this day. There is of course the late, great Wayne Goss. There's no prouder boast for any Queenslander than to say you worked with Wayne to take our state out of the dark and broken Joh Bjelke Petersen era. Another Queenslander, Bill Hayden, a great Labor activist, never let go of his vision and fight for Medicare—and that is a fight which continues.

That, of course, brings me to Kim Beazley, a towering figure in both the Labor Party and Australia's defence and foreign policy. Kim's record of service to this country and this place requires no embellishment from me. He is rightly valued and admired across the chamber. His name is a byword for passion and decency in public life. I'm not the only one to believe that our recent political history would have been immeasurably more stable, successful and dignified had he become Prime Minister a decade ago.

It's difficult to serve effectively over the years in this House without having the support of longstanding friends. It is just so important when you are in the pressure of the moment to have friends in this House that you can talk to—and I have many. I want to particularly highlight my two Monday night dinner companions, Tanya Plibersek and Jenny Macklin, but there are many others—Stephen Conroy, Stephen Smith, Anthony Albanese and the late Steve Hutchins, Rob Mitchell, Chris Hayes, Tony Bourke, Amanda Rishworth, Kate Ellis—and the list goes on. Of course, there is also the fantastic class that came in in 2013 and 2016: Jim Chalmers, Anthony Chisholm, Milton Dick, Joanne Ryan and of course that great representative of the Swan Left, Graham Perrett. I've mentioned a lot of names, and I don't really want to embarrass anyone else by putting them out there as being in the Swan Left.

Being in this place is actually about service, and that is what I have striven to give to the Australian people for my 24 years as a member, including my nearly six years as Treasurer, which makes me behind only Paul Keating and Ben Chifley as the third-longest serving Treasurer. It's a record I'm very proud of and one that I will be absolutely happy to surrender to Chris Bowen, who has done the hard yards in what is one of the most difficult jobs in both opposition and in government. There's a special place in hell for people doing that job from time to time.

I'm not the first Swan to serve this country, and I won't be the last. My grandfather fought on the Somme during the winters of 1916-17 and 1917-18 and later as part of the 3rd Division under General Monash. He was gassed at Messines and later at Broodseinde and was wounded again at the start of the great German Spring Offensive of 1918. That generation never spoke much about its war service. He died young. His health was broken by the physical and psychological effects of service. His son, my father, then served in the Second World War across the Pacific, and saw fighting at Balikpapan. Today, members of parliament

are now more likely to be the children of Vietnam veterans and the veterans of various conflicts and peacekeeping missions since then, and we must always do the right thing by them.

And how fortunate our generation and our children's generation have been by comparison. We've largely avoided war and, where we haven't avoided it, we've worked harder than previous generations to look after those who were sent away to fight. We've had our lives lengthened by advances in medical science and by our wonderful public institution Medicare, which is why we fight so hard to keep it. My father died in his 60s of the same prostate cancer that I was diagnosed with at the age of 49. I was treated successfully. He was not. So it was very satisfying as Treasurer to have made available Commonwealth funding to keep Australia at the forefront of prostate cancer research—sadly, research that was suddenly and without reason withdrawn by the health minister at the end of last year, and there is still not an explanation for it.

Fortunately, we now recognise and, of course, reward the service of women. It was a great honour and pleasure to have served as deputy PM and Treasurer under Australia's first female Prime Minister—an honour I think many of us valued—Julia Gillard, no tougher warrior for Labor values, who, possibly alone among recent Prime Ministers, has cracked that secret code about how to carry herself with dignity after losing the job.

Now, Julia was only one of the great Labor women that I've been blessed to have served alongside. There are too many to name, but I particularly want to highlight the contribution of Tanya, Jenny and, of course, Penny Wong.

It's a great source of satisfaction to me that my successor as the Labor endorsed candidate for Lilley is a woman. If Anika Wells, Corinne Mulholland and Ali France, the three women selected for north Brisbane seats, go on to win, Labor will have more than 50 per cent female representation in this parliament. I went back and had a look at the figures. When I arrived, our representation in 1993 was 12 per cent. So that's another historic achievement for social equality in our country. It is our far-sighted affirmative action policies. They were not just right in demographic and democratic terms; they have been and are and will continue to be an enormous political advantage for the ALP.

And, of course, our generation has been fortunate in another respect too. For the last quarter of a century, our country has avoided an economic recession. It's incredible to think, but, when I entered parliament in 1993, unemployment exceeded 10 per cent and more than half a million Australians at that stage were long-term unemployed. It was the formative context of my political life, and I arrived in this place to make merry hell about it. And I did, including for my own party, that we should be doing more about it.

Of course, in politics timing is everything. That's also out of our control. In 2007 Labor had returned to government just before the end of a long boom that had driven dramatic increases in Australia's and the world's wealth. We all, of course, hoped the boom would last forever, and that's why my first budget as treasurer was initially framed to fight inflation. But, as that budget approached, the investment bank Bear Stearns collapsed, our policy had to be revised and the rumbling began.

Four to five months later, those tremors turned into an earthquake—an earthquake that swallowed up Lehman Brothers, Northern Rock and Wall Street and shattered global

economic confidence. Neither the global economy nor global politics has been the same since then. The history books will record it as a moment of profound significance, second only perhaps to the Great Depression of 1929 and onwards.

And yet Australia did avoid recession, alone of the world's major developed economies to do so—a miracle, some say, but there was no divine providence about it. Australia avoided a recession because of sustained recession-beating policy. As I said a dozen times in this place: we did this by choice, not by chance.

Within two months of the meltdown, 30 major world banks had been bailed out, all G7 economies were recording negative growth and global stock markets were down 50 per cent. As students of Labor history, members of the cabinet back then remembered and knew what had happened to the Scullin Government, which also had the misfortune of coming to power at the start of a recession. But the Scullin government lacked the necessary policy tools to deal with the crisis. We did not. While the Scullin government was bullied into austerity, we would not be.

We knew from the failures of the 1930s and 1990s what recessions do. They destroy lives. They cost people their homes and their savings. Communities turn into ghost towns. They lead some to lives of misery—even suicide.

We also know it takes a decade or more to fully recover. And, of course, some communities and some families never recover. Not heeding those lessons would have been ignorant and irresponsible, so we did choose to act—to inject demand in the economy, to reject austerity policies that many, including the Murdoch press, were calling for and, in fact, still call for today. That austerity would have made the crisis much worse. Had we listened, the results would have been disastrous.

Instead, Australia became the gold standard of recession busting. That's what we became. And, of course, Nobel prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz described our fiscal response to the crisis as the best designed stimulus package and one of the strongest Keynesian stimulus packages in the world. In recognition of our policies, *Euro Magazine* named me finance minister of the year, citing careful stewardship of Australia's finances and economic performance during and after the global crisis. It added:

... Australia has not only avoided falling into recession but has been the best performing of the world's developed market economies.

And we did all this knowing full well—we did it with our eyes wide open; when we sat around the cabinet table we knew this precisely—what our opponents would be saying. They would hound us with slogans about deficit and debt.

In departing this place, I have a perspective that perhaps I didn't have in the heat of that battle. I can honestly say that I'm happy to wear that criticism—absolutely happy to wear it as the price of saving Australia from something that was far worse. Yes, there was deficit and debt. But, by far, the majority of it was the result of \$200 billion of revenues being wiped from the forward estimates in the wake of the crash. But there wasn't a recession. There wasn't higher unemployment. There wasn't a decade of lost opportunity for our people and for our country. In short, you don't feel the bullets you dodge and, of course, we dodged a huge bullet.

It's worth reflecting briefly on what might have been. Let's say we went down the road that many were urging us to. Let's say we went down the road of austerity and let's just consider how the rest of the world has changed and how Australia compares to the rest of the world. Think about where the rest of the world is now: we have the rise of populism and ugly nationalism, particularly across Europe. We have the end of the last remnants of political consensus in the United States. We have the sweeping away of mainstream parties of the Centre Left and the Centre Right across Europe and the prominence in Germany and the rest of Europe of the Far Right. We've got Brexit and we've got profound rising inequality in wealth and income across both the developed and the developing worlds.

Weirdly, 10 years ago there was an attraction in some corners—and you'd see it reported often in *The Australian Financial Review*—to the idea that the cleansing fire of recession wouldn't be such a bad thing for Australia. I rejected it then and Labor rejects it now, even more forcefully, precisely because of the potentially terrible human consequences that have flowed from the imposition of austerity around the developed world.

Of course, we have seen some polarisation in our country over the last decade, but it has been far milder and we should cherish the overall result. We have come through the decade after the global financial crisis stronger, bigger and more united than any comparable nation. We are the envy of other nations; that is true. We have an economy now that is 32 per cent bigger than it was at the end of 2007. The rest of the world is still catching up to that, so that's a fantastic Australian achievement and one that Australian Labor can be particularly proud of. I think that our entire political system, sadly, should be proud of that achievement.

In any case, what lies ahead? We do have the chance to create something extremely and truly great in this country on the back of that decade and the last quarter-century of growth. We have generalised affluence, but that is now threatened here by rising inequality. That is something that we have to avoid at all costs. Inequality breeds disdain, resentment, suspicion, arrogance and callousness, and I believe it is ultimately what lies beneath the election of Donald Trump and the result we saw in Britain with Brexit.

Of course, tackling inequality cannot just be dismissed as the politics of envy, as we read all the time in the papers. I say to our side of the House that nothing should spark the imagination of us on this side of the House more than fighting inequality. Nothing should spark our imagination and our policy push more than fighting inequality, because the future of economic democracy is actually on the line. The problem we face in this fight is that too many Australians have no knowledge of how others live. Too many people on generous incomes are simply tone deaf to the world in which they live. I call this the blindness of affluence.

It is true that Australia has done much better than the USA, but in this country inequality and deprivation are still far too high. Tim Winton has written that he became preoccupied with the topics of power and class not because he was chippy or resentful or because he was some sort of latter-day of Marxist; rather he got involved writing about this because he saw it pounding the lives of too many of his friends and associates in his local community. Not enough Australians see that. Not enough Australians experience how other Australians live. So, like Winton, I am dismayed by the self-interest shown by some of Australia's wealthiest institutions, and, of course, it's little wonder as a consequence of all of this that people do feel

on the wrong side of the economy, particularly when they see the outcomes from the banking royal commission.

We all know what follows: a loss of trust in institutions and government, people not being treated fairly while other people walk away with everything. If that continues, it cannot end well here, as it hasn't ended well in many other countries in the world. I'll put it this simply: democracy cannot survive in a morass of mutual resentment that we are increasingly seeing.

That's why, after coming to this conclusion, I have spent the latter part of my political career and policy interests looking at tackling inequality head on, because there are rapid changes going on in the global economy and they come with the potential of undoing the great advances towards social equality of the post-Second World War era. If that is undone, so will be the political stability of the post-World War II era as well. Just consider this: in other nations—but the United States stands out more than many—the benefits of growth are now going exclusively to the top 10 per cent, more dramatically again in the hands of the top one percent and more dramatically again in the hands of the 0.1 percent. This is just morally wrong and economically stupid, and we cannot allow it to happen here. We can't allow the gains from new technology and all of the prospects it brings for the future—we can't allow the gains from that new technology and rising productivity just to go to a narrow group of people in our economy and in our society. We're here to serve and defend a community, not a corporation.

Of course, to do that, we have to support progressive taxation. We have to ensure we have a fair industrial relations system where the unions and their members have the ability to bargain for and gain rising wages and better conditions. We've got to continue to build that great Labor initiative, the NDIS. We've got to pursue needs based funding. We've got to lift the unemployed out of poverty. We've got to keep Medicare strong. There are so many things we need to do. But, beneath those particular policy responses, we've got to get away from the idea that collective action by people to pursue their economic interests is somehow illegitimate or that attempts by governments to create a fairer society by redistributing income and opportunities are wrong. We've got to get away from the idea that private and public sectors are somehow mutually antagonistic. They are not.

There is a stupid and destructive idea that has come to dominate our political debates: the proposition that taxes and social investment are inherently antibusiness, that every dollar that government raises and invests on behalf of people somehow robs us of vitality and that pursuing equality somehow makes us all collectively poorer. You've heard it all before, but it's rubbish. The lot of it is simply rubbish. The truth is that business thrives best in a decent society. A decent society can't be created through trickle-down economics alone, and smart businesspeople understand this. Having been elected National President of the ALP, I will be continuing to pursue these issues in the years to come. I don't want to live in a country which is captured by either the extreme Right or the hard Left.

And, of course, the fourth estate—up there—play a very important role in our national debate. I do want to pay tribute to those in the press gallery who've kept true to the best the fourth estate can offer. There is no greater responsibility than holding all of us to account. Why? Because democracy depends on it.

To my Labor colleagues, I want to say a couple of things. First of all, we must not be overconfident. It's true that we could be on the cusp of something quite special and

unexpected and return to government in just two terms. I believe the strength of our current position has been made possible by two things. The first is that during the global crisis we avoided recession and kept our real economic credentials intact. It's a great record and we should be proud of it. The second is that we've found a new lease of political unity. That unity has come from the excellent leadership of Bill Shorten and the senior frontbenchers he works with. We cannot underestimate how important that unity is to not only electoral politics but also the faith that people have in our political institutions and wider institutions across the board.

At the heart of this unity is what I would call a unity of political purpose. Our policies have been able to unify us because they speak to the things our movement and the wider Australian society hold dear: decency, fairness and greater economic and social equality. It was said of the Whitlam generation that they made Labor electable, but they also made it worth electing. That's the power of the agenda, I think, which has been outlined by Bill and the team.

Mr Speaker, when I first started drafting this speech, and when I first spoke today, I said I thought you were one of the best Speakers we've had, and we've had a lot. I don't want to test you, but I do want to—

The SPEAKER: You can go for as long as you want!

Mr SWAN: I was fishing for that! When I first drafted the speech, I did want to reach out across the chamber. I actually thought I would be able to ask people, perhaps, to remove their party blinkers and at least try to understand a bit more about why people take the policy stances they do, even if they're disagreed with.

From my point of view, that's particularly the case in what I had to say about the global financial crisis and so on. It's not just a question of 'Labor good, Liberal bad' or anything like that. It's just that if we do have another crisis we are going to need a response like that, and the current demonisation of that response is not going to be consistent with our national interest at any time in the future.

But I'm even more pessimistic about other things, because, unfortunately, there's been a divisive tone that's pervaded this place in the past week. It has made me realise that reaching out to the other side is perhaps impossible. I say this because I was here during the *Tampa* episode in 2001, and I do recall the way it changed us. The night John Howard sprung his *Tampa* trap in the parliament, otherwise known as the Border Protection Bill, I actually wasn't here. I was on the couch at home recovering from prostate cancer surgery, and I watched the events unfold with growing trepidation. In the weeks that followed, the politics of fear drowned out domestic political issues.

And, of course, before that event covert appeals to racism and xenophobia were regarded as unworthy of our country's elected representatives. When the ship was turned back, something else floated into our harbours in its wake: American race-based dog-whistle politics. That politics is not new; it's as old as politics itself. We all thought it had died sometime well before 2001. But we were wrong. During the eighties, it was brought back to life in America during the 1988 presidential election. There was a determined strategy to link the black community with violent crime. It worked. It became the template for what happened in Australia in 2001—a scab that's remained there ever since. Sure enough, 18 years later, it is

being used again. Read the *Hansard*, listen to the debate, read ministerial transcripts; the only thing missing is the subtlety of yesteryear.

Soon after that 1988 campaign—this is the one in America—the architect of that strategy, strategist Lee Atwater, contracted fatal brain cancer. Before he died he set out to make his peace with the world. He said that his illness had helped him to see that what was missing in society was what was missing in him: 'a little heart, a lot of brotherhood' and that his own actions had contributed to 'a spiritual vacuum at the heart of American society' and a 'tumour of the soul'—that is, the man who invented the political strategy now being dusted off once again had repented. It says a lot. My hope is that this ugly approach is so soundly defeated at the ballot box that it can never arise again. And that's the good news; it won't work, not this time. One of the greatest things about democracy is its moral force. Sometimes parties can lose a moral right to govern before they lose their numerical majority in parliament. For the coalition, the first is already gone and the second is about to follow in its wake.

Finally, I want to thank the workforce in the parliament and, more generally, the support and backup that we all get as MPs. I want to thank the cleaners, the drivers, the transport office, the attendants—I just talked to Luch before; he has been here 30-odd years—the cooks, the security, the library staff for all of their help over the years. And I want to say to them that I was here for people like you. We will not prosper as a country unless we value the contributions of everyone in our community and in our workforce—the cleaners, the office workers—just as we value the work of the policy strategists, the entrepreneurs. We can only prosper as a country if we are all in this together and we don't think that wealth is created just by a brilliant few. We are in this together and we will succeed if we recognise that. I have some friends from Brisbane up there from Logan City and they presented me with a plaque the other day that was very touching. It said: 'It's the things that we do together that make us strong.' Nothing will stop this country if we always keep that in mind. Thank you for all of your support.

BILLS

Wine Australia Amendment (Trade with United Kingdom) Bill 2019

First Reading

Bill received from the Senate and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Human Services and Digital Transformation) (16:55): I present the explanatory memorandum to this bill and move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Just before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the long service of the member for Lilley at the highest levels of the Australian government and congratulate him on a very long and distinguished record of service to Australia.

The Australian government has been working assiduously to protect and promote our market access and other trade interests within the UK and EU in the lead-up to Brexit. This extends to the wine industry, where the Australian government must provide certainty, as market and vintage planning arrangements can be made years in advance before a product is available and ready to export.

The UK is Australia's top wine export market by volume and third-largest market by value. It is therefore vital that we ensure the continuity of trade with the UK, regardless of their Brexit arrangements. Trade in wine between Australia and the UK is currently facilitated by the Agreement between Australia and the European Community on Trade in Wine. This agreement is given effect in Australian law and by the Wine Australia Act 2013. The proposed UK-EU withdrawal agreement envisages a Brexit transition period during which obligations stemming from EU third country agreements will continue to apply to the UK.

This bill introduces amendments to the Wine Australia Act to ensure that Australia's wine trade with the UK continues to be covered by the act during any Brexit transition period, consistent with the terms of the withdrawal agreement. Specifically, the bill will amend the definition of 'EC country' in the act to include the UK during a Brexit transition period. The government tabled last year the Agreement between Australia and the United Kingdom on trade in wine, which was signed between Australia and the UK in London last month. This new wine trade agreement with the UK is part of our preparations for a no-deal Brexit whereby the UK leaves the EU without a transition period or other measures in place.

In the event of a deal or no-deal Brexit, the combined efforts of this legislative amendment and our new agreement with the UK will ensure our wine industry can continue to export to the UK post-Brexit. These measures will ensure the continued facilitation of trade in wine between Australia and the UK and a mutually beneficial trade relationship, whatever shape Brexit takes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough): Is leave granted for the debate to continue?

Leave granted.

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (16:58): Like the minister, I'm fortunate to be following straight on from the valedictory speech of Wayne Swan—I'm going to name him, and I know you'll forgive me for that—the member for Lilley. He has made an outstanding contribution here over a very long period of time, as the minister indicated, at the highest levels. I just wanted to spend a couple of seconds on the polar opposite of that and make the point that the member for Lilley has continued to make a contribution from the back bench. It's a reminder to all who come to this place that it is more than possible to do just that. When I say that, I think of the member for Melbourne Ports, who has served on the back bench here for almost two decades and has made an outstanding contribution. He's really influenced government policy from the back benches and has made a very significant contribution. Mr Deputy Speaker Goodenough, I thank you for your indulgence.

The Wine Australia Amendment (Trade with United Kingdom) Bill 2019 is a rushed bill for good reason. It's a bill that is uncontroversial but borne by great controversy. That controversy is the events that we see continuously unfolding in the United Kingdom as they grapple with that very unfortunate decision by the people of that country that they no longer wanted to be part of the European Union. I fear that this will be the first of many issues we will find ourselves dealing with in this place as a consequence of the UK's inability to tackle that decision properly and to find outcomes that are acceptable to the people of the United Kingdom and, indeed, to the people of the broader European union.

As the minister said—well, I think he said!—on 29 March the United Kingdom informed the European Council of its intention to leave the European Union, officially triggering article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon. As a result, it is anticipated that the UK will no longer be a member of the EU after 29 March this year. So the bill makes minor amendments to the Wine Australia Act and the Wine Australia Regulations to ensure that the UK continues to be treated as an agreement country for the purposes of this act. In other words, we need to ensure that our agreement with the European Union on wine extends to the United Kingdom if they no longer are part of the European Union.

So it's a very important bill but, again, in the terms of the hurly-burly of this place it's a non-controversial bill and one which we, of course, support very strongly. And no-one will be surprised to see me at the dispatch box talking about it. That is for two reasons: firstly, I'm the relevant portfolio shadow minister. And, of course, I represent the finest wineries in the world, without question! I know that there will be those in this place—

Mr Gorman interjecting—

Mr FITZGIBBON: And some are coughing fakely as I speak! Some will have other views, but we do have the oldest vines in this country, planted by James Busby in the 1820s. We have been a pioneering region and we remain a very significant region in this country. Of course, the area is synonymous with the names Drayton, Tyrell, Tulloch and many more. We are a significant exporter of our product, and my own region stands to benefit from this tidy up that we'll do in this place today.

I had cause to ring Bruce Tyrell yesterday, just to reassure myself that everything in this bill is what the industry would hope might be in this bill. He said, 'Yes, I confirm that.' He said, 'Mate, we just want everything to stay the same.' I suppose the government might care to take that as a compliment! I don't know, but they want everything to stay the same. So we certainly support the measure.

Again, I fear that we will be back on many occasions, depending on how Brexit pans out. I had the great joy of having a private dinner last night with the EU ambassador here and the EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil Hogan—a great Irishman. I have Irish descent on both sides, I might say, so I had a wonderful conversation with Phil Hogan. We spent all of our night talking about three things, really. I took the opportunity to protest about geographic indicators, and Prosecco in particular, and I had a bit of a jab at him on high-quality beef quotas in the European Union, as people would expect me to do. But we spent the balance of our time talking about two things: obviously, Brexit and the challenges it poses for the European community, the UK and, indeed, the rest of the world, and the President of the United States, Donald Trump, and the ripples that are shaking our economies around the world. We are entering into difficult times, I suspect, in international trade terms and, indeed, in international relationship terms. I think it's very nice to see us here today agreeing on something that relates to that, because I think the best way—and I suppose this picks up on the theme offered by the member for Lilley—and that our response to all these turbulent waters will be strongest if the major parties can find common ground on these issues. I thank the House.

Mr GORMAN (Perth) (17:04): The Wine Australia Amendment (Trade with United Kingdom) Bill 2019 represent an agreement of mutual benefit between Australia and the United Kingdom over a mutual love of a good glass—or more than one glass—of Australian

grapes. This love is evidenced by the United Kingdom being Australia's second-largest wine importer by volume. I will just say to all the wine drinkers, wine importers and people who do trade with Australian winemakers in the United Kingdom: thank you very much. The last financial year saw Australia send the equivalent of \$27.3 million nine-litre cases of wine to the United Kingdom. It is one of our most notable exports. In 2018, these wine exports were valued at some \$2.76 billion, representing a growth of some 20 per cent on the previous year. The United Kingdom is currently Australia's third-largest import market by value, at some \$384 million.

In my home state of Western Australia, we are the leading production state for fine wine in Australia. In 2017, Western Australia's bottled exports were valued at some \$49.1 million, their highest value in over a decade. I will just note, with your indulgence, Mr Deputy Speaker Goodenough, that Western Australian wine is also very popular amongst, of course, Western Australians, and it is sometimes popular amongst academics and researchers. With that, I would like to thank Edith Cowan University researcher Stephanie Murphey for her assistance in my office through the Australian National Internships Program and for her assistance in preparing this speech.

The United Kingdom represents the second-biggest market for Western Australia wines. It's ahead of our exports to the US, Singapore and Hong Kong. The United Kingdom's significance in the Australian wine export market highlights that, despite the challenges that will continue to be thrown up as a result of Brexit, smooth trade is essential. Indeed, I think it's not just wine producers who will look at the frictions and ructions that are happening in the United Kingdom on a regular basis—and votes won and lost—and worry: 'What will that mean for my industry?' It's not something that's in our control, but, as the shadow minister just highlighted, it's important that, as much as possible, we deal with these things in a way that allows for a smooth transition and a continuing smooth expansion of trade for Australian exporters.

Of course, trade between the United Kingdom and Australia extends well beyond wine. The United Kingdom is Australia's fifth-largest two-way trading partner, with exports worth \$4.9 billion and imports worth \$7.3 billion. Our relationship is further strengthened through both countries being strong proponents of fair and free trade. Free trade agreements between Australia and the United Kingdom—and, indeed, globally—can provide more jobs and higher economic growth for Australia, but these trade agreements must be in Australia's national interest. Labor has some clear policies to make sure that we prohibit through legislation any trade agreement that requires us to waive labour market testing, include provisions that require the privatisation of our public services or include any provisions that seek to undermine the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. These are the sorts of things we need to look out for when we are addressing these free trade agreements, which can be in Australia's national interests. But we shouldn't just equate the words 'free trade' with guaranteed Australian interests.

We are only discussing this piece of legislation—it is only before us—because of the intention of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union. The United Kingdom is currently Australia's largest market within the European Union, and I think it's going to be the first of many of these types of legislation that we'll see before us in coming years. Indeed, I think it may be many, many years before all of our legislation has truly caught up with the

impact of the United Kingdom's impending, or attempted impending, exit from the European Union.

With a value of \$12.1 billion, the United Kingdom is Australia's seventh-largest export market overall and, as I mentioned earlier, it is worth more than any single country in the European Union. Yet, the United Kingdom is not as large as the rest of the European Union in its entirety, if you treat the union as a single market. But what the United Kingdom has provided us with over the years, particularly within that single market, is a familiar cultural base, a familiar language base and a launching pad for many, many Australian businesses to go further into Europe and build their trade capacity.

In talking about alcohol—and I enjoy a good glass of wine—I would note that the United Kingdom is well and truly ahead of Australia when it comes to effective alcohol labelling and consistent standards for labelling about the health impacts of the misuse of alcohol. It's something we might seek to look at further in this place in coming years.

I'll conclude by saying there are many challenges and conversations that will happen as a result of this legislation. When it comes to wine, we will have many more legislative discussions about things that result from Brexit. I think that's inevitably going to lead us to discuss an Australian republic. The citizens of the United Kingdom have outlined their aspirations as a nation. It is probably about time to outline our aspiration—probably a slightly less radical aspiration than the one those in the United Kingdom have outlined—to stand as an Australian republic. It continues to be supported by the people of Australia. It's a discussion that's well due. If we're to continue to have discussions about legislation for the United Kingdom's interests, it's about time we had a discussion about our interests.

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (17:11): I'm glad to be able to stand and speak about the Wine Australia Amendment (Trade with United Kingdom) Bill 2019, even though it's non-controversial, because it does give me a chance to talk about wine exports and what they mean for regional electorates like my own. It also gives me the chance to raise, again, the challenges we have with one of our very popular varieties, which is only grown for prosecco. Prosecco has become a bit of a hit and is currently taking off in the UK, but our growers and winemakers have hit a bit of a hurdle. An area in Italy has decided to rename the region Prosecco and, like Champagne, is claiming that Australian winemakers can no longer use that name for the variety on their labelling. That of course would be disastrous for our local wine industry.

When you meet the King Valley winemakers you find they are passionate about their history. They are passionate about their wine but also about their wine history. They imported this particular grape variety, and it said on the importation papers 'prosecco variety'. They've won this dispute at the WTO and in every other economic forum, but now we have the Italians trying to be quite cheeky and push for this in the Australia-EU free trade negotiations. I hope the government are being true to their word and continuing to stand on the side of the Australian winemakers to try to stop that happening. It's not necessarily going to hurt the local industry. The real impact, we believe, is not going to be felt locally—although people may get a bit confused if we lose the name. The growers' biggest concern is about potential future exports to the UK.

This matter is relevant to where we're at in this debate, because it gives us the chance, again, to talk about the importance of having a government that advocates for all producers,

for all exporters, when it comes to free trade agreements. The UK, like Australia, has a great racing culture and racing industry. Just as prosecco has been the flavour of the season for a couple of spring racing carnivals, it's believed that it will take off in a similar way in the United Kingdom, and we hope for, and wish our growers, the best of luck when it comes to that.

Of course, it's not just the Italian varieties that are now grown and bottled in Australia that are doing well. We have the opportunity to export many of our wine grapes and the winemaking story that goes with them. In my electorate of Bendigo, in central Victoria, we have more wineries than schools—more winemakers than schools. In each little nook and corner of Heathcote you are likely to bump into a shiraz grower and winemaker, and all of them have their own stories.

To the south, we have the Macedon Ranges. Many who have been to the Virgin Club may recall the fantastic Curly Flat pinot, another great wine and one that deserves recognition for what they have been able to achieve in the Macedon Ranges. As you work through the Macedon Ranges towards Castlemaine and Mount Alexander there's another great winemaking region in Harcourt. Throughout Maldon there are winemakers, and then you move on to Bendigo and Heathcote. It's a great shiraz country, but it's increasingly diversifying and moving with climate change and focusing on different varieties.

This is another reason that we need to continue to invest in building our export industries. Our winemakers are innovative and are adapting. They are changing varieties that they are planting to adapt to changing weather conditions. Just a few weeks ago, I was at a Sutton Grange winery and they talked us through the history of the varieties on their vineyard and how they were changing because the climate was changing. The impact of climate change on our wine regions in Australia will be disastrous if our winemakers don't adapt, and they are. I was talking to winemakers in the Yarra Valley, who are now purchasing land in Tasmania because they believe that Tasmania may be the only place left in Australia that will be cold enough to grow pinot noir grapes. I know that there are many people in this place who might be alarmed to hear that, being pinot noir fans. But that's the reality if we don't get on top of and tackle climate change in a real and meaningful way.

The stats stand out for themselves about the growing importance of wine industry exports to the Australian economy. In 2015-16, 1.6 million tonnes of grapes were produced into wine in Australia. We have over 3,230 wine farms in Australia. Many of those are small family-run operations—small boutique wineries—but there are some larger wineries and winemaking regions. Treasury, as people know, is one of the big ones, and there's Penfolds in South Australia. In fact, South Australia is the largest producer of wine grapes, making up 51 per cent of the total production in 2015-16. These are industries that also employ thousands of workers, particularly in the big states like South Australia.

It's important to note that 41 per cent of Australian wine is currently exported to the United States and China. But there is a hope among the winemakers that, because of the different varieties that we have and the different quirky stories of our winemakers, the UK exports could increase. So the amendment before us may seem minor today, but it has the potential to give us real opportunity as our winemakers start to sell into the United Kingdom.

One thing we do need to note is the way in which our winemakers are increasingly value adding to their produce. They are not just making wine these days; many of them are also

producing their own preserves and their own olive oil. One in my area has even started his own sparkling wine. Our winemakers are working with our apple growers to produce sparkling apple wine, sparkling cider and sparkling apple juice.

The real innovation that occurs in the wine industry does occur at the farm. But, if we are true and want to see a growth in wine exports, one of the things we must also focus on is ensuring we have the skills required in the industry. Far too often when you are in wine regions you hear that people wanting a career in wine struggle to be able to enrol in a course that is close by. There are fewer and fewer TAFEs offering winemaking as a course today and fewer and fewer opportunities for people to be able to study this particular pathway, which is disappointing, knowing that people are converting to drinking wine and wine has become a big part of our culture. It doesn't matter who you talk to in the industry, whether it be the restaurant owner, the AHA or the pub on the corner, a lot of people within the hospitality industry now recognise the important role that wine plays. We must continue to invest in the skills and in the industry if we are going to have the ability to produce exports into countries like the UK.

As one of the previous speakers mentioned, this is one of the first minor amendments in relation to the Brexit that we expect will happen in the UK. We don't quite know where that's going, particularly after reading in the media in the last 24 hours about the future of Brexit. There's probably going to be lots and lots of these bills coming forward when we deal with the UK exiting the EU. We need to make sure that we are continuing to put Australia's best foot forward. We need to make sure that we're getting the best deal, particularly when it comes to wine. It's a value-added crop. It's a crop that we know is supported by a number of small businesses. It's a real opportunity for us going forward.

I do want to acknowledge that some of the money has started to flow in relation to the \$50 million Export and Regional Wine Support Package. A few winemakers in regional Victoria have spoken about how they have been able to tap into that. However, in some of our areas, they are disappointed that they missed out. It's a bit hard to define the Pyrenees and Central Victoria all as one wine region. It's just not possible. There is some work to do within the industry to make sure that we are properly defining our wine areas. There are areas within areas. Whilst we talk about the top 10, it's important not to forget the smaller ones.

Two-thirds of our wine is exported to the value of \$2.4 billion a year, and that will continue to grow. The industry contributes \$40 billion to our economy and employs 170,000 people, from the people working on the vineyards, to the people working at the cellar doors, to the wine sellers, and so on and so forth. It is an important industry for us, and one we need to continue to support.

In my concluding remarks, I do wish to encourage the government, with this amendment, to continue to engage in an aggressive way to support our wine varieties and wine that is going into the UK. We have a real opportunity to establish a market for our smaller producers. They have missed out on the boom in China, because their wine is just not cheap enough for China. That is a real missed opportunity for a number of our small winemakers. When the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement was done, we were concerned that the small winemakers would miss out—and they have.

There are reverse trade missions, where Chinese merchants come out and speak to the winemakers. But, of course, they just kind of say, 'We want it for 4c a litre. We want all of the

wine that you produce in a year.' For the winemakers in Victoria, that's just not what they produce. They are boutique winemakers; they have a story behind their wine. When you go to the cellar door you meet the winemaker and you meet the owner of the business—they are the same person—and they have a great story behind what they produce. If you are in an area like Heathcote, in every winery that you go to, the wine is different. Even though it's grown in the same soil, it's different because of the way in which the winemaker has made that particular variety.

I would urge the government, with these discussions that are going on, to think about the smaller producers, to think about how we can better tell their story and to think about how we can market many small winemakers into the UK market, as opposed to what we tried to do in China, which was about being big and having bulk. It was great for the big guys in the industry, but not great for the little guys in the industry.

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (17:23): I'm pleased to follow the member for Bendigo in speaking on the Wine Australia Amendment (Trade with United Kingdom) Bill 2019. As the member for Bendigo quite rightly pointed out a moment ago, the wine industry is very important to the Australian economy. I will quote some of the statistics that the member for Bendigo also quoted in her address to the House. Australia is among the top 10 wine-growing countries in the world. We have some 3,230 farms across Australia, with some 6,250 actual grape growers involved through the ownership and management of those farms. There are 2,468 wineries in this country. That, in itself, speaks volumes for the importance of the wine industry, because each one of those wineries not only employs people directly in the winery and buys grapes from the wine growers but is involved in its own research and development of new and better wines. The industry contributes over \$40 billion to the Australian economy and employs 172,000 people across the country, with exports worth \$2.4 billion each year.

The importance of this legislation is that the UK, which is at the heart of what this amendment is all about, is Australia's third-largest wine importer, with wine imports of about \$371 million each year. So, given that the UK, because of its exit from the European Union in just over a month's time, will be in a difficult situation with respect to the agreements that we have with both Europe and the United Kingdom, it's important that the market in the UK remain open and that we are able to continue to trade unencumbered with the UK. It's important for the UK, for their consumers, obviously, who clearly like Australian wine, but it is also very important for the Australian producers who export to the UK.

As the member for Bendigo quite rightly pointed out, Australia produces some of the best wines in the world. Indeed, so much so that the Europeans feel threatened by the quality of Australian wines. Again, as the member for Bendigo alluded to in her remarks, many of the European countries are now trying to prevent Australian winemakers from using names for wines that have been traditionally used for decades and decades—all because they know that it will impact on the European sales, and that buyers may be looking to buy from Australia rather than Europe. My view is that that might work in the short term, but, ultimately, wine consumers know a good wine when they drink it, and they will inevitably go back to the better product, if it's made.

This particular legislation is critical to South Australia. It's critical to South Australia, the state I represent, because South Australia produces some 51 per cent of the total wine production of this country. Across the state we have regions such as the Barossa Valley, Clare

Valley, McLaren Vale, the Adelaide Hills, the south-east and Limestone Coast, Kangaroo Island, the Fleurieu Peninsula and the Riverland region, which are all famous for their wine producing and winemaking.

All of those regions are affected, like every region across Australia, by many, many risks. Whether it is weather, climate change or change in rainfall patterns and the like, the fact is, if you're a farmer in this country, there are indeed risks. This legislation clearly seeks to avoid one risk, and that is the risk of having the doorway to the United Kingdom market closed on us. It's an attempt to ensure that it remains open.

Of course, if we are dealing with risks, then for South Australia and, indeed, for all winemakers in this country, the biggest risk is climate change and weather pattern changes, and, particularly for South Australia, the management of the Murray-Darling Basin. In fact, what's loosely referred to as the Riverland region accounts for most of the wine production in Australia. So, indeed, the whole Murray-Darling Basin is important with respect to the wine industry of this country. But it is particularly important for South Australia, because the Riverland region of South Australia is one of the largest wine-growing regions we have in the state. For the Riverland region, its dependency on the Murray River and the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is absolutely critical.

We know, as a result of what we have seen in the Darling River in recent weeks, that the Murray-Darling Basin is in crisis. We saw tens of thousands—perhaps millions—of fish dying in that system. We've also had independent reports from a number of different bodies that have highlighted, once again, that the basin is getting to a crisis point, in the same way that it was at the end of the drought period between 1998 and 2007.

But one of the reasons why the basin is in crisis is that following the basin agreement of 2012, which Labor brought together at the time under the leadership of Minister Burke, it seems that this government has abandoned that Murray-Darling Basin Plan and that through negligence, mismanagement, incompetence or simple bungling by coalition ministers since 2013 we now have a Murray-Darling Basin Plan that needs serious and urgent attention. This is so much so that the South Australian government, under the previous Labor administration, led by Jay Weatherill, ordered a royal commission into the basin.

The causes of what we're dealing with right now with respect to the Basin Plan are many, and I accept that—whether it's climate change, overallocation of water, water theft, the damming up of water before it gets into the river system itself, therefore limiting inflows, or simply general mismanagement—all contribute to the crisis that we're now facing. Climate change, of course, is one of the issues that coalition members seem to want to ignore. As far as the coalition members go, climate change has had no effect on the basin inflow at all. The truth is that it has had a serious effect. And we've also seen the issues with respect to the theft of water conveniently pushed to one side by this coalition government.

The royal commission that was ordered by the South Australian government handed down its report only last month. It's a report, from memory, of about 780 pages. I might advise the House that I've pretty much read every page of it. Having done that, I have to say that Bret Walker, who was the commissioner who headed the commission itself, has done an outstanding job in identifying the causes of the current malaise within the Murray-Darling Basin. What's even more concerning, with respect to that malaise, is that the incoming South Australian Marshall government has chosen—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Howarth): Order! The minister on a point of order?

Mr Ciobo: Mr Deputy Speaker, we're a long way off relevance now in terms of the bill that's before the House. This has nothing to do with wine exports to the UK.

Mr ZAPPIA: This legislation is about dealing with risks to the SA wine industry, and I'm talking about one of those risks.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call on the member for Makin to keep it relevant.

Mr ZAPPIA: Thank you. As I was saying, one of the critical risks is to ensure that our winegrowers are able to grow the very grapes that they're growing so that we can have the wine that we can then export overseas. I was making the point that it is very disappointing that the current South Australian Liberal government, led by Steven Marshall, is trying to discredit the royal commission into the Murray-Darling Basin system, which went to the heart of ensuring the viability of farmers within the system and, in particular, that the winegrowers in the South Australian Riverland are able to continue their operations.

Of course, there will be other opportunities where I can talk about the Murray-Darling Basin and the royal commission in South Australia, but it does go to the heart of ensuring that our winegrowers are able to remain viable. In particular, it is also deeply concerning when the South Australian state minister for water, David Speirs, came in for personal criticism by Commissioner Bret Walker in his report. His incompetence and agreement to measures which do nothing to ensure the sustainability of the Murray-Darling Basin water are things that ought to be condemned, and will be condemned, by all South Australians.

It is true that we are dealing with a measure relating to trade, and it is also true that this trade depends on contracts. And those contracts, in most cases, will depend on the ability to supply. Therefore, once again, the ability to supply arises from the ability of our wine farmers to grow the grapes and then our winemakers to produce the wine. These matters are indeed all linked.

Labor will support this amendment, of course, because we want to support our wine industry. As I said earlier on, it's an industry that matters to our country, and to our state of South Australia, where I come from. As with all trade agreements, however, this also highlights some of the concerns that we have often flagged in terms of the limitations that are sometimes placed on countries once we enter into direct agreements with one country or another. The importance, however, is that we are able to maintain a doorway to those markets and that we're able to continue to supply the United Kingdom.

Lastly, I'll say this about the importance of this legislation to the wine industry in Australia: the United Kingdom is a country that we have, over the years, always maintained a close relationship with. I believe that, regardless of whether the United Kingdom remains part of the European Union in one form or another or it doesn't, it will always be a country that we would want to trade with. Not only do we have many people in this country who originated from the United Kingdom—good links with the country—but we also have, I believe, a degree of friendship and closeness with that country that we would not want to see lost. Therefore, if this legislation is going to help us maintain that, I believe it's a step in the right direction. I understand that this needs to be done before 29 March because of the urgency involved. For those reasons, I speak in support of this legislation.

Mr CIOBO (Moncrieff—Minister for Defence Industry) (17:36): I'm certainly pleased to sum up the Wine Australia Amendment (Trade with United Kingdom) Bill 2019. This bill facilitates the continued trade in wine between Australia and United Kingdom in the event of a Brexit transition period. The trade in wine between Australian and the UK is currently facilitated by the agreement between Australia and the European Community on trade and wine. This wine agreement will cease to apply to wine trade between Australia and the UK in the event of a no-deal Brexit, or at the end of any Brexit transition period. The bill amends the definition of an EC country in the Wine Australia Act 2013 to include the UK during a Brexit transition period. This will ensure the beneficial conditions for wine trade continue to apply between Australia and the UK during a Brexit transition period.

It's certainly an important bill. It's important to Australia's wine exporters as well as to the wine industry more broadly. It's important that the parliament supports continued market access and trade relationships that enable our wine industry to grow. I would note that, having had the privilege of serving as Australia's trade minister, we had a lot of very constructive conversations with the EU and the UK. In particular, my then counterpart, Dr Fox, and I were pleased that Australia was, in fact, the very first country with whom the UK formed a joint working group to look at the nature of our trade relationship post-Brexit and that we have had an officials-level working group, which has been in place now coming up to two or three years and is doing very important work.

I'd also note, of course, that we have a large number of trade agreements that it's taken the Liberal and National government to put in place. I heard comments from opposition speakers, talking about the relevance of these trade deals, but I would note that it's only been under this government that we've been able to put in place the market access that has seen a profound boost in Australia's wine exports. We, as a government, were able to put in place the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement, the Japan-Australia free trade agreement and the free trade agreement with South Korea. We were able to put in place the additional Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Singapore in terms of its subsequent iteration. The work that we did on the comprehensive and progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership made sure I was able to lock that in on behalf of Australia. The work that we did put in place the Peru-Australia Free Trade Agreement. We were able to include negotiations around the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. We were able to commence negotiations for an FTA with the European Union, as well as work with the Pacific Alliance countries of Colombia, Mexico, Chile and Peru. All of these are in place or underway because of the work of the Liberal-National government. I would highlight to opposition members who spoke in relation to this bill that Labor was, frankly, unable to start and conclude any deals when they were in office for six years. They did not commence and conclude a single trade deal in that six-year period, and yet for the six-year period that we've been in government I just outlined a very comprehensive list.

What does all this mean? It means that we've been able to give Australia's wine producers incredible market access—so much so now that China is our single largest export market for Australian wine. I would remind opposition members that it was one minute to midnight when Labor suddenly reversed their position. The Australian Labor Party were campaigning under the guise of, of course, the union movement against the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. The Labor Party was opposed to the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement until

one minute to midnight, and then they suddenly had a conversion on the road to Damascus, so to speak. So Australians can know full well that the incredible market access that we have had to markets like China, Japan, Korea, Peru, Singapore and, in time, the European Union are all a direct consequence of the Liberal-National government.

I also note comments made by, for example, the member for Bendigo and others in relation to geographic indicators. I think it's a terrific shame that the Australian Labor Party is seeking to spook Australia's exporters, and in particular our wine exporters. There can be no doubt that there are elements of the European Union—certain stakeholders and constituencies—which have sought to establish a claim around geographic indicators. It's hardly new. Australia has worked in a comprehensive and constructive way with the European Union historically. For example, we agreed to have a geographic indicator around champagne and saw the creation of an entirely new category in Australia of sparkling wine. Just because we have done that historically doesn't mean that we'll do it in the future and doesn't mean we'll do it as part of this FTA. It demonstrates the bona fides of Australia in these negotiations. It's precisely the reason why it's taken a Liberal-National government to be able to approach this with maturity and with a highly evolved trade negotiation team that have been able to talk to these issues through and work in a constructive way.

Ultimately, we know this is about boosting Australian exports, which in turn boosts Australian jobs. For all of those reasons, I'm certainly very pleased that the Labor Party is perhaps begrudgingly supporting this amendment. I'm very pleased that we will continue to see very strong exports of wine from Australia to the UK. I commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr CIOBO (Moncrieff—Minister for Defence Industry) (17:43): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

BUSINESS

Rearrangement

Mr CIOBO (Moncrieff—Minister for Defence Industry) (17:43): I move:

That orders of the day Nos 3 and 4, government business, be postponed until a later hour this day.

Question agreed to.

BILLS

Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment Bill 2018

Second Reading

Mr WYATT (Hasluck—Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health) (17:44): I present the explanatory memorandum to this bill and I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is my pleasure to introduce the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment Bill 2018 to the chamber. The bill demonstrates the government's commitment to recognising traditional Aboriginal ownership of land and to finalising land claims in the Northern Territory which have remained unresolved for decades. It delivers on the government's election commitment to resolve outstanding Aboriginal land claims in the Northern Territory and to work with Indigenous landowners to ensure their land rights deliver the economic opportunities that should come from owning land.

This bill gives practical effect to our commitment to working in partnership with Indigenous Australians. The government is committed to the recognition of Indigenous land through statutory land rights and native title, and we are working with traditional owners and land councils to make sure these are resolved as soon as possible.

The bill adds areas subject to four traditional land claims in the Kakadu region of the Northern Territory to schedule 1 of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976, the land rights act, so that the land can be granted as Aboriginal land. It also provides for the leaseback of that land to the director of national parks.

The bill also adds land that was subject to a successful native title application in the Roper River region of the Northern Territory to schedule 1 of the land rights act so that the land can be granted as Aboriginal land. Scheduling of the land is consistent with the terms of the Township of Urupunga Indigenous Land Use Agreement, executed by the native title parties and the Northern Territory government.

In addition, the bill adds land that is associated with the settlement of the Anthony Lagoon area land claim to schedule 1 of the land rights act so that the land can be granted as Aboriginal land. Scheduling of the land is consistent with the terms of the Anthony Lagoon area land claim No. 74 deed of settlement, executed by the parties associated with the land claim and the Northern Territory government.

The four land claim areas in the Kakadu region comprise approximately 50 per cent of Kakadu National Park. Title to the majority of that land is held by the director, a Commonwealth statutory office holder. Smaller land parcels subject to the land claims are Crown land held by the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth. The balance of the land in the park is already Aboriginal land and leased by the director from the Aboriginal Lands Trust, which holds title. The land claims were lodged between 1984 and 1997.

While they remain unresolved there are statutory limitations on dealing with the land. This has constrained potential developments in one of Australia's iconic tourism destinations and adds a layer of complexity to the joint management arrangements in place between traditional Aboriginal owners and the director.

The parties to the land claims have agreed to settle on the basis of the land being scheduled for grant as Aboriginal land, subject to immediate lease back to the director of as much of the land as is required to continue to form part of that park. The director is not the Crown for the purpose of the land rights act in its current form, and that would prevent the land from being granted after it is scheduled.

The bill amends the land rights act to allow deeds of grant for the land to be delivered to the Aboriginal Lands Trust and to take effect despite the interests of the director. The bill also

repeals certain existing provisions of the land rights act relating to land descriptions in the Kakadu region that will be made redundant by adding the relevant land to schedule 1.

The grants of these lands is supported by stakeholders, including the Northern Territory government, the Northern Land Council and other local stakeholders. I commend the bill to the chamber.

Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (17:48): I'm pleased to be able to speak to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment Bill 2018. I want to make a number of observations, but, firstly, I'd ask the question: why aren't we also debating conjointly another bill that gives scheduled land in the Northern Territory? It's the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment (Land Scheduling) Bill 2018, which relates to land at Ammaroo, north-east of Alice Springs.

I propose to move an amendment and I'll move it now. I move:

That all words after "That" be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes that:

- (1) this bill was introduced into the Parliament nearly 12 months ago;
- (2) despite the bipartisan support for the bill, the Government has until today failed to progress the legislation; and
- (3) traditional owners deserve to have their settled land claims progressed in a timely fashion".

I live in Lingiari, obviously. My seat is in the Northern Territory, and all the Aboriginal lands under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act are in my electorate. Prior to coming to the parliament, my job was policy adviser at the Central Land Council in Alice Springs, dealing with the administration of the land rights act and matters related to it. The director for whom I was working at the time is the now Senator Patrick Dodson. His brother Mick was working for the Northern Land Council at the time as a legal officer. I want to use this opportunity to say congratulations to Mick, Professor Dodson, on being announced as the treaty commissioner in the Northern Territory. He'll do a marvellous job. He was born in Katherine and is a Territorian of great note, and he has spent a lot of time representing the interests of Aboriginal people across this nation. He's well recognised nationally and internationally, and he'll do a great job. His brother Pat, of course, is a different kettle of fish. He's here, with us, thankfully, and I'm very pleased he's here. I'd hoped he'd be here some years earlier. I did try, but it wasn't to be. Thank the Lord he's here now, though, and I'm pleased to have him here as someone who's got wisdom and guides us all in one way or another.

So my background, coming into the parliament, was directly related to the land rights act. I understand the act and how it works, and I understand the aspiration that Aboriginal people have to gain control of the land for cultural and other purposes. Most particularly, it is to return the land to them so they can carry on their cultural and spiritual obligations as owners of that land. But it also provides an opportunity for development, for leveraging their ownership of the land for economic purposes, and I'll come to that in a little while.

But I do want to again make the observation that this legislation was in the parliament 12 months ago. Why have we waited so long? And, unless the Leader of Government Business cares to put the other bill, the land scheduling bill, forward and make sure we debate it tomorrow or the next day, we're unlikely to debate that bill in this parliament, which means

that that land at Ammaroo will not be returned, and that would be a great shame. So I ask the government to prioritise that legislation. It won't take long. There's no dispute about it. We agree on it, as we do on this piece of legislation, but it's a shame that it's not here before us today.

I want to go into some detail on this legislation because I think it is important. The minister at the table has actually given a decent enough summary. The bill was initially presented in two schedules, but, since its introduction, the government has circulated an additional third schedule to list Anthony Lagoon lands in schedule 1 of the bill. The amendments add parcels of land within Kakadu National Park, the township of Urapunga and, in proposed amendments to the bill, Anthony Lagoon Station, to the listing of schedule 1 of the act, enabling them to be granted as Aboriginal land. Now, that's important because—for those who don't know—under the land rights act, land scheduled as Aboriginal land is inalienable freehold title. It's possibly the strongest title in the country. It cannot be bought, sold or transferred. It is inalienable. It is Aboriginal land forever. That's a really important recognition. Almost 50 per cent of the Northern Territory is Aboriginal land under the land rights act. That's important because it means Aboriginal people have security in terms of the land. It's a recognition of their historical dispossession, but at the same time it compensates for that dispossession by making sure that that land is inalienable freehold title.

I want to acknowledge that the land rights act was initially developed by the Whitlam government and then passed by the Fraser government in 1976. It's an important piece of legislation, something which, historically, is probably the high watermark of land rights legislation in this country and something which the parliament should be proud of. Noting that it was introduced by the Whitlam government and subsequently passed by the Fraser government is an important recognition of the bipartisan support it had at the time and, I think, continues to have.

There have been periods when it's been under threat. The Howard government, in particular, sought to review the land rights act and weaken its provisions. Some of you will recall—too many people here are a bit young and won't remember—that in the 1980s, during the period when Bob Hawke was Prime Minister, there was a campaign for national land rights, which shamefully was scuppered because of the Labor Premier in Western Australia, Brian Burke. I remember vividly the depictions of Aboriginal land in advertisements during the campaign against national land rights by the Western Australian government. It was shameful. I was working at the land council at the time. We were concerned that national land rights as wanted by the Western Australian government would have undermined, weakened and taken away the rights of the land rights act in the Northern Territory. It would have been lowest common denominator politics. I well remember, when I was employed by them, working with now Senator Dodson and the Central Land Council, and Aboriginal people from across the Northern Territory coming to Canberra. We would lobby consistently. We were forever here lobbying the government not to pursue the Burke land rights legislation. Clive Holding, poor bugger—he's no longer with us, God rest his soul—was the minister at the time. It was a very difficult period. I remember well truckloads of Aboriginal people coming from Central Australia into Canberra, which we helped organise, to demonstrate on the front steps of the old Parliament House against the Labor government at the time and what they were proposing to do to the land rights act. So this is a very strong piece of legislation, which

has withstood a lot of threats and attacks, and I think we need to be very proud that it's still here in this place and seen as something that is very important.

We've heard that the land is at Anthony Lagoon and Urapunga, and the minister referred to the four land claims inside Kakadu. It is well to remind us what those land claims are. One is the Ngombur (Repeat) Land Claim No. 93, first lodged with the Aboriginal Land Commissioner as far back as 23 November 1984. The second is the Alligator Rivers Area III (Gimbat and Goodparla) Land Claim No. 111, lodged with the land commissioner on 26 June 1987. The third is the Kakadu (Jim Jim) Area Land Claim No. 122, lodged with the Aboriginal Land Commissioner on 18 April 1989. The fourth is the Kakadu Region (Repeat) Land Claim No. 179, lodged with the Aboriginal Land Commissioner on 29 May 1997. The parties of the land claims have agreed to settle the claims on the basis of the Kakadu land being scheduled for grant as Aboriginal land under the land rights act, on the condition of an immediate leaseback of the Kakadu land to the director.

Just to understand what that's about, it's important that the context of the Kakadu land grant and the land claim is understood historically. You will recall—well, I'm not sure that too many people in this place will recall—that from 1975 to 1977 the Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry coincided with the preparation for land rights legislation. Accordingly, Justice Fox was given the powers of a commissioner to examine land rights claims to the Kakadu area. Justice Fox found that Aboriginal groups had traditional land rights and endorsed a Northern Land Council suggestion that Kakadu be granted to traditional Aboriginal owners then leased back to the Commonwealth and declared a national park. That's what's happening here. This land is being granted and then leased back to the Commonwealth as a national park. Some areas were excised for the uranium mines: Ranger, associated with the town of Jabiru. This is important because the bulk of the current Aboriginal land within Kakadu is grants recommended by Justice Fox from the 2013 Jabiluka land grant.

The Kakadu National Park was extended from 1984, 1987, 1989 and 1991. It's important that that historical context is understood. It's not an accident of history. This is because of a deliberate decision by Aboriginal people in Kakadu, once they successfully claimed the land, to lease it back to the Commonwealth as a national park. In this piece of legislation:

New subsection 10(4) provides that, for the purposes of section 10, any estate or interest in the Kakadu Land that is held by the Director is to be taken to be an estate or interest held by the Crown in right of the Commonwealth.

The Director is the titleholder of four of the Kakadu Land parcels.

We need to appreciate what that means, because it's inevitable that, if you talk to most people around this country and if you'd listen to the threats, the hyperbole, the vividly wrong attacks that were made against the land rights act by people over time and the very emotional, hysterical campaign waged by Brian Burke about national land rights, you would understand that this land has been leased back to the Commonwealth as a national park for the benefit and enjoyment of all Australians and international visitors. It wasn't taken away. They didn't nick it off. They didn't sell it. They didn't try to get rid of it. They leased it back to the Commonwealth.

But now we're coming to a different period in the history of this region, and we need to appreciate what that means. It's time that the grants are being made now. Kakadu will be

almost solely Aboriginal land under the land rights act, leased back as a national park as I've described. But we have the imminent closure of the Ranger mine and the issue around the Jabiru township and what should happen. And that's really quite important because now the Aboriginal traditional owners of that country want to do things to make sure that their interests in the long term are properly protected.

The Ranger mine has been operating in a small part of Kakadu for almost 40 years. In this time, the traditional owners, represented by the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, the Mirarr and the traditional owners in the south have achieved a robust regional governance capacity. In the case of Jabiru, the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation has led the design and promotion of the Jabiru vision for the future once the mine closes and the mining company has to relieve itself of its obligations. And recently we saw an announcement by Labor that a Labor government will invest \$220 million in infrastructure and community development projects to dramatically improve Kakadu National Park as a tourist destination and secure the future of the township of Jabiru. This included, importantly, \$100 million to upgrade four key access roads in Kakadu National Park itself to allow for as near as we can to all-around access. It also provided \$44 million for environmental and national park infrastructure, \$25 million for a new Kakadu visitor centre, \$2.5 million to improve mobile connectivity in the park, \$2.5 million for a new tourism master plan, \$45 million to undertake urgent asbestos remediation in Jabiru township and \$1 million for a new road strategy to be developed to improve safety on Kakadu's remote roads. These initiatives are really timely. I note that the government has put up proposals that are not quite of that magnitude but of similar type.

It's about time we understood that the Mirarr and the other traditional owners within the region are in a space now where they can take more control. It is perhaps timely—when we are thinking about the future of the national park, the role of the Director of National Parks, the national park itself and the joint management structure that's been put in place since inauguration of the park in the 1970s—that we look at the potential to review that joint management structure to potentially give Aboriginal people more control over their country. They have demonstrated time and time again their desire to work cooperatively and in partnership with the broader Australian community and the Australian government, but they want to make sure that their interests are clearly protected. Their cultural and spiritual obligations are immense. But they are the people with the deepest knowledge about that country, make no doubt about it. If that's the case, what we need to do is develop those relationships further so that they can maximise the economic benefits that can be derived from interest in the park as a World-Heritage-listed place for both its culture and its environmental values. Kakadu is a unique place.

I'm very pleased that we are finally dealing with this legislation, as critical as I am of the fact that it has taken us 12 months to do it. It is important. Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory value the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. I spoke before about the fact that we should be doing the Ammaroo grant today as well, but the Anthony Lagoon, Urapunga and the Kakadu National Park owners will be grateful to the parliament for progressing the legislation.

I just want to reinforce the fact, and underline it yet again, that this piece of legislation is extremely important. The Aboriginal Land Rights Act is what I'm referring to here. It's a very strong piece of legislation. Aboriginal people are not wont to change this legislation, I can tell

you. Any government, any political party or any external interest group that believes it will have the capacity to influence people to change this legislation should think again. It has proven test of time. It has provided a really, really tremendous base upon which Aboriginal people can build their lives in the Northern Territory in a way in which they feel safe, culturally and spiritually. It provides them with the opportunity for further economic development and for the social development of their communities.

I might point out that the Mirarr need to be congratulated on the work that they have been doing. They funded their own boarding college in Jabiru. They are doing enormous work around the region to enhance the opportunities of young Aboriginal people for training, education and employment and are involved in making sure that their interests are being properly advanced.

I commend the bill to the House, although I would ask people who are speaking to this legislation to address the issues involved in our amendment, which make it very clear that we're not happy that this has taken so long. Aboriginal people should be treated with a great deal more respect. We introduced the bill 12 months ago. Why are we dealing with it today? It's not contentious; it was agreed, and yet it has taken us 12 months to do it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Howarth): Is the amendment seconded?

Mr Perrett: I second the amendment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Lingiari has moved as an amendment that all words after 'that' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. If it suits the House, I will state the question in the form that the amendment be agreed to. The question now is that the amendment be agreed to.

Mr ENTSCHE (Leichhardt) (18:09): I rise to support this bill, the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment Bill 2018. In my role as the chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia, I am acutely aware of the challenges Indigenous Australian face, particularly with regard to home ownership. This bill demonstrates the government's commitment to recognising traditional Aboriginal ownership of land and to finalising land claims in the Northern Territory which have remained unresolved for decades. It delivers on the government's election commitment to work with Indigenous landowners to ensure their land rights deliver the economic opportunities that should come from owning your own land. This bill also gives practical effect to our commitment to working in partnership with Indigenous Australians.

The government is committed to the recognition of Indigenous land through statutory land rights and native title, and we are working with traditional owners and land councils to make sure these claims are resolved as soon as possible. This bill adds areas in Kakadu, Urapunga and Anthony Lagoon to schedule 1 of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 so the land can be granted as Aboriginal land. In the Kakadu region, the bill also provides for the leaseback of the Kakadu land to the Director of National Parks. This covers an area of around 973,300 hectares. The land claims were lodged between 1984 and 1997. While they remain unresolved, there are statutory limitations on dealing with the land. This has constrained potential developments in one of Australia's iconic tourism destinations and

added a layer of complexity to the joint management arrangements in place between traditional Aboriginal owners and the director.

The bill also adds areas in the town of Urapunga that are subject to the Township of Urapunga Indigenous Land Use Agreement, Urapunga land, to schedule 1 of the land rights act so that the Urapunga land can be granted as Aboriginal land. This covers around 73 hectares in area and is adjacent to existing Aboriginal land granted under the land rights act. Scheduling this land supports the implementation of a registered native title Indigenous land use agreement entered into by the Northern Territory and the native title parties. It continues to deliver on the government's commitment to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to support the resolution of land claims and provide opportunities for Indigenous Australians to harness the opportunities that come with owning their own land.

The bill also adds an area in the Barkly region, Anthony Lagoon land, to schedule 1 of the land rights act so that the Anthony Lagoon land can be granted as Aboriginal land. This is approximately 603 hectares in the Barkly region of the Northern Territory. The parties in this case have agreed on a land swap arrangement to finalise the claim. This supports improved access to the Tablelands Highway and proximity to relevant sacred sites.

The coalition government is committed to working with Indigenous landowners to ensure that their land rights deliver the economic opportunities that should come with owning your own land, and we are committed to working in partnership with Indigenous Australians. This bill is yet another example of this. We are working directly with traditional owners and land councils to make sure outstanding land claims are resolved as soon as possible.

Native title is an agreement where we as a nation recognise traditional owners of land and water, a recognition of pre-existing rights that for so long was denied to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Forty-six per cent of all land in Australia is now Indigenous land, including 12 per cent as exclusive native title. Excitingly, there are now more native title determinations than applications. But the fight to achieve native title does not end the challenge. For too long, traditional owners in various corners of the country have had their aspirations for development blocked, plans for employment and economic opportunities stifled by outside interests and traditional owners have not been able to make the decisions that they want for their land. Previous governments didn't provide traditional owners and landholders with the support needed, and non-Indigenous organisations and advocates flew in and acted in their best interests. The coalition government won't stand for that kind of approach. The government is committed to working with native title holders so that they can make decisions about their own land.

The coalition government is committed to building the long-term capacity of native title holders and prescribed bodies corporate, or PBCs as they are known, so that native title can deliver benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including economic independence. We work with local communities and representative bodies to create opportunity to give people choice about how they use their land, supporting economic development and employment across Australia. We recognise that native title holders are increasingly where the focus must be and that is why we are providing for the first time funding to the native title holders, to help them manage their land and participate in development.

The coalition government is investing over \$20 million through the prescribed body corporates' capacity-building fund, ensuring native title holders have a seat at the table and can pursue the economic development opportunities that they actually want to. This funding is also being used to develop a broader support work that will focus on training and support, improved access to information and expertise, and regional forums that allow engagement between governments and the PBCs.

In my electorate, at Hope Vale, the government is investing \$110,000 in the Hope Vale Congress Aboriginal Corporation so landholders can have the expertise and support to negotiate with big mining companies and to make informed decisions about the economic opportunities that can come from their land. Across the state of Queensland, the coalition government is supporting prescribed bodies corporate or PBCs. In the Mt Isa region, for example, the government is investing over \$685,000 to build the governance of board members to support traditional decision-making and to help traditional owners take advantage of emerging opportunities from development of a new shale gas industry—supporting traditional owners to access the support and expertise they need to have the driving seat at the decision-making table so that they can negotiate the best outcome for their communities and for their land. On Fraser Island, this government is investing \$288,000 in the Batchelor Aboriginal Corporation, enabling native title holders to pursue economic development and take advantage of tourism opportunities, ensuring tourism investment goes directly to those affected communities.

This funding supports the PBC to develop a system of active statutory fee-charging powers, providing a source of income and providing the opportunity for sustainability. This is on top of the \$92 million that the government is providing this year to support native title representative bodies so service providers can progress native title claims. The coalition is committed to improving the benefits traditional owners should be able to leverage from owning their own land and we have to wake up land rights. The coalition government is working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to support local decision-making process, ensuring local communities have the resources and the authority to support what they actually want.

The areas in the Kakadu region that are included in this bill comprise about 50 per cent of the total area of Kakadu National Park, approximately 973,300 hectares. The balance of the park, other than that of the Jabiru township, is already Aboriginal land under the land rights act, subject to leaseback arrangements with the director and the formal joint management with traditional owners. This has been a very successful model for many, many years. The parties of the land claims have agreed to settle the claim on the basis that Kakadu land being scheduled for grant is Aboriginal land under the land rights act on the condition of an immediate leaseback of Kakadu land to the director. In January this year, the coalition government announced the significant \$216 million investment to update Kakadu National Park and support Jabiru's transition to a tourism based economy. This announcement follows negotiations between the Australian government, the Northern Territory government, the Mirrar traditional owners and Energy Resources of Australia.

Kakadu is one of Australia's most important environmental and heritage assets, one of our biggest tourism icons and the home to 60,000 years of living Indigenous culture. Through this investment, we want to make sure that Kakadu and Jabiru and all the residents and jobs they

support are set for the future. The government is developing a detailed plan for our investment which will be spread over the next 10 years, consistent with our long-term commitment for the future of Jabiru and Kakadu.

Creating economic and business opportunities for Indigenous Australians is the key to empowering communities to take charge of their own affairs and close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. My role as the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia has given me an insight into some of the challenges these communities face on a daily basis. However, one thing I've found time and time again is that when people work together great things can certainly be achieved. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton—Opposition Whip) (18:20): I rise to speak on Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment (Land Scheduling) Bill 2018. This bill amends the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. It adds 3,105 hectares of land within Ammaroo Station to part 4 of schedule 1 of the act, allowing that land to be granted as Aboriginal land.

The 1976 act sets out a scheme for claiming and granting control and management of Aboriginal land by traditional Aboriginal owners in the Northern Territory. It provided two ways for land to be granted to traditional Aboriginal owners. The first way involved applying to the Aboriginal Land Commissioner seeking recognition of a group's traditional attachment to unalienated crown land. However, that avenue closed for new applications way back in 1997. The other method available is for parliament to add a description of the land to be granted to part 4 of schedule 1 of the act. The minister then establishes, by a notice published in the gazette, an Aboriginal Land Trust to hold the land and recommends that the Governor-General grant the land to the trust. This mechanism facilitates negotiated outcomes, obviously, and is not limited to unalienated crown land, but it requires parliamentary action, which is a long process.

It is this second method that the bill before the House facilitates. It will add about 3,000 hectares near Ammaroo Station, which is about 250 kilometres north-east of Alice Springs. This cumbersome method of giving effect to Indigenous land use agreements—or ILUAs, as they're called—is the subject of this bill. The Urapunga ILUA is an excellent example of the delays that this method, the only method still available under the original legislation, forces on traditional owners in the Northern Territory. The Urapunga ILUA was negotiated and agreed to by the parties in 2005. We've had about 27 prime ministers since then.

Legislation to add the land to schedule 1 of the act was introduced to parliament nearly 12 months ago. The Senate passed the amendments as the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment Bill 2017. If this bill does not pass this House in the next few days, before the parliament is prorogued, there will still be further delays for the traditional owners. So the current scheme requires that parliament amend the primary text of the act by adding land to a schedule in order to grant land to traditional owners. Remember, the whole reason for the act is that the traditional owners have a strong and ongoing connection with that part of the world that they've probably called their own for 60,000 years, or 3,000 generations or so.

This cumbersome process is a legacy of the Fraser government's decision to restrict the application of the act to unalienated Crown lands and lands explicitly listed in the schedules. The Fraser government passed this act after the dismissal of the Whitlam government and the

bill that the Whitlam government had introduced had lapsed. It has been suggested that this was done to protect existing land interests in the Northern Territory, particularly pastoral leaseholders, from any future claims. The Whitlam bill would have actually allowed the minister to create land trusts for land not explicitly included in the schedules. But that's not what was passed in the parliament, and we're left with this unwieldy scheme to grant land to traditional owners.

I remember when the Native Title Act was passed in 1993. I was studying law at the time, and it was of particular interest to many Queenslanders and to me as a law student. I remember the hysteria from some ill-informed quarters of the media—much of it in Queensland, I would say, but it was spread across the nation. It is fair to say that Paul Keating's Native Title Act was not universally welcome. However, it was passed by the Keating government in 1993 in response to the Mabo decision.

The previous year, Prime Minister Paul Keating had given that historic Redfern address, setting out some of the reasons why we needed to respond appropriately. Despite the alarmist rhetoric and the opposition from many political parties, the Keating government persisted. They consulted with state and territory governments, industry groups and Indigenous organisations. Can I say: the Queensland government was not particularly receptive. Remember, the Mabo legislation came from National Party and Labor governments opposing the proposal.

The draft legislation was introduced to parliament in 1993, and, I think, it passed just before that Christmas. There was a strong opposition to passing the Native Title Bill. The Liberal leader at the time, John Hewson, tried to block the bill. He called it a 'day of shame'. It's not that long ago, but he called it 'a day of shame'. John Hewson said:

The Mabo legislation that is being rammed through the Parliament by the Keating Government will be proved to be a disaster for Australia.

... ..

The Opposition will make the Government's unjust, divisive and damaging Mabo legislation a major issue right up until the next election.

And in another media article he said, 'It is a raw deal that will disadvantage the great majority of Australians.' In fact, I'm holding up a clipping from the *Northern Territory News*—not a paper I'm overly familiar with, but they do some great Twitter work! The headline is, 'Politics of fear.' That's from 10 November 1993. That editorial really sums up the turmoil that the native title debate was causing in coalition ranks. I will just quote a couple of paragraphs:

The coalition's leadership jitters almost certainly reflect national doubts and confusion about the proposed native title legislation.

The issue is dividing the two quite opposite philosophies and political camps in the Coalition—the radical conservatives and the traditional liberals.

That editorial concludes with the following observation about the politics of the early nineties in Australia:

The catalyst now is Mabo, but in its absence, it would have been something else - economic policy, labour reform, foreign affairs, immigration or any of a number of juicy issues just waiting to be picked up.

But Mabo it is, because the issue is visible, controversial and potentially explosive.

Of course it will be argued that the Coalition should adopt a statesman-like position to native title.

Nice but unrealistic. After all, the Coalition would say, there was not much statesmanship on Labor's part about tax reform during the last election. Fear works both ways. That's politics.

There were reports at the time saying that Liberals were circulating a map of Australia showing almost half the nation claimed by native title. A fear campaign was everywhere.

On the 10th anniversary of the passage of the Native Title Act, former Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett conceded that his fears that suburban backyards could be put at risk were completely unfounded. He is reported as saying in 2002:

I think that like many others, I was trying to deal with something that was new, that was undefined.

Paul Keating, to his great credit, was very brave. He didn't listen to the hysteria and he believed that the Australian people wouldn't listen either, which was a brave call. The passage of the Native Title Act may be one of Labor's greatest legacies. I am proud to belong to a political party that is brave. Sometimes, in a marginal seat, I think we're too brave, but I'm proud to be a part of that party; a party that will choose the right path even in the face of intense scaremongering. The Labor Party is a party that cares for all Australians; a party that has a good, solid moral core.

I wish I could say that things have changed so much since 1993. But, sadly, that hysterical editorial could have been written last week. It could have been written today. The Prime Minister and his senior ministers were, just last week in this parliament, peddling fear and division over a bill that was passed by our democratically elected parliament to give the sickest people in our care the medical treatment that they need. Let's remember, that's what we said: we'll give the sickest people in our care medical treatment. And yet we see this great big fear campaign—the fear machine. It's cheap politics, and, as the member for Lilley said in his wonderful valedictory speech today, the Australian public deserves better. It didn't do John Hewson any good way back in 1993 and I hope it won't do the current Prime Minister any good when it comes to the 2019 election. The Australian people have big hearts—not the pea hearts that we've seen standing opposite us at the dispatch box over the last couple of question times.

A final note on the current bill before the House: since the Native Title Act was passed, parliamentary action to grant land by amending schedule 1 of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 has become much more common, as mentioned by earlier speakers. Native title holders in the Northern Territory have agreed to surrender native title over land in exchange for the greater security of tenure provided by land rights title under the act. Maybe it's time to make it easier for traditional owners to have their settled land claims progressed in a timely fashion. As I said, the current piece of legislation started back in the early noughties.

Having to negotiate the passage of a bill through parliament each time an ILUA has been negotiated is inefficient. It is not fair to the traditional owners, and it's a wasteful use of parliamentary resources. It's time we fixed this, and the government should accept the amendment proposed by Labor, by the member for Lingiari, and seconded by me, allowing traditional owners to have their land claims progressed in a timely fashion. Aboriginal matters will be dealt with for them and by them. Surely it is time.

Mr RAMSEY (Grey—Government Whip) (18:30): This bill, the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment Bill 2018, is essentially about the Northern Territory. It says so in the title, of course. But it has lessons for all of us. It demonstrates cooperation and common purpose, and I think it's quite a stride in our relationship with Indigenous Australia that we'd get to a more sensible position where all parties would give a bit of ground, make a compromise and come up with a good result so that everybody's a winner. So I congratulate all those who have negotiated through this process, and I hope that the outcomes will be good for all of those who have done so and, of course, have supported the bill.

It's worth noting, though, from my point of view, because it gives me an opportunity to touch on a few other things which I think are important when it comes to land ownership, that Grey covers 92.4 per cent of South Australia—an area of 908,000 square kilometres. It also includes all of the remote Indigenous communities—but not all of the Indigenous communities, I might add; there are a few that live on Indigenous lands outside of Grey. But it includes all of the remote Indigenous communities at least, and it includes the APY lands. The APY lands cover 102,000 square kilometres, or around about 10 per cent of the state of South Australia. Interestingly, those lands are held in freehold title but by the community rather than by individuals. They can do whatever they like with their land and make whatever economic decisions they want to on that particular land.

It's probably 50 years since they were granted that freehold title by the then Tonkin Liberal government in South Australia. I must say, though, that it has not led to the economic outcomes that many at the time thought it would. I often question myself on why this is and why, in fact, it has not run closer to its productive capacity. I think, maybe, what I have to say in the rest of this address may come to those points but I think it's more to do with community ownership than native title. But, like elsewhere, with the APY lands it is very important that Aboriginal owners of land are able to utilise their assets properly. I think Noel Pearson has had much to say on this issue in Queensland, where he believes that the native title owners, the owners of the land, should be able to get and develop the land in the way that they see fit so they can benefit from it.

As we strive for reconciliation, it's important, too, that the Indigenous corporations that own much of Australia properly manage their assets. The Indigenous Land Corporation and Indigenous Business Australia have accumulated millions of acres and millions of dollars worth of assets, and they are the tools to success. But we need those corporations to insist that their assets are operated at least at industry average and aim for industry best. Sadly, I must say, in many cases, these assets are not. I think both IBA and ILC need to really up the ante on those people who are occupying those lands, leasing those lands and using those infrastructure items, to make sure that they are delivering what they should deliver. Lowering the bar of expectation when it comes to Indigenous Australia is an insult. We all need to insist on industry best practice.

In my opinion, the biggest unresolved issue, when it comes to land ownership for Indigenous people on Indigenous lands, is home ownership. As I said, it's not so much native title; it's more about the community title and the fact that the community title precludes individual ownership of houses. For most of us, a home is the biggest single purchase of our lives. It's the biggest financial commitment of our lives, it's the biggest financial motivator of our lives, and, importantly, it's the biggest source of collateral in our lives. So an owner of a

house—most people in this chamber are—can borrow money against that asset and launch off into business prospects, launch off into bettering their lot. That can't happen on remote Indigenous lands under community title. You can't borrow money from the bank. You can't buy a block of land and borrow money or earn money, build a house and pay off the house. It just can't be done.

In April last year Noel Pearson wrote: 'Housing in Aboriginal communities is the central problem of passive welfare.' To explain that—these are my words—it is because that land ownership model is almost exclusively occupied by public rental housing. Noel Pearson is right. This is what is holding back so much of Indigenous Australia. With but a few exceptions, remote Aboriginal housing is constructed by outsiders and the designated tenants have no role in their construction. Despite houses being built to an ever higher standard, they still have a much shorter useful life than houses in the mainstream, in the outside world. Noel Pearson says in the same article:

Most people think that over-crowding is the main issue. For me the urgent problem of over-crowding (which certainly does depreciate the housing stock) is still second to a more important problem: how do we get skin in the game on the part of the people who live in these houses?

He writes:

Tenancy, no matter how well managed by a landlord, is a form of skin in the game, but it is limited. You just don't get the same pride, the same sense of responsibility and, yes, financial self-interest that ownership gives.

Later on in the article Pearson writes:

Homeowners know that if they abuse their houses, they will have to pay for the maintenance. Homeowners know that if they plant trees and maintain their gardens, it is theirs. They know that the home which they look after with pride is the home they are likely to leave to their children.

He is right. He is absolutely right. For Indigenous communities with common ownership, it is unfortunately an impossible dream. So while this bill today is about sensible compromise, it's about the Northern Territory; about the seeding of land rights over a certain area for compensation in another. It is still not happening in so much of the Indigenous community where we need to come to a sensible solution with housing.

Not long ago, I visited the house of a young Aboriginal leader in one of my communities—a homeland community. In fact, he did own the house in this particular case. He said, 'My grandfather built it and it's consequently not owned by the South Australian Housing Trust.' It is owned by him. He's a descendant of his grandfather and it's owned by him, and he takes great pride in it. But it is the only house on that homeland that is owned by an individual. I can't think of another one anywhere else, so it's bit of a one-off. But you can see what a difference it makes. It's important in his life. It's important to him that his grandfather built the house. So I just fear that the current model that we have right across is holding people and communities back.

In fact, the only way an Indigenous person from a remote community can ever hope to own their house is to move out of it, move out of their community and go to a mainstream community where they can buy a house, where they can buy a block of land, where they can borrow money, where they can reinvest in their assets, where they can use those assets to lever off other things in their life. But if they want to stay in their home communities, they can't. It's a separate way of dealing with them in Australia, and I don't think it's right.

Sometimes I get asked by people, 'Why doesn't government fix it?' In this particular case, governments could fix it but only if it were at the insistence of those who own the land. The people who have the community title own the keys to the land. They need to make these decisions. If they want it fixed, we can fix it. But they hold the veto, and they need to bring their communities together and come up with that conclusion and come up with a model. I'm not prescriptive about the model. Certainly you don't want a model where these houses can then be sold to any outsider in Australia; that would be a bad outcome. So it's something that they are going to have to come up with and then put to governments and say, 'How about you back us in on this?'

When I speak to community elders about this, they are supportive of the concept but they don't seem to show much interest in actually making it happen. As a member of parliament I can't make it happen for them. I don't want to be put into a position where I'm trying to force them to a place they don't want to go. I hope they can look at it, listen to what Noel Pearson has to say and realise this is a way of enabling their communities, of making them stronger and making them more like mainstream communities, if you like.

So, in the way that that relates to the bill, it's common sense. That's what it is. I think anyone that looks at this issue would think that that outcome is common sense. The outcome of this bill today is common sense. It's common sense over a whole lot of different emotions. They've come to a sensible outcome. I'd like to see that happening with remote housing. We can move that part of Australia into the 21st century.

Ms BURNEY (Barton) (18:41): I rise to support the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment Bill 2018 and the second reading amendment moved by the member for Lingiari, whose speech I listened to. It is very clear to me that the member for Lingiari has a very deep understanding of the importance of this piece of legislation and, importantly, an incredibly deep understanding of the concept of land when it comes to First Nations people, which, of course, is a very important thing to understand, as it underpins the very nature of this piece of legislation.

The concept of landownership to First Nations peoples is very different to the concept of ownership in the broader Australian community. When I am speaking to young people in schools, I often explain to them that the ownership of land is different. The way that I describe it is: 'The land is your mother and you wouldn't hurt your mother, would you? You wouldn't throw rubbish at her, you wouldn't hurt her or make her sad or upset.' Of course, little kids go, 'Well, of course we wouldn't!' That's very much the way in which I try and impart the importance of land, our mother who gives birth to you, and it's important to understand this when we're talking about this piece of legislation.

The Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 sets out a scheme for the claiming, granting, control and management of Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory. The schedules in this bill set out what pieces of land we're actually talking about: Kakadu, Urapunga, Anthony Lagoon and others that I'm sure the member for Lingiari has referred to. It's important that we understand that there is an enormous amount of legislation that has been introduced in this House, and much of it will not be dealt with in the course of the life of the present government before we move to caretaker and election mode. But this, as the member for Lingiari has pointed out, I know is one piece of legislation that we do have to deal with

because it involves the handing back of particularly significant pieces of land to Aboriginal communities.

I note from my reading of the bill a couple of days ago in relation to Kakadu—I'm not quite sure if it refers to the other pieces of land—that it's a lease back arrangement so that everyone can enjoy that remarkable piece of Australia. This joint ownership, for want of a better term, is, of course, the model that's used at Uluru and in a number of other places as well, as with one of the big national parks in the very west of the state of New South Wales. It's really important because it means that whilst land is transferred to First Nations communities, it is recognised that in some instances joint ownership can be established.

This bill provides mechanisms for granting land to traditional owners, and, as I said, this bill adds areas subject to traditional land claims in Kakadu, Urapunga and Anthony Lagoon. This bill strengthens the recognition of traditional lands, and I have spoken about the importance of lands and what it means in terms of Aboriginal culture. I think the other thing that's really important is that the shape and the concept and the laws in those lands come from Aboriginal spirituality—what people might refer to as the Dreaming—and that makes these laws and these concepts of land incredibly ancient; more ancient than anywhere else on this blue planet. For me, that's a really important point that brings Australia together. I say to people that this is not just my culture; this is not just for the purview of Aboriginal people. This is the heritage and the inheritance of all of us that share Australia as home, and I think that's really important.

In the significance of land in acknowledging country, we acknowledge the truth of this land as well: that this was and always will be Aboriginal land. And there is nothing to fear in the broader Australian community from that very statement of fact. When you think of human occupation in Australia, which goes back—well, we've dated it to 60,000 years, and we know that it's much older than that, and that will come out over time. What an incredible inheritance for all of us. What a wonderful, wonderful thing that we in this nation can say is part of our background and part of our traditions. I think it's a great gift to all of us in this country.

For 60,000 years, First Nations people lived harmoniously with the land and the sea. I will never forget, as a young Aboriginal woman, going out to Brewarrina. I'd never seen the fish traps at Brewarrina on the—Barwon? I think the Barwon is the river that runs through Brewarrina—it's probably not running very much at the moment. And it just bowled me over because it said—and I'd never really thought it very much before—that these are man-made structures that are tens of thousands of years old that still work today in terms of trapping the fish in that part of the world. And they are such a marvel to see, and still intact.

This land, of course, is the source of life, culture and spirit. The *Bringing them home* report, which I just spoke about in the Federation Chamber, was such an important report for all of us in this country. For me, the *Bringing them home* report was the report into the stolen generations but it actually drew a line in the sand where no-one in this country could say anymore, 'I didn't know the history.' It was a remarkable point in terms of doing that but it also gave us the recommendations that led, of course, to the apology and all that flowed from that. But the *Bringing them home* report did something else: it talked about the connection between land, family, identity and biology, and there were no other reports that had done that previously. We had previous to the *Bringing them home* report, of course, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which was also groundbreaking because that

for the first time looked at the circumstances and life experiences of those deaths that were examined in that report. This connection of family, identity, biology and land is vital, and it is because of this link that the full Federal Court concluded that the only persons entitled to claim native title are those who can show biological descent from the Indigenous peoples entitled to enjoy the land under the law and customs of their own clan or group.

With the land came unique and secret traditions known only by members of the traditional community, practised for generations. It is really difficult to articulate the significance and importance that land represents to First Nations peoples, and the way in which the land determines how we act, how we treat each other, how we treat other people and, in fact, how the land itself was formed. It is really important to understand that. I've often spoken to, again, small children about—you have the creation stories within the Bible—the Dreaming stories, which are also creation stories and just as important, just as significant. You can just see the penny drop when you explain it in that way.

I'm not going to mention everything in the bill—I know the member for Lingiari and other members have spoken about it—but I will talk about Kakadu. This bill will add areas subject to land claims in Kakadu. I know that's incredibly important. The traditional owners of Kakadu are the Bininj people and the—how do you say that, Member for Lingiari?

Mr Snowden: Mirarr.

Ms BURNEY: Mirarr people. There are a number of clan groups within the Kakadu area. This is a complex system of kinship, and, of course, it is also where there is a large gathering every year of many peoples from across this country. It determines this kinship system of how people relate to each other and how they relate to the land. It also goes to issues of the totem system, and that refines your personal responsibilities as a First Nations person to parts of the land and animals living on that land.

In 1981, Kakadu National Park was inscribed on the World Heritage List. I'm not sure if many people have been there but it is just a spectacular place. It is subject to eight other international agreements, which function to protect, through our international obligations, the diverse wildlife which exists in the 683,000 hectares of Kakadu.

The bill also adds areas in the town of Urapunga that are subject to the Township of Urapunga Indigenous Land Use Agreement. The Urapunga community is located in the Roper Bar region on traditional lands, of course. Anthony Lagoon is also specifically mentioned in the schedule of the bill. The bill adds areas subject to traditional land claims in Anthony Lagoon, the site of one of our largest cattle stations, located in the Barkly Tablelands—home of the Warumungu people. These lands are among some of the most culturally significant lands for First Nations people.

I do briefly want to speak on the second reading amendment moved by my colleague the member for Lingiari. It is indeed disappointing that this bill was passed 12 months ago and is only being considered before this parliament now. Despite the bipartisan support that has been given to this bill, the government has failed to pass it until today. Traditional owners deserve to have their claims settled in a timely fashion. Justice delayed is justice denied. In many ways, the government dragging its feet on this bill seems to sum up the government's attitude towards First Nations affairs and its agenda for First Nations affairs—half-hearted, lethargic and underwhelming.

Labor is genuinely committed to a sincere and equal partnership with First Nation Australians. For too long First Nations people have been legislated to and not legislated with, which is why we are so supportive of establishing a constitutionally recognised voice to the parliament. This is a fundamental philosophical difference between us and the government. If we want to genuinely heal the injustices of the past, the answers will be found in listening to First Nations people.

In closing, I'll just reiterate the points that I have made. Labor will support this bill. We want to see these hand backs happen. We want to see the processes that will take place once the hand backs happen. And I reiterate once again: there is nothing to fear from this kind of legislation. It is inclusive, it's embrative and it is also doing the right thing by First Nations Australians.

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (18:54): I rise to speak on the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment Bill 2018. This bill sets out a scheme for the claim, grant, control and management of Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory. It is extremely important legislation. This is a very historic act. As the member for Lingiari mentioned a little while ago, almost 50 per cent of the Northern Territory is Aboriginal land under this act. It is very important that the history be known, and no-one knows that history better than the member for Lingiari and the people who have been involved in the land rights campaign over decades, so I won't recount that but simply refer you to his speech.

The amendments in the bill we are considering today—and I do note that it's taken some time to get here and it shouldn't have taken this long—do four things. I will just mention those before making some other comments about the bill's importance and what the amendments will mean for people in the Northern Territory. They add parcels of land within Kakadu National Park, the township of Urapunga and Anthony Lagoon station to schedule 1 of the act, enabling them to be granted as Aboriginal land. They make the Kakadu grants conditional upon the Aboriginal landowners leasing the land to the Director of National Parks so that it continues to be part of Kakadu National Park. This will not affect the park's operations, as all areas of Kakadu National Park are already co-managed with traditional owners, and the grants and associated leaseback are anticipated in the park's management plan. They resolve issues connected with the separate corporate identity of the Director of National Parks and the Crown. The director holds land interests in national parks separate from the Crown's interests. They also repeal some redundant references to Kakadu in other parts of the act. It is important to note that the amendments in the bill are supported by both the Northern Territory government and the Northern Land Council.

The bill is a further positive step in resolving longstanding land claims, which has been a bipartisan commitment of Labor and coalition governments. In the second reading speech to the bill, the government committed to finalising land claims in the Northern Territory which have remained unresolved for decades, and we support that commitment. This bill is clearly of significance to the future of Kakadu as a national park and for the traditional owners, the Mirarr people, and the other people who live there.

About 2,000 people lived in the Kakadu area before the arrival of non-Aboriginal people, and I recommend to people listening: if you want to see how people lived before non-Europeans arrived, then, when you go to Kakadu, go up to a place called Burrungkuy, formerly known as Nourlangie Rock. I first went there in about 1986 and I recently took my

family there, so it was a bit like completing the circle. My mum and dad took me there all those years ago—a short period really, relative to how long the Mirarr people have been there. To visit this incredible place, where there is a cave where people have, over generations and generations, prepared food, had festivals and performed rituals, is really an experience that every Australian should have. There are about 500 Aboriginal people living in about 18 outstations these days, and they're dotted throughout the park.

It goes without saying that Kakadu has huge cultural significance for the traditional owners. But I also wanted to say in my contribution that it has huge significance for people in my electorate. It has great environmental, economic and tourism importance for Darwin, for Palmerston and for the whole Northern Territory, and for the nation as a whole. I was very pleased to be with the Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten; the member for Lingiari, NT senator Malarndirri McCarthy; and others when we were recently in Kakadu, with the Mirarr people, announcing \$220 million in infrastructure and community development projects to dramatically improve Kakadu National Park as a tourist destination and to secure the future of the township of Jabiru.

I just want to again stress how important this commitment is not only to Kakadu and Jabiru but also to the Northern Territory and to our nation: \$100 million of this commitment will upgrade key access roads; \$44 million is for environmental and national park infrastructure upgrades; \$25 million is for a new Kakadu visitor and World Heritage interpretive centre in Jabiru; and \$2.5 million to improve mobile connectivity in the park so that people can get their Instagram photos out and share those with people around the world, which will in turn drive further interest so that people from all over the world will come to the park.

In fact, if I may, I just would suggest to anyone listening to that who wants to have any idea about how beautiful this place is, if they haven't been, to go to my Instagram, which is @topendgoz. Flick down through about 20 or 30 photos or so, and what I've put in there is a short video that I took at Burrungkuy, formerly Nourlangie Rock, of a small waterfall. Apparently these days 'calm' is something that people get into. You watch a little video of a waterfall, and it makes you calm. I have just put 45 seconds in there. If you can watch that and not be calmed, then I will be very surprised. There's another photo on there that's another cracker, and it's out on Yellow Water. You can see prehistoric crocodiles. You can see the most incredible wildlife and bird life. To go on a cruise of Yellow Water is to see something really, really incredible. I recommend that people get out there and have a look.

I want to just thank everyone who has taken part in the forums that we've held on tourism in the Northern Territory and who pushed so hard for this commitment to the future of Kakadu and Jabiru. Even as recently as yesterday, I was receiving feedback from one of my constituents—actually, he's a constituent of the member for Lingiari. Rob Wesley-Smith was giving me more and more feedback about how Kakadu can be improved. I say to Rob Wesley-Smith: a lot of your concerns will be met by our federal Labor commitment. That is being made not as some gammon, over-10-years commitment but—as the Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, said—from our first budget. There's a big difference. It's an important difference. We need this commitment now.

Kakadu and the other locations mentioned in this schedule have been cared for by the Aboriginal custodians for tens of thousands of years. If you want to see spectacular scenery and a pristine environment that has immense cultural value to our nation and to our planet,

then do yourself a favour: book a trip and get up there to Kakadu. I just want to, in closing, congratulate everyone who has worked on making these amendments come to fruition. It is a shame that it has taken this long. But, now that it's done, it is a wholly good thing, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to make the commitments to Kakadu a reality.

Mr WYATT (Hasluck—Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health) (19:04): I would like to thank members for their contributions to this debate on the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment Bill 2018. The bill amends legislation and repeals redundant legislation. The bill adds areas subject to four traditional land claims in the Kakadu region of the Northern Territory to schedule 1 of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 so the land can be granted as Aboriginal land. It also provides for the leaseback of the land to the Director of National Parks and for the repeal of the provisions of the land rights act made redundant by the bill.

The bill also adds land that was subject to a successful native title application in the Roper River region of the Northern Territory to schedule 1 of the land rights act so that the land can be granted as Aboriginal land. Scheduling of the land is consistent with the terms of the Township of Urapunga Indigenous Land Use Agreement executed by the native title parties and the Northern Territory government.

In addition, the bill adds land that is associated with the settlement of the Anthony Lagoon area land claim to schedule 1 of the land rights act so the land can be granted as Aboriginal land. Scheduling of the land is consistent with the terms of the Anthony Lagoon area land claim No. 74 deed of settlement executed by the parties associated with the land claim and the Northern Territory government.

The amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 will enable the finalisation of five longstanding Aboriginal land claims and a native title settlement in the Northern Territory.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Lingiari has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The immediate question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Question negatived.

Original question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr WYATT (Hasluck—Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health) (19:07): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Treasury Laws Amendment (Increasing the Instant Asset Write-Off for Small Business Entities) Bill 2019**Second Reading**

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms MADELEINE KING (Brand) (19:08): I rise in this place to offer my support for the passage of the Treasury Laws Amendment (Increasing the Instant Asset Write-Off for Small Business Entities) Bill 2019. But, in so doing, I would like to move the following amendment. I move:

That all words after "That" be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House:

- (1) affirms the importance of encouraging small business to make new capital investments; and
- (2) notes that the Opposition's Australian Investment Guarantee is permanent, will provide targeted tax relief for businesses that invest in Australia and Australians, and guarantees new investment".

I'm really pleased to be here tonight and see this great Labor initiative debated in the House, and pleased that small businesses across the country will continue to benefit from it. Labor is proudly supporting this bill. Labor understands the importance of these types of measures to small business. In essence, this bill will give effect to the government's announcement earlier this year that it would extend the instant asset write-off for another 12 months and increase the relevant threshold from \$20,000 to \$25,000. It's really terrific to see the Liberal Party and the National Party once again taking up sound Labor policy in favour of small businesses in this country.

As we know, it was the Australian Labor Party who first legislated for an expanded instant asset write-off from the \$6,500 threshold in 2012. It was actually the member for Lilley, the then Treasurer, who championed this initiative. On very brief indulgence from the Speaker, I'd like to give my humblest best wishes to the current member for Lilley in his retirement. Anyone who knows the member for Lilley will tell you that it will not be a quiet one. He is the stalwart of Labor and the Labor movement as a whole, a fearless fighter for equality, and an intelligent, hopeful and feeling human being. I feel extremely lucky to have had the opportunity to serve in this House alongside the great Wayne Swan in this parliament. Quite frankly, coming to this parliament, I didn't expect to ever serve in a chamber with this great Labor Treasurer of ours. I'm entirely honoured, Wayne, and I will miss you here. I think all of us parliamentarians, especially newer parliamentarians, can learn from the likes of our elders, so to speak, like the member for Lilley and others right across the chamber. I really am grateful to the member for Lilley for carrying on in opposition and lending his wisdom to some of our newer members. Good luck, El Presidente, comrade. We will see you again, of course, in your role as the National President of the Australian Labor Party.

As I've said, it was Wayne Swan and Labor that first legislated the instant asset write-off in 2012. The coalition subsequently abolished the instant asset write-off, returning it to a \$1,000 threshold, before reintroducing an expanded instant asset write-off with a \$20,000 threshold in 2015. The government has since renewed it in 2017, 2018 and again now in 2019. Labor supported the original measure, supported its two previous renewals and will support this one today. Labor has always been a friend of small business, and it's great to see the government

coming to the table again this week and following Labor's lead on helping foster the growth of Australia's small-business sector. That's because we on this side of the House know—Labor knows—that small-business owners and workers in this country are doing it tough. Everything is going up except wages. We know that the people who run small businesses and work in them are the salt of the earth. They're hardworking Australians.

I'm proud to have grown up in a small business. My mother, Diana—I know I've mentioned this before—owned a local drapery store in Railway Terrace in Rockingham. After kindergarten or after school, that's what you did: you got picked up—maybe picked up a little bit late—and ended up hanging out in the shop counting buttons, doing the stocktake or doing some other task that one hated as a seven-year-old. But, nonetheless, that's part of working in a small business and having your parents—my mother and my grandmother—running it. At that time, it was just simply part of our life.

But you also get the great benefit of realising what it is that small business provides to the family that operates it. Not only is it income; it's the community that comes with it—the community that went into that shop and the community of shop owners around our shop. They were important friends for many years. I run into people in Denmark, for goodness sake, who used to own the Foodland next to my mum's shop in Rockingham, and they always remember Diana Morris and her shop, the little drapery store, The Family Traders, in Rocko. It's a lived experience and one I'm very proud to have lived. Although, obviously, my mother, if she watches this, will be mortified because I never said I enjoyed it when I was a child. But, as you grow older, you realise the hard work your parents do, of course.

In this business, there's no clocking off. There's no 'nine to five to make a living' work. Small-business owners and many of the people that work for them put their hearts and souls into their work, into their businesses. It's their dream—there's no doubt about it—and they live their dream because they have to make it work for their families and for their hearts. It's what they do. They take all their work home with them—the worries don't end on the weekends.

Family- and small-business owners make many sacrifices to keep their businesses running. If they're short-staffed, someone's had an accident or there's an unforeseen absence from the workplace, it's often, of course, the small-business owner themselves, or their families, who have to fill in on short notice. It's the small- and family-business owners who miss out on the assemblies or school excursions, because, as the kids know, they can't necessarily get away from the shop for whatever reason that may be. That's a very common occurrence. It's small-business owners that can't necessarily get to the kids' footy, netball or hockey on a Saturday morning because they're at work and they might not have the opportunity or they might not have any employees at all—that's just the day they work and these are the things they sometimes have to miss out on. On top of that cost, of course, small-business owners take huge financial risks to support their businesses. Often times their own family homes are at stake if the business goes south, and it's barriers such as home ownership and a lack of access to capital which may lock many protected business owners out of the market altogether.

It's these factors that do, of course, make me and everyone on this side of the House, and, in fact, the whole chamber, empathise with the budgetary stresses of running a small business. While some may choose to use this as an excuse for loosening some industrial relations laws, I really can't agree with that. But I can see how in frustration these views can foster and,

sadly, fester. That's why the antiphoenixing legislation that has been talked about in this place is particularly important, because all small businesses deserve to operate on a level playing field. No small-business owner deserves to have another small-business owner cheating and not playing by the rules, and, therefore, getting an unfair advantage over others, and it's an important reform that I know will come before this House.

Many small- and family-business owners continue, despite what you might read. They're the ones that are fighting for a fair go for workers. They support a fair day's pay for a fair day's work in the form of penalty rates in this country and many other workplace conditions, and their support for this must be commended. It's not penalty rates but there's a lot of support in the small-business community for domestic violence leave. I know this because they speak to me about it. Of course, small-business owners are very close to their employees, being the nature of that business, and often don't need to be asked to give their workers leave to deal with what can be a really confronting situation for an employee. They just do it as a matter of course.

I'd like to commend one of the small businesses in my electorate, the Waterfront News Gifts and Lottery Centre, which is on the Rockingham Beach Foreshore. It's an excellent example of the hardworking, fair and quintessentially Australian spirit of the small family business. Before the attack on penalty rates was confirmed by this government in 2016, when it was just a threat, I spoke to the owner of this newsagency, Dave Mews, and he said that he couldn't imagine not paying his staff penalty rates on Sundays or public holidays. He just wouldn't cop the argument that it was to protect small-business owners. As he said to me: 'These people relying on penalties rates could be the small-business owners of tomorrow. They make sacrifices, working antisocial hours and on holidays, and they deserve to be remunerated for this.'

He was right to observe that penalty rates are entirely predictable for any business. We know when Sunday is—it happens every Sunday. We know when public holidays are—they happen as gazetted on the public-holiday list. These are the costs of running a business. Small businesses, in my experience—actually legitimate small businesses with a good business model—build penalty rates, always have, into their business plan and their costs. They build it into the cost of their coffee or the cost of whatever service they provide, because it is utterly predictable when they will have to pay penalty rates. To say it's some kind of shock and to then get rid of it and deny many thousands of workers across Australia those payments is immoral and it shouldn't happen, and I look forward to the day, perhaps in the future, when we can restore the penalty rates of those many thousands of workers across the country. So I want to thank Dave Mews for his insight many months ago—a year and a half ago, in fact—about this. I really haven't forgotten his compassion and his fairness to his workers and workers in the sector that he operates.

This is a typical sentiment of these salt-of-the-earth small- and family-business owners in this country. It's great to see them rewarded in this place with an increase in the threshold for the instant asset write-off scheme that we're talking about today. Of course, this bill's not the only win we've seen for small businesses this week. As we know, the government did a spectacular yet welcomed backflip on Monday and passed Labor's 'access to justice' amendment, and I commend them on it. I note no-one spoke on small business in that debate but I'm sure they'll speak tonight. That 'access to justice' amendment ensures a level playing

field in the case of anticompetitive behaviour by big business. It's a move that will mean that businesses will be able to request a no adverse cost order—so literally lowering their access to justice in the courts when they are suffering from anticompetitive behaviour from big business.

I commend former senator Katy Gallagher, who I hope will join us shortly in the other place; the shadow Treasurer and his team; and the shadow Assistant Treasurer, the member for Fenner, for his great work in getting this reform finally through the parliament after it was announced by the member for Greenway in the 2016 election campaign. So Labor is the supporter of small business, has been for many years and will continue to fight and continue to drag the government to this very important reform.

Today's bill, which seeks to increase the instant asset write-off to \$25,000, is yet another win for small business this week. My amendment refers to Labor's intention to make it permanent, rather than just making it year on year on year on year and the consequent uncertainty that comes with that. It is good to get rid of that uncertainty, and that is what Labor is committed to doing. In addition to these measures, Labor is also offering a superior tax policy for businesses, including small business, through the Australian Investment Guarantee. When it comes to small business, whether you vote Labor or Liberal or National, the taxation of small business will be the same with the one exception—that is, we support the Australian Investment Guarantee. Labor will bring that in should we be fortunate enough to be elected to the Treasury benches.

While there's not a breadth of difference between Labor and the government on taxes for small business, the principal difference at the moment is in relation to the Australian Investment Guarantee, announced last year. It will allow businesses to deduct up-front 20 per cent off all new investments, with the remaining amount depreciated in line with normal depreciation schedules. Assets such as machinery, plant and equipment—for example, things like trucks or utes—and intangible investments such as patents and copyrights will be eligible for the immediate deduction.

This investment guarantee promotes investment in local economies, which is very important—as many people in this House will know—in regional areas, where we have so many vendors of heavy machinery and not so heavy machinery that go on to the rural properties and farms all around this country. Like the access to justice policy that the Nationals waived through the government party room—however they manage things—I hope that they do consider the benefits to the Australian Investment Guarantee and maybe push their coalition colleagues, the Liberal Party, to support it, and we can get another win for small business in the chamber before we finish our grand total of 10 parliament sitting days this year; I think we have six left. So if the Nationals could get on to that, I would be grateful. I am sure all the small businesses in this country would thank them for that.

The investment guarantee is well targeted, fully funded, cost-effective, fiscally responsible and funded by Labor's reforms to the tax system. I want to make it clear to everyone: under a Shorten Labor government, 99 per cent of businesses will receive a tax cut and no business will have its tax rate increased, and all business will be able to plan and invest with confidence and certainty.

The investment guarantee has received broad support across the country. Innes Willox, the chief executive of Ai Group, said:

The Investment Guarantee would provide a significant boost for businesses to invest particularly for longer-lived investments.

The proposed measure comes at a time when business investment, and particularly non-mining investment, has been slow to recover in recent years.

As a measure designed to lift investment, the Investment Guarantee would increase the stock of invested capital, boost the quantity of capital per worker, raise productivity and underwrite an acceleration of real wage growth.

That is an excellent third party endorsement of our policy.

Our good friends at the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry have also supported Labor's investment guarantee, with the national CEO, James Pearson, stating:

Business welcomes this commitment from the Opposition—it's good policy. What's particularly positive is the proposal to make this a permanent feature. This is important as policy certainty and policy consistency is critical for business.

That's great news that the Australian chamber supports Labor policy in this manner, and I hope the coalition government might think about supporting it as well.

The Australian Food & Grocery Council has said:

This initiative will go a long way to encouraging investment in high-tech and high-skilled projects to enhance efficiency and increase scale.

We're particularly supportive of the Australian Investment Guarantee's inclusiveness across the industry sector. The opportunity to use this Investment Guarantee towards energy saving projects is also very important.

That's another great third-party endorsement for Labor policy.

I would be remiss not to mention in this forum Peter Strong, CEO of the Council of Small Business Australia, who has said:

Labor's announcement is a welcome one as it would make it easier for Australian businesses to invest and grow. The fact that this measure is available to all businesses, big and small, is also very positive as it will help small businesses directly as well as encouraging larger businesses to invest in the products sold by small business.

He reflects my earlier sentiment about the importance of this investment guarantee in the regions, where there are smaller businesses supplying larger businesses and farms. There is broad industry support for Labor's policy, and, again, I hope the government might consider following our lead on this, as they have done many times in this House recently, and think about this as another policy to adopt, like the instant asset write-off. Maybe they will make that permanent. I certainly hope they'll think about it.

Labor is also committed to legislating a second ATO commissioner for appeals, which will be a great benefit to small business. It will ensure small businesses receive fair appeals processes when dealing with the tax office. Genuine concerns have been raised about engagement with small businesses facing tax disputes with the ATO. We have seen some pretty grim tales in the media about small businesses dealing with the tax office. There are good people in the tax office, of course, and it's a difficult job. But there has to be a real separation in the ATO between staff who make tax assessments and those who handle disputes and appeals. This is why we will seek to establish the new position of a second commissioner of appeals in the tax office. This is another idea I would offer to the coalition today. They might want to take that back to the party room next week—not next week; we

have to wait for those three days in April—and see if they want to help us protect small business and enable it to do fairly in any disputes with the ATO.

We're also keen to make unfair contract terms illegal and punishable with significant fines of up to \$10 million. We will expand the definition of small businesses eligible for protection from such unfair contract terms.

While I am given the chance to talk about Labor's policy on small businesses, one of the great challenges to the small businesses in this country is, of course, the state of the National Broadband Network. Labor has pledged to put in a service guarantee that will deliver greater protections for small businesses and consumers alike. The rise of e-commerce is a great change facing small business. It's exciting for us as consumers but it can be quite challenging for small businesses. Whilst challenging, the opportunities are vast. It enables businesses from around the world to be competitive in our Australian market and it opens opportunities for Australian businesses on the world stage and in international trade. It means that quality access to the internet and digital capabilities is paramount to the success of Australian small businesses. As we know, the NBN rollout under the coalition has been nothing short of a disaster. It's resulted in widespread delays. I know there's a pool shop, a small business, in Rockingham in my electorate that's running two contracts with two different providers because they can't seem to get hold of the NBN adequately. We are trying to help them, of course, but that's exactly the kind of problem this service guarantee is designed to address by making sure small businesses are guaranteed the service they paid for.

I know we're coming up soon to the adjournment. Sorry to the member for Dunkley; I will save you the 30-second break in your speech, which is great for me because I'm more than happy to speak for a bit longer about small business. We know it's the backbone of Australia's economy. It employs many, many people around the country. It employs whole families. People who work in small business are family. I reflected on my mother's shop the other day. We still see some of the people that used to work there on a Saturday morning at the drapery store. They have been firm family friends since that time and will remain so until their time comes to an end. That's what small businesses are about; they work for the community, they work for each other, and they form the community itself. Labor supports small business.

Debate interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER (19:30): It being 7:30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Australian Labor Party: Retiring Members

Mr DICK (Oxley) (19:30): As this parliament comes to an end, so it brings a number of members of this House, on both sides of the aisle, who have decided that now is the right time to finish their parliamentary careers. Tonight I'd like to pay tribute to some of these extraordinary people who have dedicated decades of their lives to improving the lives of Australians. Their service and sacrifice cannot be underestimated, nor should it be forgotten.

I particularly speak about Labor members of parliament on this side of the chamber who are retiring. In total, they represent around 95 years of service. I recognise the member for Canberra and the member for Melbourne Ports, and I know they will be giving their speeches a little later. But the first person I want to recognise is a lion of the Labor Party. He is a man

who has devoted his life to public service so that working Australians are given a fair go, so that families are given the support that they need to raise their children and so that multinational businesses pay their fair share of tax. He is someone who has spent his entire working life fighting inequality in all of its forms. The man is none other than the member for Lilley, my great friend Wayne Swan.

Wayne gave his valedictory speech in this House to sign off on a career in federal politics, where he's been working day in, day out for more than 24 years. One of the great things about Wayne is that he's the epitome of a marginal seat campaigner—I believe he is one of the greatest that this country has ever seen. He is also one of the longest-serving members of parliament from the great state of Queensland.

Make no mistake: the impact that Wayne Swan has left in this place, and, indeed, around the country, will be remembered for many generations to come. He was the Manager of Opposition Business in the House, the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party and the Treasurer of Australia. That came at a time of unprecedented uncertainty in financial markets, which later became known as the global financial crisis. As Treasurer, Wayne steered Australia through when almost every other advanced economy in the world went backwards. In stark contrast, not only did the Australian economy avoid a recession, a feat unmatched in the Western world, but our economy became the envy of the world. Wayne was rightly recognised by *Euromoney* in 2011 as the world's best Treasurer for his leadership through the global financial crisis, joining Paul Keating as the only Australians to receive this prestigious award. He also served as the 14th Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, under Julia Gillard, and will be remembered for his loyalty and perseverance during very tough times.

Prior to federal parliament, Wayne also helped to lead Labor through the wilderness, working as Wayne Goss's campaign director. This would lead Queensland Labor to victory at the 1989 state election, for a Goss Labor state government. Simply, Wayne shone a shining light on the darkness in Queensland that was the corrupt Bjelke-Petersen National Party government. While he might now be leaving the frontline of federal politics in this place, somehow I believe that he won't be leaving the national political stage. In his new role as the National President of the Labor Party, I know that he will continue to fight against inequality in this nation.

Wayne, thank you for your leadership, your guidance and, in particular, your mentorship of new members of this place. I know the member for Kingston is here. She is someone who has benefited from Wayne's wise advice and wise counsel, and, in particular, his support over many, many years. I know his successor, Anika Wells, if she is fortunate enough to have the opportunity to continue his hard work, will continue in that tradition.

The second member I would like to pay tribute to tonight is the member for Jagajaga, Jenny Macklin. After almost 23 years in federal politics, she is the longest-serving woman in the history of the House of Representatives. Jenny will leave a legacy in this place bigger than most. More than that, her legacy will be seen for many years to come through her many, many achievements serving the people of this country. Perhaps most significantly, she was a key driver of and the minister responsible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, established under the Gillard government. It is for this reason that millions of families, children and carers will be given the support they need to live fulfilling lives. I've seen this

firsthand in my community, with families and their children coming up to me and telling me what a difference the NDIS makes to their lives.

The member for Adelaide, in her speech yesterday, commented about her achievements. I know the people of South Australia will miss her contribution, as will many of us. In her valedictory speech yesterday, Kate implored more women to be involved in our national politics. She said:

... do it because you will never regret it, just as I do not regret a single day that I've spent here.

We thank them for their service. I honour them tonight and recognise their contribution to this nation.

O'Connor Electorate: Welfare Reform

Mr RICK WILSON (O'Connor) (19:35): I rise tonight to update the House on the cashless debit card trial outcomes we're seeing in the Goldfields region in my electorate of O'Connor. In December last year, our government announced its intention to extend this trial until 30 June 2020. I stand here today to categorically state that the Goldfields trial is working. Children are being better fed and clothed, and the participants say that they are now able to budget and save. Reductions in alcohol related crime and family violence have been reported by police, medical and social support agencies. The University of Adelaide has been collating baseline data on the Goldfields trial but, unfortunately, this has not yet been published. The last ORIMA evaluation was released in August 2017 but it only provided feedback on the Ceduna and East Kimberley trial sites.

The Goldfields trial rollout began in March 2018, and over 3,000 participants were activated over the ensuing months. Participants were roughly 50 per cent Indigenous and 50 per cent non-Indigenous working-age welfare recipients, and, for the first time, the trial included disability support pensioners and carers. This is what makes our Goldfields trial unique—it has the most diverse participants to date. I firmly believe that extending the Goldfields cashless debit card trial beyond July 2019 is essential. It will allow time for the collection and processing of meaningful data to provide the most comprehensive evaluation of the cashless debit card to date.

Meanwhile, on the ground in the Goldfields, we have just come through what is traditionally the most challenging time of the year for social unrest and law and order. Every summer there is an influx of people into towns like Leonora and Laverton and the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. This year, it was apparent that these transient visitors, who are not on the card, were responsible for much of the alcohol related social unrest, violence and crime. It is for this reason many of the Goldfields leaders are calling to expand the cashless debit card trial to include neighbouring communities. Before the Christmas period, we had promising police reports from the Goldfields. In Laverton, assaults were down by 32 per cent. In Leonora, burglaries and property related crime had significantly reduced and overall crime was down by 42 per cent. Meanwhile, the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder was experiencing some of the lowest incidents of burglaries, assaults and domestic violence in many years, with overall crime rates down 22 per cent in the last half of 2018.

During the last nine months, I've met countless people who've told me that the card has helped turn their life around. Participants have recounted spending less money on drinking, gambling and drugs and more money on the necessities of life. One parent told me of taking

their child to McDonald's for their first birthday party ever. I also refer to Nichole, a young disability support pensioner, who only this morning updated me saying that she'd not only saved enough money to move out of home but she'd joined a gym, had lost 10 kilos and was feeling fantastic.

Despite all these positives, on 23 January opposition leader Bill Shorten was reported on the front page of the *Kalgoorlie Miner* as saying that, if elected, he would shut down all the cashless debit card programs. Mr Shorten, I invite you, along with other Labor and Greens members and senators, to come to O'Connor—and I extend that invitation to the member for Mayo, who's in the chamber tonight—to meet with those in the Goldfields whose lives are improving thanks to this card. I invite you to talk to civic leaders, Aboriginal elders, support service providers, disability advocates, local businesses, schools and families, who are all seeing the benefits of the cashless debit card in their communities. Please come to the Goldfields and see for yourself.

People are settling into life on the card, and the positive changes are gathering momentum. The Goldfields now has a great opportunity to break the cycle of welfare dependency, alcohol abuse and decades of intergenerational disadvantage. I reiterate that the cashless debit card alone will not fix everything, and I do credit state and local government agencies for responding with increased policing and community safety plans. For my part, I'll continue to call for services which complement the cashless debit card, like the financial capability and wellbeing service recently contracted to Centrecare. I would also like to see better coordination of the plethora of existing services to avoid the duplication of some services and to prevent gaps in others.

In the case of people trying to kick their addictions, I'm on the record as a firm supporter of Goldfields Rehabilitation Services Inc. Most recently, I wrote to the state health minister, calling for mental health commission funding to run their rehabilitation program at the full 18-bed capacity and to operate their newly completed four-bed medical detoxification facilities. I will continue to do my very best to support card participants, and I will fight for the extension of what I firmly believe is a successful cashless debit card trial in the Goldfields.

Mayo Electorate: Health Care

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (19:40): There is a well known quote:

You can have all the riches and success in the world, but if you don't have your health, you have nothing.

Survey responses in my community show that health is the most important issue to us. More than 5,000 people have responded to my survey over my time as the member for Mayo in this parliament, and health is our No. 1 priority. I have repeatedly campaigned for greater access to affordable health care in Mayo. I have worked with the community to secure expanded headspace mental health centres for our young people, a Medicare-rebate-eligible MRI service, 24-hour doctor service at our Mount Barker hospital and a Medicare service counter at Victor Harbor.

I've had many successes. But the lack of renal dialysis service in the Adelaide Hills was a problem that I was determined to resolve. The lack of dialysis services has had a profound impact on the families in my electorate who grapple with the physical, emotional and

financial burden of travelling to and from metropolitan dialysis services. Many of these people are not eligible for the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme. However, today Country Health has finally recognised the urgent need for a renal dialysis service in the Adelaide Hills; something I have campaigned on for over two years. Country Health will shortly place three dialysis chairs at the Mount Barker District Soldiers' Memorial Hospital. They will be co-located within the chemotherapy unit. Up to 12 patients will now be able to access dialysis service, saving these patients and their families at least 1,872 trips to Adelaide each and every year. This is just fantastic news for our community and will make a very real difference to those families.

However, we cannot rest. We always need to make sure we futureproof our health services, and the next priority is to upgrade the Mount Barker hospital emergency department. Local health professionals tell me that the emergency department is fast approaching the end of its life and will simply not be fit for purpose within 12 months, with the limited physical space already impacting on service delivery. For example, there are not enough consulting rooms. The resuscitation room is too small. The number of beds in the department should be doubled. The population in Mount Barker is currently 36,000 and is set to grow to over 56,000 by 2036—not far away for such a significant increase. With hospitals in our outer region such as Mount Pleasant and Strathalbyn reducing their emergency services, the pressure on Mount Barker hospital is immense and will only continue to grow as more and more people are forced to travel from the smaller satellite towns.

Providing health services to our region will often come at a disproportionately high financial cost due to smaller populations. But this should not justify the removal, reduction or refusal of essential services to those living outside of the metropolitan area. Rural health matters, and that is why earlier this month I wrote to the state health minister, the Hon. Steven Wade, to request that essential upgrades to the Mount Barker hospital emergency department be listed as a priority project, and one certainly worthy of the federal government's \$1.25 billion investment into regional hospital infrastructure through the federal government Community Health and Hospitals Program. The upgrade of the Mount Barker hospital emergency department already forms part of SA Health's 10-year local health plan for the Adelaide Hills between 2011 and 2020, and has the full support of the Mount Barker District Council. And I won't stop there. I will continue to campaign for a Medicare-rebate-eligible MRI licence in Victor Harbor and an increased number of ambulances to service our communities.

I will say that going hand in hand with health services are aged-care services. We need to make sure that Mayo, as the oldest electorate in South Australia, has enough aged-care services, both residential beds and care in the home. As I said, we need to plan for our future.

So I will continue to fight to make sure our health services are able to meet the growing demand and the growing need, that they are fit for purpose and that they enable our medical professionals to deliver the highest possible standard of care to our community now and into the future.

Economics Committee

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (19:44): The Goldstein electorate is one of people who are proud and who have stood on their own two feet, worked and sacrificed so that they can be independent at all stages of life. Yes, we have lots of entrepreneurs and young business

people who are making a wicket of it. They're going off; they might be getting educated and going into the professional services sector. We have a lot of people who create jobs and opportunities for other Australians so that they can realise their dreams too. We're a community of lifters.

Of course, one of the key reasons why people lift so hard for themselves and for others is so that they can be independent in their retirement. And one of the critical focuses of many of the constituents that I have the privilege to represent is that they want to be independent in retirement so they can make choices—so that they can make informed decisions about their future and so that they can make sure they stand on their own two feet.

This is one of the reasons why they are so angry about Labor's attempts to impose a retirement tax. What I hear all the time is, 'Oh, it's not a tax.' Well, I'm sorry—people need to go back and look at basic economics. A franking credit is a tax credit; that's all it is. It's a tax credit, tax paid; if you remove the credit, all you've got is tax paid. We have 11,000 constituents in the Goldstein electorate who are going to be impacted directly should there be a change in the law and, of course, many of them have a written to me and spoken to parliamentary committees or inquiries, or made submissions.

Take David, from Goldstein, who wrote in his submission: 'My wife and I set up our self-managed superannuation fund a decade ago. The franked dividends make up about one-third of our modest revenue from the fund. If we were not to receive the franked dividends our income would be inadequate for our modest lifestyle. I do not know how we would manage with this reduced income. It is totally unfair to suggest that this tax is reasonable, and we don't have the time or the resources to restructure.'

What we hear time and time again around the country is this story. Of course, it's matched only by the arrogance of the shadow Treasurer, who, when asked about the matter, said:

I say to your listeners, if they feel very strongly about this, if they feel that this is something which should impact on their vote, they are of course perfectly entitled to vote against us.

Now, that is, of course, true. And the good people of Goldstein always know that their federal representative is on their side and standing up for them, despite the attempts of others. But what makes me angry isn't just the imposition of this massive tax; it's the regressive nature of this tax—the deeply unjust and inequitable nature of this tax.

We just need to look at the analysis that was done by Plato Investments. They presented to the Economics Committee as part of the current inquiry. What did it show? People who have \$30,000 in income could be exposed to losing nearly a third of their income—a third! And yet, ironically, as you move further up the scale, you lose a smaller share of your return. This tax is a tax on the poor. Even worse than that, it disproportionately hits women, who retire on lower balances than men. It is just incredible to think that somebody could design a tax that seeks to push 85-year-olds down the financial stairs. This is disgraceful.

More than that, there are so many silent victims of this attempt at a tax rate. Go and talk to the families who make modest savings and investments to support their children with a disability so that they can be independent, should their parents face unfortunate circumstances. What we see all the time are people who have done the right thing to support themselves and their families, or, in some cases, others, who are going to suffer the direct impacts.

This election is going to be about this issue. It goes to the heart of the character of the country we are. And Labor is on the wrong side of it.

Racism

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (19:49): Today, in this parliament, the government and the opposition both spoke glowingly about our relationship with Israel on this, the 70th anniversary of Australia's formal diplomatic relationship with her. The Prime Minister referred to the 20th century horrors in Europe as part of the history of the establishment of modern Israel. I would hope that all Australian politicians have truly learned the lessons of those chapters of human history. But, unfortunately, I have to record that xenophobia and its ugly manifestation in the form of racism is something the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government has been far too willing to tolerate and, at times, to indulge.

Perhaps the Prime Minister and the members of this chaotic and increasingly desperate government have forgotten that many Jews only avoided death at the hands of the Nazis because they fled to this country and were granted asylum here. Those Jews, including my father, arrived on boats, seeking asylum. We've learnt, through immeasurable tragedy, that the base elements of human nature—fear and hatred—are not political playthings to be used for political ends. Racism is always a destructive force, and an unpredictable one. Those who think that racism can be let loose for a time, as if it were some obedient servant, and then safely put back in its bottle when it has served its political purpose are fools or worse.

For over 20 years, since the Racial Discrimination Act was enacted by the Keating government, section 18C has drawn the line against racial vilification and has protected citizens and our society from the poisonous effects of racist hate speech. At the same time, its companion provision, section 18D, has operated to provide extensive protections for freedom of speech. We on this side remember well when the then Prime Minister, the member for Warringah, launched an attack on 18C, claiming that these protections were somehow a threat to intellectual freedom in Australia. Seeking to justify giving a green light to racist hate speech, Attorney-General George Brandis infamously declared: 'People do have a right to be bigots, you know.' Labor stood with thousands of individuals, legal experts and community groups from across our nation to rally against this reckless ideological attack on section 18C, and we won. A second attempt by the Liberal government to gut these provisions also failed.

But tolerance of racism—and, worse, the nurturing of racist sentiment for political ends—under this government has continued to occur in many other ways. In January this year, a rally organised by neo-Nazis occurred in St Kilda. It was organised to coincide with the 100-year anniversary of the formation of the German Workers' Party, the predecessor to the Nazi Party, and it was attended, at taxpayers' expense, by Senator Anning. None of us have forgotten Senator Anning's willingness to invoke the Holocaust in his maiden speech, in which he expressed his desire for a 'final solution' to Muslim immigration. While I do not suggest Senator Anning is a member of the government, I will never forget that, after that disgraceful speech, Liberal and National senators lined up to shake Senator Anning's hand.

Joshua Burns, Labor's candidate for the newly named seat of Macnamara in Melbourne, has pointed out that, in contrast to this, Liberal and National MPs in this place walked out of the maiden speech of the newly elected member for Wentworth. Apparently, Anning's final-solution reference was more palatable to Liberal and National MPs than the member for

Wentworth's call for action on climate change. I very much hope that Mr Burns is able to join us in this place after the next election.

There are, unhappily, many other examples of the use of racism by this government. The member for Dickson, in particular, likes to stir up fear about gangs from a particular ethnic background—claims that reached their most hysterical level when he proclaimed in the lead-up to the Victorian state election that the people of Melbourne were frightened to go out to restaurants because of the threat of these gangs. And to its permanent shame, in October last year, this government supported One Nation's 'it is okay to be white' motion in the other place. There are very few who now believe claims by the Attorney-General that this appalling decision was due to an unspecified administrative error in his office.

I would call on all members of this place to remember the lessons and the warnings of history, and to campaign by appealing to the best, rather than to the worst, in human nature.

La Trobe Electorate: Tourism

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (19:54): This evening I'd love to talk about a plan we had last election for creating jobs; in particular, in the tourism industry in the La Trobe electorate, covering the Dandenong Ranges. I know Mr Speaker is the guardian of the Dandenong Ranges. He'll be very pleased with a number of these announcements, which we worked together closely on.

The focus I had on tourism was rather simple: if you have more tourism projects in an area, it creates jobs. And what this government has always been about is creating jobs. It also has the incredible flow-on effect of making the area we call home an even better place to live. Some of the projects we got behind were simple. At the iconic 1000 Steps we put drinking water taps down at the bottom and also at the top. It was something people had been talking about doing for years but had never achieved. Now every person who goes up 1000 Steps, especially on a hot day, has access to drinking water.

In total, nearly \$30 million was committed to different projects, including a walking trail between Cockatoo and Gembrook. This was something that Cardinia Shire Council was very keen on. It's to make sure that you have that connection between towns. I've undertaken part of the walk and was very impressed with the design and how excited the local people were about a walk from Gembrook all the way down to Emerald.

Another great project we had was the RidgeWalk project. RidgeWalk goes right across the Dandenong Ranges. I recall, Mr Speaker, that I joined you in the announcement of extra federal funding not too long ago. The whole reason we put \$5 million into this project is that it's such a special project. RidgeWalk goes from one side of the hills right across to the other and encapsulates the amazing history of the landscape artists, from Tom Roberts to Arthur Streeton, Eugene von Guerard and Indigenous artist Lin Onus. It is a really exciting project.

Another project that many people may not be aware of is called Bunjil Place. It's in Narre Warren, close to Fountain Gate. This was an incredible project undertaken by the Casey council. The entire project cost in the vicinity of \$125 million, and at the federal level we contributed \$10 million. The architecture of this project is truly amazing. It's won international awards. Anyone listening tonight who is in Melbourne or travelling to Melbourne: please get down to Bunjil Place and see this incredible piece of architecture. It's got an 800-seat performing arts centre and an amazing library.

We also have Emerald Park's Lakeside Discovery Centre, which is connected to the Puffing Billy Railway. Puffing Billy has over 500,000 tourists each year. You could get off at Emerald Park Lake and have a look at the beautiful lake but there weren't many other activities, especially in inclement weather. The discovery centre will capture the history of Puffing Billy and grow to be an incredible tourist attraction for the local area.

Something I was really proud to get behind is a project I call the red rattler project. A number of years ago a constituent by the name of Peter Smith said to me: 'Do you know what you should do? You should restore an old red rattler train and bring the tourists from the CBD out into the hills.' Well, guess what? At the last election we committed \$1 million to this project, and the red rattler train, we believe, should be ready to launch in May this year. It's a beautiful old red rattler train. I assume people have seen the *Harry Potter* films and the old Victorian carriages. It's just like that. This is going to be such an exciting project.

As I said at the start, the government have been very focused on creating jobs, and, locally, we've been very focused on creating jobs in tourism. You can only do that with a very strong economy, which this government has achieved.

House adjourned at 20:00

NOTICES

The following notice(s) were given:

Mr Porter: To present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to counter-terrorism, and for related purposes. (*Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment Bill 2019*)

Mr Porter: To present a Bill for an Act to amend the *Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018*, and for related purposes. (*Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Amendment Bill 2019*)

Mr Littleproud: To present a Bill for an Act to amend the *Water Act 2007* to increase the membership of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, and for related purposes. (*Water Amendment (Indigenous Authority Member) Bill 2019*)

Mr Robert: To present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to superannuation, and for related purposes. (*Treasury Laws Amendment (Putting Members' Interests First) Bill 2019*)

Mr Shorten: To present a Bill for an Act to amend the law to give effect to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry to strengthen consumer protection, and for related purposes. (*Treasury Laws Amendment (Banking Royal Commission Recommendations Implementation—Enhancing Consumer Protection) Bill 2019*)

Mr Shorten: To present a Bill for an Act to amend the *Corporations Act 2001* to give effect to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry to strengthen AFCA processes, and for related purposes. (*Corporations Amendment (Banking Royal Commission Recommendations Implementation—Strengthening AFCA Processes) Bill 2019*)

Mr Shorten: To present a Bill for an Act to amend the *Corporations Act 2001* to give effect to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry to end grandfathering of commissions in financial advice, and for related purposes. (*Corporations Amendment (Banking Royal Commission Recommendations Implementation—Ending Grandfathered Commissions) Bill 2019*)

Tuesday, 19 February 2019

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks) took the chair at 16:01.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Shortland Electorate: Aged Care

Mr CONROY (Shortland) (16:01): This will be one of the last times before the election that I speak in the House, and I wanted to highlight an issue of real concern for the people I represent in this place. Shortland is one of the oldest electorates in Australia—over one in five of my constituents are over the age of 60. So aged care, both home care and residential care, is a big concern for my constituents, and, unfortunately, so many of them are being let down by the system.

For the record, I want to state that the coalition are no friends of senior Australians. This is abundantly clear in their cuts to the pension and in the Prime Minister's gigantic \$1.2 billion cut to aged care when he was the Treasurer. They arrogantly proclaim at every opportunity that they are the party of older Australians, but nothing could be further from the truth.

The most pressing issue my constituents contact me about is the lack of adequate home care packages. I want to draw the attention of the House to two particular constituents who have recently contacted me. Edna is the carer for her husband, Wally, who has Parkinson's disease, unfortunately. They are both in their 80s. Edna and Wally were approved for a level 4 home care package in August last year, but my office has been advised that the wait for these packages is over 12 months. Edna is grateful for the support she gets with Wally currently, but she does really struggle. She is not sleeping properly; she often has to call nieces and nephews who live nearby for assistance; and she has had to stop going to church.

In her own words, Edna has said: 'I feel like it would be easier to keep going if I could get out and do things, but everything just has to stop, and it's not easy. I understand there is a long wait and there are people worse off than us. But you make these choices to try and stay at home, and it's very hard.' Anyone who heard this would have had to have a fairly cold heart not to have been affected—a loving wife doing her best to care for her husband and really struggling.

What I find so frustrating is that Edna and Wally have been approved to get extra support and services in their home, and there is a waiting list for these services that is entirely unacceptable. As I said, there is a waiting list of over 100,000 places; there were aged-care cuts by the Prime Minister when he was Treasurer of \$1.2 billion. My constituents are having to enter residential facilities rather than being able to stay at home and receive the home care they need and have been approved to receive.

Older Australians who want to continue to live in their home deserve so much better than what they are receiving. There is much talk of dignity and respect for older Australians, but the consequences of almost six years of Liberal government are being felt by my constituents. This is another damning indictment upon this government.

New South Wales: Schools

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (16:03): This afternoon, I'm calling for the New South Wales year 10 history textbook called *Pearson History New South Wales 10*, SB, to be withdrawn from all New South Wales schools. This textbook contains significant errors of fact, and there are many sections of it that are little more than green alarmism masquerading as history.

I'll give a few examples. On page 115 it states: 'Climate change is noticeable in Australia, with more frequent extreme weather events.' However, the most authoritative conclusion, by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, says that it is not even clear whether floods have increased or decreased over the past century. If we look at cyclones, clearly the peer-reviewed science is that they are declining in Australia. If we look at fires on a global scale, again the peer-reviewed science says that they are declining. It doesn't stop there.

Another quote from this history textbook that year 10 students in New South Wales are taught from: 'Prime Minister Tony Abbott made international headlines as a climate change denier.' The 'denial' smear, calling someone a climate change denier, is a reprehensible method to attempt to discredit anyone who questions any aspect of climate change dogma, likening them to Holocaust deniers. Further, the words 'made international headlines' gives this slur a veiled attempt at legitimacy. What international headlines said Tony Abbott was a climate change denier? Other than perhaps the Socialist International or green-Left blogs, I've not found any such international headline. It appears the author of this textbook simply made it up. This is not good enough to be taught in our schools.

It also says that the government response to climate change is varied. It goes on: 'Prime Minister Julia Gillard introduced a Minerals Resource Rent Tax on the first of July 2012.' Now, that is correct; Prime Minister Gillard did introduce the minerals resource rent tax—a disaster which had to be repealed—but it had nothing to do with climate change. One only has to read through the second reading speeches to clearly see there is no reference whatsoever. It was simply a tax grab. Again, the author shows that they have no idea what they're talking about. This text is completely unfit. We have an obligation to make sure that our children in our schools are taught the facts about our nation's climate history without political bias. This textbook clearly contains political bias and it should be withdrawn from our schools at the earliest possible opportunity.

Franklin Electorate: Woodbridge Hall

Franklin Electorate: Woodbridge School

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (16:07): It was a privilege to go down to Woodbridge, in the channel in my electorate, in the last week or so to announce funding for two wonderful projects that have a lot of community support. I particularly want to talk about Woodbridge Hall, which is owned by the Kingborough Council and managed by the Woodbridge Hall Management Committee. This hall has been a central part of the Woodbridge community since its construction in 1890. It's a beautiful, old timber building, and there are a number of regular markets and users of the hall. They have Perry's Pictures on a monthly basis and they have weekly yoga sessions using this old hall in the town of Woodbridge.

Currently, the kitchen would have difficulty meeting basic food standards. The current kitchen equipment, benches and cupboards are outdated and completely inefficient. This grant of \$10,672 will go towards a total project of \$21,343 to upgrade that kitchen area so that locals can get better utilisation of this hall. This will pay for things like dishwashers, microwaves, hotplates and other things. It is wonderful that that was able to be funded.

The other project is one at a local school, Woodbridge School. It's a multiuse park. It is going to have mountain bike tracks, outdoor classrooms, a story space, seating and landscape for recreational use and landscaped native gardens. It was designed by one of the students, which is wonderful. They did a drawing and talked to the principal, who then went off to the education department to get authority to do this quite unique project.

The state government has put some funding in. We got them \$7,500 from the Stronger Communities Program for a \$15,000 total project. It will be used by the school students and staff during classes and break times. It will provide much needed areas for cross-generational recreation in the Woodbridge community. It will also provide an outdoor community hub and a space to run other community initiatives. The school association is also raising money through annual fairs and raffles to provide some additional financial support for this hub.

The project has a lot of support from the local community, including the Woodbridge Community Association; the West Winds Community Centre; Woodbridge Village Store; Peppermint Bay, which is a restaurant nearby; and the Woodbridge Post Office. Volunteers will provide labour and services in the construction and development of the park. It's a great local community project. It's wonderful to be in a position to be able to support these two local community projects in Woodbridge. It's a very vibrant community and it was wonderful to go down to visit and talk to locals about the benefits to their community.

Homelessness

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (16:09): Rarely do federal MPs or, for that matter, the federal government get an opportunity to intervene in homelessness policy. We have very, very strong Commonwealth-state agreements in this area and we're usually reliant on state governments to deliver the housing services that Australia expects. But late last year my city of Redland faced a homelessness crisis, with the evolution of what was referred to in the media as a 'tent city'. This caused great concern to many residents. I had a number of concerned complaints come from the business community near to where we had some homeless individuals living in tents, of all things, close to this commercial area. I forwarded those concerns on to our council. I know that the council have been working with police and other support services. As a result of that intervention, I'm very pleased to say that that tent city has been closed down. Of course, from a federal point of view, it's very hard to know at an individual level how cases are managed. We'd all agree that you'd leave that to the experts. But it is my understanding now that the overwhelming majority of those people who were dependent on the tent city as late as November last year have now been housed and employed.

I want to say on, I think, behalf of both sides of this chamber that we are a nation that pays considerable attention to the needs of the needy. We're a nation that pays a lot of tax. I think it's utterly reasonable to expect that people caught in those situations for a variety of reasons should never be told that the waiting list is seven years. That's exactly what was happening. Local service providers, resigned to that difficult fact, had taken to offering tents and swags and expecting Australians to live in bushland. I can see there are areas of Australia where

problems are far greater, but unless a line in the sand is drawn to say, 'There'll be no tents in the city,' we will have the invidious challenge that those numbers will simply grow. I'm glad to say that that's not the case. I'm going to make sure, while I'm a federal MP, that that is never the case.

I know there will be people in complex circumstances. I know they'll be needing help from multiple players. But I'm calling upon homelessness providers who ultimately work under the umbrella of state government to have standard operating procedures to make sure that cases of DV are identified rapidly and cases where children are affected are identified immediately and that we don't push people away because they're a working-age male and they're less needy. Many of them have children. Believe it or not, one of the people in this case had a pet and, because he had a pet cat, he could get no emergency accommodation. The best he could do was a car. We can be better, but we must draw a line and say, 'In a civilised democracy with social policy that we can be proud of we can always do better than putting our citizens in tents.'

Education

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (16:12): Today, I welcome Labor's incredible announcement of the biggest ever investment into early childhood education that this nation has ever seen. The preschool years are absolutely critical in giving children the best start in life. Under Labor's new two-year National Preschool and Kindy Program, around 700,000 Australian children aged three and four will get access to a universal 15 hours of child care.

Labor initiated universal access for preschool for four-year-olds, and it has been a great success. If elected, Labor will extend it to include three-year-olds. In my electorate of Newcastle, this will mean that around 2,000 three-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours a week of quality early childhood education. With 90 per cent of a child's development occurring in the first five years, investment in these critical years pays dividends throughout a person's entire life. This is great news for children, who will get the best start in life to ensure they reach their full potential. It's good news for families, who'll get relief from the ever-mounting costs of child care. And it's great news to be having a smarter, more engaged cohort of younger Australians as we stake our place in the global knowledge economy. This was borne out by a recent EU study which showed that every dollar spent on early childhood education for three-year-olds returns \$4 to the economy.

While Labor is extending preschool from the current program for four-year-olds to include three-year-olds, the Morrison government won't even guarantee the funding for four-year-olds beyond this school year now. But this should be of no surprise. The Liberals just don't get the importance of education; they never have. They see education as a line item in the budget, ripe for slashing, rather than an investment in our national prosperity. They've cut billions from schools. They've cut billions from universities and TAFEs. And now they won't even guarantee preschool funding.

Labor has been able to fund this important investment in universal education by making tough savings choices. In doing this, we have unapologetically prioritised investment in health and education over tax breaks that largely benefit high-income earners. Countries across the world are starting to realise the importance of early childhood investment, but we are currently lagging behind the rest of the world. Indeed, the United Kingdom, China, New Zealand, France and Ireland have all expanded their early childhood education programs to

include three-year-olds. It's time we caught up. Australian kids deserve better. Australian families deserve better. And indeed our country deserves nothing less.

Warringah Electorate: Northern Beaches Tunnel

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah) (16:15): It doesn't matter what you are in this place or how far you might rise, we are all local members first and foremost, and our constituencies expect us to deliver. They want us to do the right thing by them. I've often said that my constituency of Warringah is the best place in the world to live—until, of course, you want to go somewhere else. That's when you get stuck in some of the world's longest parking lots.

Well, I'm pleased to say that the Northern Beaches tunnel looks like it might at last finally be happening, thanks to the convergence of a good state Liberal government with a good federal Liberal government. The state Liberal government has put several hundreds of millions of dollars into property acquisitions, into preliminary works, into planning and into designing, and it's only been possible because of the funding partnerships that the federal Liberal government has had with the state. These include the \$2 billion plus for WestConnex, the half a billion dollars plus for NorthConnex and of course the Asset Recycling Fund, which was one of the features of the 2014 budget.

But I've got to say that the tunnel will only go ahead if we keep Liberal governments, because the Labor Party wants to cancel it. The tunnel will only go ahead if it has a champion. And I'm pleased to note that the only federal candidate so far declared in Warringah who is 120 per cent behind the tunnel is me.

This tunnel will cut out 17 sets of traffic lights between Manly Vale and the city alone. It will reduce travel times from Manly Vale to the city by about 10 minutes, and then, of course, connecting on with the second harbour crossing, it will do a lot more good for the people of the Northern Beaches and also for people living in other parts of Sydney. It will also enable Military and Spit roads to go back to being suburban thoroughfares. It will restore Mosman, Cremorne and Neutral Bay to their residents.

I don't say that the design can't be tweaked and improved. But no-one should let any small objections imperil this great project. If there are any issues, let's improve the tunnel design, not try to block the whole project, because, if we block the project, the whole area will choke on its own traffic. This is the one thing that could permanently improve the lives of everyone on the Northern Beaches. It can give us our lives back, and I am absolutely determined to make it happen.

Wenham, Mr Brian and Mrs Fleur

Mr CLARE (Blaxland) (16:18): Last month I got an email from a woman named Carol, telling me that her mum and her dad live in my electorate and that they were about to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary—no ordinary thing. And I soon found out that Carol's mum and dad are no ordinary Australians.

Her dad, Brian, was an engineer. He designed with another bloke the famous Warragamba Dam, the largest concrete dam in Australia and one of the largest domestic water supply dams in the world. If you go up there, you can still see his name on the plaque. But in 1963 he gave up engineering and became a pastor. In 1973, he became the pastor of the Peoples Church, as it was known then, in Condell Park. He only retired from that role a few years ago, after 43 years at the helm.

Carol's mum, Fleur, was a runner. She was a very fast runner—so fast, she went to the Olympic Games. She went to the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. She was in the 4 x 100 metre relay team that won gold and smashed the world record twice—the one that included Betty Cuthbert and Shirley Strickland. If you go on the internet, you can still watch the race. Fleur is the third runner. She passes the baton to the late, great Betty Cuthbert.

I popped over to Fleur and Brian's house the other day to say hello, to introduce myself and to congratulate them on their wedding anniversary. I got to see the gold medal. Fleur told me that in those days they didn't place the medal with a ribbon over your neck. They handed it to you with a little case. We watched the race again on the internet, and we talked about Brian and the work he did with Warragamba Dam. As I was talking to them, I realised that, as exciting as I thought all of this was—gold medals and building dams—they weren't the most important things in their lives. They certainly weren't their greatest achievement. What was a lot more important to both of them was what they meant and what they continue to mean to each other—their love and commitment over 60 years. That's really their greatest achievement.

We don't talk a lot in this building about love, but I think Fleur and Brian's love story is a story worth telling here. Not too many people win gold medals. Not too many people celebrate diamond anniversaries. To spend so much of your life with the love of your life is a very special thing. So congratulations to Fleur and Brian—should we all be so lucky!

Berowra Electorate: Eastwood-Thornleigh District Tennis Association

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (16:21): Tucked away on the edge of the Lane Cove National Park, in Pennant Hills, in the Berowra electorate, is a brilliant tennis association—the Eastwood-Thornleigh District Tennis Association, which regularly provides opportunities for tennis for over 1,500 people every single week. People aged three to 83 regularly use the facilities, with sometimes three or four generations playing at the club at one time. The association is over 90 years old and was established by volunteers. That wonderful volunteering tradition continues, beginning with a small association with only a few courts, to the large association it is today, with 16 courts and over 30 teams playing every night.

The association runs a major schools tournament each year, with over 200 schools participating. In March this year, for the first time, the association will host a Bronze semi-professional AMT tournament. This event will involve some of the top players in New South Wales. The association has been told that, if Tennis Australia considers their facilities satisfactory, they will be able to host that event on an annual basis, from 2020 onwards. Hopefully, it will attract other Silver and Gold and eventually Platinum AMT events. This would be an enormous boost for the profile of tennis in my electorate and across Sydney.

I've been particularly impressed by the association's efforts to retain their female players. The ETDTA are improving the facilities to attract more women by providing more supervised areas for young children and to allow for other sporting activities like yoga that might attract more women players.

I want to commend the people who play a leadership role in this association, in particular, Mary Baker, the president; Clare Wagemans, the secretary; and Sandi Edwards, the manager. I also want to acknowledge the wonderful Dave Cochrane, who served as manager of the Pennant Hills centre for over 26 years and is something of an institution in my community.

The next steps that the Eastwood-Thornleigh District Tennis Association want to take is to upgrade some of their facilities, to make them more accessible for those who want to use their facilities throughout the day and night. At the moment, the cost of lighting is a huge burden for the association. The lights that enable people to play at night, particularly in winter, are not efficient and are extremely costly. It costs \$3,500 per light every time it's changed. The association wants to install LED lights, which will be more environmental and more efficient and will allow for a major cost saving for the future. More sustainable lighting will enable membership fees to be kept to an affordable level and allow more members of the community to access the facilities at a time that suits them. The association also wants to create automatic locking on their courts so that someone doesn't need to be there to let people in and let them out of the courts.

I want to see sports clubs across the Berowra electorate thriving into the future, and that's why I'll be fighting for an upgrade of the lighting at the Eastwood-Thornleigh District Tennis Association. I'm proud of what the association does. Better lighting will be good for the association, it'll be good for the environment, and it'll be good for tennis in my area.

Glass, Mr Steven

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (16:25): I rise to pay tribute to the life of one of the most outstanding legal practitioners I had the privilege to work with, but, more importantly, one of the finest human beings I will ever know, who is mourned by his own family the Gilbert + Tobin family and the many people whose lives were changed forever by his advocacy and passion for justice. Steven Glass was a brilliant commercial litigator, an almost constant tenant in the various top lawyer rankings. He was one of those partners at Gilbert + Tobin whom young lawyers specifically wanted to work for, the one the summer clerk interviewees said inspired them to apply to the firm. I never practised in the litigation team, but Steven and I developed a relationship that included his constant support for me as an MP.

The one matter I worked on closely with Steven was a project to deliver best practice training for the communications regulator in Thailand. There was a moment I still laugh about with our friend and the other supervising partner, Angus Henderson. We didn't realise that the regulator was going to be comprised of members who appeared to be from predominantly ex-military backgrounds. I had designed a workshop session to be delivered in Bangkok which required these very senior personnel to break into small groups. When this was explained to them, one individual looked at me and bluntly declared: 'We do not break into groups.' I froze. I looked at Steven. He stood up without hesitation and basically said: 'Right. Let's talk about being a regulator.' And he had everyone there mesmerised for the day. Like all great people, Steven was a teacher, and I still remember his lessons.

The fact is: Steven could have had a cruisy life, accumulating wealth on the back of his incredible legal prowess, acting for some of the most privileged and high-profile individuals and corporations. But this child of a refugee who survived the Holocaust was destined to achieve so much more.

As perfectly summarised in a beautiful obituary, 'Many of the causes Steven championed were legally complex and socially controversial.' At some point in Australia's political discourse over the first decade of the 21st century, something must have triggered Steven to take his advocacy to the next level. He would employ his legal genius to make the change he wanted to see in Australia and advance human rights, especially for asylum seekers. His

achievements in this regard are too many to list, and merely doing so would not adequately capture the scale and detail of the work he must have ploughed into these cases and their profound implications.

I went back through my email exchanges with Steven since 2010. They were mostly about people or organisations recommended by Steven to contact me, vicarious connections ranging from Progressive Women in Law to the New Israel Fund, pro bono matters and the member for Cowan. So Steven possessed that other great trait of greatness: he connected people.

Steven only had his official farewell from Gilbert + Tobin in April last year. On the evening of Wednesday, 6 February, I received the terrible news from his great friend Peter Waters that Steven had died of a heart attack that morning. Peter's message was accompanied by a photo of Steven with a man who could be an amalgam of his many good and selfless works throughout his life, both of them with beaming smiles, Steven's arm around his shoulder. The message read: 'As this photo so well shows, he made this country a little less unjust, a little fairer, through his work with refugees.' Vale, Steven Glass.

Domestic and Family Violence

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Families and Social Services) (16:28): I rise to recognise the work of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter and President Sallianne McClelland in providing assistance to victims and survivors of domestic violence in my electorate of Bradfield and surrounding areas. In the last year alone, there were 263 reported domestic violence assaults in the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai council areas. The Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter aims to provide temporary supported accommodation for women in times of crisis such as homelessness or domestic violence. Women can stay at the shelter for up to three months and are allocated specialist caseworkers who support them to access necessary legal, health, employment and financial services. Women who cannot be housed can access an outreach program. Since opening in February 2015, more than 282 women have been safely housed at the shelter. Seventy-two per cent needed help due to domestic violence. Ninety-seven per cent had a tailored case plan within 72 hours of arriving at the shelter.

I also acknowledge the work that Sallianne McClelland is presently doing as part of an Apron Project roadshow initiative. She is driving throughout New South Wales with the aim of educating and raising awareness of domestic violence in towns across New South Wales, while raising much-needed funds for women's services at each stop, with an Apron showcase, community art projects and the sharing of stories.

Can I also acknowledge the chief executive of Women's Community Shelters, Annabelle Daniel. Women's Community Shelters is the umbrella organisation behind the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter. It's also the umbrella organisation behind the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, and I'd like to acknowledge the president of that organisation, Rosy Sullivan. I joined with her and the member for Warringah and Margie Abbott in Manly last Saturday to announce new funding for trials of technology that can help protect women against the risks of domestic violence. We were also able to speak of the \$60 million grant program, announced by the Prime Minister last Monday, for eligible organisations to provide new or expanded emergency accommodation facilities for those escaping domestic and family violence. I certainly hope and expect that both the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter and the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter will be among the many organisations around the country bringing forward grant applications under that \$60 million program, which of course

was also accompanied by an announcement of \$18 million to extend the existing Keeping Women Safe in their Homes program.

The Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter and the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter are wonderful examples of communities coming together to develop facilities which provide support to women at a time of great need. I congratulate all involved with these great organisations and I look forward to the \$60 million program announced last Monday allowing many more such organisations to deliver these services.

Macquarie Electorate: Infrastructure

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (16:31): Ten years ago, when I first ran as a candidate, I asked people in the Hawkesbury, 'What's the biggest problem you face?' And what did they say? Traffic congestion. Ten years on, nothing has changed. We have two bridges, single lanes each way. One was built more than 150 years ago and the other was built a much more recent 115 years ago. Yet the population has grown. It now sits at around 70,000, and new developments at Redbank and other subdivisions will continue to see growth on that side of the river. But we have the same four lanes to and from work, to hospital, to school and to our major centres.

In 2010, when the then minister for infrastructure and I announced \$20 million to do short-term improvements to alleviate some of the congestion at either end of Richmond Bridge, the local Liberals pooh-poohed the idea. The then Liberal Federal member for Macquarie had no view on it and her state counterparts thought it wasn't needed. But Labor did provide that funding to the New South Wales government following the 2010 election. The study, finished in 2012, identified longer term options—a duplication of Richmond Bridge—plus recommendations on \$28 million of short-term measures to improve the traffic flow.

So how has that worked out under the Liberals? The New South Wales government has refused to provide any funding on top of the remaining \$18 million in federal Labor funding. And here we are, in 2019, and the money that was announced and committed in 2010 is only just being spent. We all know that the work being done is a drop in the ocean of what is needed given the increased population across the river. The latest promise by the Liberals of a study on where the duplicated bridge might go—a few million dollars is all that is on the table, with no funding for construction in the offing. After eight years of doing nothing at a state level—yes, they have had eight years to address these problems in their safe Liberal seat—now, on the eve of an election, they suddenly notice there is a problem and they say, 'Trust us, we'll fix it.' Well, you'll have to forgive me for being a bit cynical.

We are really at a point where we need a series of measures to provide a long-term vision for how local traffic gets around our area and across a river, including in times of crisis like bushfires and flood threat. What we are seeing in Windsor is a shocking waste of taxpayer money—\$100 million to construct one extra lane across the Hawkesbury, with no improvements to the flood-prone single-lane roads either side of the bridge. A two-lane bridge is being replaced by a three-lane bridge without contraflow—and that is aside from the fact that it has destroyed an economically significant heritage site.

And you know what the Liberals will say at both a state and federal level. They will boast about the improvements they have made. The only long-term solution for the terrible delays

that people face across the Hawkesbury is a third crossing, one that bypasses our major centres.

Goldstein Electorate: Infrastructure

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (16:34): Established communities like the electorate of Goldstein have their own unique challenges that every government needs to be mindful of. The reality is that every day thousands of residents in Goldstein get up, go to work—they might work in professional services or labour jobs—and commute into town. Often residents complain to me about the fact that they can't get a car park after 7.30 at many of the important train stations across the electorate.

We hear that, and that's why I'm so proud that the Morrison government has provided \$4 million for the Hampton train station on the Sandy line for 133 new car parks in addition to the 25 that have been promised by VicTrack. We have heard directly from the concerns of constituents, and we are taking action. It sits as part of a broader package of \$121 million being invested in infrastructure across the south-east of Melbourne because the Morrison government understands the challenges that Melburnians face on a day-to-day basis.

Making sure that there is proper car parking at train stations makes a huge difference in alleviating the pressure that sits at the heart of the daily commute of many professional workers and, as I said, labourers. It means that there are fewer cars on the streets. It means that there's less traffic clogging up our residential streets, and it reduces pollution as well.

Established communities like Goldstein have unique challenges in facing some of the difficulties of daily commutes for many professional service workers and labourers as well. Many residents complain to me often about not being able to get a car spot at 7.30 in the morning if they don't get to the train station by then to get to work. That's why the Morrison government is delivering \$4 million investing in new car parking: 143 new car parks at Bentleigh train station on the Frankston line. It sits as part of a package of \$121 million that the Morrison government is spending on infrastructure in the south-east of Melbourne because the Morrison government fundamentally understands the challenges that face Melburnians. You have spoken and we have acted.

This is critical infrastructure if we want to reduce the number of cars on our roads. It is critical infrastructure if we want to be able to reduce the number of cars parked in residential streets and also in making sure that there is less pollution, as part of cleaning up our wonderful city. It will take the pressure off people's daily commutes and improve people's lives so they can spend more time with their family at the start of the day and of course will assist them in being able to get home sooner at the end of the day as well. It's these important projects across south-east Melbourne that make all the difference in improving the lives of Goldstein residents.

Vietnamese Cultural Centre and Museum

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (16:37): Australia is home to nearly 300,000 Vietnamese Australians, and each one of them has a unique Australian story—stories of sacrifice to give their children a better shot at life than they had, long hours and hard work to grow small businesses and educate the next generation of doctors, lawyers, teachers, leaders and entrepreneurs. I am proud that, under a Labor Shorten government, each of these stories will get told at Australia's first Vietnamese Cultural Centre and Museum. If elected, a Shorten

Labor government will invest \$4.4 million to support the construction of the museum in Footscray, in my electorate. This commitment matches the contribution of the Daniel Andrews Labor government announced with the state member for Footscray, Katie Hall, last year, and it builds on the contributions and support from many local community members and the City of Maribyrnong.

The museum will become a place for the Vietnamese-Australian community to collect, preserve and exhibit their culture, history and identity as a reminder and example of Australia's successful multicultural society. The museum will celebrate the contribution of the Vietnamese-Australian community to our society, so visible in the social fabric of my electorate. The Vietnamese-Australian community has transformed Melbourne's west into a vibrant multicultural hub, enriching our society and our local identity.

This museum will celebrate the new ideas and innovations in the Vietnamese community that have strengthened our businesses, our hospitals, our schools, our cuisine, our literature and our culture. From the museum, we will learn about the values revered in the Vietnamese-Australian community—values like hard work, the pursuit of excellence, and community and familial obligation.

The museum has been a goal for the Vietnamese community in Australia since 2002. Almost two decades later, they are almost there. Frankly, they shouldn't have to wait longer. The Morrison federal government should listen to the 300,000 Vietnamese Australians in our community and commit to funding this museum now. They should listen to the Victorian chapter of the VCA, ably supported by the state chapters in New South Wales and Queensland in this campaign—and other chapters. They should listen to members of the Dual Identity Leadership Program, who I've been proud to work with in recent weeks to collect 11,000 signatures calling for the federal government to contribute funding to this museum. They need to listen to Phuong Nguyen, the former VCA president, who has championed this project; to Bon Nguyen, the national VCA president; and to Viv Nguyen, the Victoria VCA president. They should listen to Bishop Long Nguyen and the Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan, who have spent almost two decades of their lives advocating for this museum.

This is a museum that will be a legacy for all Australians, not just Vietnamese-Australians, because it tells an Australian story. Come on, Prime Minister, let's get this museum built. Match Labor's commitment to the Vietnamese cultural museum and let's get to work.

Hume Electorate

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy) (16:40): A shout-out to the great people who I met for coffee at Mount Annan central on Saturday. Last weekend I was able to catch up with Ron Gloich and a bunch of his mates, many of them retired policeman. They're passionate about many things but they were particularly vocal on the weekend about our borders, about staying strong on border protection, and on government calling the shots for all Australians. It was another clear reminder about the depth of community feeling on this issue.

My team and I doorknocked around 500 or 600 houses on Saturday in Spring Farm. This is one of the newer, very high-growth suburbs next to Camden and Mount Annan, full of young families. Many residents have only lived there a couple of years. Commuting and transport, local jobs, the cost of living—these are the things that people in this area worry about. They want the government to steer a strong economy where there's real reward for hard work. But

equal to the hip-pocket issues there was a lot of talk about borders. Across many parts of my electorate there has been a strong reaction to federal Labor's vote to weaken our borders. I see it in the emails from my constituents over recent days where securing Australian borders is the top priority mentioned. It came up many times in conversations at Spring Farm. The federal government is getting behind those hardworking young families: a strong economy, new business growth and more jobs close to where you live. This is what we're focused on delivering.

Latest figures from the department of industry show Mount Annan is one of the top growth areas for new businesses in my electorate. A total of 70 new businesses started up at Mount Annan in the 2017-18 financial year, the vast majority of them in the construction sector. Across Hume, more than 860 new businesses have opened up in construction in the past three years. This reflects the extraordinary growth in parts of my electorate, with connectivity improving and massive public and private investment flowing through the local economy—particularly around the north of Hume and the new Western Sydney Airport—creating local jobs and connectivity like we've never seen before.

This government will not waver on border protection. We are not wavering on building new infrastructure. We'll continue to drive the economy so that the aspirational young families in areas like Spring Farm can have a strong and prosperous future.

Fremantle Electorate: City of Cockburn

Mr JOSH WILSON (Fremantle) (16:43): The National Growth Areas Alliance brings together local governments that face the challenges that come with rapid urban and residential expansion. They're here in parliament this week. The City of Cockburn in my electorate is an active member of the alliance, as you'd expect of a local government that at various times has been one of the most rapidly expanding residential areas in the country. There is no doubt that the visionary Perth-Mandurah rail line has been the prime catalyst for growth in this corridor thanks to the Carpenter government. As a result, with Cockburn station at its epicentre, Cockburn Central has bloomed into a remarkable strategic centre with high-quality transport-oriented housing surrounded by a range of retail, health, community and recreational facilities.

The planning for the precinct as a whole was funded by a Labor smart cities grant. Labor's Social Housing Initiative provided \$40 million to enable the innovative Living Space, a social and shared equity housing development. The Labor government also delivered the \$20 million super GP clinic that is at the heart of the Cockburn Health and Community Facility. It was Prime Minister Julia Gillard who committed \$10 million to kickstart the project that would become the incredible Cockburn ARC, a state-of-the-art recreational centre that is powered by state-of-the-art solar and geothermal technology.

In recent years it has become clear that Cockburn's success has created growing pains, especially in relation to transport. It's clear that there is more to be done. That's why when I was elected in 2016 I made the construction of the new North Lake Road Bridge and duplication of Armadale Road key election commitments. The project is now underway. That's why I fought alongside my community to see the end of the wasteful Perth Freight Link and the redirection of those funds into much-needed local transport projects. That's how we secured funding for the additional lane of the freeway northbound from Russell Road. That

work is also underway. That's how we secured funding for the Cockburn-Thornlie rail link connection as part of the McGowan government's Metronet transport system.

Further west a couple of years ago I stood with my colleague the shadow minister for regional services and local government on the site of the old Spearwood Road Bridge, which had become a terrible pinch point for people in Beeliar and Yangebup. Needless to say, I supported the City of Cockburn wholeheartedly in its pitch for federal funding to create a new bridge. Despite the fact that WA got virtually nothing from the coalition under the bridges for recovery program, we were successful in the case of that project, which is nearly complete.

Rapid residential growth needs to be matched with transport links, services, jobs and facilities that allow people to live as part of a connected, sustainable, cohesive community. The city of Cockburn from the bush in Yangebup to the coast at Coogee—or from the wetlands to the waves, as the locals put it—is a diverse and vibrant community. I'm fortunate to be its representative in this place and to share its landscape. I will continue to be a strong voice for the needs and interests of people in Cockburn.

Education

Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson—Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) (16:46): I rise today to highlight the incredible work of teachers on the Gold Coast who are actively promoting students to engage in science, technology, engineering and maths—commonly known as STEM. Megan Hayes, the STEM coordinator teacher at Mudgeeraba Creek State School, recently wrote to me to let me know about her participation in the STEM X Academy. This five-day residential professional learning program is open to Australian teachers across all sectors and levels of experience. The STEM X Academy is run by a partnership of the Australian Science Teachers Association, Questacon and CSIRO.

Megan highlighted to me that her participation in this program was, without doubt, the most enriching and inspiring personal development opportunity she's been involved in during her teaching career. The program focuses on developing the skills of teachers so that they in turn can futureproof their students in a rapidly changing and increasingly digital world. Furthermore, through the week-long program the professional networks that were established between the teachers from across Australia provide an invaluable resource for idea sharing and support. It's a testament to the passion of Megan and the other attendees that they sacrificed their personal holidays to attend, with many paying for the program themselves.

I too am passionate about STEM education and, as an engineer, I can personally attest to the benefits of studying these subjects. My studies have been central to my career outside politics and also allowed me to bring this experience to my role as the member for McPherson and the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology. I know that to secure the jobs of the future for our children we need to educate them, to train them and to give them the skills that they need. This will allow Australia to continue to compete as a global economy. Those who have participated in this STEM X program know this too. I commend all the wonderful science educators on the Gold Coast, in particular Megan Hayes, who are inspiring and teaching our children. I wish Megan all the very best in her endeavours and efforts to make a positive impact in our community.

Broadband

Ms SWANSON (Paterson) (16:49): Communities across my electorate are absolutely fed up—fed up with the dodgy, unreliable second-rate NBN. Not a week goes by when my office doesn't get a call from a frustrated constituent asking for help. I hear of terrible experiences with the NBN, including dropouts, missed appointments, dodgy lines and—can you believe it—homes that still aren't on the NBN rollout map, let alone getting a connection.

Last year I received a letter from NBN Co telling me that residents of Waterside Pastures, an estate in Medowie, not too far from my electorate office, will receive NBN via the Sky Muster satellite technology. This works when stations across the country beam internet up to the satellite, which then beams it down again to a dish attached to a home. It used to connect Australians in regional and remote areas, where no other NBN connection technology is practical.

My electorate of Paterson is less than half an hour from Newcastle. Newcastle is the second-biggest city in New South Wales and the seventh-largest in the country—hardly a rural and remote place. Medowie is not remote, and, contrary to the purpose of Sky Muster satellite, there are other practical options. In fact, there is a NBN line just one kilometre away from Waterside Pastures, and there are properties that are three kilometres away getting more reliable fibre-to-the-curb technology. Medowie is a suburb of over 9,000 people, who are all entitled to decent NBN connections to study, to do their homework, to run their small businesses and to stay in contact.

In the letter that NBN Co wrote to me, they state: 'This decision was not made lightly. Satellite is the only option we currently have to serve the community and meet the statement of expectations provided to us by the government.' Well, let me be clear today, as this letter was clear to me: the decision is a result of the coalition government, not NBN Co. I have written to the Minister for Communications urging him to intervene and extend the fixed line network so that my community in Medowie isn't left in the Dark Ages. I look forward to his response, and I look forward to passing it on to the people of Medowie.

The national broadband network is broken. My community know it is broken, and they are suffering. Like everyone else in Australia, residents in Medowie deserve access to decent internet connections. After six years of this dysfunctional government, the only thing that will fix the NBN is a Shorten Labor government.

Corangamite Electorate: Corangamite Medal

Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite—Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services) (16:52): It's my great pleasure to congratulate all of the winners of the Corangamite Medal, which celebrates the leaders of tomorrow in Corangamite schools, for 2018. There are more than 50 of them. I'm going to try and get through them all in the allotted time.

In the primary schools: Lucca Trigg, Aireys Inlet; William Budge, Alvie; Aaron Mohr, Armstrong Creek; Hazel Burgess, Barwon Heads; Grace Hebblethwaite, Beeac; Saskia Kellett, Bellbrae; Ned Callahan, Birregurra; Angus Rudge, Ceres; Phoebe Guye, Clairvaux; Ella Puttyfoot, Clifton Springs; Reegan Brown, Colac; Savanna Nicholls, Colac West; Kaiti Chappell, Deans Marsh; Curtis McCoughtry, Drysdale; Kohima Sprunt, Forrest; Rebecca Smith, Grovedale West; Laila Thompson, Highton; Brayden Orr, Inverleigh; Elissa Jefferys,

Leopold; Lily Colla, Lethbridge; Nga Nguyen, Linton; Luke Brooks, Lisieux Catholic Primary; Savannah Jenkins, Mandama; Isabelle Wood, Meredith; Taylor Handley, Montpellier; Felix Maher, Moriac; Lilly McCarthy, Mount Duneed Regional Primary School; Abigail French, Oberon; Freya Borg, Ocean Grove; Madison Dalziel, Our Lady Star of the Sea; Michael Ahearn, Point Lonsdale; Ethan Burnett, Portarlington; Bailey Drummond, Queenscliff; Nonnie Cook, Rokewood; Ella Denney, Roslyn; from the Woody Yaloak School, Oliver Filmer, Daniel Grant, Mia Manton and Riley Burrill; Tess Chatham, St Aloysius; Kira Savage, Surfside; James Weatherly, Teesdale; Isabella Marsland, Torquay; and Ellie Watson, Wallington Primary School.

Very proudly, from our secondary schools: Liam Pohl, Bellarine Secondary College; Noor Al Assafi, Belmont High; Nicholas Boylan, Colac Secondary College; Ellie Murrant, Grovedale College; Noah Lingam and Caitlin O'Rourke, Lorne P-12; Suraya Bandari, Matthew Flinders; Lucy Tsitas, Oberon; Megan Stephenson, Saint Ignatius; William Magher, St Joseph's; and Mitchell Reither, Surf Coast Secondary College.

That was quite a list, but it is an incredible reflection on the wonderful contribution that our students play in the Corangamite electorate. The Corangamite Medal is a very important part of recognising student leadership, and I'm really proud to make that award, as I do each and every year. Thank you so much.

Sudan: Human Rights

Melbourne Electorate: Somali Community

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (16:55): Since 19 December 2018, Sudan has been witnessing a wave of protests against the economic policies and alleged human rights violations of the government. According to Amnesty International, over six weeks there have been more than 300 protests in 15 of Sudan's 18 provinces. The government has responded to the protests with excessive and lethal force, using live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas and attacking the injured inside hospitals. At least 50 have been killed, dozens injured and at least 1,000 arrested and imprisoned. Activists fear that many more may face arbitrary arrest and torture. I'm informed that the government has cut off access to social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp, and continues to reject the entry of international reporters to Sudan. Historically, this has been the government's tactic to limit reporting on violence, torture and killings as it continues to escalate the use of force. I draw the attention of members in this House to the record of human rights abuse in Sudan. More than 300,000 people were killed in Darfur. Many people in the Blue Nile and Nuba Mountains regions were killed, tortured and discriminated against, while millions were displaced and forced out of the country, including some who've received protection in Australia and in my electorate of Melbourne.

The Australian Sudanese community has called on the Australian government to take a stand against violence and arbitrary detention, bring human rights violators to justice and support the right of the Sudanese people to peacefully demand their rights. The Melbourne Sudanese community marched on Saturday for freedom, peace and justice and to demand that President Omar al-Bashir, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity, step down. Australia and governments around the world must take action and speak up.

This government we have at the moment is channelling Donald Trump and seeking to fight an election campaign on who can make life hardest for migrants and refugees. Melbourne's Somali community has been targeted by this sort of politics from Donald Trump before, and today I want to make it clear that I will stand with the community against these attacks. Melbourne's Somali community is crying out for serious policies to address community needs, like schools, jobs, family migration, hospitals and housing. But this government's policies have made life harder for Somali Australians. It's shut down many good jobs in the family day care sector that were an important pathway to employment and care for the community. It's caved in to overseas government that have made it harder to send money to Somalia through hawala remittances, putting devastating pressure on families in Somalia. It has introduced so-called terror laws that make it harder for people to travel to Somalia and visit loved ones. It has made family migration harder. It has locked up asylum seekers, who've done nothing wrong, in offshore detention camps on Manus Island and Nauru, with the full support of Labor. And yet, despite all of this, the Somali community is thriving, making Melbourne a better place to live, and I will always stand with them.

Lismore Lantern Parade

Think Pink Broady

Mr HOGAN (Page—Deputy Speaker) (16:58): This year the Lismore Lantern Parade, an iconic community arts festival, is turning 25 years old. Held near the longest Saturday night of the year, the winter solstice, the parade attracts tens of thousands of people. It is thanks to the vision of the creative director, Jyllie Jackson, who is literally the heart and soul of this event. She wanted to see the streets of Lismore light up with creativity and community spirit. The local economy also benefits, with the event injecting more than \$2 million into the local economy. The festival celebrates community, arts, crafts, workshops, regional cuisine, the parade, lanterns, parade bands, street theatre, music, carnival dancers, illuminated puppets, fire art and pyrotechnics. It is a very colourful night. The theme last night was wonderland. Lismore was transformed into a colourful fantasyland.

Last year's parade was the largest in its history, with 1,000 lanterns taking part and around 30,000 spectators enjoying the night. Partners in the event included LightnUp, Lismore City Council, the *Northern Star*, Lismore Shopping Square, Ecoteam, Photography by Natsky, the *Lismore Echo*, Northern Rivers Conservatorium, the Lismore City Liquor Accord, PRIME7, the Lismore Regional Gallery, Lismore Tourism and Events, Enova, The Quad, the Lismore App, Southern Cross University, Lord's Taverners, TAFE NSW, Jacksons Technical Services, Cetnaj Lighting, Electrical and Data, Storm Boy Productions and Dogwhistle Creative. I congratulate Jyllie and her partners who help to make the Lismore Lantern Parade happen every year. I'm very much looking forward to this year's 25th parade.

The event Think Pink Broady is an example of what a vibrant community can do to raise money for breast cancer research. Over the last six years, for one night pink has been the favourite colour of Broadwater. Thanks to Sheree Hyslop and her team, Think Pink Broady has helped raise nearly \$25,000 for the Cancer Council. Given that in 2016 there were only 640 people living in Broadwater, this is an amazing result. Sheree's team consists of her husband, Steve; daughter, Mikayla; son, Lachlan; and Carmen Ainsworth, Natalie Piggott, Vicki McLennan, Tenille Leahy, Robyn Haselden, Yvonne Sawtell, Sheree Gaiter, Maxine Gaiter, Erin Gollan and Sharon Haselden.

The donations and prizes for the games and raffles were also very generously donated by local businesses and individuals. I would like to acknowledge them: Drew Pierce, McGrath Estate Agents Ballina, Kirstie Bonnici, Jeb Walton, Mick Sawtell Electrical, Tom and Tenille Leahy from North Coast Building, Jesse and Cassie from Nothern Rivers Jumping Castles, Liberty Broadwater, Simone Briggs, Megan Pignat from Waves Dance Studio, Broadwater Bowling Club, Ballina Power Equipment, CN2480 Photography, Vikki and Stephen McLeannan, Doug and Marilyn Hyslop, Gloria Jean's Lismore, Henry's Bakery Cafe, Metcalf Quality Meats Evans Head, Evans Head Butchery, Solitary Islands Marine Park Resort, Affordable Beauty Ballina, Carla and Wynn Magnay, Mal Dalby, Michelle Shoesmith, Janet Fernie, and Michelle and Kane Walker. I thank all involved.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has concluded.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Closing the Gap

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That the House take note of the document.

Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (17:02): This year's *Closing the gap* report reminds us, sadly, of how little progress we have made in addressing the structural inequality facing First Nations people in this country. Before I continue, I want to acknowledge the Ngambri and Ngunawal people, who are the traditional owners of this country, and acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands that I represent in this place across the electorate of Lingiari.

Now, there are some pleasing aspects of the report, or at least two: improvements to early childhood and year 12 retention. We can't deny that reality. It's very important that we applaud it. But, 11 years on, two of seven targets are only 'on track'. We need to ask ourselves why that is. We shouldn't be blaming the victims, as is often the case. We need to reflect upon what we are doing here. I think that as a nation it's an indictment on us all. If anything has failed, it's us, not the targets. We need to acknowledge that we haven't done enough. This nation, as rich it is, hasn't come to terms with its obligations to deal properly with our First Nations people and to work with them in a way where they control the outcomes. There's a huge gap between the words and actions; the gap between promises and results. We must do better.

I'm not going to, as I could, reflect upon the initial Close the Gap targets when they were set by the Rudd government, now so long ago, and talk about the record moneys that were made available to tackle disadvantage. But I do want to say that those investments have not been sustained. I'm not going to itemise them, but the 2014 budget saw \$500 million taken out of programs for First Nations peoples. In that environment, it's very hard to understand how we could ever close any gap.

I want to applaud the initiatives that have been taken to address particular things over that period, but they have dropped off. Instead of looking at what more we can do with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we have withdrawn. So the current structure of government is not inclusive. It doesn't take leadership from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It treats them as victims and objects. The compelling argument that I receive all the time is the

desire of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take control over their own lives and be dealt with equally, as partners, in the process.

I was heartened to see the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition in his contribution about what Labor is planning to do around the establishment of a voice, around regional representation and around giving Aboriginal people greater control over their lives and greater control over what happens in this place—in a sense, trying to just flip it so that the policy determinants are developed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people themselves rather than by us here. If we can do that and understand with maturity that it's okay to let go a bit and give people that opportunity, then I think we can make a difference—and we will make a difference.

I've seen some examples. We've got the member for Forde here in the chamber. I'm not sure if he's aware of the work of the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health in Brisbane. Now, here is an organisation which reflects the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across this country to do good for themselves and for the nation. Starting in 2011, I was fortunate enough to be the Minister for Indigenous Health and I was able to provide the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health with support to establish their organisation. It is four health services coming together under one umbrella—four health services, four clinics. I'm going to get the figures wrong, but it is now eight years on—my maths is not that flash, as you can tell—and they've got 21 clinics and are servicing almost 50 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in South-East Queensland. They are making an immeasurable difference in health outcomes and they're doing it for themselves. They are a community based organisation, a community driven organisation, which is delivering magnificent services to the people of South-East Queensland. That's an example of where government has been prepared to allow them, provide them with support and give them the opportunity to tread in the direction they want to tread—and that's what we need to do.

That's not to say there won't be failings and failures around the place, but we've got to commit to a different relationship. The one we've got at the moment is simply not good enough. I've been in this parliament a long time and I've seen policies come and go, ministers come and go and prime ministers come and go—you name it! But one thing is certain: the desire of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be self-determining has not changed from the day I entered here to today. Yet, we have been loath, absolutely loath, to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the power to make decisions around their own lives in an appropriate way. That's why the issue of the voice and the Statement from the Heart is so important. That's why constitutional recognition is so important. We need to appreciate that, if we want to change the dynamic to really close the gap, we have to give people control. It's not hard. It might be hard to loosen the grip a bit. But, once you do and with the proper governance arrangements in place, you will see the difference, as I've seen the difference in many organisations across this country. We've got very reputable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, highly professional people, who are able to lead the organisations and be engaged as equals across the table as partners. We just don't care to do it. We need to change that. We need to make sure that we do what we can to change the relationship.

We need to appreciate that, in how we deal with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it's about health and it's about education—it's all of those things. But it's got to be

delivered in a culturally safe way. We've got to recognise something which is very hard for us non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to recognise—and that is the depth of the institutionalised racism that still exists in this country. We've got to come to terms with that fact. We've got to let go and understand that we have been the inhibitors. We've got to change it and allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have their voice and to properly listen to that voice—not just tolerate that voice but listen, hear and then act. If we can do that, we can make a difference. That's what I believe we, as this parliament and this country, need to do.

As parliamentarians, we have a particular responsibility. It's time for us to stand up in a mature and open way and deal with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as they should be dealt with—as the First Nations people of this country. It always was and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land, this country. Nothing can change that. What we've got to do is recognise it and recognise that, with it, comes an obligation on us to treat people fairly. We've yet to do it. We must do it. I'm hopeful that, if there's a change of government, as a result we can make it happen.

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde—Government Whip) (17:12): I would like to thank the member from Lingiari for his comments. I had the pleasure when we served on the Indigenous affairs committee to spend some time in his electorate and to visit some of his communities. Before I was in this place, I used to have some business clients in Alice Springs, so I spent a bit of time in Alice Springs as well. I'd like to take this opportunity, first and foremost, to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land here in Canberra, the Ngunawal, but also to recognise the traditional owners of the country that I represent—the Yugambeh people and the Yugara people.

I think it's interesting to reflect on the comments from the member for Lingiari. I made the note in response to his comments that, to progress, we must be eternally vigilant. I think sometimes we let things slip over time. We think that we've put things in place and we think that they will continue to work the way we always envisioned they would work. But gradually, over time, that falls away and people lose focus and we see these good intentions fall by the wayside and we end up not achieving the outcomes that we sought with the best intentions from the outset. I think this *Closing the Gap* report highlights that very starkly. I think, in that context, it's appropriate that the Prime Minister has used the term 'refresh' and that we refresh those goals and objectives of what we want to achieve.

But the key part of that is that we involve the Indigenous community in that process. I think that's what the member for Lingiari touched on particularly well. It's interesting—I took the opportunity to go back and have a look at some of the history of the relationship between the settlers in the 1800s and the Indigenous community in Logan at the time. Based on the information that I was able to obtain through the Logan City Council website, it appears to me that there was an enormous amount of interaction between the then settlers and the Indigenous community. We have, I'm pleased to say, no records in what is modern-day Logan City of any major issues of conflict or other things that we know happened around the country that were very detrimental to our Indigenous communities. In fact, the writings of botanist Charles Fraser in 1828 document the quality of the workmanship of the local Indigenous communities in their fish traps and kangaroo nets that they used to catch wildlife to feed themselves and how the settlers relied on the ingenuity of the Indigenous community to survive those first

few years. We have a number of stories of our local families when they first settled and how they relied on the help of the Indigenous community to survive a couple of very difficult summers. So it's not that we haven't been able to do this in the past; we actually have. I think it's one of the great failings today in our society that we seem to disregard our history and we fail to learn from what worked in our history.

But I also want to use this opportunity to speak about the terrific work that is being done in my electorate by our local Indigenous community. When we have a look at the work that is being done by the Yugambeh Museum to preserve the Yugambeh language and other associated language groups and to preserve the broader cultural history of the Yugambeh language group, which stretches all the way down to the border at Tweed Heads and out to the Bay Islands as well, and at what is being done using modern technology to spread that message, we see also that the result is that a number of our schools, particularly a couple of our state primary schools, Waterford West State School and Eagleby South State School, actually have programs within their language-other-than-English classes to learn the local Yugambeh language, which I think is absolutely tremendous. They're creating a platform for Indigenous storytelling with traditional and contemporary didgeridoo compositions, including didgeridoo lessons and collaborative performance opportunities.

I also know that the show at the Beenleigh Historical Village called *Spirits of the Red Sand* is about showing the story of our Indigenous community throughout history up until the modern day.

When you look at some of the great elders in our Indigenous community, who do so much work with the youth and the younger generations to ensure that that cultural history is retained and taught to the next generation, they are people like Aunty Robyn Williams, Patricia O'Connor and Rory O'Connor. They do so much work to ensure that the culture, beliefs, values and language of the Yugambeh community are continued.

I'd also like to take the opportunity to mention Will Davis, who's the CEO of the Beenleigh Housing Development Company, and also Peter Eather, who is very involved there as well, for the work that they are doing to put together an Indigenous housing project out near Jimboomba to create a community. Part of the importance of that community is that it is focused on creating the opportunity for our Indigenous community to buy and own their own property and creating the economic opportunity for them to do so.

We know from the *Closing the gap* report and its focus on education how important that is. I've already touched on that as to a couple of our schools, but Upper Coomera State College and their Indigenous champions program and Beenleigh State High School's Indigenous mentoring experience program are also critically important to that.

In the urban setting, which we don't always talk about as much for our Indigenous community, there is much that is occurring. I'm pleased to say that, in a number of those spaces, we, as a government, have provided significant funding to organisations. We've provided over \$200,000 to the Kombumerri Aboriginal Corporation for Culture, to facilitate those Indigenous language and arts programs. We've provided over \$300,000 to the Beenleigh Housing Development Company, to keep them operating, and we are working, through the minister's office, at the moment, on their Indigenous housing project.

I'd also like to touch on the terrific work that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service does with their Jimbelunga nursing home at Eagleby. In particular, I'd like to mention Jody Currie as well as Belinda Davis for their hard work and dedication to providing culturally appropriate aged care for our ageing Indigenous community members. Importantly—and I think this is one of the great values of Jimbelunga—it's not only about providing aged care for our Indigenous community; it is creating a bridge for an older generation of people with a European background who are also residing in that facility. It creates the opportunity for those people, even at an advanced age in life, to build relationships with and better understand our Indigenous history and culture. I think that is critically important.

I want to use this opportunity to thank all of those people in my local community who ensure that our Indigenous culture and heritage is celebrated but also that it is continued forward for future generations.

Ms BURNEY (Barton) (17:22): I recognise the member for Forde's comments. I also recognise the member for Werriwa, who is in the chamber this afternoon; her commitment to reconciliation is a very genuine one. I'd also like to recognise, to begin with, the Ngunawal and Ngambri people of this part of the world, the traditional owners of Canberra and its surrounds.

It is interesting to participate in this debate, because I have been a part of this history and been present at most of the momentous occasions I'm going to speak about. Last week, of course, this parliament marked 11 years since the Rudd government delivered the national apology to the stolen generations, which then, of course, led to the 10-year commitment in Closing the Gap.

The member for Warringah has just joined us. He of course has a great commitment in this area as well.

I remember that day absolutely clearly. I remember sitting in the gallery, looking down onto the House of Representatives, and seeing those old people from the stolen generation—where it could not be denied anymore, this truth—sitting around the chamber. I remember the speeches of the then new Prime Minister; it was the first act of the Rudd government to make that apology. I remember well the steadfast refusal of Prime Minister Howard to make that apology. And it was like this nation held its breath, waiting for that apology to take place—that's what it truly felt like. I remember walking out of the chamber that day after listening to the speeches—one from the member for Warringah, as I recall—and I remember walking into the marble foyer and then out onto the forecourt and falling into the arms of Aunty Mae Robinson, who was carrying a black-and-white photo that day, and she said, 'Linda, I brought Mummy with me.' It was a photograph of an eight-year-old Aboriginal girl who'd been put into the Cootamundra girls home. Aunty Mae—and she might be one of your constituents—brought that photograph with her that day. It was truly, truly remarkable.

I'll always remember Kevin Rudd's words:

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

Those were the opening words of the apology. Of course, the reality of that apology was felt not just in this place but by the many thousands of people out on the lawns and across the country. In schools they sat in front of television sets and watched that apology being made.

It did acknowledge the pain and injustice experienced by First Nations peoples, families and communities. It did recognise the historical injustices. The effects of those injustices have transcended down through generations and can still be felt today. It meant so much to so many who had waited so long. I'll never forget those old people and I'll never forget the 350,000 people who crossed the Harbour Bridge in Sydney. Looking up into that clear blue winter sky the word 'sorry' appeared.

That apology of course led to the Closing the Gap targets, which we have an annual report to this parliament on. I think it is right that we think about that annual report and whether it is just a tick-and-flick exercise and how we make that annual report and those Closing the Gap targets a reality that is part of every day of this parliament's existence. Labor has argued long and hard that those targets need to be expanded to include two new targets: one about incarceration and one about child removal. We understand that there is much work being done by the peak Aboriginal organisations and the government in terms of bringing new Closing the Gap refresh targets. We look forward to looking at and working with those targets.

I cannot underscore the intergenerational impact of the stolen generations and how that is felt not only in my generation but in generations younger than mine. I was there the day the *Bringing them home* report was launched in Melbourne in 1997. It was a terrible time in Australia's history. We as a nation were ripping ourselves to pieces. The minister at the time was John Herron and the Prime Minister was John Howard. It was at the height of that terrible debate in terms of winding back the native title legislation and the government's 10-point plan to do that. I'll never forget those days. I think we are still recovering from those days. The *Bringing them home* report was a line in the sand for this country. It was a line in the sand that said that, of course, no-one could argue they did not know that history. It was very important.

There were unmet targets this year. The target to halve the gap in child mortality rates by 2018 is not on track. The target to close the gap in school attendance by 2018 is not on track. The target to close the gap in life expectancy by 2031 is not on track. The target to halve the gap in reading and numeracy by 2018 is not on track. The target to halve the gap in employment by 2018 is also not on track. It is clear to me that we are simply not progressing fast enough for many of us. These have real implications for real people.

Self-determination is very much what First Nations people are talking about. The 200 years of injustice perpetrated against First Nations people should not be our destiny or our fate. Dispossession, the massacres, the removal of children and the destruction of culture and languages of course are still being felt today. The *Closing the gap* report and the apology that kicked off that report should be the way in which we, as a parliament, are working with First Nations people to address those incredibly distressing social justice outcomes. An Indigenous voice to the parliament would give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders a greater say on the issues and decisions of government that affect our lives, and of course the Australian Labor Party is committed to that voice in the parliament. We are committed to constitutional entrenchment of that voice. There is nothing to fear with that entrenchment, and it is certainly

not a third chamber of this parliament—it never has been, and it has never been described as that by those who have been its architect. This is at the core of listening to First Nations people. If we want to see real progress in closing the gap, we need to listen to First Nations communities and their peak organisations. This is where those answers are.

I have worked in this space for over 40 years and I have come to understand that there is no magic bullet. These issues can be dealt with on an individual community basis and we have the capacity to do that. To be able to listen requires real leadership. I recall, very vividly, the words of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, who made that apology:

We ... take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians.

.....

A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility.

A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia.

I pay tribute to Jenny Macklin and, of course, Brendan Nelson, who was the Leader of the Opposition at that time, and the member for Warringah, who I think was the deputy leader at that time.

There is nothing to be afraid of when we speak the truth. There is nothing to be afraid of as a nation in knowing that truth. That truth will liberate us. It will make us a more united nation, a more reconciled nation. The leadership has to come from us. It has to come from this parliament to help shape that truth for future generations in this country.

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah) (17:32): It is good to follow the member for Barton. It is also good to see that there are a number of strong Indigenous voices in this parliament. It is a sign of how far we have come, as a country, that that is the case. Obviously, we have got further to go, but we have come a long way.

Modern Australia has an Indigenous heritage, a British foundation and an immigrant character. Indigeneity is one of the three pillars that constitute modern Australia. I was delighted to be asked by the Prime Minister to be his special envoy, with special responsibility for improving remote school attendance and performance, because if Aboriginal people are to fully participate in this country then obviously they have got to have jobs and they have got to have a decent education, because without a job it is hard to live decently and without an education it is hard to work effectively in modern Australia.

I made a statement to the parliament late last year with a number of recommendations, and I was really pleased that the Prime Minister took up three of those recommendations in his Closing the Gap statement last week. First, the government is proposing to waive the HECS debts of teaching graduates who, after a couple of years of experience and appropriate training, go into remote areas and stay for four years. The government is going to considerably expand funding for the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation. We are proposing to work with more communities that wish to take more responsibility for self-improvement by embracing measures such as the debit card or something akin to the Family Responsibilities Commission. I thank the Prime Minister for adopting those recommendations.

It is absolutely critical that every Australian child go to school every day unless there is some absolutely compelling reason for their absence. It is also important that, when kids go to school, they are going to be well taught. We all know that schools with a high turnover of teachers and principals are not going to give the same quality of education as schools that have teachers and principals who are there for the long haul. We all know that there are difficulties associated with life in remote Australia; some people love it, but many people find it difficult; even those who love it find it difficult. That's why the more incentives we can provide to people who do have a real commitment to teaching in remote Australia the better.

I am a huge admirer of the work of the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation. I know that it is not easy for kids from remote Australia, kids from disadvantaged backgrounds, to suddenly bowl up to some of the best schools in the country; but, thanks to the mentoring which the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation provides, the vast majority of those kids have made a success of the schooling that they've got. I don't want to sound elitist but, frankly, why shouldn't Aboriginal kids be able to aspire to the very best of schools, why shouldn't Aboriginal kids be able to hope for the same kinds of networks that so many of us in this parliament enjoy, why shouldn't the government do what it can to ensure that this particular gap is well and truly closed?

One of the things that impresses me about the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation is that, thus far, at least 50 per cent of the money they have spent has been privately raised. I hope that they continue to raise a very substantial sum from private sources. I think there are many Australians, individually and corporately, that want to support this cause. But if we are going to expect private philanthropy to continue to fund the education of so many promising Indigenous kids, I think it is only reasonable that the federal government provides at least 50 per cent of the funding on an ongoing basis—and I'm pleased that that is now happening.

I know that Indigenous politics can be just as difficult as politics everywhere, but I want to say that there are few people in this country who are more deserving of our admiration than Noel Pearson. I don't say Noel is always right, but he is always courageous. And he has been incredibly brave in trying to insist that his own people don't just lament the manifest injustices that have been done to them over the years but are also prepared to take responsibility for their future—'our right to take responsibility'. It thrills me that Indigenous leaders at a number of communities right around Australia, such as Ian Trust in the East Kimberley, have said to government, 'We are prepared to accept the debit card,' whereby 80 per cent of a person's welfare payments are, of necessity, spent on the things that are needed for life. I think any community that wants to embrace the debit card should find that the government is prepared to make that happen.

As is reasonably well known, I've spent quite a lot of time in remote Australia. I've tried to make it my business to spend at least a week a year in remote Australia—even as opposition leader, and even as Prime Minister, I tried to do so. Over the years, visiting remote schools has been a pretty dispiriting experience—but much less so now, I've got to say.

I am very impressed with the progress that has been made and the efforts that governments of states and territories of both persuasions have been making to ensure that remote schools are getting better. Every remote school that I visited had a data board in the common room where every enrolled child's progress and attendance was being tracked. All of the remote schools that I visited were insisting upon a rigorous back-to-basics curriculum, and all of the

state and territory education departments were doing what they could to try to ensure that they got much more continuity with teachers and principals.

So, while we have not closed so many of these important gaps, progress is being made. We should be encouraged, even while we urge ourselves on to more efforts in the future. Yes, I am certainly open to seeing new targets added. I would like to see crime reduced. I would like to see family dysfunction reduced, because then we would certainly reduce incarceration. Then we would certainly reduce child removal. But, in the end, in every community—remote, regional and urban—regardless of its ethnic composition, we want the kids to go to school, we want the adults to go to work and we want communities to be safe, because that is what happens in a decent community. We owe it to Aboriginal people to ensure that they, the First Australians, are also first-class citizens in the very best of countries. I think that the Prime Minister's Closing the Gap statement is a significant step towards that wonderful goal.

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (17:42): At the heart of the reconciliation movement is a profound and simple truth: Australia is and always will be Aboriginal land. First Nations people loved and cared for this continent for millennia, long before many of our ancestors first arrived by boat. They fought fiercely to defend their homes and they have battled bravely ever since against exclusion, disease, oppression and discrimination, trying to preserve for their children, and for all of us, the world's oldest living culture.

I stand in this place today to share with you my frustrations on the Closing the Gap strategy. While I still commend the last Labor government on this commitment and its positive intention in establishing the Closing the Gap strategy, after 10 years of well-intentioned and well-crafted words from numerous political leaders, today I reflect that not enough has really changed in that time. We must refresh the Closing the Gap targets for it is not them that have failed; rather, it is governments, both state and federal, that have failed to take necessary action to meet them. The uncomfortable truth is there is a dramatic gap between the Australia that the overwhelming majority of Australians inhabit and that inhabited by many First Nations people around our vast country. There are deficiencies in justice and jobs for our First Nations people, as there are in health care, in housing and in opportunities for Aboriginal children to get a good education.

Without revising these targets and reviewing our activities, the cycle of ongoing discrimination and disadvantage will continue. Communities continue to be torn apart by poverty, violence, abuse, addiction and alcohol. The truth is there are still men and women being arrested, charged and jailed not because of the gravity of their offence but because of the colour of their skin. Aboriginal people are still suffering from diseases that the rest of us will never know and are still dying at an age when the rest of us are contemplating retirement. The truth about children and young people who are suffering violence and taking their own lives in numbers is a circumstance that should be shaming us all into action.

The initial Closing the Gap strategy introduced by the Rudd government went a long way in promoting changing this story. However, despite the interrelationship between the areas addressed by that strategy and its goals, the over-representation of Aboriginal people in Australia's prisons draws attention to the lack of a justice component to the strategy. There is no focus on dealing directly with the over-representation of Aboriginal Australians in our prisons and criminal justice system, and yet not dealing with that issue prevents us from dealing with all the other areas of focus for the strategy as well.

We need to refocus our messaging and our strategy because, instead of just being tough on crime, we need to also be tough on the causes of crime, as well as how we come to these often inequitable outcomes. I implore this government and indeed this entire parliament to work with all state and local governments and community organisations to bring about a true nation-reaching, grassroots, active, place based justice reinvestment approach before we lose more people to recidivism, crime and intergenerational welfare dependency.

I've been passionate about changing this story for some time now. I am proud that, during my term as President of the Law Society of Western Australia and as a director of the Law Council of Australia, I have contributed to these organisations adopting the Diversity and Equality Charter as well as continuing to press for better funding for access to justice and closing the Indigenous justice gap. The greatness of a nation is judged by the way that it treats its most vulnerable. Alas, when it comes to Indigenous incarceration, we are neither a strong nation nor a great one. This is something that we can and must do something about, because we must ensure that Australia is indeed a great and strong nation.

Research by Save the Children in Western Australia has found that one in four young people in detention are from Perth's south-eastern suburbs, predominantly the areas that I represent in the seat of Burt. In recognition of this shocking statistic, the Youth Partnership Project was founded with the belief that children are not born bad but rather are born into complex environments that can lead to significant behavioural problems. The Youth Partnership Project model provides an early targeted support for young people aged 10 to 12 with complex needs, by working with the WA Police Force, many different state government agencies and local government to identify young people, many of whom are Indigenous, who are at risk of going down a juvenile justice path.

From this model has come the Armadale Youth Intervention Partnership. This place based intensive intervention recognises that merely being tough on crime does little to remedy the causes of crime or reduce crime from occurring. This program is now also being expanded into Gosnells.

In WA, we spend around \$56 million a year on juvenile detention. Imagine if some of that money were being invested in early intervention programs like AYIP or directed towards better education and prevention programs to teach families about the dangers of alcohol consumption while pregnant, to teach more about foetal alcohol spectrum disorder. We would be spending a lot less on corrective services and instead gaining a lot more from the people who we have helped and decreasing crime rates.

There is an opportunity here to change the story of people's lives from one of poverty and another generation of welfare and public housing dependency into one of being employed taxpayers. It's up to all levels of government to support programs such as this and to connect to grassroots programs and organisations who are at the front line, preventing the entry of a child into the justice system.

I recently met with some graduates and new attendees from the Armadale Youth Intervention Project. The results have been outstanding, not just for the children who have participated in the program but for their families and the wider community. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of the next class of 2019 and the new Gosnells program as well.

For every day that a young person is kept out of juvenile detention, we save \$815 in Western Australia. Given that approximately one in four juvenile detainees come from my electorate, the government investment in this program, the AYIP, pays a huge dividend. We will not have to spend as much on police, courts or corrective services, whilst gaining a lot more from the people that we have actually helped. We need to provide more opportunities for at-risk kids, not just in the electorate of Burt but across the country, before they end up in the juvenile justice system. These sorts of programs are really important to our community and critical to how we together can change their story and the story of our community.

The few programs that I have mentioned in this speech and many others that I have seen and explored around the country are not only focusing on crime of a particular sort. The reason that they were brought into existence is to reduce instances of such crime, often in response to a critical indicator of rising crime rates. The crimes in question, by and large, are crimes of violence against white Australians and property crimes, whether home burglary, shoplifting or property damage. Again, the victims are predominantly white or non-Aboriginal. What the programs in response have to deal with, however, is the trauma and disconnect inflicted on these communities by such crime stemming from numerous and far more serious crimes committed against them, usually by those close to them, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, child abuse and drug abuse. It is of course completely right that we should be addressing these, but should we not be acting to prevent these crimes in the first place and assisting these victims of these crimes because of the seriousness and importance of these crimes and the trauma caused to these victims in and of itself, not merely as a by-product or because it's a way of reducing crimes committed against more mainstream members of our society? Herein lies the rub: Aboriginal people are caught up in the criminal justice system at a disproportionately higher rate than non-Aboriginal people not only because they commit a disproportionate amount of crime but because they are also a disproportionately higher proportion of the victims. Yes, the thing swinging people into action is when a nine-year-old shoplifts, not the trauma inflicted on a child and the way that it may ruin their life forever for yet another generation.

All of that brings me to one of my other major social justice passions: keeping women and children safe in their homes. I've spoken in this place many times about my previous work with Starick's services and the import work that it does in my community providing refuge and outreach services for women and children fleeing domestic and family violence. I've spoken many times previously about the need to adequately fund refuges like Starick to keep women and children safe. Indigenous women and girls are 35 times more likely than the wider female population to be hospitalised due to family violence. Starick House, the domestic violence refuge in my electorate, tells me that more than half the women who present to their shelter fleeing domestic violence are Indigenous. We must close the gap.

The flow-on consequences of this government's inaction, of its dust-gatheringly slow results in invoking any sort of change or progress, must be made a priority. A Labor government will make justice reinvestment a national priority because detention and jail time for young people should be a rarity, not a right of passage.

Mr RAMSEY (Grey—Government Whip) (17:51): I rise to speak on this 11th statement on Closing the Gap. My seat of Grey has around seven or eight per cent Indigenous population, and around 40 per cent of those live in remote communities, in many cases where

English is not the first language. All of the remote Indigenous communities in South Australia are in the electorate of Grey. I was elected in 2007 and I have become a very regular visitor to pretty much all of these communities. Over that time I made a lot of friends and looked at the change. I must say the improvement in infrastructure over that period of time, which roughly shadows the period since the apology, has been very significant. In many of these communities the infrastructure is first class, whether that be housing—sometimes we need a bit more housing, it must be admitted—the quality of the shops, the health facilities or the schools. They are schools that parents anywhere in Australia would be happy to take their children to on the basis of the facilities. As we speak, we are constructing a \$106 million road into the main access road into the APY lands in the north of my electorate.

We've done many things. We've implemented a school attendance program. It's had mixed results, it must be said. School attendance programs work very well when you have good leaders on the ground, a bit like schools themselves. Where you have a really good lead person in the school attendance team, we get very significant results. One of the downsides of that, of course, is that it's only part-time employment. Once somebody shows that they actually have some goods, someone else will offer them a job and then you'll have to find someone to replace that very good person. So it's patchy. The government has announced that we are providing funds to continue that role and, in fact, will expand it in my electorate in the main town of Ceduna so it will apply to Ceduna Area School and the Lutheran school there. It's been running 30 kilometres away at Koonibba.

All of those things are improving, but on many other things—as the *Closing the gap* report shows us—the indices are not improving. You have to ask yourself the question: why? We are spending a bit over \$40,000 a head on Indigenous Australia at the moment. When you get into the remote lands, the APY lands, we're at over \$200,000 a head. And you have to ask yourself: why aren't we seeing a dramatic improvement in the outcomes of the people? We've got dramatically improved infrastructure, but the programs do not seem to be delivering the results. And yet, when I go and talk to these program deliverers on the ground, whether they be NGOs or government employees, they've got a good story to tell: 'We're doing this. We're doing that. We're teaching the women how to cook. We're showing the fellows how to repair their car.' Whatever the program, they're doing a really good and important job. They'll convince me they're doing a good job. They are convinced they're doing a good job. Then I'll go to the next provider and get exactly the same story and I'll be convinced again. And then I'll go to the next provider and I'll get exactly the same story and be convinced again. I say to them: 'How come, if you're all doing such a good job, the place is not getting better?'

One of the complaints that I hear is: 'Well, we just started this program. We thought we had it up and running well, and then the funding changed.' I'm not a great subscriber to that theory. I think we don't examine the programs hard enough in the first place. We don't have hard enough benchmarks put in and we don't ask the programs to justify their existence. I say: if the program's no good, it's no good, and that money should be reinvested into something that works, quite frankly. We're doing the best we can, but it's not good enough. We're spending a lot of money, but it's not making enough difference. So we need to keep examining those programs.

In urban Indigenous Australia—I said 40 per cent of the Aboriginal population live in the remote lands; 60 per cent, by definition, live in the more urbanised areas—progress is better.

One of the great advantages they have in these communities is that English is generally the first language. They speak English at home and they speak English in the school. It's such an enormous advantage. I don't know how many wars the English won around the world, but they won that war—the war of language. English is the commerce of the world. It is the thing that works. It unlocks the future. So we're seeing better results, particularly in the school area, and I celebrate every Aboriginal child that reaches year 12 level. I celebrate everyone that goes on to higher levels of learning. I celebrate everyone that enters an apprenticeship. May they keep doing it!

I'm very pleased to report that the South Australian government is supporting Clontarf to come into South Australia, a place where they weren't welcome before for other reasons. I won't get into the politics of it. But they will be there, and I think they're doing a great job in getting Indigenous boys to school all over Australia—thousands of them. So we need to back that program.

That brings me now to the cashless welfare card, which the member for Warringah touched on. It is an outstanding success. Ceduna was the first community to sign on. We know we've got lower domestic violence rates. We know we've got lower levels of alcohol content in people admitted to the drying out centres. We know that people are spending more money on groceries. We know that the place is just better. As a young leader said to me: 'I know all that. I've seen all the statistics. I know what it is. But the place just feels a whole lot better!' We know that they're spending less money on poker machines. It's a great outcome. It's a great program. It needs to be extended. I think it needs to be extended to more communities around Australia. But in fact it's a finite program that's running out on 30 June.

The legislation to extend this trial for another 12 months was introduced into the chamber last week. It hasn't been debated yet. I understand that the minister is seeking the Labor Party's support. I dearly hope they give it. Let me say to those opposite: please, please support the continuation of the trials. Support it for the women and children that need the vastly improved environment in which they are living in. Don't just lap up the things you are told by people who don't know. I extend the invitation to anyone on the other side of the chamber—and I don't just mean this chamber: if you want to come to Ceduna and meet the people and witness the results, I will take you there any time you like. I'd be very pleased to do so. So that's my plea at the end of this. I think we are making progress in that community faster than we've ever made it before. It is a quantum change in behaviour. Tourists have noticed the difference. The place is calmer. The program is now stretching—it's just starting to unroll in Bundaberg. I've said all along that I think Bundaberg is a very important marker in this trial. We've had Ceduna and Kununurra, or East Kimberley, which have large Aboriginal populations. We have gone into the Goldfields, where there is a very significant Aboriginal population. But now it's in Bundaberg, where the Aboriginal population is much more like the mainstream make-up of the rest of Australia.

I've always said that the cashless debit card is not about Aboriginality. It is about the failure of those on long-term welfare to spend money on the things that the taxpayer has given them money to spend on: to spend it on their families; to spend it on education; to spend it on housing, on heating, on clothing and all of those things—to spend it on entertainment—but not to blow the majority of it on alcohol, on drugs and on gambling. I am always reminded of what the former mayor of Ceduna told me when I asked about the way it was going down in

Ceduna. He said: 'I'll tell you the people who really hate it; the people who really hate the cashless welfare card are the drug dealers. The drug dealers really hate it, because there's no cash for the drug dealer.' I celebrate that. What a magnificent win that is. That is a fantastic advance.

As one who has walked with that community and congratulated their leaders on the strong moves they've made, and told them that in fact they are showing Australia the way, I implore this place to support the continuation of the trials and to look seriously at rolling them out further around Australia. It's not a silver bullet—I understand that—but I believe it's a very valuable tool in closing the gap. We must stick with it.

Ms O'TOOLE (Herbert) (18:01): I believe it appropriate that I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land upon which we stand at this point in time, the Ngunawal people. I will also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land upon which I live: the Manbarra people and the Bwgcolman people of Palm Island, and the Bindal people of Townsville.

Last year I stood in this place and spoke on the 2018 *Closing the gap* report. I spoke about the targets that were set 11 years ago and how, sadly, the report showed that, for the first time since 2011, three out of the seven Closing the Gap targets were on track to be met. Unfortunately, I am standing here today disappointed and frustrated again. Whilst I am very pleased to see improvements in early childhood education and year 12 retention rates in the 2019 *Closing the gap* report, the reality is that these are only two targets out of seven that are on track. I will also give my congratulations, in my local community, to Clontarf and the newly established Stars programs that are operating in a number of the high schools in my electorate of Herbert. I do believe that that has helped significantly in ensuring the year 12 retention rates and that getting kids to school is working very, very well.

Under this LNP government, targets have gone backwards. As a result, they have not done much for our First Nations brothers and sisters, because their lives are not improving. The cuts, chaos and dysfunction of this LNP government are clearly evident in this report. I want to make it clear that it's not the targets that have failed; rather, it is this LNP government that has failed our First Nations people. The successive failures of the Abbott-Turnbull Morrison government's inability to match well-intentioned rhetoric with action are gross miscarriages of justice and leadership.

It needs to be said that the time for rhetoric and longwinded niceties is well and truly over. It is now time for action, collaboration and delivery. The time for dictating to our First Nations people is over. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have a very high incarceration rate and very poor health outcomes. Poverty and inequality are extraordinarily high. We must engage and collaborate with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters, because this is their land—it always was and it always will be.

Labor believe that we need a new focus to achieve the targets set out in the Closing the Gap framework, and we welcome the opportunity to collaborate with our First Nations people, because we know that a genuine partnership with First Nations people is essential to bring about change. This LNP government has failed to genuinely engage with First Nations people. Whether it's Closing the Gap, the Community Development Program, the Indigenous Advancement Strategy or constitutional recognition, this government has consistently pursued flawed policy and failed to genuinely engage with First Nations people in the design and implementation process.

If those opposite were serious and truly committed to ensuring First Nations people have a say in the matters that affect them then they would immediately reverse their opposition to a constitutionally enshrined voice for First Nations people. Under a Shorten-led government, a voice for the First Nations people will be enshrined in our Constitution and it will be one of our first priorities. This is a genuine commitment and we will work in partnership with our First Nations peoples.

My electorate of Herbert includes the largest discrete Aboriginal community, Palm Island, with a population of anywhere between 3,500 and 5,000 people. Fifty-one per cent of the population on Palm Island are under 25 and it's approximately eight per cent of the electorate. Palm Island has a horrendous penal history, but the traditional owners, the Manbarra people and the Bwgcolman people, are strong and resilient people. But they have some unique challenges that the LNP government are completely ignoring.

Palm Island's unemployment rate is almost 29 per cent and, when you consider that 51 per cent of the population are under 25, that is extraordinarily high. Instead of working with the community to address this, the LNP government have cut the national partnership on remote Indigenous housing, a 10-year \$5.4 billion program which expired in June 2018. For Palm Island, this has meant further job losses. Because of the LNP cuts to vocational education and training and the national partnership on remote Indigenous housing, seven apprentices on Palm have lost their jobs. These cuts are doing nothing to assist in closing the gap. In fact, it is this sort of poor decision-making and lack of vision by this LNP government that is failing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples not only in my electorate of Herbert but across this nation.

I have a strong and longstanding relationship with the people of Palm Island that stems from well before my election to this place. As I said earlier, the residents of Palm Island, the Bwgcolman and Manbarra peoples, are resilient and strong, but they need support to achieve economic sustainability. They are passionate about their community, their history and their vision for a thriving, prosperous and economically sustainable island. Last year, it was their 100-year anniversary and they celebrated with a focus on the past, the present and the future. The future was formed around the young people and their vision for their community.

I have been enormously proud to support Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council in securing funding for local projects such as: the better connected project, which improved connectivity between the Palm Island council and community members, staff and other agencies; and the small business incubator project, which enabled residents to have a space for entrepreneurial small-business endeavours which will stimulate small-business growth and create much-needed employment opportunities.

I am proud to be part of a Labor team that will invest an extra \$750,000 in our first three years to the Bwgcolman Community School on Palm Island. This investment will ensure every child will get the quality education that they deserve. I will continue to work with the residents and the Palm Island Shire Council to ensure that they receive their fair share. Together, we will continue to strive for more opportunities for the residents to ensure that we do close the gap.

Labor have worked with our First Nations peoples. We have co-designed and announced policies that will assist in closing the gap. A Labor government will provide \$10 million to programs that will assist in the healing of the stolen generation and their descendants

nationwide and be administered by the Healing Foundation. These programs will support intergenerational healing, family reunion and return to country. Labor will work with First Nations peoples and set justice targets, reduce incarceration rates and improve community safety. In our first 100 days, a Shorten Labor government will convene a national summit for First Nations children. It is very clear that Labor are serious about working with our First Nations people in order to make positive and meaningful changes to their lives and the lives of their children.

Governments cannot any longer turn a blind eye to the reality of failed targets. In order to meet our targets, as I have said, we must engage in genuine and collaborative partnership. We must engage in truth-telling. We must admit our weaknesses and failures of the past and take serious and immediate actions that will improve the lives of First Nations people and give them the opportunity to tell their stories. Labor believes that the notion of 'business as usual' cannot continue and is no longer an option. First Nations people must have a permanent and ongoing say in the issues that affect their lives if we are to ever close the gap. I am proud to work in this place with the Hon. Linda Burnie, Senator Pat Dodson and Senator Malarndirri McCarthy in a Labor team that is trying very hard to close the gap for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters into the future.

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (18:11): Deputy Speaker McVeigh, in commencing my remarks, I acknowledge the work that you did with me on the Joint Select Committee on the Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, which I chaired and which reported at the end of last year. Your contribution, particularly with your experience as a minister, was very significant. I appreciate the work that you did in helping bring us together. I also note that my friend the member for Wide Bay, who has a significant community of Indigenous people in Cherbourg, is here today. It is to my great regret that we never made it to Cherbourg, because of some sorry business that was going on in that community, but it was very much our intention to go there. I particularly want to acknowledge my friend the member for Indi, who I will miss in the next parliament. We had the great privilege on that committee of visiting her community and understanding something more of what happens when you bring together a group of Aboriginal people from all around the country and put them in a community that is not necessarily their own community and also some of the issues of intercommunal dispute, as it were, as to who are the rightful claimers of the area. I know that the member for Indi is particularly passionate about truth-telling and having a better understanding of that history. I am sure that is a matter in which, even beyond her service in this place, she will continue to be interested.

Occasionally we come to this place thinking we have all the answers. I approached the Joint Select Committee on the Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as somebody who was interested in constitutional law, but I realised how little I actually knew about Indigenous policy and Indigenous history and how much more I needed to know and wanted to know. The member for Indi has a particular interest in the whole issue of Closing the Gap and asked many questions about that issue. I'm going to write something, at greater leisure later in the year, about the experience of that committee and some of the things that we saw. But it occurred to me that it is occasionally good to admit that you don't have all the answers and that you can look around and there is much that you can learn from others.

I think too much of the debate we have had about Indigenous policy in this place has been bifurcated between those on the Right, who are looking for the practical and the local, and those on the Left, who are looking for the symbolic and the bureaucratic. I think what we need to do is find a *modus vivendi* that brings the sides together, that says 'For the practical to work you need the symbolic, but for the symbolic to have meaning you need the practical.' That is something that I particularly took away from the journey in relation to the Joint Select Committee on the Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

I think it's important to think about the purpose of Indigenous affairs policy. Surely the policy has to be to close the gap, to lift the standard of living for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I think one of the key things that has come out of the Closing the Gap Refresh is the same thing that we put forward in the joint select committee: you need to have Indigenous people at the centre of what you are doing and you need to actually ask them to set the targets that are right for them. Anybody can set a target for somebody else where you set somebody up for failure; but, unless you have people buying into the target, unless you have people buying into the goal, you will not achieve the aim that you wanted to achieve.

I'm sorry the member for Herbert has left, because I enjoyed visiting Palm Island on that committee with her. I opened my eyes to Palm Island. I have to say, I had a particularly negative impression of Palm Island before visiting there. Palm Island has a notorious reputation in our country, but I was actually impressed by a number of the people that we met on Palm Island for their leadership and for trying to better the lives of their fellow citizens. The member for Herbert did what any opposition does in this space: critiques the failure of government policy in this space. That is, in some respects, easy and understandable politics. It is indeed what people on my side could have done when the Rudd-Gillard Rudd government was in office, when the Whitlam government was in office or when the Hawke government was in office, because the truth is that everyone has approached this policy space with good intentions and wanting to do better. But we haven't achieved the success that all of us would hope to.

Australia, as I've said, in other contexts is a wonderful country. There's nowhere on earth where the standard of living is as high as it is here, but Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples don't always share in that high standard of living. The inequality between the social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the rest of the population is quite stark. So the notion that Tom Calma put forward when he was Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner some decade ago, that we should have a Closing the Gap target, was a very good one. The measurements and the performance over that decade have not been fantastic. As the Prime Minister said, we should celebrate the victories, because part of this is a need to celebrate the hopeful notes in Indigenous policy. It is not all a story of failure. It is good that we now have 95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education. We're on track to meet that target by 2025. And we're on track to meet the target in relation to year 12 attainment, halving the gap there by 2020. But they are the only two targets under the current regime that are on track. The other targets around life expectancy, child mortality rates, reading and numeracy, employment and school attendance are not successful, and we need to do more there.

It is true to say that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are living longer, that 95 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander four-year-olds are enrolled in early childhood education, that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are staying in school for longer and that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have year 12 qualifications, and that is a good thing. I agree with the member for Warringah when he talks about the importance of school attendance, because education is the thing that is going to change people's lives. But it's more than just education. It is what Noel Pearson once described as 'fanning the flames of self-interest'. Indigenous people themselves have to decide that they want to try to improve their lives and make them the focus. The government can't force that on people. That is why the refresh targets that have gone through the COAG process, which have the buy-in not only of the Commonwealth government but also of the states and territories, are so important. The way in which we've engaged with Indigenous people and are engaging with them in relation to those refresh targets is so very important in terms of properly achieving. That doesn't mean that if you haven't succeeded in one area you change the target so that you can succeed. It's about getting the buy-in. It's about getting that flame of self-interest. It's about making the decision, a decision of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In the remaining couple of minutes that I have left today, I want to talk about some of the things that we are doing well and some of the thing that the government has talked about in relation to addressing the Closing the Gap targets. I also wanted to address the member for Herbert's point about constitutional recognition. The government is giving active consideration to the report from the committee that Senator Dodson and I chaired, and I look forward to their response in due course. That is not something that has been taken off the table. It is being given active consideration.

I applaud the Prime Minister for his announcement of the teacher boost for remote Australia. Prior to becoming a member of this House, I served on the board of Teach For Australia, which places outstanding university graduates from other disciplines—in science, in law, in economics—into a teaching program and then sends them to remote schools and sees extraordinary changes in the performance of students as a result of that. Anything that we can do to encourage our best and brightest teachers to go into remote schools has to be of benefit, because we know the quality of teaching improves the quality of student performance.

I applaud the work that the member for Warringah is doing in trying to encourage more students to go to school. I applaud the Prime Minister's focus, his single focus, on improving educational outcomes, because that is a particularly life-changing and society-changing policy prescription. Senator Scullion, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, has, since he has been minister, pursued the notion of Indigenous procurement, and he has had real success in this. It's not something which he has blown his trumpet about, but it is a wonderful thing to see Indigenous businesses given a real focus in government procurement policy. The Indigenous business sector now spans over 1,473 Indigenous businesses, delivering 11,933 contracts worth over \$1.83 billion since the establishment of this policy in 2015. This is a great increase, and it has been particularly because of the single-minded focus of the Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

I commend the *Closing the gap* report. We must do better, we will do better and the refresh targets will help us achieve that goal.

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (18:21): I'm going to begin with a quote from co-chairs June Oscar and Rod Little of the Close the Gap campaign. Just a few days ago, those co-chairs said:

We have had so many promises and so many disappointments. It's well and truly time to match the rhetoric. We cannot continue to return to parliament every year and hear the appalling statistics.

I have a great deal of empathy with that statement. This is the sixth year I have stood to address the *Closing the gap* report. The fact that, again, in 2019, I stand before the House to say that only two of seven targets remain anywhere near on track fills me with a sadness but also a rage that we seem incapable of doing better when, indeed, we are an incredibly prosperous and wealthy nation. There is a problem with the relationship between government and its First Nations people, and I don't think that we can underestimate the challenges that that brings to this parliament. I will come back to that issue in a moment.

Before going any further, I would like to acknowledge that this parliament again meets on the lands of the Ngunawal and the Ngambri peoples of Canberra and surrounds. I would also like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the country that I get to call home in Newcastle—the Awabakal people and the Worimi people across the harbour into the Port Stephens region. I take that acknowledgement very seriously. Indeed, when I chair our caucus meetings, it is the first thing that I say each and every time. I hope that reminding ourselves of this is not just a trite comment at the beginning of our speeches or at the start of parliament or community events but that it somehow becomes deeply embedded in the Australian psyche—this understanding of First Nations peoples, their place in this nation and the responsibility that we have to create and to forge a mutually respectful partnership.

I opened with those comments about just how deeply distressing it is to stand in this parliament year after year and report that we have failed. I think the problem is—and I take the point of the member for Berowra before about not wanting to take political pointscore into this debate—the failure of consecutive governments to find a genuinely respectful, mutual partnership. And, at the risk of sounding partisan now, I think the way that this government responded to the Uluru statement that came down last year has simply embedded that distrust of government. Their quick response was to dismiss that statement, within days, after two years of consultation—two years of First Nations people talking about the kind of relationship they wanted to reset with the Australian people. The First Nations presented a very well-thought-through statement to this parliament. It was one that we weren't sitting at the table for, and one that might have surprised us with some of the content, but it was the wishes of First Nations people. And what did we do—what did the government do? It said outright, 'This cannot happen. This creates a third chamber.' Wrong! That was total misinformation. But that dismissed that statement on day one. I cannot even begin to imagine the pain and sense of betrayal that would've been felt by First Nations people in Australia at that time.

First Nations people are amongst the most resilient people on this planet, as any people must be who've survived 200-plus years of dispossession—and I don't think we should sugar-coat the cultural frontier wars and the bloody process of colonisation, over a long period of time, that took place here. Australia has a very complicated relationship with First Nations

people that is born from our colonial past, and it seems we are very, very slow to learn about how to remedy that. The year-by-year Close the Gap disappointments are really confirmation of the fact that we've never been able to deal adequately with those fundamental questions about our relationships with First Nations people. So we can say that it is great that we have more four-year-olds enrolled in an early childhood education program in First Nations communities, and it is terrific that more people are attaining a year 12 education. But it is truly appalling that we cannot make headway on any one of those other targets.

Let's not forget that there are important targets that are missing, that have never been agreed to by this parliament. I will flag with you just one of those: the justice target. It is totally abhorrent that we incarcerate First Nations peoples to the extent that you are more likely to go to prison than you are to go to university in this country if you are a First Nations person. I don't know anybody who actually thinks that that is acceptable. Yet that is what we do.

I am deeply worried by the incarceration of any person, because, really, imprisonment is a failure of our justice system. It's the failure end. So the more and more people you incarcerate, the more and more you really have to say, 'We've failed. We have failed you deeply.'

There is a dreadful trajectory, a pattern, now, that shows the shocking imprisonment rate for First Nations women. This has skyrocketed nearly 150 per cent since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1991. We have a senator, Senator Patrick Dodson, who sat on that royal commission. It took testimony from people across this nation and made over 330 recommendations, most of which were not enacted. So when I sometimes feel a little despondent about the progress, or the lack of progress, being made in this space—and this is an area that I've worked in for the last 30 years of my life—battling issues around the relationships between First Nations Australians and the rest of us, I think that I cannot be self-indulgent and throw my hands up and say, 'This is too hard.' We do not have that luxury. When I see people like Senator Pat Dodson, Senator Malarndirri McCarthy and Linda Burney, the member for Barton, in our own house playing such important leadership roles and bringing those voices into this parliament—and I acknowledge Ken Wyatt, the member for Hasluck, on the other side—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr McVeigh): It being 6.30 pm, the debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 192B. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting. The member for Newcastle will have leave to continue speaking when the debate is resumed.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That grievances be noted.

Pharmaceuticals

Mr HILL (Bruce) (18:30): Just over two years ago a 64 centimetre blood clot almost killed my healthy 20-year-old daughter Elanor after she was prescribed the old and dangerous drug Diane-35. This drug has never been approved for use in the US and was banned in Europe in 2013 for a time after too many women died of blood clots. It was prescribed to Elly off-list as a contraceptive pill simply to regulate irregular periods, despite only being approved for use in Australia to treat acne and excessive hirsutism in cases of androgyny. Yet

Diane-35 is still prescribed by Australian doctors off-label as a contraceptive without proper warnings, education or discussion about the risks. All contraceptive pills have the risk of blood clots, but the risk with Diane-35 is higher than the more modern, safer alternatives. Quite simply, while for a small number of women it may be on balance okay, it should not be prescribed as a first-choice contraceptive, yet it still is. Just to explain, 'off label' or 'off list' are terms used when a drug is prescribed to treat a condition other than what it was actually approved for.

In relation to my daughter, after two years of treatment and seeing every type of doctor imaginable, Elly is now left with serious lifelong impacts, such as irreversible damage to multiple veins and intermittent swelling and pain—post thrombotic syndrome. She had another blood clot late last year as the veins are so damaged. She'll probably be on blood thinners forever. She can't have surgery without coming off them. She is waiting for the doctor to say she can risk a break to have her wisdom teeth out. She has very sexy and expensive leg stockings. She is unable to ever take the contraceptive pill again. She has constant check-ups, doctors appointments and tests, risks in pregnancy, expensive travel insurance and longer term risks of serious deterioration, ulcers and worse.

Since we first spoke publicly a year ago, Elly and I have worked together to raise awareness and speak up on behalf of women across Australia. I've been contacted by hundreds of women with similar harrowing stories. Some women did not live to tell their tale and I spoke with their families. I promised that I would not give up pushing for changes to reduce the harm from this drug, and I have not. I have spoken to pharmaceutical companies, regulators, the minister, colleagues in the Labor Party, across the aisle and on the crossbench, including Dr Phelps.

These efforts last year produced some positive changes, including stronger, harmonised product warnings and the Pharmacy Guild's new professional development modules. The Royal Australian College of GPs, under the presidency of Dr Bastian Seidel, was wonderful and pushed out awareness campaigns to GPs. The TGA considered the many requests I made and provided reasonable responses. But it's still not enough.

Despite my efforts, I don't think enough has changed. I have no hesitation in saying that there are still women in Australia today who needlessly die or are at risk of harm due to this drug. I'll give you one small illustration. Only late last year my daughter told me in frustration that a close friend of hers went to the GP and asked for a contraceptive pill. The GP prescribed her Diane-35 as the first choice, without asking any family history and warning that this drug was not approved as a contraceptive or that it was risky. Fortunately, she remembered that that was the drug Elly was on and walked out of that GP to find a better doctor. Not all women would be so lucky.

I've come to realise, however, that the problem is wider than just Diane-35. Australia's whole pharmacovigilance regime—a fancy word for drug safety—needs strengthening. So I call tonight for an independent inquiry to officially review Australia's pharmacovigilance system, as we have now fallen behind many other countries in too many areas. More can and must be done to improve drug safety and to minimise harm to Australian patients. A key focus for the inquiry should be to examine the introduction of a mandatory requirement that doctors advise patients that they are being prescribed an off-label drug with a potentially

higher or different risk profile and that they seek their consent prior to issuing the prescription, unless this is practically impossible.

In Australia currently, while the TGA recognises that off-label prescription may be clinically appropriate in some circumstances, it recommends that such use only be considered where other options are unavailable, exhausted, not tolerated or unsuitable. There are inherent risks in prescribing off-label drugs. Drug companies of course make a commercial decision when they choose to get a drug approved for certain indications. They pick the easiest thing and then may pursue other indications, or word may just spread that it's also good for X or Y, through case studies or clinical practice and so on. But in off-label cases there is insufficient clinical data about the efficacy in the novel situation that they're being prescribed for, and they could have unknown, serious or possibly irreparable side effects.

Scientific literature indicates that an adverse reaction is more likely to occur soon after a patient commences a new drug, and risks are heightened where a drug is prescribed for a purpose other than one for which it is approved. Particular risks—which I don't have time to outline tonight—apply for patients aged over 65 years and children. Australian clinical practice currently encourages doctors to discuss medication risks with patients, but there is no legal obligation in this country upon doctors to inform patients when the drug they are prescribed is off-label.

In effect, in being prescribed off-label drugs, the patient is being subjected to an experiment which may or may not work but could have unexpected medical outcomes or complications. It's critical that patients be fully informed about this by doctors so patients can decide whether they wish to take a drug, knowing of the risks and being extra watchful then for adverse side effects.

The UK and several European countries, including France, Spain, the Netherlands and Sweden, require doctors to advise patients when they're prescribing off-label drugs so their informed consent is obtained before they commence any drug regimen. There is no reason not to adopt a similar model in Australia. The Australian Advisory Committee on Medicines has recognised that informed consent is critical in all prescribing decisions. Requiring Australian doctors to give patients the choice of whether to accept the risks or not, by informing them that the drug is being used contrary to label and may have unknown consequences or complications, will lead to better quality conversations between doctors and patients, increase patient awareness of risks and potentially adverse drug reactions and empower patients.

Some jurisdictions also give drug safety regulators an explicit power to step in and impose special conditions or restrictions in relation to off-label prescribing. I wish this would happen in Australia in relation to Diane-35 to stop it being handed out by lazy doctors as a first-line contraceptive.

Another key focus for the inquiry should be to examine the introduction of a mandatory requirement for prescribers to notify pharmacists on prescriptions when a drug is off-label and what ailment or illness it is being prescribed for. Pharmacists, of course, have a significant role in drug safety and patient education. Australian pharmacists are not generally involved in overseeing or second-guessing prescriptions. Nevertheless, pharmacists usually check patient understanding of prescription drugs and dosages prior to dispensing them. With off-label prescriptions, this final check cannot be as effective in Australia, as pharmacists are unlikely

to know why a drug is being prescribed or to have sufficient pharmacological information about a drug's risk profile if it's used off-label.

In other countries, such as the US, some European countries, Thailand and the Philippines, there is this extra check, and pharmacists are notified when a drug is prescribed off-label so that better conversation can occur at the counter at that last check. As the last professional link in the prescription chain, pharmacists in Australia could provide a critical extra check in improving patient awareness of and education about those risks so patients don't just take off-label drugs unwittingly and so they can encourage patients to return to them or to their doctor if they're experiencing any adverse drug effect or side effect.

Reporting of adverse reactions, of course, is so important, as it increases the body of clinical knowledge about the off-label use for the benefit of all consumers, so an independent inquiry should also be tasked to examine improvements to Australia's adverse event reporting system. There were about 17,000 reports to the TGA in 2016 of suspected adverse events due to medicines, yet Australia now has relatively low rates of adverse incident reporting in comparison with similar jurisdictions. This is something that in all our systems we should be aiming to be world leading in, right at the top.

There's no clear responsibility for reporting. It can sit with anyone, including consumers, practitioners and drug companies. Adverse event reporting by sponsors such as pharmaceutical companies and medical device suppliers is mandatory, and around 54 per cent—so the majority—of the total reports in 2016 were received from that source. Yet there's no mandatory obligation on doctors or clinicians to make reports to the TGA of suspected adverse reactions. This seems astonishing to me on the face of it, when our rates of reporting are lower than they should be. There's also room for improvement in consumer reporting. Australia was an early adopter of consumer reporting in 1964, yet only six per cent of reports received in 2016 came from consumers.

So an independent inquiry should consider a requirement for the mandatory reporting of adverse events by medical professionals and the circumstances in which that is a reasonable thing. It should consider training of all medical practitioners in adverse event reporting and support for this. In informal conversations it seems the practices are very varied in different practices and it is just not part of the culture. The use now of IT systems can automate this process. When a doctor is changing a patient from one drug to the other, it can become a fairly simple automatic check so you're not tying people up in red tape and paperwork. And there should be a public awareness campaign of the TGA's ADR reporting mechanism in order to improve the rates of consumer reporting.

In closing, I want to do my best, having committed to follow this issue through, to make sure that what happened to my daughter does not happen with other Australians—not just with the drug Diane-35 and the many names that it is marketed under but, as I have come to discover, with the much broader issue about off label prescribing Australia. These are sensible practical recommendations that can improve the situation.

Barker Electorate

Mr PASIN (Barker) (18:40): As this, the 45th Parliament, draws to an end, I thought I'd take this opportunity to update the House and, in particular, my constituency on some of the projects I am seeking to deliver. The Barossa Village is a not-for-profit community owned

organisation which provides aged-care services to those within the Barossa Valley aged over 55 years. They are the only provider within the growing region that offers a complete package of services—from independent living, home support and home care services through to residential care services. In 2008 they were named the National Retirement Living Organisation of the Year and in 2013 they were inducted into the Brand SA Hall of Fame. Barossa Village is also part of the SA Innovation Hub, a small group of providers selected to work with the federal minister and government agencies to develop innovative ways of delivering aged-care services into the future. In 2017, they built a new allied health centre. They now have plans for a hydrotherapy pool as their latest addition to that facility. This would offer a range of benefits to the community, including pain management, rehabilitation and physiotherapy focusing on the elderly and those with disabilities. I want to make it plain: this would be a state-of-the-art, purpose-built hydrotherapy pool located in the Barossa Valley and I'm doing everything within my power to ensure that is delivered as part of this the 45th Parliament.

The Coonawarra would be known to many in this place for its great wine, but it is also a great community. If you ever find yourself in the Coonawarra on the last Friday of the month, it is tea night at the Coonawarra Hall. Bring a salad, share a steak, schnitzel or fish. Corkage is \$5, or you can ask your friendly local volunteers behind the bar for a local drop; you might well be speaking to one of the world's premier winemakers. I checked on the internet, and the flyer says: 'Have a yarn with the everyday grassroots people of this fine region. Mix and mingle with the winegrowers, the winemakers, the cellar door staff, the viticulturists, the farmers, the store owners, the teachers and their families and so many more.' It is as authentic as it gets.

These community teas take place in the Coonawarra Hall. The hall was opened on 1 November 1922—and I'm sure they won't mind me saying it looks like it! It is nearly 100 years old and it is in need of an upgrade. The whole community has been working to raise funds for the much-needed upgrade, as well as applying for grants from government and other places. They have made an application to the Building Better Regions Fund and I for one am making sure that their application is considered seriously by those in a position to deliver that outcome for this exceptional community, a community which, as I said, is known for its wine but is also a fantastic and vibrant community.

Murray Bridge is one of the largest centres in my electorate of Barker and it is known as a regional city. Murray Bridge centres around the mighty Murray River, a river which is quite familiar to those in place—and there is certainly a lot spoken about it. It is important because of the vibrancy it delivers to river communities in particular—in this case, the community of Murray Bridge. The river is quite simply the lifeblood of so many communities and towns in my electorate of Barker, and Murray Bridge is no exception. The township of Murray Bridge, originally called Mobilong and later Edward's Crossing, was established when a road bridge over the Murray River was completed in 1879. It was followed in 1886 by the Adelaide-Melbourne railway line, which ensured the city's importance as a vital link across the river. It is a beautiful part of the river, but over the past century and a half the town has grown. Shopping centres have been built and the river bank has not been developed to the community's benefit.

Sturt Reserve is a wonderful open area for community members to enjoy. Indeed, it is the home of the Murray Bridge Rowing Club, the Murray Bridge Community Club, the Murray Bridge Lawn Tennis Club and the popular Riverscape Cafe. To put it bluntly, this area is in need of an upgrade to realise the full social and economic potential of this iconic part of Murray Bridge. I recently met with the Mayor and the CEO of the Rural City of Murray Bridge, and I am incredibly keen to work with them to see the riverfront at Sturt Reserve upgraded to become the vibrant community hub it can be, where locals and visitors can enjoy the iconic River Murray in the way that they should.

Mr Deputy Speaker Llew O'Brien, I, like you, spend a lot of time listening to constituents and, overwhelmingly, the same topics come up again and again and again. One of those topics for those of us who represent rural, regional and remote Australians is the need for better mobile telecommunications—or, more to the point, the need to avoid mobile black spots. Our Mobile Black Spot Program has delivered 867 new mobile phone towers and coverage to almost 32,000 Australians and their businesses. My father—and I have spoken about him in this context before—is a 70-something-year-old farmer who acts like a 20-something-year-old farmer. We are incredibly worried, as many people living in rural and remote Australia are, when farmers are working in remote locations and they don't have mobile phone connectivity. Mr Deputy Speaker, I, like you, understand that our mobile phones are effectively our first piece of safety kit.

The fourth round of the Mobile Phone Black Spot Program is currently under consideration, and I have been working, as I am sure other members in this place have been, to ensure my projects are given the best prospect of success. That is all very well and good, but I am here to say that what we need in addition to round 4, where priority sites will be identified shortly, is a rolling program—a commitment to a long-term funding package, which ensures that mobile phone programs and the subsidy for their rollout is provided for over many years going forward. Personally, I think if we commit to that and provide certainty for the telecommunications companies and certainty for communities then we will be much better for that.

In addition to the other work that I have been doing in this place, I have been running a campaign to deliver an MRI licence to the Riverland in my electorate of Barker. For those who don't know, the Riverland is situated, obviously, on the River Murray, but, importantly, it is some 250 kilometres from Adelaide and nearly 200 kilometres from Mildura. Why do I say those places are important? Well, those are the closest places where constituents in my community who are living in the Riverland can access an MRI scan. This scan is now a commonplace diagnostic tool. It is adopted almost all the time by healthcare professionals in the treatment of very many conditions. To ask individuals to travel, in some cases 500 kilometres, to undergo an MRI scan is unacceptable in 2019. This is why I have run a campaign to convince the federal health minister of the need for an MRI licence in the Riverland. I am grateful to the minister for making a number of licences available. We are clearly, as a community, putting up our hand for one of them. I am grateful to the three mayors within the community, the community generally and members of the Health Advisory Council, who have all worked collaboratively with me to make the case for these licences.

I had a lady on the phone to me who pointed out the inequity. Her sister was required to undergo an MRI scan. Her sister lives in Adelaide. Her sister could take time off from her

work, during her lunch break, to arrange for that scan to be taken. In my constituent's case, it involved taking two days off from work, travelling 500 kilometres, overnight accommodation in Adelaide, cost and inconvenience—all of which wasn't something that her metropolitan based sister had to experience. This is an access-to-health issue. I, for one, am doing everything that I can to give us the best prospects of success. I want to thank the community for standing with me during this campaign.

Petitions: Climate Change

Energy

Dr PHELPS (Wentworth) (18:50): Climate change has been variously described as one of the most pressing moral, social, health and economic challenges of our time. The average temperature of the earth's surface has increased by about 0.6 degrees in the last three decades, and global sea levels have risen by around three millimetres per year. Scientific consensus is that this is largely due to an increase in carbon dioxide and other human-emitted greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. We have seen an increase in the number and intensity of natural disasters and the extinction of animal and plant species. Climate change has significant implications for human health; for example, with increased air pollution, insect-borne diseases and impacts on food supplies.

Australia, like nearly 200 other nations, has committed at an international level to address this challenge as part of the Paris agreement's goal of emission reductions to keep the global temperature rise below two degrees Celsius. In October 2018, however, the IPCC report told us that these targets were not ambitious enough and that we needed to take urgent action to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, not two degrees Celsius. However, effectively addressing climate change is proving extremely challenging in the current Australian political context. Concerns about spiralling energy prices and reliability of supply have been used by the current government to sideline attempts to adopt climate policies that reduce Australia's carbon footprint. Yet climate change remains one of the top issues in the upcoming federal election, and I believe we need to work together to deliver change.

To be politically and economically viable, any climate change policy in Australia must meet three key criteria: it must take account of social costs—or, as economists call them, negative externalities—associated with the emission of carbon; it must ensure that energy supply is reliable; and it must also ensure that energy is affordable, especially for low-income Australians.

Along with a smart grid and energy efficiency, renewable energy is the lowest-cost sustainable solution for Australia's energy crisis. Renewable energy has the potential to be Australia's largest export industry of the future. In order to contain emissions, we need to shift away from coal. To do this, ideally, we also need to ban any new thermal coalmine developments. A landmark court decision by Chief Judge Preston in the New South Wales Land and Environment Court this month rejected a new coalmine, partly on the grounds of its future impact on climate change.

Fossil fuels are a finite source of dirty energy, and the externalities are extreme and almost entirely uncoded. The majority of fossil fuel projects in Australia are owned by foreign multinationals, yet these fossil fuels belong to the Australian people. Fossil fuel projects benefit from massive taxpayer subsidies in the form of free water, free carbon emissions and

massive royalty holidays, particularly for gas. Then there is the diesel fuel rebate, a \$2 billion annual subsidy that no Australians, other than farmers, receive. There is no other private industry that is so dependent on using public, finite assets for private, foreign, largely tax-free gain.

This brings us to the fundamental regulatory issue of whether there is a functional gas market. There is no gas market on the east coast of Australia; rather, it is a tightly controlled network, run by a small number of large multinationals for whom profit is the primary motivation. November 2018 saw Australia briefly surpass Qatar to be the world's largest exporter of natural gas. The alleged gas crisis in Australia is not about supply; it is more about offshore sales and supply being prioritised over Australia's consumer needs. In the last eight years, Australia's cost of gas has trebled to US\$8 to US\$9 a unit, while the United States's has gone down to US\$3 a unit. We now have the highest gas prices in the world—even though Australia's east coast production has trebled this decade. If you treble supply and treble the price, you don't satisfy the fundamentals of a functioning market. The government has not intervened to establish a domestic reservation policy—the very policy which keeps Western Australian gas prices far more affordable than gas prices in the eastern states.

Going forward, Australia must invest in renewables. Renewables no longer require major subsidies beyond policy clarity. The single biggest reason renewables are now the clear choice for Australia is that they are now the lowest cost source of new electricity generation. Solar and wind projects are now being built across Australia at just \$40 to \$50 per megawatt hour, down some 70 per cent in just the last three years. Firming these projects with pumped hydro storage for evening peaks takes the price to \$70 per megawatt hour—almost half the price of new coal-fired power generation. Renewables are deflationary. Once built, there is no fuel cost—primarily, just interest on the debt capital. And, like storage costs, renewable energy costs are expected to fall some 10 per cent annually over the coming decade due to economies of scale and massive ongoing technology gains. Renewables are clean and sustainable. Renewables use almost no water. Once built, renewables create no air or particulate pollution or carbon emissions.

Energy Australia, Origin Energy and AGL, Australia's three largest electricity generators, understand the need to move to renewables. Each has ruled out any involvement in any new coal power plant. Moreover, NAB, CBA, Westpac and ANZ have not invested in new coal projects since 2015. Macquarie Group is one of the largest investors in renewables globally.

The idea of baseload electricity is last century's solution to today's problem. Yes, renewable energy is variable. But Australian cities have 24/7 water supply, even though it's not always raining. What we need is firming electricity supply to balance out when low-cost renewables are not available. Firming and peaking power will come from: pumped hydro storage; batteries, both utility scale and distributed; greater interstate grid connectivity; and demand-response management. In November last year, the New South Wales government launched an excellent program to pay 40,000 New South Wales households \$1,000 over three years for the use of their home battery systems—a virtual 200-megawatt power plant delivering ultra-peak power supply.

Investing in renewable energy infrastructure is creating substantial investment and jobs for regional Australia. The New South Wales government announced in November 2018 that it had \$28 billion of low-carbon project proposals under evaluation right now, ranging from

pumped hydro storage to wind and solar infrastructure. Investing in industries of the future will build our engineering and scientific capacity, leverage our financial capacity, including our \$2.6 trillion superannuation pool of assets, and build export industries of the future. Mike Cannon-Brookes has recently launched the campaign Fair Dinkum Power, calling for Australia to target 200 per cent renewable energy. This is a vision worth discussing.

After iron ore, Australia's top exports are all fossil fuel commodities—gas for electricity, coking coal for steel and thermal coal for electricity. We cannot simply switch off these industries, but we need to plan our transition to a clean energy future. We need to transform our economy and prepare transition plans for our most affected communities, such as those in the Hunter and Latrobe Valley. We need to build industries of the future. We should consider building a renewable energy hub in outback Australia and then exporting clean, 100 per cent sustainable and renewable energy, from either hydrogen or ammonia, via a subsea cable connected to Indonesia. Several of the largest energy investors and corporates in the world are exploring such a concept in the Pilbara—for example, the \$20 billion nine gigawatt Asian Renewable Energy Hub.

It gives me great pleasure to present on behalf of the citizens of Wentworth a petition to firstly impose an indefinite moratorium on all new coal mines, including Adani's; immediately cease all federal government subsidies for fossil fuel companies; impose a nationwide ban on fracking; and legislate a renewable energy target of 100 per cent renewable energy by 2030.

The petitions read as follows—

This petition of the citizens of Wentworth comes at a critical juncture in human history. Climate change poses a threat to the continued existence of human beings and myriad other species. The world's leading climate scientists have sent governments a clear warning - rapidly transition away from fossil fuels or risk global warming exceeding 1.5 degrees and the consequent, devastating effects. Approving the construction of new coal mines and subsidising fossil fuel extraction is incompatible with this essential transition.

We therefore ask the House to: 1. Impose an indefinite moratorium on all new coal mines, including Adani's proposed Carmichael mine 2. Immediately cease all Federal Government subsidies to companies mining fossil fuels 3. Impose a nation-wide ban on hydraulic fracturing (fracking) 4. Legislate a renewable energy target of 100% renewable energy by 2030
from 1441 citizens (Petition No. PN0400)

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from 652 citizens (Petition No. EN0840)

Petitions received.

Dr PHELPS: Australia needs an evidence based climate policy led by our national government. We can and must all assume responsibility for supporting and embracing change for our children, for our land and for our planet. Taxpayers' money should be invested in creating the long-term sustainable transition to renewable technologies. ARENA and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation are world-leading examples of how our government can cost-effectively lead this transition. Investing government money in privately owned coal-fired power stations or protecting those assets against future changes in policy will only create bigger problems for Australia down— *(Time expired)*

Energy

Mr PITT (Hinkler) (19:00): It's a great pleasure to follow the new member for Wentworth. We might have to hand out some practical lessons. I would say to the member for Wentworth: I'm an industrial electrician by trade, I'm a power systems engineer by profession and I was a registered professional engineer in Queensland and, whilst I acknowledge her passion and her deep-seated interest in renewables, we actually have to do things that work. There are some real challenges around what's being proposed by the member for Wentworth, and I'd suggest that the very first one is around reliability. The concept that we can shift the nation's energy from Tasmania to Townsville through a transmission line is fraught with danger. What happens when a lightning strike hits somewhere in Victoria and you blackout the rest of the eastern coast? These things are just not feasible from an engineering viewpoint. In fact, as suggested by AEMO in their report last year, it would require over 100,000 acres of solar panels and you would need wind turbines from Sydney to Cairns every 500 metres and you still wouldn't have enough.

The people of North Queensland can tell you in the last three weeks—I'd suggest there is not a single solar panel that delivered a single megawatt for three weeks. We need to look at these things in a practical and balanced sense. For the member for Wentworth and the people in her electorate, I'm sure that their ideology is one which they can afford. There are many people in this country who simply cannot. So the proposal that we spend billions of dollars on things that don't work—go and look at South Australia right now. There are some \$40 billion worth of subsidies, as suggested by the department of industry when the Renewable Energy Target was implemented. We have spent tens of billions of dollars on renewables—on wind, on solar—and what has been the result? You have the highest electricity prices in the world in South Australia. You had blackouts in South Australia and Victoria over the Christmas break.

Deputy Speaker Hogan, you've heard me say this before and I'll say it again: as politicians, we should get out of the way and let engineers do their job. I know you're a bright man, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I wouldn't like you to design the bridge that I drive my car across with the kids in the back. We should recognise the limitations of people in this place to do things around technical engineering design that takes, can I say, decades in their professions to get that level of skill. Enough with this nonsense. We cannot run the country on something which turns off in the dark or when a cloud runs over or when it's not windy enough. Mr Deputy Speaker, would you like to go to your stove and have to look out the window to decide whether you can put the cake on or not? This is the proposal. The idea that we can have batteries—nothing has been costed for the proposals for the member for Wentworth. None of it! Quite simply, most batteries have a 10-year life. They are incredibly toxic. What are you going to do with them? Football fields of batteries will still not provide the capacity that's

required. We need to make practical, commonsense decisions that work or we will lose industry.

I'll put it in simpler terms: that's when you turn off customers. Customers are our people. A thousand dollars seems great until you actually want your air conditioner running or you want your stove on on Christmas Day, because that's when it peaks. Consequently, you just get switched off. Some of this stuff is absolutely nonsensical. And no-one has discussed distribution upgrades. If you want to run this country on solar panels from the roofs of houses, you need to upgrade the biggest network in the entire nation, and that is the distribution system: the low-voltage system which runs down every single street to provide every single house with a connection. You cannot pump five or 10 kilowatts from every house down that line and back up the network. It just doesn't work that way. It's like trying to fill a dam with a garden hose. No-one has costed this properly. You need to have, quite simply, a balanced look at what needs to be done to make it work. Coal has to be part of the equation because, at the moment, there are no other replacements. I'm a supporter of nuclear, but that is a 20-year proposition. That information comes from the Institution of Engineers. I'd suggest they know what they're doing.

But back to the issue of the day, can you believe it? We've actually seen comments from Stephen Conroy, a former Labor senator. I wouldn't believe too much of what Mr Conroy puts forward, but he's come out and attacked Bill Shorten and lashed Queensland Labor's last-minute attack on Adani's proposed coalmine. Once again, we're talking about a single company. The Galilee Basin has more than 40 approved licenses. That is tens of thousands of jobs. The member for Wentworth's proposal is that there will be this transition. Well, she should get out there and tell everybody who works in the resources industry that she wants to transition their 200,000 jobs out of the economy. This is 50-plus per cent of the nation's exports—more than \$200 billion. The suggestion that we can go without that is nonsensical. We need to have a practical solution to what we are doing. So Mr Conroy, a former leader of the Labor Party in the Senate, came out and said that it is time for the Queensland state Labor government to show that it is serious about supporting coal jobs in Central and North Queensland. I say, 'Hear, hear!' It is about time that someone recognised the contribution that resources make to this country. There are those who get up every single day and put on their hi-vis clothes, steel-cap boots and helmets and go to work and contribute to this nation's GDP. They do it every single day.

In the face of activists and these people who have come out now, how many more hurdles and hoops can the Queensland government put in front of this project? Every time the company gets through them and they think they're at the final line and about to break the tape and run through at the end, they put up another hurdle. The latest, I believe, is a black-throated finch. A black-throated finch is now going to stop the opening of the Galilee Basin because the Queensland government need another review before they get back to an organisation which has spent over \$2 billion. And what is that organisation trying to do with that money? It is trying to provide jobs in Central Queensland which are desperately needed. This might sound like a pretty short and practical assessment of the black-throated finch. I'm sure it is an important bird, but it can fly. I'm confident that it can move. In fact, Adani are suggesting that they have some 33,000 hectares of land allocated as a reserve for this bird. The Queensland Labor government need to wake up to themselves. They are very clearly just

trying to stop this project. They should stop doing it. If they don't want the project to proceed, they should go and tell the company that that is the case. They should go and tell them that they don't want jobs in Central Queensland—and there will be tens of thousands.

In terms of people who are actually supporting this project, once again, you can imagine my shock when I read last night that the CFMMEU will demand Bill Shorten's candidates across Queensland pledge support for the coalmining industry. Who would have thought that the CFMMEU would have to go to the Labor Party, who purport to be the representers of workers in this country, and propose support for an industry which they have been involved in for absolutely decades. This is just getting completely out of hand. What sort of topsy-turvy world are we living in now where the Labor Party doesn't support working people and we have the CFMMEU supporting our proposition that we should build our economy and open the Carmichael mine? Things are getting very, very strange.

There are warnings that five other coal projects, totalling \$30 billion of investment, will be threatened if activists succeed in thwarting Adani's project. \$30 billion is not a small amount of money. This is an area that needs jobs and needs to increase the local GDP and provide opportunities for the people who choose to live there. If you choose to live in regional Australia, you should have exactly the same opportunities as everyone else.

It's not just the Galilee Basin that the Queensland government are making a mess of. We know that they are making a mess of energy. I spoke to Shane Roberts. Shane owns Pacific Coffee in Bundaberg. He tells me that the top three costs for his business are now wages, commercial rent and power. This is not an organisation that has huge refrigeration or is running an energy-intensive business. It is a coffee shop. He's actually had to invest nearly \$40,000 to change his air-conditioning over to try to bring down that monthly bill, because it is out of hand. Let's look at Bundaberg Walkers, a foundry which has been in place for more than 130 years. Enio Troiani, the manager there, told us in recent weeks that their contract expires on 30 June for the supply of energy through the Queensland Labor government, through the GOCs, and it will go from \$1 million to \$1.7 million a year overnight. This is a business that employs a hundred people and has trained apprentices and trainees throughout our region for decades, and they are in serious trouble if that is the case. Because their bottom line, I would suggest, may not even be that high.

Once again, I say to the Queensland Labor government: get out and actually do something. You own the GOCs. You own all of the poles and wires. You own 70 per cent of the generators. You control the only retailer in town. In fact, it was suggested to me by Mr Troiani that their per-kilowatt-hour rate will go from what it is currently to 48c a kilowatt hour! Domestic tariffs are around 29 or 30 now. There is no business that can absorb that increase in their overheads.

This is the nonsense of the argument put forward by people like the member for Wentworth. It wasn't that long ago that these prices were down at 20 and commercial was under 10. What's changed? Well, we have all these incredibly unreliable, intermittent wind and solar generators right around the country that simply don't work all of the time. We need to make practical decisions that continue to deliver jobs—jobs for our people and jobs into the regions. Thank you.

Pensions and Benefits

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (19:10): Centrelink is in crisis under this Morrison government. Those opposite have gutted the Department of Human Services to the point that it is understaffed and under-resourced. Worse, they have outsourced good jobs, jobs on which people could build a life, into the hands of the transient world of call centres and labour hire. And the horror stories that I've heard from residents in my community are evidence that this is a very, very bad idea. It is absolutely no coincidence that the government's cuts and outsourcing of over 2,700 staff from the Department of Human Services and Centrelink has led to an increase in Centrelink phone waiting times, blowouts in processing times and many income support recipients being pushed to the edge of poverty, waiting months for their payments to be received.

Last year, my staff and I assisted over 7,000 local residents with Commonwealth issues. A significant proportion of this work involved assisting with Centrelink matters. We heard horror story after horror story of people who were forced to wait months for their age pension to be processed or who were forced to wait on hold for hours for their phone call to be answered. It's just not good enough. And the horror stories that were heard were a direct result of the government's cuts to staff.

In the federal electorate of Lalor, we have nearly 13,000 age pensioners. We also have over 6,000 people who are recipients of the carer allowance—good people caring for others in their life. We have nearly 5,000 recipients of a disability support pension—people on the margins of our society, the disabled, doing it tough. We have nearly 18,000 recipients of family tax benefits, not surprising given that we have 60,000 families in the electorate, and these are mostly single-income, hardworking families. And we have over 2,000 young people on youth allowance, who are studying or undertaking an apprenticeship—a point of celebration it should be, but not under this government.

I often say that we are judged as a society by how we treat our seniors, particularly our pensioners. So I am deeply concerned that I've heard stories from local residents who have advised me and my staff that they've been forced to wait months for their age pension to be processed. And I know this is happening across the country. Last year, I spoke in this place of Duncan, a Wyndham local who was forced to wait 161 days from the date he applied before his age pension was processed. Even more concerning than this outrageous delay is that Duncan is not alone. In fact, nationwide nearly 10,000 age pension applications took over 26 weeks to process. This is outrageous. These people are eligible and entitled to their pension, and delays should not be occurring. I'm horrified to think what would have happened if Duncan hadn't come to my office to seek assistance with his application. How much longer would he have been forced to wait for support without the intervention from the local member's office? The thought is truly horrifying.

Our seniors, after working hard their entire lives and contributing to our community, deserve to have access to their age pension in a timely manner. They shouldn't be forced to live on the edge of their bank accounts while Centrelink processes their age pension applications. I've heard stories of applicants being asked how much money they had in the bank, and being told that if it exceeded \$800 they could wait. Our seniors are being punished by this government's cruel decision to slash staffing allocations at the Department of Human Services.

In the electorate of Lalor, as I said, there are over 2,000 young people who are in receipt of youth allowance. These young people are either studying or undertaking an apprenticeship. As a former teacher and principal, I've seen firsthand the challenges and obstacles that young people in my community face in accessing further education. I want our young people to be going to university, going to TAFE and completing apprenticeships, but I know that it's not just as simple as showing up for class. When our young people who qualify for support in the form of youth allowance payments are entitled to it, they should receive it in a reasonable time. Not months later. Not at the end of the first semester of their university study. Not when they're living in a low-income household for whom they are now a burden when they should be off studying with support from the government.

When they call Centrelink, they should get a response in a reasonable time. It is extremely concerning that in 2016-17 there were 55 million unanswered calls to Centrelink—more than double the 22 million in 2014-15. Australia-wide, nearly 90,000 youth allowance claims have taken more than 29 days to process. Again, it is no coincidence that increased phone wait times have coincided with the government's cuts to Centrelink staff, and that processing times are blowing out as a result as well. Now, not only has this government slashed funding for tertiary and vocational training but those opposite are causing significant and unnecessary stress to students and their families by failing to process their youth allowance in a reasonable time.

In stark contrast to this government, a Shorten Labor government will invest 1,200 permanent full-time jobs in the Department of Human Services nationwide. We will have them properly trained to assist people with income support. Income support is complex, and that is why it is important that there are properly trained and permanent staff who are familiar with the personal circumstances facing income support recipients. This is not a job to be done in a call centre; it needs to be done face to face. These people are making applications. They need support. These jobs will improve access to Medicare and Centrelink, and will reduce wait times and processing times for older Australians and particularly for younger Australians and the 60,000 families in my electorate who may need to interact with Centrelink. These are important services which have been left to deteriorate under this Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government.

On a different tack: I lost my dad when I was 11. At a young age, I learnt that life wasn't always fair. The dairy market crashed, we lost our dad and life changed irrevocably. I learnt it again at 23, when I lost a cousin to mental health issues, and again at 28, when I lost a brother driving his truck on a stretch of road in north Queensland. As a result, I committed my life to the service of evening the odds—to educating young people to ensure that they could take their place and argue their case. And after years of teaching, when I looked around the school I was in and I could see the classroom-to-classroom difference, I looked up and sought leadership in education to change those odds in favour of more students rather than fewer.

It's an important week this week for the Labor Party, because this week we say goodbye to two extraordinary Labor greats, in Wayne Swan, the member for Lilley; and Jenny Macklin, the member for Jagajaga: two people who made a commitment in this place to evening the odds and to making life a little bit fairer for everybody in this country. They've spent their lives in this place working to even the odds in favour of working families, to ensure that the hurdles that families hit don't leave them wrecked and to ensure that people got that even

break when they needed it. They leave us this week—as we saw today with Wayne Swan's speech and are looking forward to tomorrow with the speech from Jenny Macklin, the member for Jagajaga—with a fire in our souls to continue the Labor legacy, to even the odds, to build an economy and a society that are fair.

Ryan Electorate: Infrastructure

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (19:20): The leafy western suburbs of Brisbane have always offered an idyllic lifestyle for growing families. With bushland, acreage and parkland in close proximity to the CBD, the allure of Brisbane's western region has continued to increase year on year. From pineapple farms in Moggill to the rolling hills of bushland between Brookfield, The Gap and Upper Kedron, our end of town has seen substantial change over the last 40 years. We all know that increases in population density mean more cars, more traffic, more school-age children, a greater demand on resources and infrastructure—and the list goes on. While the northern suburbs have had upgrades to roads, trains and schools, the south-western part of Ryan has long suffered a lack of investment by successive governments. While you may well think that I speak of the plight which urban sprawl has brought to the western suburbs, it is more that I describe an increasing population which outpaces the capacity and growth of existing infrastructure.

As a government, we are already delivering billions of dollars of funding for congestion-busting roads and rail projects. As the Prime Minister said recently, we want people to get home sooner and have dinner as a family. We want tradies to spend less time on the road and more time at the worksite. For some, it might be a few extra minutes in bed each morning before their daily commute to work or school. Queensland, and specifically South-East Queensland, needs updated infrastructure, schools, water storage and health facilities to ensure that our state remains a major tourist destination and, importantly, one of the world's premier locations to live, work and raise a family. In short, we need a strategic plan and a commitment to deliver it.

Successive Labor state and federal governments have neglected the hardworking taxpayers and residents of the western suburbs of Brisbane. From the era of Goss, Beattie and Bligh to the current tyranny of Palaszczuk and Trad, Brisbane's western suburbs have certainly not maintained infrastructure spends at the pace of other, less densely populated areas.

Long-term planning is absolutely essential to ensure that Australia identifies and protects the land required for the infrastructure that we will all need in order to meet the increasing demand on our transport and other systems and networks that results from a growing population and a growing freight need. I'd like to use this opportunity to speak about the need for increased and better infrastructure spends on roads, schools, new bridges and bridge upgrades, just to name a few.

I start by raising with the House the travesty known as Moggill Road, the mere thought of which has me dreading that hour-long, only eight-kilometre commute from my home to the office. Day in and day out, this major road for those travelling to and from Brisbane's CBD is almost reminiscent of Sydney's peak-hour gridlock.

We must remember that road transport infrastructure is critical to sustaining Australian communities, growing our strong economy and improving our international competitiveness. Time spent sitting in traffic would be better spent making a contribution to business, society

and family. The economic impact of peak-hour chaos is detrimental to positive economic impacts. Back in 2007, the Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics undertook a study and forecast that the avoidable social costs of congestion will rise to more than \$20 billion by 2020. That's now just one year away.

Along with Dr Christian Rowan MP, the state member for Moggill, I have discussed at length and engaged with local road users to determine some short- and long-term positive places of investment to alleviate and futureproof congestion issues—for example, the Kenmore roundabout, to reduce congestion and bottlenecks and increase the flow. Moggill Road between the Kenmore roundabout and Kilkivan Avenue needs to add an outbound lane at Our Lady of the Rosary School to make two lanes each way. Bellbowrie needs a traffic or green bridge over the river from Weekes Road to allow for buses to travel to Bellbowrie and residents to get to the Darra or Wacol train stations. There is upgrading the Centenary bridges and adding lane capacity to the Western Freeway and the Centenary Motorway. Then there is the highly controversial Kenmore Bypass. With land already allotted and designs formulated, this bypass has long been a justifiable option.

It is not just about increasing Brisbane's western transport network; it is about strategy and forethought to ensure new and updated infrastructure has the capacity and ability to cope over the longer term. Unlike the lazy Labor governments, the coalition government is responding to the needs of the economy by building infrastructure that will drive economic growth, create jobs and improve productivity. But we do need a strategic plan. We need all levels of government to be involved and we need community consultation. We need to plan not for now, not for next year, but for future generations. We need a vision and a long-term plan—and then we need to fund it and stick to it.

At a time when the coalition government is giving record funding for education, the western suburbs of Brisbane are crying out for a new school. I have long advocated for the construction of a P-12 in the Pinjarra Hills area of the Ryan electorate. Every school within a 10-kilometre radius of this area is already at capacity. If our part of Brisbane maintains its demographic trends, the requirement for more schools is a must. Since becoming the federal member in 2010, I have time and time again heard from local residents who are forced to send their children to schools as far away as Ipswich, or to private schools, because of limited capacity nearer to home and local schools that cannot cater.

Kenmore State High School more than serviced the local catchment when it was built in the 1970s but, since then, it has grown to a point where it is now bursting at the seams. We cannot risk our future generations' scholastic aspirations merely because of inadequate school infrastructure. Again, we have a classic bottleneck scenario here, with more than 10 primary schools in the district feeding into Kenmore State High School. If primary schools within the catchment are continuing to grow, the problem is blatantly obvious.

Previously, students from the local school catchment would choose Kenmore State High School for their senior education. It was a close social community and, importantly, it was convenient for local parents. Unfortunately, with more than 10 local schools currently feeding into this one high school, the option is becoming unviable. Again, successive state Labor governments have approved development plans for new housing estates in the area but refuse to acknowledge the need for the resulting infrastructure.

The old University of Queensland vet school site at Pinjarra Hills, I believe, offers a prime location for the construction of a new school. With direct access from public transport and close proximity to the now populated areas of Moggill, Bellbowrie, Karana Downs and Mount Crosby, this location could very well be the solution. While we can blame the significant neglect on successive Labor governments in Queensland—and, indeed, I do—I also believe actions speak louder than words. I use this opportunity to support the commencement of a scoping study to demonstrate our commitment and determination to offer a solution to long identified challenges. Along with my coalition colleagues, I have remained committed to the betterment of infrastructure in our respective communities. Only a strong economy and responsive fiscal policy can provide significant investment in infrastructure, as evidenced by the recent South-East Queensland City Deal.

Having persisted with the slow flow of traffic on Moggill Road, the lack of state government action on a new high school in the area or even the desire to add another bridge across the Brisbane River, I believe only this coalition government has the courage and budgetary position to invest in desperately needed infrastructure to revitalise Brisbane's western suburbs. Strategic investment will transform infrastructure across the country and lay the foundations for future growth. The coalition government is responding to the needs of South-East Queensland by providing investment that will drive economic growth, create jobs and improve productivity, ultimately enhancing local residents' lives and their future generations.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): The time for the grievance debate has expired. The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 192(b). The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 19:29